



St. Thomas School Willoughby

A – Z Guide

2021

Art and Craft Show

This is the major fundraiser for the school each year and has been running successfully for 44 years. It is always held in the last weekend of October

The funds raised are largely spent on classroom resources, educational equipment and school building upgrades.

Every child from the school will benefit from the profits we make from the show, but not only do we raise the much needed funds, we create a strong community environment for the families and we also have a lot of fun.

We require an enormous number of volunteers to help bring the Art & Craft show together each year, and the Committee will send out information via the Newsletter and Compass.

The 'Opening Night' is a fantastic event and one not to be missed. On the night there are great live and online auctions of the children's class art and other items to be won. The evening is one of the schools' three major social events of the year.

Art and Craft Show Committee

The committee is a sub-committee of the P & F. It consists of the Art & Craft Show Convenor/s and its many committees, which organise the various components of the Art & Craft Show such as sponsorship, jewellery, art etc. The committee works tirelessly over the year to bring together an event that is not only an integral part of the school culture, but also the local community. Being part of a sub-committee is not only a great way to contribute to our school but also a great way to meet different people within the school community. For further information or if you would like to volunteer your time please contact the Art and Craft Show Convenor/s or the school.

Assemblies

Every fine Monday morning there is a general assembly in the playground immediately after the morning bell, where pertinent information for the coming week is shared with the school community and achievements from the previous week are recognised. Merit Awards are given out by class teachers to those students who are seen as having excelled in some aspect of school life during the previous week. Birthdays are celebrated. The assembly closes with the National Anthem.

In addition to the weekly assembly, there are Friday afternoon assemblies, usually held in the Parish Hall. The purpose of these assemblies is to enable one class per assembly to showcase work they have been doing during the term. Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Awards are given out for the previous fortnight's targeted behaviour. Year 6 Wellbeing Team present the new-targeted behaviour for the upcoming fortnight. Dates and times for these assemblies are always listed in the school calendar and the fortnightly Newsletter well in advance so that parents can attend if they are able.

Parents are welcome to attend both types of assemblies; however, while Monday morning assemblies are usually attended by parents from all years, the Friday assemblies are generally only attended by parents of the class group presenting it as space is at a premium.

Basketball

Parents have formed a basketball club named Saints that serves the students and parents of St Thomas who want to play competitive Basketball in the Norths Basketball Competition. Currently we have 35 teams playing. Parents are offered first aid training and coaching tutorials each year.

Training is carried out before and after school on the Carmody Court behind administration.

Before and After School Care – (Out of School Hours Care - OOSH)

St Thomas School has an independently run before and after school care service located at the Parish Hall across the road from the school. **Camp Australia** is the current provider. If you intend to use this service either on a permanent or casual basis you need to register with Camp Australia directly prior to booking children in. Registration is required at the beginning of each school year, even if you have used this service previously. Please call: **1300 105 343** or go to their website: <https://www.campaustralia.com.au>

Before and After School Activities

Currently Coding class is offered before school on a Wednesday by Code4Fun and Debating is offered on Wednesday after school by Masters Academy.

Beginning of the School Year Mass - Sunday

This is the first School Mass of the year when all children, in school uniform, are expected to attend. It is held at the 9.30am Sunday Mass around two weeks into 1st term and is followed by a morning tea. It celebrates the strength of our school and parish community partnership.

Book Week

Held in August of each year, Book Week is when the school community gets a chance to focus on books and reading. There is a range of activities held over the week that are linked to reading.

Busses

There are two bus route which serve the St Thomas Community. The 701 Crows Nest bus runs morning and afternoon and the 759 Artarmon bus runs in the afternoon.

Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore

Our school community is an integral part of the Parish led by **Fr Brian Moloney**.

A Family Mass with Children's Liturgy is at 9.30am Sunday Mornings, with a cup of tea to follow. The Parish runs the Sacramental program. Please contact the Parish Office if you need detailed information: Tel. **(02) 9958 8846** or their website: <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/lns>

Class Parents

Every year two parents from each class are asked to volunteer as Class parents. They act as a liaison person between the P&F, class and school. Class parents also have responsibility for class related matters such as: organising social events for the class/year, co-ordinating their class allocated school events for the year (usually no more than two events per year) eg. Welcome Party, breakfasts for Mothers/Fathers, morning tea for Grandparents Days and organising raffle ticket selling rosters for the Art and Craft Show. The Class Parents are supported in their role by the P&F Social Coordinators and the school.

Cluster

Our school is a systemic school within the Broken Bay Diocese. Within the Diocese there are three clusters: Peninsula; Central Coast and North Shore. Our school is located in the North Shore Cluster.

Colour Houses

Each child is allocated a colour house (Stevens, Hume, Thomas and Darby). Siblings are allocated the same colour house. Children compete for point at all sport events and are given points for outstanding behavior.

Crazy Days

These fundraising days occur usually in Term 1 during Lent and in October which is the Diocesan Mission month. The student Social Justice Team plans these days and they are in the school calendar. The idea is to use what you have around the house, parents are not encouraged to purchase any items for the day. Examples from the past are:

- crazy sock day (chn wear odd socks or colourful socks)
- crazy hair day (chn gel or colour hair or wear hair differently on both sides of the head)
- crazy glasses day (chn can make glasses out of cardboard or pipe cleaners)

Cross Country Carnival

This is held at the end of term one, in preparation for the Cluster Cross Country Carnival held early in Term Two. The children are required to run around a 2km (8 & 9yr olds) or a 3km (10 – 12yr olds) cross country track, set up around Willoughby Park. All children in Yrs 2 – 6 are required to compete as part of their PDHPE program and from this event a team is selected to go to the Cluster Carnival to compete against other schools in our Cluster (region).

Debating

Senior students participate in a local interschool competition with other schools.

Diocesan

This describes any activity organized by our Diocese, which is Broken Bay.

End of Year Mass

This is held on the morning of the last day of the school year. It is attended by the whole school and parents are very welcome. Generally it is a time we say goodbye to all students and their families who are leaving St Thomas.

Fathers Day Breakfast

This is held the Friday morning before Fathers' Day in the school playground. Breakfast is provided for all the fathers (and children) who attend. Mass is held at 9am for those fathers and families who are able to attend.

Gala Days

Sports Gala Days are held throughout the year in Netball, Soccer, Basketball, cricket, Rugby, League Tag and other sports. Teams are chosen from Years 3 upwards and these children attend a day of inter-school competition, which is always a lot of fun.

Graduation Mass

This Mass is held for our Year 6 students to formally recognise the completion of their schooling at St. Thomas. It is typically held on the last day Yr 6 attends school and everyone attends. Year 6 students need to wear their full uniform on the day

Grandparents Day

This is a special day for the children to celebrate with their grandparents (or another special person in their life). It is generally held at the end of Term 1, coinciding with the Open Classrooms, from 8am and a whole school Mass at 9am to which the grandparents & families are invited. The Open Classrooms give families the opportunity to view their child's work with them and generally occur at 8am. A morning tea is hosted by a different class/year level each year. The library will be open for families to come through and view a selection of books to purchase and donate for the school library. The donor's name will be placed on a plaque on the inside cover of the book.

Holy Week Presentation

This is a special Liturgy that the whole school takes part in during Holy Week when the term break allows. Each year group takes responsibility for a section of our Lord's Passion and all parents are invited to come and share the children's preparation for Easter. Individual students will have parts assigned to them and if your child has a key part, you will be asked to help them rehearse at home.

Kiss and Ride

This is a system, which allows parents to pick their children up in the afternoons without getting out of the car - particularly useful on rainy days or for people with babies and toddlers. Those families using the system are provided with a name card to display on their dashboard. If you are planning on using Kiss & Ride please complete the Google form on Compass. Parents then queue up alongside the fence in High Street. If the queue continues into Forsyth Avenue, parents are asked to drive around the block and return to the back of the line.

When the car moves towards the front of the queue a teacher calls out the child's name and the children are supervised as they get safely into the car. For this system to work the staff of St Thomas assist to monitor and supervise. For expediency and safety it is requested that parents stay in their car. ***Please read full procedures with diagrams on Compass under 'Kiss & Ride'.***

Lost Property

Your child's name should be sewn or stuck on and clearly marked with permanent marker on all uniform, shoes, lunch boxes, drink bottles and bags.

The lost property rack is located outside the school office. Parents and children are asked to look for lost articles themselves.

Unnamed items of clothing will be sent to the 2nd hand uniform shop and food containers will be disposed of.

Any articles found such as glasses, keys, wallets are kept in the office. Please enquire there.

Lunchtime Clubs

Lunchtime activity groups are very popular! Children may choose to participate in an activity one lunch time per week (subject to capacity). The activities vary from time to time but currently include sport, chess, double dutch skipping and jazz. It is necessary to re-enrol/register your child/ren for these clubs at the beginning of each term via Lunch Time Clubs on Compass.

Lunch Orders

Lunch orders can be made prior to 9am 5 days a week from **Tricycle Cafe** on Mowbray Road www.thetricyclecafe.com Lunches are delivered to school and put in the class tubs outside the school office for collection by the individual child.

If a parent has missed placing an order or it has not turned up, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide lunch for their child. Tel. **0431 551 466**

Maintenance Days

There is always a Maintenance Day the week before the Art and Craft Show, when all the school is asked to participate. We depend on the help of parents for this event. A barbecue lunch is provided. Unfortunately, due to work, health and safety regulations you cannot bring your children to these days.

Masses

Each grade attends a short Parish Mass once a term at 9:00 am for about ½ hour. Dates for these Masses are in the Parent Calendar and on the school electronic noticeboard. Parents are always welcome to attend these Masses. Years 3-6 students also receive Reconciliation twice a year after Mass.

Each grade also contributes to a Sunday Mass once a year. While the whole school is welcome at every Mass this enables each grade to take on special responsibility and help them learn with a hands-on approach about their journey in faith and the parts of the Mass in more detail.

There are other special Masses and Liturgies held throughout the year to celebrate Mothers, Fathers & Grandparents Days, Holy Week, Advent and various designated saints days. These are held on weekdays as noted in the school calendar. Each grade is responsible for organising at least one of these Masses or Liturgies.

The Parish Priest also visits each class or grade for about half an hour (or as requested) to chat informally with the students and teachers.

Mothers Day Breakfast

Mothers Day is celebrated on the Thursday or Friday prior to the Mothers' Day weekend in May. A special Mass is held as well as a breakfast hosted by a class group.

Mufti Days

Mufti days are days where children can wear plain clothes instead of uniform. There is a payment for this privilege and it may be a toy or donation on Tombola Days or a gold coin on charity drives.

Netball

Girls from Year 2 upwards can play netball in the Northern Suburbs Netball Comp, at Willoughby Leisure Centre (providing they are turning 7 before 31st of December). No teams actually play for St Thomas, but they are made up of St Thomas students.

For those younger girls in Year 2 who wish to play, an alternative is available through the Ku-Ring-Gai Netball Association.

The STNC is fully coordinated and run by parents and although the school is supportive of the club, it has no involvement in it beyond simply being the school that the students attend.

Nut Policy

St Thomas School strives to be a **Nut Free Zone**. We have a number of children who have severe allergies and by eliminating nuts in all forms at school, either with peanut butter or mixed nuts we reduce the risk to these children.

Open Classrooms

In every term parents are given the opportunity to view their child's work and classroom. Classrooms are open from 8-9 am.

In Terms 1, 3 & 4 this occurs on the second last Friday of the term. In Term 2 parents can view their child's work during Parent Teacher Interviews.

Open Days

The Open Days are for prospective parents who may be considering the school for their child to visit and have a look around. It is generally for parents and their children who will be entering kindergarten the following year, but others are also welcome.

The Open Days are generally held in March, and it is necessary to register on-line to attend one of these days.

Parent Information Night

Every year a Parent Information Night is held to provide those parents who have accepted the offer of a place for their child at St Thomas', an opportunity to receive an overview of how St Thomas' operates on a general basis and to ask questions about general aspects of starting school at St Thomas. The session usually lasts for approximately one hour. The scheduling of the Parent Information Night is determined by the Principal but is generally held during early Term 4.

Parents & Friends Association (P&F)

St Thomas Parents & Friends brings families, children and teachers together to make our school a better place celebrating the diversity of talents and interests

within our school community. We promote a relationship with school staff and the wider Parish community which models Catholic values that are lived out every day within our school. We value a community where all feel welcome.

Membership of the P&F is open to all parents or carers of students attending the school and to members of the parish community. Members of the school staff may also become members of the P&F. The Parish Priest and Principal shall be members, ex-officio, of the P&F and all of its committees. You are not required to fill out any forms. If you fit into one of the categories stated, you automatically become a member, and are welcomed to any meetings or events held by the P&F.

P&F Meetings

These are held around week 6 of each term at 7.00pm in the library. All parents are invited to attend and find out firsthand what is going on in and around the school.

The meetings generally last no longer than an hour. They may involve a guest speaker.

We do not discuss individual children or teachers, curriculum matters or specific teaching/school business (such matters should be raised with the Principal).

If you would like to suggest a topic for discussion, or presentation at a P&F meeting we encourage you to bring this to any of the Executive Committee members or Principal.

Pastoral Care & Volunteers

The role of Pastoral Care is an important one within the St Thomas school community and is there essentially to provide help and support to families at various times of need in their lives. The guidelines for Pastoral Care are fairly broad and are really defined by the specific needs at the time.

In a practical sense it generally translates into providing all or any of the following: meals and snacks for a family, arranging to get children to and from school, and offering emotional and physical support in times of sudden illness, bereavement or family upheaval.

Pastoral Care operates with the continued support of volunteers, and, as part of the St Thomas school community, you are invited to sign up via the Compass form. Your details are not shared with anyone other than the Pastoral Care team.

Families who require this support, can contact the Coordinator directly and privately (details on last page of this handbook) and they will liaise with the team on your behalf.

Public Speaking Festival

A Public Speaking Festival is generally held every year, over a two-week period. It involves each child in the school presenting a speech to their class; two finalists are selected from each class and they present their speech to the whole stage during school time. Year 6 students present their speech to the whole school at a special assembly. Two students are then selected to represent the school in the cluster finals.

School Band

The St Thomas School Band is open to all children in Years 3–6. Typically children join the band in either Year 3 or 4, and continue until Year 6. The band is run by the school and begins in 1st term with a weekly lesson on the child's chosen instrument. The process for students who wish to join the band is

- a) children experience the variety of sounds each instrument makes
- b) a 'blow test' day is held a few days later where instrument tutors help children choose an instrument
- c) Band tutors then decide whether they wish to sign their child/ren up for the program. Later in the year, once the child has progressed to a satisfactory stage, they will be invited to join the band, which meets at 7.45am on Fridays. The band performs frequently throughout the year.

School Musical

The School Musical is run as a bi-annual event towards the end of Term 3. All children are involved and are expected to attend both nights.

Sport Carnivals (Athletics, Cross-Country and Swimming)

These are generally held at a local park, field or pool. The whole school takes part in the Athletics Carnival but only those turning 8 or older compete in the Cross Country & Swimming Carnivals. K – 2 children have a short carnival on the final day of their two week Swimming Program. The children wear their sports uniform and a shirt in their house colour to all carnivals. Children turning 8 years old or older in the cluster competition year may be selected to represent the school at the North Shore Cluster level at each of these events.

More details will be sent out before each event.

Sports at St Thomas – Extra-Curricular

Please contact the school office or your child's class parent to enquiry about specific extra-curricular sports offered at other venues.

St. Thomas Day

This is a special day for our school when we recognise the life of St. Thomas. We generally celebrate with a Mass followed by games and activities for the children.

Staff Development Days (SDD) (Pupil Free Days)

These are days when the staffs receive professional input from experts in the areas relevant to our school improvement goals. Students do not attend school on these days. Care for those students who require child minding may be arranged if the Principal offers them.

Teachers "Thank you" Lunch

This is a lunch put on by the parents for all staff to say thank you for their work during the year and is held towards the end of term four. Parents are asked to either provide a plate or help with setting up or cleaning up.

Tissues and Champagne Morning Tea (Kindergarten parents)

The first day of school is often more traumatic for a parent of a kindergarten child than it is for the actual child. The P&F organises a celebratory morning tea on the first day of school, usually hosted by a kindergarten child's family so that parents can meet and share the tears and cheers!

Tombola

The tombola stall is a toy stall at our Art & Craft Show. The toys on sale are donated by our community. The children can wear plain clothes on the three tombola mufti days each year bringing in a new toy or a money donation. One tombola mufti day is held in each of the first three terms.

Transition to School & Pre School Visits (Kindergarten children)

These days are held in November for the following year's intake of Kindergarten (Kindy) children. The purpose of these sessions is to have your child in a classroom environment and to help the Kindy teachers assess the classroom dynamics. The Kindy teachers will have had an opportunity to visit the child's pre-school with the parent's consent. During each session, all parents are invited to attend a presentation by the Principal where further information will be supplied. It is necessary for parents to make an on-line booking via School Interviews for these days. More information will be provided on this later in the year.

Uniform from Lowes (And 2nd Hand Uniform Shop at School)

Lowes Chatswood is the supplier of our school uniforms other than Skorts (which can only be purchased from the school office – no cash please).

Lowes 346 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood. Tel. (02) 9419 8046

The **Second Hand Uniform Shop** (at the cottage across from main school gates on Horsley Ave) is open once a month. Due to Covid restrictions it is necessary to register prior to visiting the shop. Please contact **Charlotte Menzies** (Parent volunteer) to register. Tel: 0413 490 288.

Please keep an eye out on Compass for opening times for 2021.

Donations of second hand uniforms are very welcome, and can be dropped into the school office.

Wellbeing Week

Wellbeing week is held in Week 6 each term. The student wellbeing team provide morning tea and lunch time activities for students. There is no homework in Wellbeing Week.

Welcome Back to School Function

Early in first term a function is held to welcome new parents to the school and to welcome back returning parents. This is an opportunity for all new parents to come along, meet and be formally welcomed into the community. It's also a great opportunity for existing parents of the school to catch up after the Christmas holidays.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

St Thomas Catholic Primary School
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Principal

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Assistant Principal

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Religious Education Co-ordinator

Mrs Elizabeth Jones: elizabeth.jones@dbb.catholic.edu.au

P&F Contacts 2021

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