



St Thomas's

CE Primary School

September 2026 Newsletter

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Message from the Head of School



It has been a wonderful start to the new school year, and I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to all of our children, families and staff. The school has been filled with excitement, enthusiasm and positivity, and it has been a joy to see how well the children have settled into their new classes. They have returned ready to learn, eager to reconnect with friends and keen to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

This year, we are proud to launch our six school values: **Respect, Compassion, Courage, Resilience, Hope and Aspiration**. These values will be at the heart of everything we do. We will encourage our children to show respect for themselves and others, demonstrate compassion and kindness, have the courage to try new things, develop resilience when faced with challenges, hold on to hope in difficult times and aspire to be the very best version of themselves. We look forward to seeing these values lived out across our school community throughout the year.

Our Enrichment Programme continues to be a highlight of school life. Every Friday afternoon, children have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities designed to broaden their experiences, develop new skills and discover new interests. Opportunities include Forest School, mindfulness, dodgeball, sewing, nature walks and many more exciting activities. We are passionate about providing wider opportunities that help children flourish both inside and outside the classroom.

Attendance has been excellent so far this term, with our whole-school attendance currently sitting at **97%**. This is a fantastic start and reflects the commitment of our families to ensuring children are in school and ready to learn. Thank you for your support. Regular attendance remains one of the most important factors in helping children achieve their full potential, and we encourage families to continue prioritising school attendance wherever possible.

Thank you to all of the parents and carers who attended our recent Curriculum Showcase events. It was wonderful to see so many families engaging with their children's learning and finding out more about the exciting curriculum experiences planned for the year ahead.

A polite reminder that all children should wear black school shoes as part of our school uniform. Trainers should only be worn on designated PE days.

Finally, thank you for the many smiles, friendly greetings and positive conversations at the school gates each day. Strong relationships between home and school are at the heart of our community, and we greatly value your continued support.

As we begin this new school year together, we are reminded of our theological root:

"With God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

We look forward to an exciting and successful year ahead, working together to help every child thrive.

Mrs E. Butler

Head of School

St Thomas's CE Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality



Our school gates are open from **8:40am** until **8:55am**, and open again at **3:10pm** when school finishes.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open by the class teacher until 9:00am. Following this, any late arrivals will be recorded by staff in the office who will record and update any changes on arrival.

Absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of absence by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible.

When phoning school to inform of your child's absence, please press 1 on the menu unless you need to speak to the office staff. When leaving a message, please clearly state your child's name, class and the reason for their absence.

If your child has sickness/diarrhoea, they must not attend school for 24 hours after the bout of symptoms.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence if the office has been informed of the appointment in advance.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

We request that an appointment card is shown at the office in advance of the appointment so the class teacher can be informed.

Holidays During Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time.

If you need to request a holiday during term time, then you will need to complete a Leave of Absence form which can be obtained from the school office.

Although the school will look at each request for leave on its own merit, requests will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

When taking your child out of school when a holiday is not authorised/requested, you may face legal action under Section 444 (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1966 or be issued with a Penalty Notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Penalty Notices are issued **per parent, per child** at £80 each if paid within 21 days and rising to £160 each if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in the Local Authority taking legal action against you under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1966.

The full version of our attendance policy can be found on the school website. We appreciate your cooperation in supporting your child's attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance enhances their learning experience and helps them achieve their full potential.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Together, let's ensure every school day is filled with enriching educational experiences for our children.

ATTENDANCE



WHAT THE NEW RULES MEAN FOR ME

1

I'm a single parent of one child and we want to go on holiday for a week

Your holiday will not be authorised and you must talk to the school before you book anything.
Because your child will miss 5 school days you will be given a penalty notice fine.
The fine is £160 but if you pay it within 21 days it will be reduced to £80



£160

2

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

10

IN

10

If your child is absent for 10 or more sessions in 10 weeks and their absences are unauthorised, the school will consider prosecution

1

day =

2

sessions

A PENALTY FOR EACH CHILD






+£160
+£160
+£160
+£160

4 children & 1 parent = £640

Reduced to £320 if paid within 21 days

3

4

FOR A FAMILY OF TWO PARENTS







+£160
+£160
+£160
+£160

4 children & 2 parents =

£1,280

Reduced to £640 if paid within 21 days

5

If in any period of not more than 3 years, your child has a 2nd and 3rd leave of absence or pattern of irregular attendance...

SECOND TIME

2 parents and

1 child = £320

2 children = £640

3 children = £960

4 children = £1,280

No discount for early payment

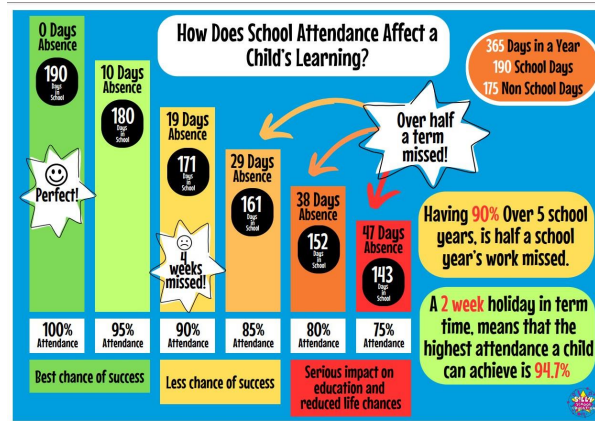
THIRD TIME

A penalty notice fine will not be given. Instead your case will be taken to court. A magistrate can fine each parent £2,500 for each child.

1 parent & 4 children = £10,000

2 parents & 4 children = £20,000





School Systems



At St Thomas's, we use a variety of systems in the day to day running of the school and to communicate with parents. Below you will find information on the 3 main systems that our parent and carers should be using.

Arbor

Our school uses the Arbor app, which is our main primary communication channel for sharing important information, newsletters, key events and general updates. Information from the school office will be shared via email, and any homework or messages from class teachers will be sent via an in-app message on the Arbor app.

Arbor allows us to bring several features together in one place, making things simpler and more efficient for families. Through the **Arbor Parent Portal** and app, you will be able to:

View your child's **attendance**

Update your **contact details**

Check and manage **consents**

Sign up for **Parents' Evening appointments**

...and much more as we introduce further features.

School Grid

We use School Grid as our lunch system, which allows you to order and pay for your child's school dinners online on www.schoolgrid.co.uk

We recommend selecting your child's meals for the upcoming week each Sunday, as the system does not allow any further orders after 8:55am. If you have not placed your child's order for the day, they will be given a cheese sandwich at lunch time.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a Universal Free School meal. **You do not have to apply for these. But if your child is in a Key Stage 1 Year Group and you get one of the qualifying incomes, it will help the school if you make a claim for free school meals, as they can get extra funding.**

From Year 3 onwards, you will have to pay for school meals which are priced at £2.90 per day, which is £14.50 per week.

Parents do not have to pay for school meals if they qualify for Free School Meals. You can view the eligibility criteria and apply for Free School Meals through the [Bury Council website](#).

School Money

School Money is an online payment system that we use, which gives parents and carers the facility to make payments for school expenses, such as trips, online with your debit or credit card.

We also use School Money to take bookings and payments for our Breakfast Club which is priced at £1 per day. All bookings and payments for Breakfast Club must be in advance as we have a limited number of places available. Sessions can be booked up to midnight the day before it's due to take place.

Breakfast Club is available from 8:00am to 8:30am, and we cannot accept any children into the club after 8:30am.

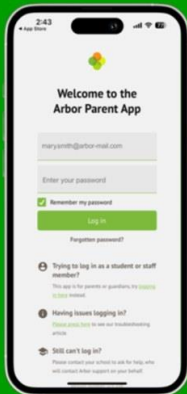
School Money can be used [online](#) or via the **Teacher2Parents** app.

If you need help logging into or using any of these systems, please visit the school office and a member of staff will be able to help you



We're using the Arbor Parent App!

See and manage your child's day-to-day school information. Understand their progress, make payments and bookings, and receive in-app messages - all from one app



- Log in in seconds with Face ID
- Receive in-app messages and reminders on your phone
- Make payments, sign up for clubs, and book parents evenings
- See your child's progress, attendance, behaviour points, report cards and more
- Check your child's calendar, it's always up-to-date

Scan the QR code to download the Arbor Parent App, and use your email address to log in








SchoolMoney



Make payments for school expenses, such as trips, online with your **debit or credit card**.



SchoolMoney also gives you the facility to book a place and pay online for our Breakfast Club. Our Breakfast Club costs **£1 per day**, and you must book **before midnight the day before**.



SchoolMoney enables us to experience a more streamlined, cost-effective and efficient payment system in a **secure and safe** environment.

To log into SchoolMoney



Download the 'Teachers2Parents' app via the App Store.

- Enter your mobile number.
- You will then receive a verification code to enter into the app.




OR



Visit the website www.eduspot.co.uk

- Click on the sign in button in the top right-hand corner.
- In the drop down, select the SchoolMoney Parent Login option.
- This will send you through to a page where you need to enter your mobile number, email address, the password we have sent to you, and your child's first name.



If for any reason you are struggling to log in, it may be because you have not provided us with the correct contact details. **Please let us know immediately** if either your mobile number or email address changes.

Free School Meals



All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 get a free meal at lunchtime, under the government's Infant Free School Meals scheme. **You do not have to apply for these. But if your child is in a Key Stage 1 Year Group and you get one of the qualifying incomes it will help the school if you make a claim for free school meals, as they can get extra funding.**

From Year 3 onwards, free school meals are only available if you meet the eligible criteria. You can view the eligibility criteria and apply for free school meals on the [Bury Council website](#)

If your child is on school dinners, please ensure that you pre-order their lunch choice on School Grid. Orders should be placed at least a week in advance to provide accurate numbers for the kitchen. If you do not place an order for your child, then they will receive a cheese sandwich at lunch time.

If you have any questions regarding free school meals, please contact the school office.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

A healthy meal. A brighter future.

If you get certain benefits, your child(ren) may be entitled to **Free School Meals**.

It could make a big difference!



BURY
COUNCIL

Could you be eligible?

You may be entitled to Free School Meals if you receive any of the following:

- ✓ Income Support
- ✓ Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- ✓ Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- ✓ Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- ✓ The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- ✓ Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of £16,190 or less (as assessed by HMRC)
- ✓ Universal Credit (with annual net earned income of £7,400 or less)

 Your child may be eligible even if they are in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2.

Why apply?

Registering for **Free School Meals** can bring lots of benefits:



A healthy meal every school day – helping your child to learn, concentrate and do their best.



Extra funding for your child's school – helping to support learning, resources and activities.



Help with other costs – such as school trips, uniform and educational support.



Better support for your child – schools can provide more targeted help when they know who is eligible.



Quick, secure and confidential – your application is safe and information is only used for eligibility purposes.



 **It's easy to apply!**



Apply online in just a few minutes.
Find out if you're eligible today.



Apply online now:
www.bury.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals
For more information, contact your child's school or visit the website above.



Healthy today,
brighter tomorrow.

Healthy Packed Lunches



It is part of our responsibility to help our children to learn how to eat healthily. To help us educate our children, we would like to remind our parents and carers of what constitutes of a healthy packed lunch via our below poster.

Some ideas for recipes for a healthy lunchbox can be found on [Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS](#)

Healthy Packed Lunches

Healthy food fuels happy,
healthy learners!

Good
food
=
Bright
futures
♥



It is part of our responsibility to help our children to learn how to eat healthily. To help us educate our children, we would like to remind our parents and carers of what constitutes a **healthy packed lunch**.



✓ Choose healthy options

We ask that parents ensure that their child's packed lunch is made up of **healthy items** and only contains **cold foods**.



✗ Please do NOT include these items

The following items should **not** be included in your child's packed lunch;

- ✗  Fast food (such as burgers and chips)
- ✗  Chocolate or sweets
- ✗  Cakes
- ✗  Fizzy drinks



No nuts – keep our children safe

As the school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts, we ask that parents do not include any nuts or products containing nuts in their child's packed lunch. An allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) can be life threatening, and can be caused by ingesting nuts, cross contamination or breathing in the nut dust/oil in the air.



Some ideas for recipes for a healthy lunchbox can be found on [Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families – NHS](#)

✗ Do NOT bring these items into school

- ✗ Packs of nuts
- ✗ Peanut butter or Nutella sandwiches
- ✗ Fruit or cereal bars containing nuts
- ✗ Sesame seed rolls (children allergic to nuts may also have a severe reaction to sesame)
- ✗ Chocolate bars or sweets containing nuts
- ✗ Biscuits or cookies containing nuts
- ✗ Cakes made with nuts
- ✗ Any home cooked food made with nuts

This is not an exhaustive list, so please check the labelling of packaging closely.



Healthy food
helps children learn,
grow and thrive!
♥



High School Applications



The deadline to submit your high school applications for September 2027 is on 31st October 2026.

Information on the application process, key dates and how to apply online can be found on the Bury Council website via the following link;

<https://www.bury.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-admissions/secondary-school>

Dates for the Diary



Our key dates for the diary are listed below, please note that these dates may change and reminders for upcoming events will be sent via email

Thursday 8th October - School Photographs

Tuesday 20th October - Flu Vaccinations

Wednesday 21st October - Harvest Assembly at 9:00am

Friday 23rd October - School closes for October half term

Monday 2nd November - School reopens for Autumn 2

Tuesday 3rd November - Peter Pan Pantomime

Monday 9th November to Thursday 12th November - Year 6 Bikeability Cycle Training

Term Dates for 2026/27

HOLIDAY PATTERN 2026-2027							
	PUPIL DAYS			PAD DAYS		SCHOOL DAYS PER HALF TERM	
	BANK HOLIDAYS						
	SCHOOL HOLIDAYS						
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri		
	24	25	26	27	28	Autumn Open	
Sept 2026	31	1	2	3	4		
	7	8	9	10	11	38 days	
	14	15	16	17	18		
	21	22	23	24	25		
	28	29	30	1	2		
October	5	6	7	8	9		
	12	13	14	15	16		
November	19	20	21	22	23		
	26	27	28	29	30	Autumn Half Term	
	2	3	4	5	6		
	9	10	11	12	13	35 days	
	16	17	18	19	20		
December	23	24	25	26	27		
	30	1	2	3	4		
Jan 2027	7	8	9	10	11		
	14	15	16	17	18		
	21	22	23	24	25	Autumn Close	
	28	29	30	31	1		
	4	5	6	7	8	30 days	
February	11	12	13	14	15		
	18	19	20	21	22		
	25	26	27	28	29		
	1	2	3	4	5		
	March	8	9	10	11	12	
15		16	17	18	19	Spring Half Term	
22		23	24	25	26		
29		30	31	1	2	24 Days	
5		6	7	8	9		
April	12	13	14	15	16		
	19	20	21	22	23		Spring Close
	26	27	28	29	30		
	3	4	5	6	7	33 days	
	10	11	12	13	14		
May	17	18	19	20	21		
	24	25	26	27	28		
	31	1	2	3	4	Summer Half Term	
	7	8	9	10	11		
	June	14	15	16	17	18	
21		22	23	24	25	30 days	
28		29	30	1	2		
5		6	7	8	9		
12		13	14	15	16		
July	19	20	21	22	23	Summer Close	
	TOTAL PUPIL DAYS					195	

Prayer



Dear God,

Thank You for a wonderful start to our new school year. We are grateful for the joy, laughter and learning that fills our school each day.

Help us to live out our school values of **Respect, Compassion, Courage, Resilience, Hope and Aspiration** in all that we do. Guide us to be kind to one another, brave when things are difficult, hopeful for the future and determined to achieve our very best.

Bless our children, families and staff as we learn and grow together. Help us to make the most of every opportunity, both in the classroom and through the many enrichment experiences we enjoy.

Thank You for the partnership between home and school and for the support of our community. May we continue to work together so that every child can flourish and fulfil the plans You have for them.

We remember our school vision:

"With God all things are possible."

May this truth encourage and inspire us throughout the year ahead.

Amen.

Contact Us



If you wish to contact us

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On Twitter @StThomasBury