



St Thomas More School NEWSLETTER

Term 2 Week 9 Thursday 27 June Website: www.sttmore.catholic.edu.au Email: info@sttmore.catholic.edu.au

Upcoming Events

Friday 28 June

Assembly 9am
Jubilee Hall
hosted by 2MD

Monday 1 July

Catholic Schools
Netball Carnival

Reports to go home this
week to families

Tuesday 2 July

SAPSASA District
Basketball Carnival

Wednesday 3 July

Canteen Special
Chicken Yiros \$5

Last day of Term 2

**Friday 5 July
at 3pm**

First day of Term 3

**Monday
22 July 8:50am**

St Thomas More School recognises and acknowledges that we are living on traditional Aboriginal lands and we offer our respect and appreciation to all Aboriginal people.

St Thomas More Feast Day

St Thomas More is the patron of our school and Parish and the Spirit of Mercy lives within us. On Friday 21 June we remembered St Thomas More for his loyalty to God and his fondness of laughter. The children enjoyed many different things beginning with a whole school Liturgy, a Teddy Bear Picnic, activities in the classroom and outdoor sports on the day!!!

- Leah Williams Acting APRIM



St Thomas More School

Principal

Mr Chris Platten

Acting Deputy Principal

Mrs Sonia Kilmister

Acting APRIM

Ms Leah Williams

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St Thomas More Feast Day



Dear Parents, Caregivers, Students and friends of St Thomas More,

End of Term 2!

END OF TERM 2

**This is advanced notice to the community that FRIDAY 5 JULY
at 3:00 pm will be the END OF TERM 2.**

St Thomas More Feast Day

St Thomas More Feast Day was on 22 June, a day where we celebrate the life of St Thomas More whom our school is named after. He is certainly a great choice for our school, given that he was a man who spoke up for what he believed was right and just. Thomas More was beheaded because he believed that God was far more important than the king of the time. As part of our culture here at St Thomas More we stand up for justice, especially for the poor and marginalised.

Staffing News

This week we farewell one of our Admin team Mrs Kerry Oates. Kerry has won a permanent position at Xavier College and concludes her time with us after a year of wonderful service to the St Thomas More School community. Kerry has held a number of different roles and responsibilities during this time, including but not limited to; enrolment officer, newsletter publication, front office work, parent social media communication, marketing and principal support. Kerry has been a valued and important part of the school and someone who has always been friendly, caring and welcoming to students, parents and visitors. On behalf of our school community I'd like to thank Kerry for her outstanding work ethic and commitment to St Thomas More School and wish her every success and blessing as she embarks on this new chapter of her professional career.

In other news, Mrs Sandy Ahearn will be on Long Service Leave for the first week of Term 3, beginning Monday 22 July and returning 29 July and Mr Paul Clift will also be on Long Service Leave, for the first 2 weeks of Term 3, beginning Monday 22 July and returning on Monday 5 August. We wish Sandy and Paul a safe and enjoyable break with family and friends and look forward to their return.

First Semester Reports

Teachers have been busy writing reports that are evidence based and capture the entire learning achieved by your child/ren during their first semester of school this year. I have had the pleasure of reading each child's report and gaining a greater understanding of their growth and development.

One of the areas I take particular note of is a child's **efforts**. Children receive a grade for achievement and for **'application to learning' (effort)**. This grade is provided for each subject area and compliments the 'Achievement' grade, informing you about how your child has applied themselves and given effort in their learning. One of our School Norms is; 'Strive for Excellence' which highlights the importance of trying your best, regardless of your knowledge or interest level in a particular subject area.

I'd like to thank our teachers for their efforts with writing these reports and encourage you to celebrate your child's/children's achievements and talk to them about the importance of setting personal learning goals for the remainder of the year. First Semester Reports will be sent home with children next Wednesday.

Ensuring our School is a safe place for all

I want to assure all parents and carers of our absolute commitment to ensuring that St Thomas More School is a safe place for all.

- ◆ Our staff are committed and trained to protect the children and young people in our care.
- ◆ All staff and regular volunteers have current police checks.
- ◆ We teach our children age-appropriate strategies to keep themselves safe through South Australia's *Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum*.
- ◆ Staff complete certification and undertake regular updated training in *Responding to Abuse and Neglect in Education and Care Settings*.
- ◆ We also promote strategies to minimise bullying and help students stay safe online.

You can read more about our commitment to the wellbeing of your child on our website www.sttmore.catholic.edu.au and follow the links:

[Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People 2011](#)

[Cybersafety: Keeping Children Safe in a Connected World](#)

[Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum](#)

Additional information about the broader protection policies of Catholic Education SA can be found on their website. <http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/safe-environments-for-all>

The website also includes links to online resources for parents and students on a range of topics including anxiety, depression, bullying and how to support your child.

If you have any questions or concerns about child safety please contact the Front Office.

How to stop Literacy loss over the holidays

As children's first and most important teachers, families have a major role to play in motivating children to read during the holiday period. There are many ways that families can use to encourage holiday reading.

Combine activities with books

Holidays leave lots of time for children to enjoy fun activities, such as going camping, fishing or seeing a movie. Why not also encourage them to read a book about an activity? If you're going to a sports game, suggest that your child read a book or article about a favourite player or about the game beforehand. In the car, you'll have lots of time to talk about the book and the game.

Lead by example

Read the newspaper at breakfast, pick up a magazine at the doctors and pack a paperback book into your travel bag. If children see the adults around them reading, they understand that books and other reading material are a fun and important part of their holidays.

Talk it Up

Talking with your children about what you have read also lets them know that reading is an important part of your life. Tell them why you liked a book, what you learned from it, or how it helped you. Soon they might start doing the same.

Help children find time to read

By the end of a long day, children may be too tired to pick up a book. Make some time for reading, such as before bedtime or after breakfast.

Relax the rules for holidays

During the school year, children have busy schedules and often have required reading for classes. Holidays are a time when children can read what, when and how they please. Don't set daily time requirements or decide the number of pages they have to read. Instead, make sure they pick up books for fun and help find ways for them to choose to read on their own.

Have plenty of reading material around

Storybooks aren't the only thing that children can read for fun. Newspapers, magazines and information material can spark the interest of a young (and old) reader. Encourage them to read about an interest or to extend their knowledge.

Use books to break the boredom

Without the regular school regimen, adults and children need more activities to fill the hours. Books that teach children how to make or do something are a great way to get children reading and keep them occupied.

Read aloud with children

Take your children to see a local storyteller (local library) – or be one yourself. The holidays leave extra time for enthusiastic read-alouds with children, no matter their age. Find your inner actor and improvise different voices or wear a silly hat to make the story that much more interesting! Starting an engrossing book at the start of the holidays can become a highly anticipated part of the day for all the family.

Acknowledgement: Reading is Fundamental

Enrolment reminder

2019 TERM 3 RECEPTION ENROLMENTS

Places are available. If you have or if you know of anyone who has a child **turning 5 before 31 October 2019**, please complete and lodge an enrolment form at the Front Office.

2020 RECEPTION ENROLMENTS

Places are available. If you have or if you know of anyone who has a child **turning 5 before 1 May 2020**, please complete and lodge an enrolment form at the Front Office.

2020 TERM 3 RECEPTION ENROLMENTS

Places are available. If you have or if you know of anyone who has a child **turning 5 before 31 October 2020**, please complete and lodge an enrolment form at the Front Office.

TERM ARRANGEMENTS

Term arrangements are:

Term 2 finishes on Friday 5 July at 3:00pm

Term 3 commences on Monday 22 July at 8:50am

On behalf of the Staff, we hope you all have a peaceful and safe holiday with family and friends.

Working in Partnership,
Chris Platten

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Farewell to Kerry Oates

It's always sad when you have to say goodbye to people who you know really well and whose company you enjoy. Kerry began at St Thomas More a year ago, but in that time, she has found her way into our hearts, because of her kindness, her caring nature and her persistence to promote our school in a most positive light. There are many things about Kerry that have endeared her to us, including her hard working ethic and her rapport with staff and students. It is with sadness that we bid Kerry farewell, but at the same time we wish her all the very best in her new permanent role as Executive Assistant to the Principal at Xavier College.



Internet and Children's Brains

With holidays just around the corner, it is timely to think about the amount of time children may spend online using online games and social media. It is hard to believe that it has been less than 30 years since we had access to the Internet, but it has become such an integral part of our lives, it feels that it has always been there. This generation of children have grown up with the Internet as an everyday part of life, both at home and at school and researchers all over the world are looking at the effects of sustained and frequent use of accessing the Internet on the brains of young people.

A recent major study by university researchers at Oxford, King's College London, Manchester, Harvard and Western Sydney: *World Psychiatry 18:2 - June 2019, The "online brain": how the Internet may be changing our cognition* concluded that higher frequency use of Internet over 3 years in children, is linked with decreased verbal intelligence and impeded maturation of the development of the brain. There needs to be more research done, but something we can take from this is the importance of moderation in our lives and in particular, ensuring our children learn how to balance their time effectively.

Ideally, an approach by parents/caregivers, where children are encouraged to spend time playing outdoors and engaging in physical exercise, playing board games, undertaking creative art or craft activities and face to face interacting with siblings and peers would help to lessen the use of online time, thereby enabling them to reach their full intellectual potential. As always, it is such a good idea for parents/caregivers to talk to their children about the time they spend on the Internet and the types of activities they are doing on there. It may be an ideal time for children to share any concerns or anxieties they may have in relation to their time online, as social media can often be instrumental in affecting the self-esteem and well-being of many young people. Lastly, many experts believe it is important for families to discuss and agree upon boundaries and time limits for Internet use in the home.

The whole research report can be read at the following URL address:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/wps.20617>

Working in Partnership,

Sonia Kilmister
Acting Deputy Principal

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As parents, and others, caring for children, it is a natural instinct to want to alleviate or suppress any anxiety that children may be experiencing. However, it is a natural part of life that we may all experience different levels of anxiety in certain circumstances. The difficulty can be knowing how to support children to navigate their way through these experiences in a fashion that allows them to develop the necessary life skills and resiliency to cope in such circumstances. The following article highlights some strategies in how to manage children who are anxious.

[What to Do \(and Not Do\) When Children Are Anxious](#)

How to respect feelings without empowering fears.

Clark Goldstein, PhD

When children are chronically anxious, even the most well-meaning parents can fall into a negative cycle and, not wanting a child to suffer, actually exacerbate the youngster's anxiety. It happens when parents, anticipating a child's fears, try to protect her from them. Here are pointers for helping children escape the cycle of anxiety.

1. The goal isn't to eliminate anxiety, but to help a child manage it.

None of us wants to see a child unhappy, but the best way to help kids overcome anxiety isn't to try to remove stressors that trigger it. It's to help them learn to tolerate their anxiety and function as well as they can, even when they're anxious. And as a by-product of that, the anxiety will decrease or fall away over time.

2. Don't avoid things just because they make a child anxious.

Helping children avoid the things they are afraid of will make them feel better in the short term, but it reinforces the anxiety over the long run. If a child in an uncomfortable situation gets upset, starts to cry—not to be manipulative, but just because that's how she feels—and her parents whisk her out of there, or remove the thing she's afraid of, she's learned that coping mechanism, and that cycle has the potential to repeat itself.

3. Express positive—but realistic—expectations.

You can't promise a child that his fears are unrealistic—that he won't fail a test, that he'll have fun ice skating, or that another child won't laugh at him during show & tell. But you can express confidence that he's going to be okay, he will be able to manage it, and that, as he faces his fears, the anxiety level will drop over time. This gives him confidence that your expectations are realistic, and that you're not going to ask him to do something he can't handle.

4. Respect her feelings, but don't empower them.

It's important to understand that validation doesn't always mean agreement. So if a child is [terrified about going to the doctor](#) because she's due for a shot, you don't want to belittle her fears, but you also don't want to amplify them. You want to listen and be empathetic, help her understand what she's anxious about, and encourage her to feel that she can face her fears. The message you want to send is, "I know you're scared, and that's okay, and I'm here, and I'm going to help you get through this."

5. Don't ask leading questions.

Encourage your child to talk about his feelings, but try not to ask leading questions— "Are you anxious about the big test? Are you worried about the science fair?" To avoid feeding the cycle of anxiety, just ask open-ended questions: "How are you feeling about the science fair?"

6. Don't reinforce the child's fears.

What you don't want to do is be saying, with your tone of voice or body language: "Maybe this *is* something that you should be afraid of." Let's say a child has had a negative experience with a dog. Next time she's around a dog, you might be anxious about how she will respond, and you might [unintentionally send a message](#) that she *should*, indeed, be worried.

7. Encourage the child to tolerate his anxiety.

Let your child know that you appreciate the work it takes to tolerate anxiety in order to do what he wants or needs to do. It's really encouraging him to engage in life and to let the anxiety take its natural curve. We call it the "habituation curve"—it will drop over time as he continues to have contact with the stressor. It might not drop to zero, it might not drop as quickly as you would like, but that's how we get over our fears.

8. Try to keep the anticipatory period short.

When we're afraid of something, the hardest time is really *before* we do it. So another rule of thumb for parents is to really try to eliminate or reduce the anticipatory period. If a child is [nervous about going to a doctor's appointment](#), you don't want to launch into a discussion about it two hours before you go; that's likely to get your child more keyed up. So just try to shorten that period to a minimum.

9. Think things through with the child.

Sometimes it helps to talk through what would happen if a child's fear came true—how would she handle it? A child who's [anxious about separating from her parents](#) might worry about what would happen if they didn't come to pick her up. So we talk about that. If your mum doesn't come at the end of soccer practice, what would you do? "Well I would tell the coach my mum's not here." And what do you think the coach would do? "Well he would call my mum. Or he would wait with me." A child who's afraid that a stranger might be sent to pick her up can have a code word from her parents that anyone they sent would know. For some kids, [having a plan](#) can reduce the uncertainty in a healthy, effective way.

10. Try to model healthy ways of handling anxiety.

There are multiple ways you can help kids handle anxiety by letting them see [how you cope with anxiety yourself](#). Kids are perceptive, and they're going to take it in if you keep complaining on the phone to a friend that you can't handle the stress or the anxiety. I'm not saying to pretend that you don't have stress and anxiety, but let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.

Sourced from The Child Mind Institute



Sandy Ahearn

School Counsellor