

St. Thomas of Canterbury

Catholic Primary School



Friday, 4th September 2026



A message from Mrs. Rawlinson

What a wonderful first week we have had in school! It has been such a joy to welcome the children and their families back after the summer break.

A very special welcome to all our new families joining the St Thomas of Canterbury community. We hope you settle quickly into the routines of school and, most importantly, feel part of our very special community. We are delighted to have you with us.

It has been a real privilege to see the children settling so well into their new classes and getting stuck into their learning already. Our Nursery and Reception children have made a fantastic start to their school journey, arriving each morning with big smiles and growing in confidence each day.

Across the school, the children have shown such a positive attitude and a real enthusiasm for learning. We are incredibly proud of them and are excited about all that the new school year has in store. With lots of exciting learning opportunities, experiences and events planned, it promises to be another wonderful and successful year as we continue **Growing Together in God's Love**.

To help you keep up to date with all our school news, events and celebrations, our weekly newsletter will be sent out every Friday and will also be available on our school website.

You may notice that the newsletter looks a little different this year! As Microsoft Publisher is being retired in October, I have had to find a new way of putting our newsletter together. So, over the next few weeks, you may see a few different styles and formats as I experiment and find one that I particularly like.

Bear with me – I'm sure I'll get there eventually! 😊

I will endeavour to be 'on the gate' most mornings and afternoons. Please feel free to stop for a quick chat if you'd like. You can also reach me via email at lyn.rawlinson@sthelens.org.uk.

I look forward to working closely with you all and sharing another happy and successful school year together.

Warm regards,
Mrs Rawlinson

Welcome to Mr. Birchall

This week we also welcomed Mr. Birchall to our staffing team. Mr. Birchall is teaching year 6 this year and is also our new Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO).

We are extremely happy to have our new SENDCO in place and look forward to working alongside Mr. Birchall in his role.

Important reminders and notices for parents

In order to keep our children safe in school we ask that parents adhere to the following:

- **We are a nut free school**

Please do not send anything that contains or may contain nuts into school. This includes packed lunches and morning snack.

- The staff car park is not to be used by parents at any time. Please use the car park before the gates.
- Parents are kindly asked not to block the junction at Rainford Road as they enter the school car park. Cars should not stop on the yellow junction box.
- When parking your car please do so with courtesy for our neighbours on St. Thomas Close. Do not block driveways and do not stop on double yellow lines.
- We request that snack for morning break is a healthy snack. Crisps, sweets, chocolate etc are not to be consumed at morning break.

S T R U M - St. Thomas' Rockin Ukulele Musicians

Are you in key stage 2?

Would you like to be part of a Ukulele Rock Band?

We are an after-school club and play along to modern hits like Dua Lipa, George Ezra and Ed Sheeran.

No Need to be able to play as you will soon learn all the simple chords you need.

Plus, there are school Ukuleles for free loan.

Just hand you name into the office a.s.a.p. to go on the list before all the Ukuleles are gone.

After school clubs are £1 per night towards school overheads.

Thanks

Mr. Brown



Attendance

Good attendance and punctuality at school is not just valuable —
it is essential.

For week ending Friday, 4th September 2026 the whole school attendance is 97.7%

Reception = 100%

Year 1 = 99.3%

Year 2 = 96%

Year 3 = 96.7%

Year 4 = 100%

Year 5 = 95.8%

Year 6 = 94.4%



School Meals

The school meals charge for September for children in KS2 who are not entitled to a free school meal will £3.20 per day.

Please see information below regarding new free school meal eligibility.

Changes to free school meals from the 2026 to 2027 academic year

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What is changing?

Expanded entitlement for families on Universal Credit

From the start of academic year 2026 to 2027, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of earnings.

Going forward, there will be two types of eligibility:

Targeted FSM: for households in receipt of universal credit earning £7,400 or less (includes free meals and additional support such as pupil premium).

Other educational entitlements such as the Holiday Activities and Food program (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will also continue to be based on targeted FSM.

Expanded FSM: for households in receipt of universal credit earning above £7,400 (free meals only)

Families with no recourse to public funds may also be eligible for Targeted FSM subject to meeting separate criteria.

All pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 will also continue to be entitled to free school meals under the universal infant free school meals policy regardless of family circumstances.

End of transitional protections

Since 2018, some children have continued to receive free school meals, even if their family circumstances changed during the rollout of Universal Credit. This is referred to as transitional protections.

Now that entitlement is being expanded to all families on Universal Credit, these protections will end at the end of the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

This means:

Some children may **no longer be eligible** from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year if their family does not receive Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit

Eligibility will now be based on current benefit status

What you need to do

If your child currently receives free school meals:

In most cases, you do not need to reapply

The local authority will check your eligibility automatically using the details already held and inform you of any changes to your FSM eligibility

In some cases, your child's local authority may contact you to confirm your details

If your child is starting a new school in September, they will be in touch to confirm whether you need to confirm your details or reapply.

If you are unsure, please contact the local authority for advice.

If your child does not currently receive free school meals

You may now be eligible under the expanded criteria

You will need to apply through your local authority via the following link: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals>

Not sure?

If you are unsure whether you need to apply or if your circumstances have changed, please contact:

Your local authority, or

Apply via <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals>

Important Dates for your Diary

September

23rd - Meet the Teacher (3.30pm) School Nurse will also be available.

28th - Whole school flu immunisations

30th - Height & Weight screening for Reception and Year 6

October

22nd - End of Autumn 1st half term (finish at 3.20pm)

NB: More dates will be added as we go through the term.

HENRY Programme

We have been asked to share the information below with our parents by St Helens Wellbeing Service

✿ HENRY Healthy Start, Brighter Future Programme ✿

Looking for friendly, practical support to help your family make healthy lifestyle changes?

HENRY is a 6–8-week programme which offers friendly, practical support for families around healthy eating, physical activity, emotional wellbeing, sleep and screen time.

The link to book on is:

[Henry - Healthy Start, Brighter Future Programme | Eventbrite](#)

New Parents

Please bear with us as we try and resolve an issue with our School Money system which has not brought our new children over automatically as it should have.

We have logged this with their support team and hopefully this will be resolved early next week. Once the issue has been fixed you will receive a welcome message to School Money where you can book after school and breakfast club sessions and will pay for any trips etc.

In the meantime, if you require afterschool or breakfast club sessions next week, please email the office.

Thank you for your patience.