



29 September 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

Our Year 7 pupils have now been with us for a number of weeks and I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on how they have settled in and to share with you some key information and reminders of upcoming events here in school.

Transition

- I have been incredibly impressed with how well Year 7 has settled into life at St Thomas More. For the first few weeks they have been supported by older pupils and staff in getting around the building, but are now mostly confident and managing to make their way around school independently.
- Their conduct around the site has been exemplary and they have adapted very well to our rules and routines.
- Walking around the school, you cannot fail to be impressed by the focused atmosphere in lessons and the clear engagement and enjoyment that pupils are demonstrating in their learning.

Extra Curricular

- We have begun to launch our extra-curricular activity programme and it's great to see so many pupils getting involved.
- I'd strongly encourage all pupils to participate in at least one extra-curricular activity. If your child would like to get involved, but hasn't yet, they should chat to their Pastoral Tutor who will have all the details of the activities going on.

Teaching Groups

- Academically, you will be aware that pupils are allocated into one of our parallel sets at the start of the year. This is based on extensive transition information and detailed conversations with Year 6 teachers.
- We operate three main sets, with an additional support group for those who need greater support. Pupils remain in these teaching groups for most of their subjects, with some variation in practical lessons such as PE and DT.
- All pupils have access to the same curriculum, regardless of which teaching group they are in.
- We review the teaching groups regularly to ensure that all pupils have the best chance at success in mastering the crucial learning. This begins with our '5 week check' where staff identify any pupil who they feel has been 'mis-set' and would benefit more from being in a different group.





Module Reports & Target Setting

- At St Thomas More, we structure our curriculum into three modules, roughly equating with each of the three terms.
- At the end of each module, pupils will sit a formal assessment which gives them an opportunity to demonstrate the learning they have secured so far.
- This information helps staff to re-shape their teaching, adjust the curriculum or make any class adjustments, if necessary.
- We report this information to parents at the end of each term, along with the pupils' Learner Attributes grades. All of this information is shared via MCAS.
- Pupils are supported to reflect on their achievements within lessons, and then more holistically with their pastoral tutors, setting themselves goals for the coming term. We call this our 'Target Setting' process.

Learner Attributes

- Learner attributes is the phrase that we use to describe the behaviours that all pupils can adopt and develop that help them to become better learners.
- This includes their attitude to learning, their engagement and their behaviour for learning.
- We share how pupils have demonstrated their learner attributes at each module report, so at each term you should have a good picture, not only of how secure your child is in terms of the curriculum, but also in how they are developing as a learner.

Homework & Study Support Club

- This can be one of the biggest changes from primary school, and can take a while for pupils to get the 'hang of'.
- Please support your child by checking their homework diary regularly, and helping them to organise their homework if they are struggling.
- We do operate a Study Support Club in school, where pupils can go to complete homework, and staff are on hand to support them. In some cases, if we feel pupils are struggling to manage we will ask them to attend so that we can support them to get back on track.

Reading & the Library

- You will be aware we ask all pupils to bring a reading book with them to school.
- Reading for pleasure is one of the most important things that children can do to help them develop as a learner, and we ask parents to help encourage them in this.
- Following some refurbishment, we are pleased that our school library is now fully operational again. Pupils are able to borrow books, spend time reading or completing homework.
- Pupils should look out for a range of opportunities to get involved, such as reading groups, book clubs and our 'young librarians' scheme.

Chaplaincy



- Our school chapel is open for pupils for quiet prayer & reflection and our school Chaplain is always available to support and guide the pupils.
- We are pleased to be able to hold an in school retreat day for our Year 7 pupils, which provides them with an opportunity to come together as a faith community and further build relationships within their peer group.
- We are also pleased to host our Year 7 Welcome Mass in school for all of our pupils - this is something that we have really missed because of the restrictions. If any child is not familiar with Mass, there is plenty of guidance to help them join in in a respectful way.

School Calendar

- The school calendar is available to view on our website.
- Whilst typically events in the calendar are 'set' please be aware that some events that involve large gatherings may be reviewed in response to the public health situation at the time.
- Some key upcoming dates are outlined below:
 - 08/10/2021 - Year 7 Retreat Day
 - 12/10/2021 - Interhouse Cross Country
 - 13/10/2021 - INSET day - school is closed to pupils
 - 15/10/2021 - Year 7 Welcome Mass
 - 22/10/2021 - Sponsored Walk
 - 19/11/2021 - Non Uniform Day
 - Week Beginning 22/11/2021 - Module 1 Formal Assessment Week
 - 03/12/2021 - INSET Day - school is closed to pupils
 - 07/12/2021 - Year 7 Parents' Evening
- Our last week of term is also typically packed with festive activities, including a Year 7 Party, Carol Service, School Quiz, Cinema trip & Advent Mass - more information regarding these events will be shared nearer the time.

I sincerely hope that your child has enjoyed their first weeks at St Thomas More and is looking forward to really getting involved in school life. If you have any queries, concerns, or want to chat to us, please get in touch via your child's Head of House using the house email addresses below.

St Bernadette	St Catherine Laboure	St John Fisher	St Therese
s_stbqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_stclqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_stjfqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk	s_sttqueries@stthomasmore.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Parkinson
Head Teacher