



Friday 4th September 2026

Head Teacher's Weekly Update

Dear Families,

It has been wonderful to see our school community come back together following the summer holidays. The start of a new school year always brings a renewed sense of excitement, and it has been a pleasure to welcome our pupils back into school.

There has been a real sense of enthusiasm and positivity around the school as pupils have returned well rested, refreshed and ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges of a new academic year. During the summer, we were incredibly proud to celebrate the achievements of our Year 11 and Year 13 students as they received their examination results. Their success was a testament to their hard work, determination and resilience, supported every step of the way by their families and our dedicated staff.

A particularly warm welcome goes to our new Year 7 cohort as they begin their seven-year journey at St Thomas More. We have been so impressed by the way they have embraced secondary school life. Whilst there have been a few inevitable wrong turns as they find their way around our school, they have approached each day with determination and confidence, quickly settling into routines and working incredibly hard in their first lessons.

It has also been a pleasure to welcome back so many of our former Year 11 students as members of our Sixth Form community. We are delighted that they have chosen to continue their education with us and look forward to supporting them as they embark on the next stage of their journey.

Together, the excellent start made by all year groups has set a positive tone for what promises to be another successful and rewarding year at St Thomas More.

Prayer Theme

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Matthew 18:20



We have prayed together as a community:

Dear Lord,

We thank You for the gift of our school community and for the strength we find when we come together in Your name. As Jesus taught us, *"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* May Your presence be felt in our classrooms, homes and friendships. Help us to support one another with kindness, encouragement and compassion, and to grow together in faith, wisdom and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

New School Timings:

- We would like to remind families that the changes to the school day timings took effect from Tuesday 1 September. Please see the details below.

Monday to Thursday		Friday	
8.40am	Tutor check	8.40am	Tutor check
8.45am	Pastoral	8.45am	Pastoral
9.05am	Lesson 1	8.50am	Lesson 1 [WC]
10.05am	Lesson 2	9.40am	Lesson 2
11.05am	Break	10.40am	Break
11.20am	Lesson 3	10.55am	Lesson 3
12.20pm	Lunch	11.55am	Lunch
1.20pm	Lesson 4	12.50pm	Lesson 4
2.20pm	Lesson 5	1.50pm	Lesson 5
3.20pm	End of the day	2.50pm	End of the day

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices

- As we begin the new academic year, we would like to remind families about the changes to our Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy. On Wednesday 2 September, all pupils were issued with a Yondr pouch and took part in a pastoral session outlining our expectations and the rationale behind the



policy.

- All pupils are expected to place their mobile phone and any electronic devices, including smart watches and headphones, into their Yondr pouch before entering the school site each morning.
- To help prevent pouches from being misplaced, we strongly encourage pupils to write their name in the designated area on the pouch. Please note that pupils are responsible for the cost of replacing any lost or damaged pouches.
- We would also like to remind families that if a pupil is found to have accessed a mobile phone or electronic device during the school day, the device will be confiscated and a parent or carer will be required to collect it from school.
- Full details of the policy can be found on our website.

Mobile Phone & Electronic Device Protocol



Step 1:

When pupils cross the school gate, all **phones and devices** should be **switched off and stored away in a YONDR pouch**. Pupils must show staff as they cross the threshold that phones are in their pouch & this will be checked again in pastoral. All phones / devices should be locked away until pupils cross the school gates at the end of the day.

Step 2:

If a pupil forgets their pouch and so cannot lock their device away, the item will be confiscated and taken to **Reception** until the **end of the day**. As pupils have flagged the issue and have not used the phone during the school day, phones are returned to pupils at the end of the day.

Step 3:

If a pupil accesses their device during the school day **OR** the device goes off in a lesson, the device is immediately confiscated, taken to Reception, and held until a parent/carer collects it. In addition pupils will be issued with a **Whole School Detention**. If a pupil has had several incidents of phone misuse, a more serious consequences may be issued.

Step 4:

Should a pupil refuse to hand over their mobile phone, the phone is collected by a school leader. Pupils will be issued with a placement in the **Behaviour Base** for refusing to comply with our expectations.

Step 5:

If a pupil fails to hand the device over to a school leader, the pupil will be taken to the **Behaviour Base** until they are ready to comply.

Welcome Mass

- On Friday 18 September, we look forward to welcoming the families of our Year 7 pupils to our Year 7 Welcome Mass, which will take place from 9:00am to 10:30am.
- This special celebration provides an opportunity for us, as a school community, to give thanks for the wonderful start our new Year 7 cohort has made to life at St Thomas More and to pray for them as they begin their seven-year journey with us.
- Families are warmly invited to join us for this important occasion. Refreshments will be available following the Mass, providing an opportunity to meet with other families and





members of staff as we celebrate the newest members of our school community.

Youth Village: Woodland Adventure Day

- Families may be interested in a free Community Woodland Adventure Day taking place at Emmaus Youth Village on Saturday 5 September, starting at 10:00am.
- This fantastic outdoor event offers a range of activities for children and families, including bushcraft, archery, tomahawk throwing, and the opportunity to explore the Green Man Trail. Visitors can also take part in tree surveys, nature walks, craft activities, and short expert-led talks about the natural environment.
- The event is open to everyone, although booking is recommended. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and families are advised to wear sturdy footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.
- For more information or to book a place contact noreply@microsite.co.uk.
- This looks to be a wonderful opportunity for families to enjoy the outdoors, learn new skills and spend time together in nature.



A reminder to use our house email addresses if you have any queries.

St Bernadette	St Catherine Laboure	St John Fisher	St Therese	Sixth Form
STM-StBQueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-StCLQueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-stjfqueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-sttqueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-SixthFormQueries@stm.bwcet.com

Please follow us on social media (**Facebook, Instagram and Twitter STM_CS_Blaydon**) where we share regular updates from our school community.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs J Turner
Head Teacher