

Dear Families,

Welcome to all students, staff and families to the start of the 2026 school year. It has been great to see so many excited and happy faces as I visited classrooms today. A special welcome also to the new families and students who have joined our St. Thomas More school community. I look forward to getting to know you all throughout the year and hope that you enjoy your time at our wonderful school.

We understand that the start of the school year can be exciting, but it can also be a stressful time for families. I want to remind you that our staff are here to support you and your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

We begin our school year with our school prayer.

Dear Lord,

Bless our St Thomas More School community where we Live, Learn and Thrive,

Help us to Live with Your Love.

Help us to Learn with your Spirit.

Help us to Thrive with your Blessing.

Amen



NEW BISHOP FOR BALLARAT

Over the holidays Pope Leo XIV appointed Parish Priest, **Fr Mark William Freeman** (aged 66), as the new Bishop of Ballarat. He will succeed **Bishop Paul Bird CSsR** who has led the diocese since 2012. Fr Mark Freeman will be ordained to the episcopacy and installed as the ninth Bishop of Ballarat in mid-March 2026. We look forward to welcoming Fr Mark Freeman to our school community.



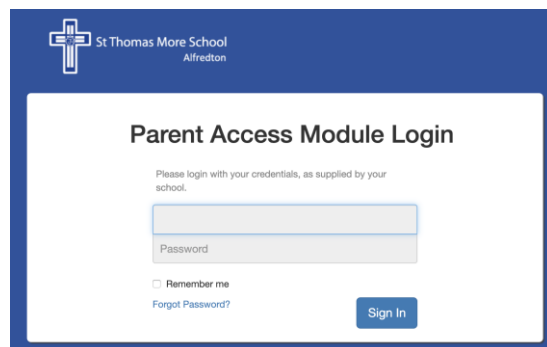
UPCOMING EVENTS

The **Literacy Learning Parent information session** will be held tomorrow, **Thursday 29th January** from **5pm – 6.30pm**. All parents are warmly encouraged to attend this session, and children are most welcome and will be supervised by staff outside in the yard.

Our **Beginning of School Year Mass** will be held on **Friday 6th February**, at **9.15am** in the school's multipurpose room. All members of the school community are welcome to join our mass.

Parent Teacher Meetings

You are invited to attend a 10-minute parent teacher meeting with your child's teacher on either **Monday 9th** or **Tuesday 10th February**, between 3.30pm and 6:00pm. These interviews will be held in your child's classroom. The purpose of this meeting is to have time with your child's teacher so that they can gain a deeper understanding of both yours and your child's expectations and aspirations for 2026. We deliberately make this meeting an opportunity for the teacher and parent/s to talk privately in the absence of the child. Staff will supervise children outside on the playground if required. Bookings for the interviews can be made through the PARENT ACCESS MODULE (PAM) <https://pam.stmalfredton.catholic.edu.au> and follow the instructions to organise a convenient time.



A reminder that **Monday 16th February** is a student-free day therefore the school will be closed. During this day staff will be participating in professional learning in the curriculum area of literacy.

Reconciliation Parent Information session will be held at St Thomas More on **Thursday 12th March at 9am.**



SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM 2026

RECONCILIATION - Term 1
Grade 4 & Above

Parent Information Session @ STM - Thursday, 12th February 9am
Parent Information Session @ St Patrick's Cathedral - Thursday, 12th February 5.30pm
Presentation of Candidates at Masses - St Patrick's Cathedral
Saturday, 28th February @ 5.30pm / Sunday, 1st March @ 10.30am or 5.00pm
Saturday, 14th March @ 5.30pm / Sunday, 15th March @ 10.30am or 5.00pm
Saturday, 21st March 5.30pm / Sunday, 22nd March @ 10.30am or 5.00pm
Sacrament of Reconciliation - St Patrick's Cathedral
Tuesday, 24th March @ 5.30pm - St Patrick's and Siena Co-ordinating
Wednesday, 25th March @ 5.30pm - St Thomas More Co-ordinating

LUNCH ORDERS

The online canteen will recommence tomorrow. The online canteen is available each Thursday and Friday throughout our school terms. Orders close at 8am on the days that the online canteen is open. A small percentage from all canteen items sold goes towards P&F fundraising at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School. The company that runs the online canteen is called QuickCliQ. Please note, if lunch orders were placed for your child/ren in 2025, you will need to change their class to their 2026 classroom number so that their order gets delivered to their new/current classroom.



Need help

Phone or email us - Monday to Friday, 7.30am - 4.00pm

Call 1300 11 66 37 | support@quickcliq.com.au

How to get started

- QuickCliQ is free to set up and easy to use
- Register at www.quickcliq.com.au
- **SIGN UP** and complete the registration form
- Receive a link via email to **ACTIVATE** your account before logging in
- **ADD STUDENT**, add your child's details, select their school and save to your account
- **ADD CREDIT** to your online wallet before ordering
- Select **MEAL ORDER** and you're good to go

SCHOOL UNIFORM

A few uniform reminders regarding uniform requirements:

Hats - Students must have a school hat to wear whilst outside during Terms 1 and 4. The wide brim hat is the correct hat to wear, not the old blue bucket hat.

Earrings - Students may only wear sleepers or small studs.

Nail Polish - Students are not to wear nail polish to school.

Tattoos - Student may not wear visible temporary tattoos or transfers.

Hair – Students with hair below the collar of their shirt or dress must tie it back. Students must not have their hair coloured and are required to wear conventional haircuts only.

School bags - all students are encouraged to use an approved STM school bag this year (either brown or blue). The blue school bag will be compulsory for all students from 2027 onwards.

Shoes – when wearing the academic uniform, students must wear all black shoes.



ANAPHYLAXIS

Several of our students at school are anaphylactic and for their families, sending them to school can be very stressful, not knowing which foods they might come into contact with. To assist with limiting accidental exposure to food allergens we request that parents assist us in maintaining a safe environment by making the choice not to pack nuts or peanut butter, in your child's lunchbox.

2026 FEE PAYMENT AGREEMENTS

A reminder that families should have returned their 2026 Fee Payment Agreement. If you are yet to do so, we ask that you please do so ASAP. If you have any questions or queries, please contact the school office.

SchoolTV -A Special Report: EMBRACING CHANGE & NEW BEGINNINGS

Here is the link to your special report: [Embracing Change and New Beginnings](#)

'Change is a natural part of growing up. Whether it's the start of a new school

year, moving between year levels or stepping beyond the school gates for the final time, each transition brings a mix of emotions, presenting both opportunities and challenges. These shifts call on young people to adjust to new routines, navigate unfamiliar environments and develop emotional flexibility. While some may embrace these changes, others may find the disruption unsettling and struggle with the loss of predictability.

Research shows that periods of transition are often linked to heightened anxiety, reduced academic engagement and changes in peer relationships. For families, these periods can also bring added stress. Recognising the emotional and psychological impact of change helps us respond more effectively and supportively.

While change can feel daunting, it also offers valuable opportunities for young people to learn and grow. By normalising uncertainty and encouraging open conversations, we help young people face new beginnings with curiosity rather than fear. When children are surrounded by guidance, encouragement and consistent structure, they're far better equipped to manage life's transitions with confidence and resilience.

We hope you take time to reflect on the information offered in this Special Report, and as always, we welcome your feedback.

If you do have any concerns about the wellbeing of your child, please contact the school for further information or seek medical or professional help.' (School TV, 2025)

I look forward to a great year working alongside all the members in our school community.

May God bless you all and keep you safe,

Handwritten signature of Simon Duffy in blue ink.

Mr. Simon Duffy,
Principal



Staffing 2026

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Principal:	Mr. Simon Duffy
Deputy Principal:	Mrs. Trish Caldwell
Religious Education Leader:	Mrs. Dympna Turner
Wellbeing Coordinator:	Mrs. Kelly McMahon
Teaching and Learning Leader:	Mrs. Jo Wheelahan

ADMIN STAFF:

Mrs. Fran Dunn, Mrs. Olivia Burge, Mrs. Amanda Barham

CLASSROOM TEACHERS

FOUNDATION:	Mrs. Sarah Gannon (Room 1), Mrs. Nicole Cudia (Room 2), Ms. Bethany Edwards (Room 3)
YEAR 1/2:	Ms. Kate Edmends (Room 4), Ms. Ella Stacey (Room 5), Mrs. Susan Allan (Room 6), Ms. Elle Hammill (Room 7) Mrs. Melinda Turkenburg/ Mrs. Abby Bourke (Room 8).
YEAR 3/4:	Mr. Mark Woodhart (Room 9), Ms. Sarah Calleija (Room 10), Ms. Talee Hare (Room 11), Mrs. Genevieve Hawkes/ Mrs. Teresa De Bono (Room 12), Mrs. Michelle Gittings/ Mrs. Melissa Willey (Room 18)
YEAR 5/6:	Mrs. Lisa Baker (Room 13), Mrs. Fiona Dodd (Room 14), Mrs. Lauren Larkin (Room 15), Mrs. Kath Davis (Room 16), Mr. Haydn Smith (Room 17),

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Physical Education:	Mrs. Melissa Willey
STEM	Mrs. Jessica Sartori
Performing Arts:	Mrs. Elizabeth Jerram
Visual Arts:	Ms. Hayley Robertson
Languages (Japanese):	Mrs. Denise Buttler
ICT	Mrs. Natasha Munro

LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICERS:

Mrs. Imma Edwards, Mrs. Rebecca Findlay, Mr. Craig Buesnel, Mrs. Donna Heys, Mrs. Angela Pearson, Ms. Tanya Evans, Mrs. Penny Sheppard, Mrs. Pru Stott, Mrs. Nikita Martin, Mrs. Jo Bayles, Mrs. Michelle Larkin, Mrs. Tracey Simpson, Ms. Isabella Dwyer, Ms. Bella Clarke, Ms. Maggie Doyle, Mrs. Marcia Read, Mrs. Carrie Ilsley, Mrs. Lee Drain, Mrs. Nilu Fernando.

Learning Diversity leaders:	Mrs Dympna Turner and Mrs Kelly McMahon
Pastoral Care worker:	TBA
Library management:	Ms Tanya Evans
Maintenance/ Gardens:	Mr Phil Dunn

Term 1 Calendar, 2026

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 Jan/Feb	26 Australia Day Holiday - Public Holiday	27 Staff first day back	28 All students (Foundation to Year 6) resume school P and F Morning Tea 9am	29 Literacy Learning – Parent information Session 5:00-6.30 pm - held at school	30
2 Feb	2	3	4 Foundation rest day	5 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 3/4 Calleija	6 School Opening Year Mass 9.15am- all welcome
3 Feb	9 Parent/Teacher meeting 3.30 – 6pm	10 Parent/Teacher meeting 3.30 – 6pm	11 Foundation rest day	12 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 5/6 Dodd Sacrament of Reconciliation parent meeting 9am at STMCPs	13
4 Feb	16 School closure Day Staff Literacy training	17 Shrove Tuesday	18 Ash Wednesday Foundation rest day Whole School Prayer -led by 5/6 Davis	19 Swimming – Eureka Division	20
5 Feb	23 Year 5/6 Camp Cave Hill Creek	24 Year 5/6 Camp Cave Hill Creek	25 Foundation rest day	26 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 1/2 Stacey	27 Students wear crazy socks as a Caritas fundraiser gold coin donation
6 March	2 School Advisory Council (SAC) Meeting 5:00pm	3	4 Foundation rest day	5 Whole School Prayer @ 2:55pm led by 3/4 Woodhart	6 School Closure Day - Staff Cultural Awareness Day
7 March	9 Public Holiday -Labour Day	10	11 NAPLAN testing	12 NAPLAN testing Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 1/2 Allan	13 NAPLAN testing. K's for Caritas as a fundraiser gold coin donation
8 March	16 NAPLAN testing	17 NAPLAN testing	18 Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	19 Whole School Prayer @ 2:55pm led by 1/2 Edmends Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	20
9 March	23	24 Foundation 2027 Parent Information session 9.15am- 10.15am	25 School Photos Sacrament of Reconciliation 5.30pm	26 Assembly @ 2:55pm presented by 3/4 Hawkes/DeBono	27
10	30	31 Easter raffle drawn 2.50pm	1 Stations of the Cross: Whole School Prayer @ 2:30pm led by 5/6 Baker	2 Last day of Term 1 1.45pm finish	3 Good Friday -Public holiday