



Scoil Thomáis

Laurel Lodge, Castleknock, Dublin 15

www.scoilthomais.ie

Phone: (01) 820 1022



Information Booklet

Welcome! Fáilte!



On behalf of Scoil Thomáis we extend a warm welcome to you and your child as you join our school community. We hope your child will enjoy his/her learning experiences in our school over the course of their years with us. Our mission is to promote the fullest possible development of each child socially, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually so that he/she may lead a full enjoyable life as a child, be prepared to avail of further education, be able to contribute to society as an adult and enjoy leisure time.

We have put this booklet together as a general guide for parents and we trust you will find it helpful. It provides useful information about school life and also includes information about some of our school policies.

A summary of the School's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy (revised 2014), Child Protection Policy and Acceptable Use Policy are included in the booklet. Parents are asked to read these policies carefully. You are requested to read and sign an Acceptance of School Policies Form to confirm your acceptance of school policies as part of our school enrolment process.

We look forward to meeting you and your child/ren.

Mary McGarry, Principal & Mary Ryan, Deputy Principal

Index

1.	About Scoil Thomáis	page 1
2.	Primary School Curriculum	page 2
3.	School Uniform & Tracksuit	Page 4
4.	School Book Rental	Page 4
5.	Communicating with the School	Page 5
6.	Medical Conditions and your Child	Page 6
7.	Other Important Information	page 7
8.	List of Important School Policies	page 8

1. About Scoil Thomáis

Scoil Thomáis is a primary co-educational Catholic school serving the parish of St Thomas the Apostle, Laurel Lodge. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It is a vertical school providing primary education for pupils from aged 4years – 12years ie junior infants to sixth class.

The school currently has 41 teachers on staff (Sept 2016) as follows: 26 class teachers, 12 special education teachers and Administrative Principal and Administrative Deputy Principal. The school also has a number of SNAs as well as a full time school secretary and caretaker

Scoil Thomáis operates under the Rules for National Schools and Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidelines. The School is staffed in accordance with the schedule laid out each school year by the DES. The school is funded by annual grant aid from the DES. This funding is supplemented each school year by parent contributions for school materials and school fundraising.

Scoil Thomáis follows the curriculum prescribed by the DES, which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 9 & 30 of the Education Act 1998. All pupils enrolled in the school are expected to participate in all aspects of the curriculum which includes the following subjects: English, Gaeilge, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science, Visual Arts, Music, Drama, SPHE and Physical Education.

The school provides Religious Education for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the religious education programme at the request of their parents.

The school calendar for each year will be made available prior to September and will be posted on the school website. Parents should note that planned school holidays may be subject to change by the BOM in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as bad weather etc.

School Timetable: **Infant Classes: 9am - 1.40pm**
 First to Sixth Classes: 9am - 2.40pm

School doors open at 9am for admission of pupils. Before this time, the Board of Management is not responsible for the safety of the children on the school premises. The school gates open at 8.50am for parents and pupils to enter the school yard. Pupils should line up at their class line to await collection by class teacher.

Board of Management

In accordance with DES regulations Scoil Thomáis is managed by a Board of Management which is comprised of two nominees of the (Catholic) patron, two teacher nominees (including the principal teacher), two parents' nominees and two community nominees. The BOM meets regularly during the school year providing leadership and effective management of the school. In this regard the BOM is supported by the principal, deputy-principal and in-school management postholders.

Parents' Association

Membership of the Scoil Thomáis Parent's Association (PA) is open to parents of children in the school. The PA committee is made up of parents/guardians elected at the Annual General Meeting, usually held during the first term of school. The committee promotes the interests of the pupils in the school, in co-operation with the Board of Management, the principal and teachers. The PA committee liaises regularly with the Principal and Deputy Principal to plan and support school activities and fundraising.

2.Primary School Curriculum outlines what children learn in each subject, the approaches and methodologies used and how children's learning progresses through the primary school. The curriculum is learner-centered. It emphasises the importance of literacy, numeracy, and language, while at the same time responding to changing needs in science and technology, social personal and health education, and citizenship.

The Primary School Curriculum aims to:

- develop each child's potential to the full
- encourage in children a love of learning
- help them develop skills they will use all their lives

Languages	Gaeilge English
Mathematics	
Social, environmental and scientific education	History Geography Science
Arts education	Visual Arts Music Drama
Physical education	
Social, personal and health education	
Religious education	

All pupils must participate in all (secular) curricular areas as prescribed by the DES. Pupils may not opt out of any of the prescribed subjects on the curriculum.

NOTE: Pupils who are not Roman Catholic will not be obliged to participate in the religious education programme. Parents should inform the school in advance if they wish to withdraw their child from the RE lessons or events.

The curriculum is presented in 7 subject areas comprising 11 subjects. As well as learning new ideas and finding out new information in the different subjects of the curriculum, children develop important skills such as communicating, estimating, problem solving, working scientifically, designing and making. The curriculum specifies the amount of time to be allocated to each curriculum area. At each class level school work is appropriately differentiated by teachers as the need arises (either simplified or extended) to accommodate all ability levels within the class.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils are assessed annually from first class to establish their educational needs. Standardised assessments are also carried out in Maths and in English by class teachers. Additional Support teaching (either in-class or small- group /individual) will be provided for pupils by our team of special education teachers. The school also

has access to the services of an educational psychologist under National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), who works closely with the school in assessing and supporting pupils who are experiencing learning or behavioural or other difficulties. The school also works closely with the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA) personnel and services such as Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) etc. It is important that parents inform the school at enrolment if a child has learning/behavioural/social/sensory or other problems that may impact on the child's experience of school. This also allows the school to plan for the child and to seek appropriate teaching and other resources such as SNA support, assistive technology, physical adaptations etc to assist the child in school



Homework: Each pupil in classes 1st – 6th has a school journal in which he/she records homework. Homework is not normally given at weekends. Parents: please read your child's journal each night and check copies and books /reading to ensure that your child has completed all homework carefully.

Stay Safe Programme

The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme for primary schools. Its overall objective is to prevent child abuse, bullying and other forms of victimisation. The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. The programme develops children's ability to recognise, resist and report risk situations or abusive encounters by teaching children:

- To identify for themselves unsafe or upsetting situations
- Simple rules to help them avoid abuse
- To respect and value the rights of others
- The language and skills they require to seek help

The children are taught the content of the Stay Safe lessons in the classroom by their class teacher, and can then discuss the lessons at home with their parents. The lessons teach children about what to do if they're frightened or upset. One of the central messages children learn is that if they ever have a problem, they should tell an adult they know and trust. There are five topics discussed in the Stay Safe Programme,

- Feeling Safe/Unsafe
- Bullying
- Touches
- Secrets and Telling
- Strangers



Each topic is dealt with in an age appropriate manner, in a way that emphasises positive experiences while acknowledging that there are times when children may feel unsafe, threatened or frightened. Through classroom discussion, role-play and repetition, children learn simple safety strategies for dealing with problems. Children learn that they should always tell an adult who can help. The overall message is that children will learn to: Say 'No' and Get away and tell.

As part of the SPHE curriculum, the Stay Safe programme is taught each year to pupils in Senior Infants, First, Third and Fifth Classes. Further information on Stay Safe can be found on www.staysafe.ie

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings are normally held in November, to discuss your child's progress at school. Details of dates and times are confirmed early in the school year. It is important that parents attend these meetings.



End of Year School Reports

Written Progress Reports are issued in Mid June of the school year. The purpose of these reports is to inform parents of their child's progress and general behaviour and school attendance for the school year.

Important Note: Pupils often talk about television programmes etc which they have seen late at night. Many are too exhausted to derive any benefit from school the following day. Please ensure your child has at least ten hours sleep each night so that he/she can reach his/her potential at school.

3. School Uniform, & Tracksuit

Scoil Thomáis school uniform must be worn by all pupils each school day.

Pupils should wear their school tracksuit on P.E. days. Each class will be informed by teacher of their PE days in early September. Full uniforms must be worn on other days.

The school uniform shorts may be worn instead of uniform trousers in hot weather. Runners with non-marking soles must be worn in the Hall.

Please check your child's runners. Pupils who come to school without a uniform (uniform in wash, tie lost etc.) must bring a note to the class teacher to explain.

Please check that runners, uniform and other belongings have been labelled. All "lost property" will be in the lost property area in the school. Please ask at the Secretary's office.

Rings & Earrings: The Board of Management in consultation with Scoil Thomáis Parents' Association has decided that only stud earrings are permitted in school.

Make Up : Pupils are not permitted to wear any make-up , nail varnish etc in school.

Footwear : Please note that runners with a roller option (heellies) are not allowed in either the school grounds or building.

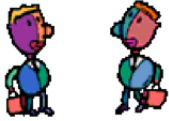
4. School Book Rental Scheme

The school operates a book rental scheme at all class levels for a selection of class books. There is a small annual fee charged to parents to cover the costs involved in purchasing the books. All rental books must be looked after and returned at the end of the school year in good condition for

redistribution to other pupils. Parents will be liable to pay the replacement cost of rented books that are lost or returned in poor condition. All school books and copies should be covered with paper or plastic covers (available in local bookshops).



5. Communicating with the School:



Parents who wish to meet your child's teacher or the Principal should send a written note to the school office for the attention of the teacher or Principal requesting an appointment. The letter should give a brief indication of the reason for the meeting. The school secretary will liaise with teacher/staff member and arrange a meeting at a mutually suitable time. Meetings with teachers are normally arranged to take place outside of class time to minimize disruption to school work.

- Parents are asked not to call in to classrooms during the day. If children forget lunches, PE gear etc., please put the child's name and teacher's name on the bag and leave it in Secretary's Office
- Please inform the Secretary (not the class teacher) in writing of any change of address; parent's phone numbers; contact person's phone number etc. and active mobile number to be used for Aladdin Text Service for urgent school message service.
- If it is wet or very cold, children do not go out to playground at 12.30. Only in very exceptional circumstances (e.g. child on crutches or with stitches) can pupils be allowed to stay in First Aid station (under the supervision of teachers) at lunch break. A letter requesting permission to remain indoors at playtime must be sent to class teacher.
- A schedule of school holidays is available on the school website in advance of the school year. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking children on holidays during the school term. This can lead to pupils losing valuable teaching and learning time and falling behind in school work. Pupils may also miss important school assessment tests etc which cannot be repeated.

The school website www.scoilthomais.ie is regularly updated and parents should consult the website regularly for school news. A monthly newsletter is sent home with the eldest child in each family and is available on the school website. Notes & Letters may also sent home to parents of particular classes as necessary with information about important school or class events. Please check school bags regularly for such notes. The school is in the process of compiling an email database to communicate with parents about school events etc.

Pupil Absence from School: The Education Welfare Act states that it is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school every day. It also requires schools to monitor pupils attendance and to notify the Education Welfare Board (TUSLA) of pupils who are absent for 20 days in any school year. All pupils are expected to be in school each day unless there is good reason for absence ie illness. **If your child is absent from school, please write a note to explain the dates of absence, reasons for absence and include parent's/guardian's signature.** Documentation may be sought by the Education Welfare Board which oversees school attendance for all children and this agency is now under the remit of the Child & Family Agency.

6. Medical Conditions and your Child:

It is important that the school is aware of any medical conditions that may affect your child during the school day. In the case of a child becoming ill at school, parent or guardians will be contacted. You will be notified if your child has any fall involving a bang on the head.



Infection in School: Infections in schoolchildren are common. Infection may spread rapidly when groups of children are in classrooms so it is very important that the school should be informed when there is an outbreak of certain contagious infections. Your G.P will be able to advise you on this.

If your child is sick: If your child is unwell, please do not send him/her to school as children are unable to cope with the demands of school when they are unwell. Should a child become sick during school hours, the child is made as comfortable as possible and the child's parent/guardian is notified straight away by telephone and asked to collect the child from the school office (not classroom)

Emergencies during school hours : In the event of a child becoming ill at school or suffering a fall or injury, parents/guardians will be contacted by phone. It is very important that we have a contact number of a responsible adult who will be able to collect the child if the parent/guardian is not available. Parents are asked to make sure that the emergency phone number on their child's Enrolment Form is up to date.

Administration of Medicines: The Board of Management requires that parents inform the school and their child's teacher in writing of any medical condition their child may have. While the Board has a duty to safeguard the health and safety of pupils when they are engaged in authorised school activities, this does not imply a duty upon teachers to personally undertake the administration of medicines. Under normal circumstances, no oral medicine or tablets will be administered by the staff. This includes medicines which have been prescribed by your own doctor for your child. If your child is ill enough to require medicine while in school, please keep him/her at home until the treatment is completed. Where children carry inhalers, they should be competent to self administer.

Long term illness requiring administration of medicine during school hours, e.g.diabetes, severe allergies, etc. Parents must write to the Board of Management requesting permission for the administration of medicine during the school day and outlining the procedure involved. Where children are suffering from life threatening conditions, parents should outline clearly, in writing, what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child. If specific staff members agree to administer the requested medication, the parents/guardians are required to indemnify the Board of Management and authorised members of staff in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of prescribed medicines in the school. Requests for administration of medication should be received at the beginning of each school year.

7. Other Important Information

Custody/Separation

We encourage parents experiencing separation or family issues to come and speak confidentially to your child's teacher/s and/or Principal. The school will deal with such matters with sensitivity and compassion. Our primary concern always is for the well being and overall development of the child.

When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers. Regarding the collection of child/ren from school - it is requested that the school be informed of any changes in collection arrangements in writing. Generally the school will correspond/contact with the parent with whom the child normally resides and the school seeks that this parent will inform the other parent of meetings, arrangements etc. Special requests for separate communication may be accommodated by prior agreement only. School staff will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively and caringly with children experiencing separation and other family difficulties.

School Texting Service

We use this service to communicate with parents. Text alerts may be sent as reminders of important events or meetings or if there is a school closure during unforeseen circumstances. It is important that we have a current mobile number for parents.

School Celebrations

As part of the school curriculum, and school life in general, we celebrate festivals such as Halloween, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. We also acknowledge other traditions and national events.

Important Note: If your child is having a birthday party, we ask parents to refrain from distributing party invites in school and in the school playground in the morning or at hometime. Children from the class who may not be invited can feel upset and left out. It is best to discreetly pass any invitation directly to the parents /adult guardian of the pupil. Please do not ask the school personnel for phone numbers or addresses of children in the class – as the school cannot release this information to parents. We also ask that birthdays cakes/party bags etc to share with the class are not sent into school as food sharing may pose safety issues for pupils with allergies.

Green Schools Initiative: Scoil Thomais is participating in the An Taisce Green Schools Initiative. We also encourage environmental awareness amongst our pupils. Our class teachers will be encouraging "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" Policy and in light of this will be encouraging pupils to bring in lunch boxes instead of wrappings, beakers or tetra pack instead of plastic bottles and to recycle as much as possible. Recycling arrangements have been made in each classroom.

School Car Park: Please note that the car park is for staff cars only. Please ensure that the main gates to the school are never blocked by cars. Your attention is drawn to the double yellow lines and yellow box outside the school gates.

Dogs: Dogs in the school grounds have the potential to frighten or injure pupils. We ask for your consideration of other pupils and co-operation in keeping dogs out of the school grounds.



8. School Policies:

Scoil Thomáis has a range of school policies covering many aspects of school life. All policies are available to parents as necessary. School policies are reviewed and updated in accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines. Below is a summary of some of the more relevant policies.

School Code of Behaviour & Discipline

School Code of Behaviour & Suspensions

Scoil Thomáis has a Code of Behaviour & Suspensions & Expulsion Policy which was devised in collaboration with the school community. Our Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and to prevent unacceptable behaviour. This policy is also linked to the current school Anti-Bullying Policy. All parents are expected to support the school in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour .

Anti Bullying Policy.

The school has updated its policy to comply with the *DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools 2013*. Every pupil has the right to education in an environment free from intimidation. Repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, by an individual or group against another pupil will be treated as an extremely serious matter by the school authorities. **(see Appendix)**

Child Protection Policy.

TheBOM reviews its Child Protection Policy annually in accordance with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2011*.

Healthy Lunches Policy:

We implement a Healthy School Lunches policy in Scoil Thomáis. We ask that all parents adhere to this policy when preparing school lunches for your child. We recommend that sandwiches, cheese, fresh or dried fruit and a healthy non fizzy drink would be appropriate in a child's lunchbox. Children are not permitted to bring in sweets, chocolate, crisps, yogurt , yogurt drinks, popcorn or peanuts. Glass bottles are not allowed in the school. Emphasis will be placed on having a healthy snack/ lunch each day. Teachers will reinforce the healthy lunch message in class.

For safety reasons we do not allow children to share food with other pupils in school. Some of our pupils suffer extreme reactions to specific foods including peanuts We would ask parents to emphasise this rule and the reason for it when talking to your child.

We ask parents to co-operate with the teachers in implementing healthy eating in the school by giving your child a plastic lunchbox and a drink in a beaker or tetra pack. We encourage children to bring home uneaten food as part of our Green School Initiative



Mobile Phones Policy :

The Board of Management has recently updated the school policy on mobile phones and electronic devices. Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school unless there is some very important reason that a child

would need to have access to a phone after school. In such as case special permission in writing must be sought from the school. If a pupil has permission to bring a mobile phone to school, it must be kept switched off when he/she enters the school grounds until he/she leaves the school grounds in the afternoon. If a mobile rings or if a pupil attempts to make a call, the phone will be confiscated, retained in the school office for a specified time. The phone will only be available for collection by a parent of the pupil concerned and a report on the matter will be retained in the child's file. ***PLEASE NOTE: Mobile phone or other handheld communication devices are not allowed to be brought by pupils on school trips or other out of classroom events.***

Internet Access & School Website

The school has an Acceptable Use Policy which governs access to the internet by pupils. Parents are reminded of their responsibility to monitor their child's use of the internet and other social media outside of school hours. The school includes advice and guidance for pupils and parents as part of the cybersafety programme within the SPHE curriculum. As part of the enrolment process are invited to give consent to the school to place photographs of pupils and their work (as deemed appropriate) on the school website.

Social Media: The school does not allow pupils to access social media websites ie Facebook etc. However the school is aware that some pupils in senior classes are accessing these sites outside of school hours. Parents are asked to carefully monitor your child's use of mobile technology. Please go to www.webwise.ie to become familiar with internet and mobile technology safety. Parents should contact the Gardaí if you have concerns if your child receives inappropriate communication via social media websites.

Pupil Online Data Base (POD) – Department of Education and Skills .

The following information has been prepared by the DES to inform you about the function of POD and to explain the information that Scoil Thomais will be obliged to upload onto POD in respect of your child.

The Department of Education and Skills has developed an individualised database of primary school children, called the Primary Online Database (POD). The new system at primary level will allow the Department to identify children leaving the education system early or not making the transfer from primary to post primary level. It also will in time deliver benefits to schools and parents by reducing form filling and allowing records to be transferred between schools automatically as your child moves school.

For all pupils enrolments from 2015 onwards schools are now being asked to provide individual details about your child, including your child's PPS number, name, address, date of birth and nationality, into the POD system. A full outline of all of the

data requested, the reasons for collecting each piece of data, and how the data will be used, accessed, stored, shared and retained is given in the POD Fair Processing Notice available on the “POD” area of the Department’s website www.education.ie or on request from Statistics section. A Frequently Asked Questions document is also available on the website which outlines answers to some of the regular queries from parents we have received to date.

The Department takes the protection of your child’s data very seriously. All data on POD is stored on the Revenue Commissioners servers, with the same security protections in place as for Revenue records. Within the Department, only a limited number of Statistics section staff will have access to the individual records.

Two optional pieces of information requested about your child, religion and ethnic or cultural background, are considered under Data Protection legislation to be sensitive personal data and require your written consent in order for the data to be transferred to the Department.

The current retention policy for POD data is for POD records to be maintained until the pupil reaches the age of 19 (revised March 2015 – see Department of Education & Skills Circular 25/2015). This is to allow longitudinal analysis in line with the national and international priorities for lifelong learning, and to allow for pupils to obtain their record from the Department in the future.

Please note that from 2015/16 school year the provision of all required pupil data (excluding ethnic/cultural background & religion) is mandatory for all enrolments in order for the pupil to be counted for grant payments and teacher allocation.

IMPORTANT SCHOOL POLICIES

The following school policies are available
on www.scoilthomais.ie (ABOUT US/SCHOOL POLICIES)

Acceptable Use Policy

Anti- Bullying Policy

Code of Behaviour & Suspensions Policy

Child Protection Policy

Enrolment Policy

Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

Relationship and Sexuality Policy

Data Protection Policy

Other relevant polices are available to parents on request

APPENDIX 1: ANTI BULLYING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Bullying (*intentional, repetitive, hurtful behaviour*) can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (*this list is not exhaustive*):

Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:

Shouting and uncontrolled anger

Personal insults, Verbal abuse

Offensive language directed at an individual, Continually shouting or dismissing others

Public verbal attacks/criticism

Domineering behaviour

Open aggression

Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact

- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**

- Treating in a dictatorial manner

- Ridicule, Persistent slugging

- Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort

- Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual

- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family

- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork

- **Interference with property, for example:**

- Stealing/damaging books or equipment

- Stealing/damaging clothing or other property

- Demanding money with menaces

- Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property

- Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**

- Condescending tone

- Deliberately withholding significant information and resources

- Writing of anonymous notes

- Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments, Malicious tricks/derogatory joke,

- Knowingly spreading rumours

- Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea,

- Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)

- Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying,

- Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence

- Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

- Deliberately marginalising an individual

- Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group

- Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

- Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

