



St Thomas Aquinas School

New Entrant Information Pack



"A supportive environment, which empowers students to achieve personal excellence and to be successful citizens in our global community."

Transition from home to school

The purpose of pre-school visits is for both child and parental familiarisation. They give the child the opportunity to become used to the environment and socialize with peers, whilst parents have the opportunity to decide whether the school is compatible with their philosophies and expectations of education. It is a good time to become familiar with where classroom equipment is located, room number, teacher name, bag hooks, library, toilets, bells ringing, office and playground.

We appreciate seeing Kindergarten/Childcare Portfolio's as it provides a background of knowledge of your child's experiences to date.

We realize that all children are different - some needing more parental support than others. Your child may experience a variety of emotions when starting school. These could be: excitement, enjoyment, confusion, tiredness etc. Keep expectations realistic and encourage confidence. Your positive attitude helps your child's adjustment.

We suggest that you arrive approximately 10-15 minutes before the school day begins and let your child begin to organize their belongings. Depart on a positive note soon after the bell has gone and your child is involved in an activity or happily settled in. Occasionally, children become very tearful when parents depart from the room, but experience has taught us that they do settle and if you are anxious a phone call can often ease any concerns.

Enrolment procedures

As part of the enrolment process you need to visit the Parish Priest- based in the Presbytery next to the school. Phone: (03) 236 8084

When a child is enrolled at the school, some personal information is required. This involves such aspects as family placement, health background, interests. Such information becomes part of school records and enables teachers to make informed decisions about the child. A school record card is started and relevant academic and health information is entered. This card follows the child through the classes and is sent on to the next school attended. It should be pointed out that any information on the record card is completely confidential to the Principal, Class Teacher, selected official personnel who have to refer to the card - eg, Health Nurse and the parents of the child. Parents have the right to access any records pertaining to their child that the school holds and can amend or correct the record if required.

Note: It is a Ministry of Education requirement that we sight a birth certificate or passport for 5 year old children, and an Immunisation Certificate. A copy of the Immunisation certificate will be retained by the school and details entered into an Immunisation Register. The certificate shows whether a child is fully immunised or not. If not, it shows which, if any, of the nine diseases the child is protected against. The immunisation certificate must be completed and signed by the doctor or practice nurse. This immunisation certificate can be found on the back page of the Well Child-Tamariki Ora Health Book given to parents of every

child at birth. If the book is lost, parents and caregivers can get another book or separate certificate from their doctor or nurse.

A file on each pupil is created giving personal data regarding addresses, telephone numbers, including emergency contacts. **It is most important that this file is kept up to date. Please inform the school, as soon as possible, of any changes in such data. This also applies to business telephone numbers.**

Stationery Packs

These are made up and ready for you to purchase at the office. You are welcome to take home the exercise books and cover them. Please ensure all stationery is clearly named.

Class Programme Outline

Morning tasks before the bell:

The children have before school responsibilities, and once they have become familiar with these it is up to them to carry them out independently.

- Hang up their jacket and bag on their named hook in the corridor
- Greet the teacher
- Put their lunch box and drink bottle in their cubby hole
- Put their reading bag in the reading bag box and library books in the library box
- Find an activity they would like to do or a book to read (if it is unsuitable to go outside).
- When the bell rings, the children are expected to pack up what they are playing with and go and sit on the mat.

At home time we encourage the children to pack their own bags with their lunch box, book bag and water bottle.

Morning Mat Time/Greeting/Roll/Administration

The morning starts with class prayer time. There are children responsible for setting this up and choosing the activities.

Mathematics

Our programme has a strong focus on number knowledge and number strategies at this level. The children work in groups and rotate around a variety of activities. Some Number Knowledge ideas to support learning at home are listed at the end of this booklet and can also be found on our school wikispace, www.stthomaswinton.school.nz

Writing

Children write every day, with instructional writing typically Monday to Thursday. Please encourage your child to discuss possible "story ideas" so they have a sense of what to write. These ideas can be drawn as a reminder prior to coming to school. This could be something they have done, seen, made or played with.

Reading

Reading occurs throughout the week in a variety of means, including browsing box, instruction, group reading etc. A reading book will come home in the book bag on a daily basis (Monday to Thursday) this book will have been read in an instructional lesson the day that it is sent home. Please support your child's reading by listening to them and talking about the pictures and storyline. Please fill out the reading log book as a record of your child's reading experience. On Fridays we have library time and the children are able to choose two books to bring home, please ensure these come back the following week so that your child can get new books. We hope you enjoy sharing these with them.

Poetry

Each week there will be a poem in their poetry book, which will be taken home on Fridays. Please encourage your child to read through the poem of the week and other poems in their book with you. Please return books to the Poetry box on Monday.

Handwriting

Please help us by checking that your child is holding their pencil correctly and forming the letters correctly at home. A guide sheet is in your enrolment pack. You can help them by using their whiteboard marker to write over these letters or writing them on their whiteboards.

Letter Sounds and Basic Word Knowledge

It is very important for the children to begin to develop an understanding and knowledge of letter names and sounds. The letter card that your child has received has the same pictures that we use in class. This helps to strengthen the link between letters, sounds and words.

It is also very important for the children to learn their basic words as quickly as possible. When your child can read their basic words it is a good idea to ask them to work on being able to write their basic words - first from copying off their word card, and then from memory. This helps during writing time, as they are able to concentrate on writing unknown words rather than spending too much time on the basic ones. They can also practice writing them on the whiteboard in this pack or creating the words using the magnetic letters.

Fitness

Our fitness programme includes a range of activities, exercises to music or dancing, running, relays, using sports equipment, partner activities and circuits. We try to do something every day so please ensure that your child wears suitable footwear.

Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning is the approach we use for our Science, Social Studies, Health, and Technology. We focus on asking questions that make us think and want to find out more.

Computers/Interactive Whiteboard

We have computers and an interactive whiteboard in our room. These have mathematics, spelling, reading and science-based activities on them, plus some publishing programmes. We encourage the use of technology with all of our learning.

Homework

Reading and number knowledge activities form the basis of our homework.

Reading Book - Monday to Thursday

Poetry Book - Friday

Please sign the reading log daily and use the guidelines in the reading log book when asking questions about what they have read. If there is no book bag then school readers cannot be sent home - sorry. It is important to ask your child to retell the story. This is a little difficult at the Emergent level, but as the children progress through the levels, books lend themselves more to opportunities for questions.

Basic words can be reviewed each night. They can be inserted into sentences and generally played around with so that they become familiar.

Six Week Discussion

This discussion is to talk about how your child has settled into the school routines and to go over any questions that may have arisen since the beginning of their school journey. The class teacher will make contact with you to arrange a suitable time and date for this to happen.

Parents as first teachers

Children learn by example. They need to be involved and converse with adults who are interested and prepared to share ideas and experiences with them. Everyday happenings can provide an invaluable basis for learning at home and in the wider community. At school we encourage the development of INDEPENDENCE and it is important that you encourage your child to do as much as possible (within reason) for themselves. Have available such items as: Sand, shells, crayons, games, books, paper, magazines, boxes, glue etc. You will automatically be introducing your child to concepts of colour, shape, size and number by talking while they experiment. Talk with and to your child, drawing their attention to "things around them" when you are out in the car, at the beach, park, shops, doctor etc. Children are curious by nature and ask lots of questions. It can build a great repertoire of words and knowledge for them.

Some tips for preparing your child for School

It would be helpful if your child could:

- Write his/her name or recognise it.
- Listen to a story and talk about it. The greatest preparation a child can have for reading/writing learning is book experience. It is said that prior to starting school children could experience the pleasure of sharing 1,000 books.
- Recognise some letters possibly at least those in their own name.
- Handle pencils/crayons. Be able to draw a simple picture.
- Dress and undress him/her self. (Swimming in summer).

- Recognise colours by name.
- Count to ten.
- Use scissors to cut simple shapes from paper.
- Recognise basic shapes.
- Be able to express their needs to the teacher.

ALSO:

School Bags: Need to be large enough to hold all the gear necessary for school i.e. book bag, lunch box, raincoat, spare clothing, swimming gear. Show your child how to pack his/her own bag at home, they are encouraged to do it for themselves at school.

Shoes: Tying shoe laces is difficult for most five year olds. Shoes are not allowed to be worn in class so children are putting on and taking off shoes several times a day. Shoes with velcro fastenings or other alternatives are easier than shoe laces.

Parental Help

Once your child is settled at school, you may wish to support part of the programme at some stage. A discussion with the teacher would be most welcome and arrangements can be organized as appropriate.

Thank you for taking the time to read this! Remember - please come and have a chat if you have any questions or any concerns at all, no matter how small. It is important to us that your child is happy and confident and that the transition to school is as smooth as possible.

We look forward to a successful home/school partnership.

School E-mail: office@stthomaswinton.school.nz

Kindest regards

Tabitha Brock