

WestBelcommen

Inclusion
Innovation
Understanding
Respect
Education
Resilience
Try Your Best
Faith
St Thomas Aquinas
Stay Safe

2019

Friendship
Always Be Respectful
Laughter
Love of Learning
Honest
Supportive



INFORMATION BOOK

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A word from your Parish Priest

Parents are the primary educators of the child in the ways of faith. In deciding to send your child to St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School you are saying you want your child to grow up sharing your Catholic faith. You want something more...something special for your child.

What is "special" and "different" about St Thomas Aquinas School?

The answer is firmly embedded in its basic quality as a spiritual community. This means 'in a nutshell' that it is religious, it is Christian, it is catholic and it is an integral part of the parish.

This will find its expression in family prayer; in the help you will give your child in the preparation for the reception of the Sacraments and by actively meeting Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Jesus said to his apostles: 'Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you will not have life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life and I will raise them up on the last day'.

He also said "I have come that you may have life and have it in all abundance".

We remind the children that what Jesus said applies to us all in this life and in the next.

To enrol a child for the reason 'that a little religion does no harm' or that 'there is more discipline in a Catholic School' are reasons not in keeping with Catholic Education.

Finally, I would emphasise that our Catholic faith demands that we respect the conscientious beliefs of all members of the human family, Christian and non-Christian, believers and non-believers. We are all united as children of our heavenly Father.

Give children laughter...they will live in a world that sings

Give children smiles...they will live in a world that glows

Give children your hands...they will live in a world that stands strong

Give children your faith...they will live in a world of love, justice and peace

Reverend N Drinkwater, PP.



St Thomas Aquinas
West Belconnen

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Parish School of St Thomas Aquinas is situated in Lhotsky Street Charnwood. Our school serves the community of West Belconnen which includes Charnwood, Dunlop, Macgregor, West Macgregor, Flynn and Fraser.

The current enrolment from P-6 is 397. Our professional staff are committed to the development of the individual child; academically, socially and spiritually. As a Parish School we have strong and enduring links to our Parish. Father Drinkwater, our Parish Priest and Sr Colleen Howe, our Pastoral Assistant along with our Parish Council form our Parish Leadership team. The School Parish Community has a strong School Community Council. Within our school we enjoy leadership from our senior children through our peer support program, authentic leadership positions such as the Faith and Justice Crew, Environmental Enthusiasts, Community Service Squad, buddy classes and reading tutors for children in younger classes.

The School Community Council is a major resource contributor to St Thomas Aquinas. The SCC works tirelessly at various levels within our school community to provide funds and services that ultimately benefit the children at our school. Every classroom has an Interactive Whiteboard and members of the Diverse Learning Team support all classes. Our staff have vast experience and offer varied strengths in personal and social development.

The Regional Early Learning Centre - Preschool situated at St Thomas Aquinas West Belconnen caters for the needs of families within the parishes of the West Belconnen area. This includes St Monica's Evatt, St Matthew's Page and St John's Florey. We also provide a before school care and after school care service run by OSH Club. This service caters for Primary School age children from Kindergarten to Year 6 and is available Monday to Friday from 7.30 – 9.00am and 3.15 to 6pm during term time. A holiday program run by OSHClub was introduced in April 2016.

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School takes its name from the great Doctor of the Church, St Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the thirteenth century. St Thomas Aquinas is known primarily as a brilliant theologian and philosopher, who, among other achievements, wrote voluminous amounts on the person of Christ and God and famously came up with five arguments for the proof of the existence of God. Fittingly, St Thomas Aquinas is the patron saint of universities and scholars. As such, he is a great ambassador for education and serves as a wonderful role model for our children.

He was also a man of the heart and was known for his humility. He was a great servant to his community and was generous and tireless in his efforts to help others. Again, he is a wonderful model for our children.

St Thomas Aquinas Primary School celebrates the human person. We believe that your son or daughter is gifted beyond measure, gifted with potentiality and the possibility to be the best person he or she can be. The staff at our school will work tirelessly to ensure that your child has wonderful experiences at our school and grows into the person God is calling him or her to be. We have a very supportive parent body that is represented primarily through the SCC, but many parents choose to be involved in more informal ways, through opportunities afforded to them through work in the classroom, on excursions or through coaching sporting teams.

Through our strong links with the Parish, we have a rich Religious Education program, which includes a Sacramental program for children in Grades 3 and 6. The children attend Mass once a week with the parish and we also have an Assembly every week which sees the children give expression to their growing understandings of their faith.

The school offers further enrichment through a specialist PDHPE teacher, a Spanish teacher, a guitar teacher for the children in grades 5 and 6, a ukulele teacher for the children in year 4, a growing robotics program and numerous sporting opportunities.

I look forward to forming a strong partnership with you as St Thomas Aquinas takes on the privilege of educating your child and assisting you in guiding them through the formative years of childhood.

Further information is available on our website www.staquinas.act.edu.au or from the Catholic Education Office website www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au

Yours sincerely
Cameron Johns
Principal

St Thomas Aquinas Purpose.

A blue graphic with a white cross on the left containing the text 'TO CARE'. To the right, the title 'St Thomas Aquinas' is written in a serif font. Below the title are two white boxes: 'Declaration of Purpose' and 'Living the Purpose'. The 'Declaration of Purpose' box contains text about celebrating students and engaging them in education. The 'Living the Purpose' box contains text about communicating faith, hope, and love. At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a group of people holding hands.

TO CARE

St Thomas Aquinas

Declaration of Purpose

With Jesus Christ at the heart of our school, our purpose is to celebrate the uniqueness and giftedness of our students and to engage them deeply in an education that will enable them to make a powerful contribution to a just, merciful and compassionate world.

Living the Purpose

Communicating a sense of faith, hope and love for the world, and with Jesus Christ our model and inspiration, our relationships are dynamic and transformative, tender and just, loving and merciful, compassionate and equitable; and we communicate the dignity and worth of all people to the world.

ENROLMENT

Application and Criteria for Enrolment

St Thomas Aquinas is a Parish School and as such its purpose is to serve the parishioners. Consequently first preference is given to the baptised Catholics who live within the parish and whose parents have a commitment to the faith.

ELC Students should have turned four and Kindergarten children must have turned five years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment. Proof of age will be required. If there are less places than the demand in any year the following priorities will apply:

- Baptised Catholic children who are members of the designated local parish communities.
- Siblings of children already attending the primary school.
- Baptised Catholic children from other parishes who cannot obtain places in their local parish primary school.
- Baptised Catholic children whose parents/guardians seek to enrol them in a parish primary school outside their own parish but who can obtain places in their own parish primary school.
- Other children whose parents/guardians desire and are committed to a Catholic Education.

All children who attend a Catholic ELC will be given preference for Kindergarten enrolment at a Catholic primary school in their parish.

The process of enrolment involves the school and parents working together to provide an effective educational environment. The following processes will normally occur:

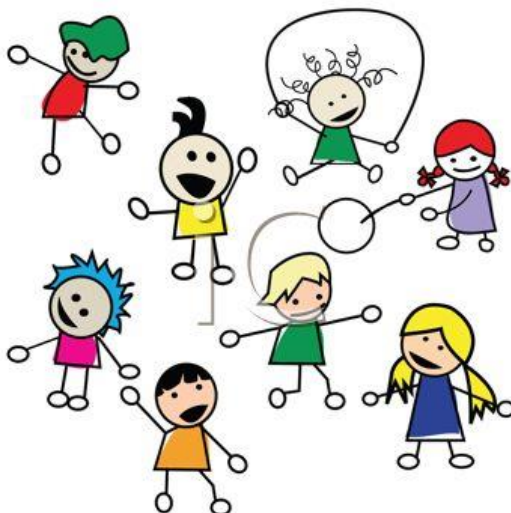
1. The parents attend, ring or write to the school requesting an Application for Enrolment Form. Alternatively, you may download a copy from our website www.staquinas.cg.catholic.edu.au
2. On receipt of the completed form, along with a copy of the birth certificate, baptismal certificate, and immunisation records, together with an enrolment fee of \$25.00, the school will contact parents who are new to the school to arrange an interview.
3. The interview provides an opportunity to discuss your child's / children's enrolment and needs. If a child has a particular learning need, every effort will be made in the interview to begin planning for the student's success at St Thomas Aquinas. As a consequence, our Diverse Learning Coordinator, as well as a CEO Representative, may also be present at the interview to lend support.

Although the students in the school will be predominantly Catholic, children from other faith backgrounds are most welcome to attend St Thomas Aquinas.

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten - Year 6 Buddies

At the Early Bird Orientation program Kindergarten children will be matched up with a Year 5 child who will be their special buddy for the following year. This relationship assists with creating a smooth transition into primary school. The system eases the Kinder child's anxiety during the first few weeks by knowing a familiar face. This relationship is fostered throughout the year by working together in Peer Support Groups and many other vertical grouping activities.



CURRICULUM

Religious Education

We aim for the children to be nurtured in the Catholic faith and tradition within a Catholic Christian community. They are greatly influenced by the Christian responses they give and receive. The love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-control which they should experience in a community united in Christ, is where the most learning occurs.

Every class sets aside 150 minutes per week for formal Religious Education. Programming is based on units from our Archdiocesan guidelines Treasures New and Old.

Whole school gatherings are held for significant events and parents are most welcome to celebrate with us. Christian values dominate our entire school program and are not merely 'taught' in an RE lesson. All children attend Mass every Thursday morning at 9.30am at St Thomas Aquinas Parish Church and prayer celebrations are conducted throughout the year.

The usual format for the Sacramental Programs is;

- Reconciliation Year 3
- Eucharist Year 4
- Confirmation Year 5/6 – every alternate year.

The above year levels are the usual practice. Sacraments are very personal and unique to each individual. In this way if children are considered not to be ready for a particular Sacrament they can receive the Sacrament at a later date, after consultation with the REC and class teacher.

At present, the parish and school support the family in helping their child receive the gifts of the Sacraments. This is done through a Commitment Ceremony where the candidates are presented and prayed over to support them in their preparation. The prime responsibility for the children's preparation lies with the example and Catholic practice of the family. The school and parish will do their utmost to aid the families in any way they can. All our Sacraments are celebrated in St Thomas Aquinas Parish Church.

Other Key Learning Areas

The Australian Curriculum forms the basis of classroom teaching and learning and is organised with explicit content descriptors of what is to be taught to students and what is expected of their learning at every year of primary schooling.

The curriculum identifies essential content that all students should be taught and ensures that there is time to pursue deep learning of that content. The Australian Curriculum also allows flexibility for schools and teachers to include local and topical content. Achievement standards have been set to ensure they are challenging and contribute to all students receiving a quality education.

The Australian Curriculum also pays attention to how seven general capabilities and three cross-curriculum dimensions (listed below) contribute to, and can be developed through, teaching in each learning area.

The general capabilities are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Information and Communication Technology
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Ethical Understanding
- Intercultural Understanding
- Personal and Social Capability

The three cross-curriculum dimensions are

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability

Greater detail of the content of our curriculum can be easily accessed by visiting the website www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/

PROGRAMS OCCURRING ACROSS ALL YEAR LEVELS

Diverse Learning

Early intervention is provided for children who have difficulty in acquiring the skills of literacy and numeracy. This assistance is provided for children throughout the school, with a concentration on children demonstrating difficulties in lower primary classes. All students take part in rigorous assessment. Students are tracked and monitored from Kindergarten to Year 6 according to our school based benchmarks.

Spanish

The Australian Curriculum Languages is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. At St Thomas Aquinas the students participate in Spanish classes to experience language and cultural activities through the teaching of a second language. We provide instruction each week from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Music Lessons

All students in Year 5 and 6 receive a one hour guitar session each week. The school has purchased individual guitars for all students and they have the opportunity to take their guitar home to practice during the week.

Year 4 students learn the ukulele.

The children in Kinder to Year 3 are provided with a variety of musical experiences in the classroom.

Library

Children visit the Library on a regular basis each week for borrowing and returning books. Each child's borrowing records are kept on the computer system.

The Resource Centre is opened at lunchtimes and recess for children to borrow, to sit quietly and read or share a book with a friend.

The teacher librarian conducts regular information literacy lessons with all classes. These sessions are not isolated lessons but form part of a cooperative program plan with the class teacher.

Excursion

All classes at St Thomas Aquinas are involved in excursions that enrich and support classroom learning. These excursions are to local venues, with the Year 5 and Year 6 students also attending overnight camps.

Homework

St Thomas Aquinas does expect that homework is a part of the learning process but it is not considered overly demanding and excessively difficult to complete. Therefore in K-2 in 2017, children are able to read a book for fun, or be read to. They are also asked to complete a spelling or a letter activity. Children in grades 3-4 are asked to also read and complete a Maths activity. In 5/6, children are asked to do the same, with one assignment a term being added.

Teaching Staff

All teaching staff are qualified teachers and are employed by the Director of Catholic Education on behalf of the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and are registered with the Teacher Quality Institute.

St Thomas Aquinas teachers have developed a style of teaching that incorporates the best features of guided inquiry. This self-directed and highly motivating approach to learning caters for individual differences and is also ideally suited to the talented and gifted students in our school. Our staff are skilled and actively seek to utilise teaching aids and technology to assist student development.

EXTRA CURRICULA ACTIVITIES

St Thomas Aquinas prides itself in being a place where each child is able to become involved in a wide variety of educational pursuits. Interested staff and parents ensure that cultural, academic, as well as sporting activities are available to all students. Some of these activities are listed below:

Choir and Drama

St Thomas Aquinas School choir is open to children in Year 2 to Year 6. They perform at school functions and local events. At times, different groups of students prepare to perform in musicals, dance and drama presentations to entertain different audiences and to participate in different competitions.

Peer Support

Children in Year 6 are given an opportunity to develop and enhance their leadership skills by taking part in a social skills program. The program is aimed at providing young people with leadership experiences. Every child from Kindergarten to Year 5 is organised into multi-age groups and assigned a Peer Support Leader (a Year 6 child). The Peer Support Groups meet on a regular basis. During this time, the Leader works through a number of formal and informal activities focussing particularly on the older students helping our younger students.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

It is the aim of St Thomas Aquinas school to provide all children with “hands-on” experience with technology. Through working with various forms of software and hardware, children not only discover exciting new ways to learn but also are learning how to utilise the technology of the present and the future.

ICT is not an isolated subject but is an integrated part of most areas of learning.

The school has a mobile chrome book pod, with internet, intranet and email capabilities. The school is also networked throughout and each classroom has their own Interactive Whiteboard which is used regularly during all Key Learning Areas. Students in Year 4 are provided with a 1:1 ipad and in year 5 and 6, are asked to provide an iPad to participate in the school’s innovative iPad program.

Competitions

We encourage and support students in participating in many educational competitions throughout the ACT and Australia. The students of Years 3-6 are specifically invited to participate in the University of NSW Competitions Mathematics, English, Science and Digital Technology. We like to encourage and celebrate children’s achievements and participation in such events.



Year 6 Leadership

All Year 6 students are inducted as school leaders and work in portfolio groups to take an active leadership role in the school.

Sport

St Thomas Aquinas provides the students with many other opportunities to participate in sport representing the school. These sports include:

- Netball
- Swimming
- Soccer
- Athletics
- Cross Country Running

Parental Involvement

Many activities at our school require parental involvement, which we see as being of great assistance to our students. At this age children love to see Mum, Dad, carers and friends doing something with them or supporting them in some of their educational adventures. To help us provide the best possible education for your children, your involvement as parents is always welcome.

Help can be in many forms:

At home:

- helping children come to know and love God by taking children to Mass and celebrating the Sacraments;
- ensuring that homework is completed;
- working with the teachers to ensure that your child is happy at school;
- ensuring that your child is enjoying reading and/or being read to each night (or regularly); and talking with your child about school (highlighting the positive aspects).

At school:

- participating in the Sacramental Program;
- assisting the class during Literacy and Numeracy sessions or any area of the curriculum that you enjoy or have competency in;
- assisting when transport is required;
- attending School Community Council meetings;
- support and attendance at school functions;
- offering to help in our library.

Parents' participation in the life of the school community is strongly invited and warmly welcomed at all levels.



Visitors & Volunteers Policy

Visitors and volunteers are welcome to the school but are required to obtain and wear a 'Visitor' label during school hours whilst on school property and observe the sign in/out policy and procedures. This includes parent helpers, canteen volunteers, visiting tradespeople, CEO staff, teachers and parents.

Volunteers are required to apply for a Working with Vulnerable Peoples Card. These forms may be obtained from the following website:

http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working_with_vulnerable_people/forms_and_fees

The school offers guidelines to volunteers, coaches and managers for working with students in order to provide positive learning experiences.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter

The Newsletter is emailed to families weekly. It contains information from the Principal and staff, School Community Council, ELC and a variety of notices from the wider community. Notices for the newsletter should be sent to the front office no later than 10:00am Monday morning. This newsletter can be accessed on the school website. www.staquinas.act.edu.au or via Skoolbag (an application for mobile phones).

Contact with the School

Parents are always welcome to visit St Thomas Aquinas to speak to the Principal, Assistant Principal, Diverse Learning Teacher or Class Teachers. It has been our experience, that when free and open communication is maintained, any perceived problems are more readily resolved.

For practical reasons it is essential that an appointment be made for all such meetings, except in an emergency. The school secretary can arrange an appointment with the Principal or Assistant Principal at a time convenient to both parties. Parents can be assured of the principal's interest in any aspect of school life that is of concern.

Appointments to see one of the teachers should be made for out of teaching hours, which are before 9:00am or after 3:30pm, and can be done via a note, email or by contacting the teacher directly.

Formal home-school contact

Formal reports on student progress will be sent home towards the end of Semester 1 and Semester 2 each year. In addition, you will be given the opportunity to attend Parent/Teacher Interviews or 3 Way Conferences throughout the year.

Reporting to Parents

This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Early in the school year parents will be given the opportunity to meet their child's teacher and to familiarise themselves with the class routines and curriculum.
- Parent Teacher Interviews and conferences, known as 'Three Way Conversations', which involve parents, the student and the teacher, are held during the year. Written reports are provided at the end of each semester and follow the Government's A-E reporting format.
- Please feel free to approach your child's teacher regarding his/her progress. Open lines of communication assist both parents and teachers and ultimately benefit the child. Quite often a word from parents can help teachers to understand marked changes in behaviour and attitude.

Attendance at School

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act parents are asked to train their children in the habit of regular attendance. Generally, each day's work builds upon the previous day's work and loss of time may upset the teaching/learning situation for the student and teacher. However, a child when ill, or disturbed through family trauma, does not participate well and should be kept at home to receive the care needed for recovery.

For many reasons, teachers are concerned if a child is absent from school and no explanation is received. When a child returns to class after an absence, a note of explanation, stating the day and date of the absence must be presented to the class teacher. This is a legal requirement for the school.

The school will always endeavour to contact parents or an emergency contact in the event of illness. It is most important that all our information on your child is up to date and accurate. An information sheet is sent home at the commencement of each year to allow parents to update our records. If a change occurs during the year, a note to the office or a phone call will allow us to ensure our records remain accurate.

When families are moving on from our school community, formal notification to the Principal is required. For school records and schooling transfer requirements, this notification needs to include a forwarding address, the name and location of the child / children's new school and the date of departure. Parents are asked to please ensure that all library books and classroom books are returned and outstanding school fees are paid.

IF AN EMERGENCY OCCURS

In the interests of your child please ensure that the school always has up-to-date information about:

- your current address;
- your current phone contacts - home, work and at least one emergency contact;
- If medication is to be taken by your child, the school requires written permission.

STUDENT HEALTH

Medical Information

Immunisation information: It is an ACT Government regulation that all children attending schools in the ACT be immunised. The school is obliged to formally collect from parents duly completed forms that verify immunisation. Where parents object to immunisation, a formal letter indicating this objection must be provided. In such cases, the ACT Health Department will be notified about your child's lack of immunisation. In the event of a contagious illness being reported at school, children without the appropriate vaccinations will be excluded from school. We strongly urge all families to fully immunise their school age children.

Medical service

ACT Health visits the school each year. Only Kindergarten will receive a thorough medical screening. Other children will be seen on request. After consultation with parents any child with a specific need is referred to appropriate specialist services.

Accidents and Illness

Every care is taken to make sure that children are attended to in the event of an accident. Minor accidents, cuts and bruises are treated by staff who are first aid trained. Any bumps to the head are treated and the parents are contacted. Parents are also contacted where the injury is considered to be of a more serious nature. In the event that a serious accident occurs, parents are immediately contacted and, if necessary, medical attention is sought. The school will, in extreme circumstances, ring directly for an ambulance whether the parents can be contacted or not. Parents should note: it is Ambulance Service policy to provide free transportation for any accident occurring on the school grounds or on a school excursion within the ACT. Any child who becomes ill at school is taken to the First Aid room and parents or emergency contacts will be called. This highlights the importance of having current contact details at the front office.

Anaphylaxis

The school aims to work with parents with the management of those children who have a severe form of allergic reaction to certain triggers, which is life threatening if not treated immediately.

The school understands that it must take reasonable steps to promote the health of students at risk of severe allergic reactions including arranging emergency care when it is needed.

The school can help by assisting the student in the avoidance of allergens and ensuring that an emergency response plan is in place for all activities. The early recognition of the signs and symptoms may save lives by allowing the earlier administration of first aid and contact of the appropriate emergency services. Planning to assist staff to deal with unexpected situations forms part of the responsibility of the school and parents of children who have severe allergic reactions.

All staff have a duty of care. Staff are to exercise common sense which dictates that in an emergency, while they should not act beyond their capabilities and qualifications, they are expected to do what they can to take appropriate action.

Nut Free Policy

Nuts have been identified as a major trigger for an allergic reaction by students in our St Thomas Aquinas community. Your support in refraining from sending peanut butter and nut products to school in lunches and snacks is sought. The staff will talk to the children and it is most important that you also impress upon your child the importance of following this request. All children need to be aware that they must only eat from their own lunchbox.

Illness Exclusion Table

The following illnesses are common in early childhood. This is a guide to the time which the child should be away from school should an illness occur.

Chicken Pox / Mumps:	Exclude until fully recovered. Contacts not excluded.
Measles:	Should be excluded for at least 7 days from the appearance of rash or until a medical certificate of recovery is produced. Contacts not excluded.
Ring Worm:	Re-admit when appropriate treatment has commenced, supported by a medical certificate upon request. Close contacts should be inspected regularly.
Conjunctivitis:	Until the discharge from eyes has ceased.
Impetigo:	Until sores have fully healed. The child may be allowed to return, provided appropriate treatment is being applied and sores on exposed surfaces such as scalp, face, hands or legs are properly covered with dressings.
Head Lice:	Exclude until hair is completely cleaned; neither eggs nor lice being present.
Diarrhoea:	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases.
Rubella:	Exclude until recovered or for at least 4 days after the appearance of the rash.
Whooping Cough:	Exclude for at least 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment.
Hepatitis A:	Exclude for at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice and a certificate is furnished by a medical practitioner stating that the person is no longer infectious
Vomiting:	Exclude for 24 hours after child has last vomited.

Accident Insurance

Catholic Churches Insurances is now providing students' personal accident and disability cover for all primary school children. This will cover medical expenses up to \$5,000 (provided no Medicare benefit is payable for the service or treatment), emergency transport up to \$1,000, home tuition if the child is unable to attend school for more than 5 days, up to \$1,000, school fee relief in the event of the accidental death of the person who pays the child's school fees, and monetary amounts for death and certain bodily injuries.

Counsellor

CatholicCare and the Catholic Education Office provide the school with a Counsellor for 2 days per fortnight. The Counsellor will be available to parents, students and teachers who seek advice or help for the emotional, social and educational well-being of students. Parents may request an interview with the Counsellor, whilst teachers may at times refer students to the Counsellor with parent permission. Parents are contacted before their child sees the Counsellor and must give permission. This service is a positive aspect of the school community. Before contact with the Counsellor can be arranged, parents are requested to contact the office for a referral to be returned to the Principal.

STUDENT WELFARE AND SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR PROGRAM

Our School Pastoral Program aims at keeping students and teachers safe so they can learn and teach in a safe, supportive environment. The main objective is that students will recognise their responsibility both for their own behaviour and for the natural and logical consequences that flow from it, empowering them to become responsible community members.

To achieve this we endeavour to create an environment within the classroom that is warm, encouraging and consistent.

We strive for a consistent approach to behaviour management with continued inappropriate behaviour and all serious matters of unacceptable behaviour reported to the parents.

Students are encouraged to restore the harm when an incident occurs. Other incidents will be dealt with by the Principal and Assistant Principal and a restorative session will take place with all those involved.

SCHOOL HOURS

Supervision

Supervision by teachers is provided daily from 8:45am until 3:30pm.

The school day commences at 9:15am when the students are required to line up for assembly. Students arriving at school after 9.15am must report first to the front office with their parent /carer where they are required to complete a late arrival form.

Lunch is at 11:15am – 11:55am. Afternoon Tea is at 1:45pm – 2:15pm. A 10 minute supervised eating time occurs at the start of lunch and end of afternoon tea. Children are dismissed at 3:15pm.

For legal and safety reasons, children should not be on the school premises before 8:30 am and must depart the school grounds as soon as they are released from school, unless they are attending our Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) facility, ELC or are involved in sports training.

No child is permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours. Parents wishing to collect their child early must first report to the front office where they will sign the child out and receive an early departure slip. This must be presented to the class teacher. This note is required for legal purposes.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Commonly known as OSH Club. Their motto is “Happy Children Learning’. Friendly and qualified staff provide stimulating craft and sport activities in an atmosphere that is relaxed and homely.

The program is great value and most families get a childcare benefit discount (CCB) on fees and the 50% Tax Rebate as it’s not means tested. All food is healthy, fresh and nutritious.

Operation Times – Before School Care 7.30 – 9.15am; - After School Care: 3.15pm-6.00pm.

School holiday programs are also available and will be advertised via the school newsletter.

Wet Weather

In the event of rain, morning assembly is not held. Children go straight to their classrooms in wet weather. In the afternoon parents are requested to collect their children from their child’s classroom. Teachers will escort children who will be attending OSH Club, ELC after school care and bus children to the appropriate areas.

School Buses

ACTION Bus Service run a special school bus from the school in the afternoon. Timetables for this and normal route service information are available from ACTION offices. Whilst the school has no direct control over the services, parents may advise the school of any problems and support will be given using the assistance of ACTION bus supervisors.

If there is to be any variation from normal travel arrangements for your child, please send a note, not a verbal message. This is most important with small children. Bus routes are normally published in the Canberra Times the week before school resumes or on ACTION website.

The Murrumbateman Bus collects children each afternoon at approximately 3.20pm.

SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

School Community Council (SCC)

The School Community Council exists to support the school in the following ways:

- Provide a meeting ground for parents and friends;
- Provide an educational forum for parents;
- Provide the opportunity for the Principal to report on the school's activities;
- Organise social activities for the parent body;
- Conduct fundraising.

Meetings are held regularly in the Staffroom (refer to the School Calendar).

Canteen

The Canteen is out sourced. The canteen is open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. A copy of the menu is available on the school website.

Sports

The school provides a range of sporting activities for students. The aim is to promote the positive aspects of team sports and to provide opportunities for all our children to participate in a wide variety of sporting activities for Kindergarten to 6. The Sports Coordinator facilitates teams competing in community based sport under local associations for Netball, Soccer, and the like. The Sports Coordinator organises outside sporting agencies to run specific primary school clinics for all students to experience a variety of team sports.

SCHOOL FINANCES

The school draws its finances from various sources. It is important that parents understand the need to pay fees in a Catholic school. Traditionally Australian Catholic schools have been built and operated with money provided by the parents whose children are enrolled in the schools. The Federal and the ACT governments contribute to the economic viability of our schools, but we still rely heavily on school fees collected from parents to ensure a level of staffing and resources comparable with the government schools. Additional funds need to be raised through the School Community Council to ensure that our school is appropriately resourced.

Fees

The Catholic Education Commission sets school Tuition and Building Fund fees for all ACT Catholic Schools annually. As well as these payments, the St Thomas Aquinas SCC sets an Operations fee, an Excursion/Performance fee, ICT fee, a Maintenance fee a Fundraising Levy and an Art/Craft fee. These payments are part of the process of setting the annual school budget.

The Operations fee refers to the costs associated with running the school itself. These include cleaning, groundsman, electricity, phone, mowing, waste disposal, loan repayments, administration costs, office stationery, etc.

Excursion/Performance Fee covers all excursions, special school activities, Book Week guests, visiting performers, and costs of St Thomas Aquinas athletics, swimming and cross country carnivals.

Bookpack fees are charged separately and refer to all stationery, text materials, classroom paper and sundry items purchased for the children and the classes.

The Fundraising Levy is an alternative to running lots of different Fundraising activities throughout the year. It means the school can focus on our Annual Fete as the main fundraising income source and families then also contribute a small amount each term to support the SCC related funding of school resources eg playground equipment, landscaping etc

Payment of Fees

Fees may be paid annually, by term, month, fortnight or weekly. Credit Card, Direct Debit, Direct Credit and Bpay arrangements are an ideal way to make regular payments. Please contact the school early in Term 1 to discuss your fee situation if you wish to pay by instalments.

A schedule of school fees is provided by request from the school office. It is the policy of the Catholic Education Office that no child will be denied a Catholic School education due to the inability of parents to pay school fees.

School Uniforms

Enrolment at St Thomas Aquinas indicates that each child will abide strictly with our school's dress code. This code dictates that each child will wear full and correct uniform to school each day. The only exceptions to this are when the school holds an "out of uniform" day for fundraising purposes. Parents are asked to strongly support this rule, making sure that shoes are of the correct type and kept clean.

Children are generally expected to wear their full school uniform three days per week and their sports uniform two days per week. This may be amended according to a particular year's programming and timetabling needs for sport and gymnastics. The Physical Education program requires some sporting activity every day so older children should bring their gym shoes in their school bags and wear the correct shoes to and from school. At times children are asked to bring in football boots, mouth guards etc for sports teams. These should be kept in separate bags.

Uniform

All items of uniform MUST be marked clearly with your child's name.

Summer Uniform to be worn in Term 1 & Term 4

Boys	Powder blue polo shirt with school logo and navy shorts.
Girls	Blue checked dress or royal blue dress shorts and sky blue polo shirt with school logo.

Winter Uniform to be worn in Term 2 & Term 3

Boys	Long sleeve powder blue shirt or powder blue skivvy, or long sleeve powder blue polo shirt with school logo and long navy trousers.
Girls	Long sleeve powder blue blouse with Peter Pan collar or powder blue polo neck skivvy navy slacks or Navy dress Clearon fabric 9046.

Items common to both Uniforms:

Maroon jumper with school logo or Maroon polar fleece with school logo.
Maroon sloppy joe with school logo.
Black leather school shoes (summer & winter) - not sport shoes.
White ankle height socks.

Navy bucket Hat (with school name printed) as recommended by Cancer Society to be worn by all students when out of the building at all times. A navy polar fleece beanie may be worn by students in June and July in accordance with the Sun Smart Policy.

Sports Uniform:

Summer	Both boys and girls will wear the same sport uniform. Navy blue shorts (optional navy skorts skirts for girls) and navy/sky polo knit shirt with school logo. Gym shoes for sports days only.
Winter	Navy tracksuit with navy/sky polo knit shirt with school logo. Gym shoes for sports days only.

PRESCHOOL Uniform

Both boys and girls wear the same sky blue and navy polo shirt year round. They also have a navy bucket hat.

Makeup

Makeup and fingernail polish are not part of the school uniform and are not to be worn.

Hair Ties

Hair ties should be in keeping with the school colours.

Jewellery

The school policy is that the only jewellery students are allowed to wear to school are watches, stud or sleeper earrings to be worn in a maximum of 2 holes per earlobe. Wearing of other jewellery including rubber wrist bands and friendship bands can become a safety issue.

Coats/ Scarfs

Children are permitted to wear any coat or scarf in the colder months. We do not have a school specific coat or scarf. We ask that children only wear these outside and remove them once they are inside the school building.

Uniforms can be purchased from Savvy School and Formal Wear, MacDonald's School Wear, The Uniform Shop. These suppliers will only sell the correct uniform. They have all been notified of our current school uniform requirements.

2019 School Fees

School fees for 2019 have not yet been determined by the SCC, however, they will generally increase in line with the CPI Index, usually between 3% and 5%. The fees for 2018 detailed below can be used as a guide.

The following tables show the school fees payable in 2018 for families with one to three children (Fourth and subsequent children are not charged any fees).

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child
Money paid to the Catholic Education Office			
Tuition	\$346.00	\$103.80	\$69.20
Total	\$346.00	\$449.80	\$519.00

Contributions to the **Canberra Catholic Schools Building Fund (CCSBF)** are voluntary for 2018 and retain tax deductibility. The level of contribution for 2018 is \$168 per family per term.

The Catholic Education Commission has recommended a 20% discount to tuition fees for the first child at a catholic systemic primary school where there is a sibling in an Archdiocesan Secondary College. The total cost to families is summarised below.

	First Child	Second Child	Third Child
Money paid to the Catholic Education Office			
Tuition	\$346(\$276.80)*	\$103.80	\$69.20
Total	\$346	\$449.80	\$519.00
Money retained at St Thomas Aquinas to run the school			
Operating	\$209	\$304	\$362
ICT	\$100	\$100	\$100
Performance	\$25	\$50	\$75
Maintenance	\$30	\$30	\$30
Fundraising	\$20	\$20	\$20
Total	\$384	\$504	\$587
Sub Total Fees	\$730.00(\$660.80)*	\$953.80	\$1106.00
Catholic Church School Building Fund (Voluntary and Tax Deductible)	\$168	\$168	\$168
Total Term Fees payable for families	\$898.00 (\$624.80)*	\$1121.80	\$1274.00

* Please note that the asterisked fees in brackets show the discounted rate (20%) for the eldest child where a sibling attends an Archdiocesan secondary College. The Catholic Church School Building Fund is not paid at Primary school in this instance as it will be paid at the Secondary School.

In addition to the above fees, a one off payment from families is required to cover Art and Craft expenses at \$30 per child per annum. This is invoiced in Term 1 each year and will appear on your Term 1 School Fees Invoice.

Book Packs (including software licence fees) are also charged separately in Term 1 and are provided to families at cost price. Book pack costs for 2018 were \$110 per child from Kindergarten to Year 6.