



Parent / Guardian Code of Conduct

Introduction:

St Thomas More Primary School is committed to providing a respectful learning environment that is safe, positive and supportive for all students, staff, parents and other members of the school community.

We believe that Parents, Guardians, Carers, (referred to as **Parents** in this document) are valuable contributors in the life of our school and play a key role in the education of their children. As such, it is imperative that they act, at all times, in the best interest of all students, their families, staff members and the broader school community.

It is the intention of St Thomas More Primary School to provide all parents with clear guidelines regarding the conduct expected of them whilst on the school premises, communicating with staff, engaging in school related activities, attending school events or in any other way representing the school. Parents are expected to uphold the school's core values & expectations at all times.

St Thomas More Primary School values & expectations include:

- Vision - St. Thomas More Primary School aspires to be a nurturing Catholic school that builds respectful relationships based on Gospel values and is committed to excellence in education.
- Mission - In our parish school community, we model the teachings of Christ through compassionate and positive relationships. We provide a sense of belonging and develop brave learners, spiritually, socially and academically.
- Aspiration - Passionate learners, acting justly within society.
- Values – Respect; Collaboration; Innovation; Integrity

This Code of Conduct aims to support the school's existing *Child Safety Code of Conduct*, which further consolidates the school's commitment to providing a safe, supportive and respectful environment for everyone at St Thomas More Primary School.


Scope:

St Thomas More Primary School Parent / Guardian Code of Conduct applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, and any other person on the school premises, engaging in school related activities, attending school events or in any other way representing the school .

Implementation:

When visiting St Thomas More Primary School Parents are required to:

- a) Sign in and out during school hours, via the school's Visitor Register, so that their presence in the school is acknowledged and recorded. This not only supports the school's commitment to Child Safety, but also all ensures their safety in the event of an emergency.

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- b) Comply with all safety and emergency procedures implemented by the school and in the event of an emergency, whilst on school grounds, follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- c) When attending any school assembly, celebration, mass or event, parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of students and staff, and will refrain from creating any inappropriate noise or disturbance during performances, prayers or speeches by the Principal, staff members, students, visitors or other members of the school community.
- d) Not to discipline any child, including their own, or speak to any child about their behaviour. This is the role of staff members and all parents are required to respect this.
- e) Treat others visitors to the school with courtesy & respect including the clergy, members of parliament, representatives from the Catholic Education Department, allied health professionals or other educational consultants.
- f) When visiting a classroom parents accept the authority of the supervising staff member/s. Staff members value and respect parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave the classroom or class activity for any reason including, but not limited to:
 - i. Parental assistance not being required at the time;
 - ii. Parental assistance in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or member of staff;
 - iii. The parent is not in control of their emotions.

Ethical Conduct:

When attending St Thomas More Primary School or any school-related event, parents must:

- a) Refrain from engaging in malicious or judgemental gossip (either directly or online) and ensuring that anything they say about others is fair and truthful;
- b) Refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification;
- c) Refrain from offensive, insulting or derogatory language or conduct. This includes wearing clothing with offensive words or insignias;
- d) Dress appropriately according to the occasion;
- e) Not take a photo or video recording of another student or parent without their consent;
- f) Not post a photo or video recording of a child that is not their own on social media without obtaining consent from the child's parent beforehand;
- g) Disclose the personal details of a student or parent to another person without consent.
- h) Not smoke on school grounds within four metres of any entrance (Victorian Law);



- i) Not possess alcohol on school grounds, unless the event has been sanctioned by the School;
- j) Never possess illicit drugs on school grounds;
- k) Not attend school events if affected by alcohol or other intoxicants; and
- l) Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others.

Communication & Interaction with Staff & Other Parents:

All members of the school community including staff and other parents are entitled to feel respected and safe. To achieve this, parents are reminded that their actions should not create any unnecessary stress or anxiety.


When communicating, staff members and other parents must:

- a) Interact civilly with staff, students and other parents at all times;
- b) Not use abusive language or expletives, raise their voice, insult or engage in violent behaviour to anyone on school grounds or at any school-related events;
- c) Ensure that physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of and relationship with the student such that questions of impropriety do not arise;
- d) Not discipline or raise their voice or get involved in verbal altercations with another parent or child under any circumstances;
- e) Parents must respect the privacy of other students, parents, staff, and volunteers within the school community;
- f) Advise the school of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws;
- g) The school expects parents to behave lawfully on school grounds and observe the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to.

Direct Communication with the Principal & Staff Members:

The priority for staff members at St Thomas More Primary School is the welfare and education of all students at our school. The school Principal & staff members are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. They will however, ensure that they attend to all correspondence within a reasonable timeframe. Parents are also reminded that a response to communication should not be expected outside normal working hours or during school holidays unless it is an emergency.

The time available for parents to meet with members of staff is limited and must be scheduled when this does not disrupt learning time. When arranging to meet with a member of staff, parents

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must communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the staff member time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be addressed.

All correspondence with the Principal and staff members should be courteous and respectful at all times.

The Use of Social Media:

Despite the range of positive uses of social media, parents must be mindful that there are also a number of ethical and legal issues associated with its use, which can directly or indirectly affect the welfare of staff members, students, other parents and the school's reputation.

When using Social Media, Parents must:


- a) Not make contact with any student (other than their own) using any form of social media. This is a breach of the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and may be considered 'Grooming' In accordance with the Victorian Crimes Act 1958 - Sect 49m;
- b) Not post images or videos of other students without prior consent from their parents;
- c) Not discuss or mention the school, its staff or any members of the school community in a negative or defamatory way;
- d) Be respectful to staff, volunteers, other parents, and/or students;
- e) Not use it as a means to voice grievances about the school members of staff, other students or parents;
- f) Make reasonable efforts to ensure that their children comply with the school's Child Safety, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media Policy;
- g) Never disclose any confidential information relating to other parents, staff members, volunteers, and/or students to third parties without the individual's express consent;
- h) Never post sexually inappropriate or other material that may damage the reputation of the School.

Complaints


The school takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the school, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect in order to try to resolve the matter.

As a general guide, minor issues may be raised with the child's teacher. Cases of more serious inappropriate conduct or misconduct ought to be directed to the Principal.

When making a complaint parents should refer to the School's Complaints & Grievances Policy, which is available on the School Website; and parents must follow the procedures outlined in this Policy. It is a breach of this Parent Code of Conduct to make a complaint in a way that is not

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consistent with the School's Complaints & Grievances Policy, especially when the complaint is about the Principal or other Staff Members.

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Breaches of the Parent Code of Conduct

Where a breach of the Parent / Guardian Code of conduct has been identified or reported, the Principal will investigate the complaint.

Where the Principal is satisfied that a breach has occurred they will:

- a) provide a first and final warning that a breach of the Code of Conduct has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
- b) Determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;
- c) Where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the school, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the school unless on the school grounds with the express permission of the Principal;
- d) Correspondence that is in breach of this Code of Conduct, because of the language and expression used or the manner in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.
- e) Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect to obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

Other Relevant Policies:

- » Child Safety Code of Conduct
- » Working With Children Procedure
- » Complaints & Grievances Procedure