



Code of Conduct

Review: 2023

Rationale

The Code of Conduct Policy states what St Thomas' Primary School is about. We are different from other organisations you may know or have come before us. This document explains what to expect if you join or engage with our school. When you join our school – you are 'the school'. You need to comply with the St Thomas' Code of Conduct to be at our school.

Our Code of Conduct Policy has been written with our school mission statement in mind - 'Educating the Whole Child'. St Thomas Primary School is part of a faith community centred on the life of Jesus, as expressed in our motto, ***'Together in Christ'***. Our vision is to create opportunities for our children to become loving individuals with the skills to willingly contribute to make the world a better place.

It has been developed with consideration placed on our school values – St Thomas' seeks to promote the Gospel values with particular emphasis on respect for all. This is lived out through the following attitudes:

- Inclusivity
- Compassion
- Truth
- Community
- Excellence

This document outlines positive work practices and the legal obligations and expected behaviour, relationships, attitudes and responsibilities for staff, parents, students, visitors and volunteers at our school. The purpose of the Code of Conduct defines healthy relationships between students and adults that are animated by staff, copied by parents and sought after by students in all their relationships.

Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to describe minimum standards of conduct in all behaviour and decision making to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

Application

The Code applies to staff, students, volunteers, parents and guardians as applicable. The term 'parents' includes guardians.



Introduction

You acknowledge the inherent vulnerability of the students in your care.

You recognise that the safety and well-being of students depends upon your vigilance and diligence and the vigilance and diligence of all adults.

The Code does not give you detailed professional advice on specific behaviour. Rather, it describes the minimum requirements expected of you.

The Guidelines are illustrative and not an exhaustive list of the behaviours covered by the Code.

If your behaviour varies from the standards described in this Code and Guidelines, you should be prepared to explain and justify your decisions and actions.

While mandatory language such as 'must', 'shall' and 'will' is not used throughout the Code, there is a presumption the conduct described is mandatory and therefore not discretionary.

The Principal expects you to conduct yourself personally and professionally in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in your school and the Church.

You have a responsibility to students and their family, other members of the school community and the wider community to provide and support safe and competent education and care of students.

You will do your best to support other members of the school community to comply with the Code.

In cases of conflict between parts of the Code, between the Code and other school policies, or in any decision-making choices, you give priority to the outcome that will be in the best interests of the safety and well-being of the child.



Breaches

Breaches of the Code must be notified to the Principal and it is a breach of the Code not to do so.

A breach of the Code may constitute a failure to follow a lawful direction from the Principal and therefore the Principal will have the discretion as to what action to take, which may include counselling, professional development or sanctions under any agreement between you and the Principal. If you are a parent, volunteer or visitor, the Principal may take such action as is appropriate in your circumstances to maintain the safety and well-being of students.

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was grooming behaviour: i.e. deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a student, to lower the student's inhibitions in preparation for engaging in sexual activity with the student. Examples include:

- developing relationships that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- being alone with a student in circumstances where you are unseen or unlikely to be randomly interrupted
- initiating unnecessary physical contact with students or doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engaging in personal disclosures (including personal contact details), or exchanges containing sexual content with or in the presence of a student
- organising contact with a student or their family outside of school without the Principal's knowledge and/or consent (e.g. tutoring, sport coaching).
- having any non-curriculum related online contact with a student (including via digital media) or their family
- using any personal digital media account to contact students or their family
- photographing or videoing a student without the consent of the parent
- being in the presence of a student whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs or offering either to a student

The Principal must notify the appropriate authorities of any breach of the Code that was sexual abuse of a child: i.e. sexual behaviour in circumstances where:

- the student is the subject of bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;
- the student has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or
- there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.



Conduct Statements

1. You act safely and competently.
2. You give priority to students' safety and well-being in all your behaviour and decision making.
3. You act in accordance with the values of the Gospel as defined in the Code of Ethical Conduct.
4. You conduct yourself in accordance with laws, agreements, policies and standards relevant to your relationship with the school community.
5. You respect the dignity, culture, values and beliefs of each member of the school community.
6. You treat personal information about members of the school community as private and confidential.
7. You give impartial, honest and accurate information about the education, safety and well-being of students.
8. You support all members of the school community in making informed decisions about students.
9. You promote and preserve the trust and privilege inherent in your relationship with all members of the school community.
10. You maintain and build on the community's trust and confidence in Catholic schools and the Church.
11. You act reflectively and ethically.
12. You allow students to have a voice in their education, safety and well-being.

Natalia Thomson

Principal



CODE OF CONDUCT

Declaration

I _____ acknowledge that I have read and understood

(Print Full Name)

the St Thomas' Primary School Code of Conduct and will comply with this document.

I am aware that all breaches of St Thomas' Primary Schools' Code of Conduct shall be notified to the Principal and that it is a breach of the Code not to do so.

A breach of the Code may constitute a failure to follow a lawful direction from the Principal and therefore, the Principal will have the discretion as to what action to take, which may include counselling, professional development or sanctions under any agreement between you and the Principal.

If you are a parent, volunteer or visitor, the Principal may take such action as is appropriate in your circumstances to maintain the safety and well-being of students.

Signed: _____

Date: _____