

# St Thomas the Apostle Student Behaviour Policy



## Purpose

The St Thomas the Apostle Student Behaviour Policy reflects the school community's shared expectations in relation to student engagement, attendance and behaviour. This Policy sets out the clear processes to be followed in order to support students' behavioural, educational and emotional engagement.

This Policy provides an overview of how St Thomas the Apostle will:

- promote positive behaviour in the school community
- seek to prevent behavioural issues
- respond to challenging student behaviour occurring at school, at a school activity away from the school grounds or while travelling to or from school or a school activity.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all School policies and the [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018](#).

## School Profile

### About St Thomas the Apostle

St Thomas the Apostle is committed to providing equitable access and opportunity for all. The School considers that awareness of, recognition of, and responsiveness to the needs and rights of all individuals are essential to human dignity. Inclusive practices embrace and celebrate diversity, invite belonging and provide opportunities for participation and achievement of appropriate learning outcomes.

Foundational to our work with students, families and the school community is the building of genuine, authentic relationships. The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. All teachers, students, families, parishes and the wider community contribute to fostering life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity of each person.

### Rationale

At St Thomas the Apostle we strive to provide an inclusive education which values diversity and celebrates difference. Diversity is enacted through a pedagogy of inclusion and a commitment to uphold the rights of all to be welcomed, valued, acknowledged and actively engaged in education. Our learning community is committed to processes that support all students to make optimal progress and respect the rights of all students to learn in a positive and supportive environment. We seek to provide successful participation and to intervene as early as possible when students are not actively engaged in learning. Student behaviour is linked to the quality of the learning experiences. Purposeful, authentic, and relevant learning experiences that are of a sufficiently challenging yet achievable standard maximise positive behaviour.

## Mission

St Thomas the Apostle is committed to providing educational opportunities that actively welcome, engage, inspire and challenge all students to learn in a safe and enlivening Catholic environment.

## Aims

Our school is a community that exemplifies the gospel values of love, forgiveness, justice and truth. Our school community recognises that everyone has the right to be respected, to feel safe and be safe and, in turn, our school community acknowledges each member's own obligation to behave responsibly. This Policy is intended to guide our school's actions. It has been developed in consultation with the school community and seeks to prioritise respectful relationships and safety in response to the rights and needs of all members of the school community. A safe and supportive environment respects the rights of all students to learn, the rights of all teachers to teach and the rights of all members of the school community to be safe.

Every person at the school has a right to feel safe, to be happy and to learn. Therefore our school aims:

- to promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others
- to acknowledge the worth of all members of the community and their right to work and learn in a positive environment
- to maintain good order and harmony
- to affirm cooperation as well as responsible independence in learning
- to foster self-discipline and to develop responsibility for one's own behaviour.

## Guiding Principles

St Thomas the Apostle strives to build a safe and positive school environment that is guided by Gospel values and honours the dignity of the individual, the family and the school.

The development and promotion of high-quality relationships are responsibilities shared by all members of the school community. Teachers, students, families, parish members and the wider community contribute to and share in the responsibility to foster life-affirming relationships that recognise and support the inherent dignity and safety of each person. All members of the school community are expected to contribute to the mission and vision of the school and to understand their rights and acknowledge their obligation to behave responsibly.

As a provider of Catholic education, the school Principal will take into account the need for the school community to represent and conform with the doctrines, beliefs and principles of the Catholic faith when making decisions regarding matters of school administration, including enrolment. Pupils and families who are members of other faiths are warmly welcomed at our school. However, the school reserves its right to exercise its administrative discretion in appropriate circumstances, where it is necessary to do so to avoid injury to the religious sensitivities of the Catholic school community.

It is vitally important that the school is made fully aware of each child's individual circumstances insofar as these may impact upon his or her physical, functional, emotional or educational needs, particularly where the school is required to provide additional support to the child.

## Definitions

- Behaviour is defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. In general terms, it can be considered to be anything we say or do.
- Appropriate behaviour is behaving in a manner that is suitable for a public gathering, respecting the

other members of the forum (class, meeting, assembly, gathering) and treating others as you would wish to be treated. Members are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to show mutual respect, maturity, and common sense. In general, appropriate behaviour is any behaviour that contributes to the positive learning environment and aligns with our school rules, codes of conduct and behavioural expectations.

- Inappropriate behaviour or unacceptable behaviour (including bullying, harassment and victimisation), may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Unacceptable behaviour does not have to be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as gestures, written, telephone or e-mail communications or through social media.
- Discriminatory conduct is conduct whereby an individual is treated less favourably on the basis of a relevant attribute, including their sex, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, physical appearance or belief or gender reassignment. Such action may constitute discriminatory conduct that is contrary to Commonwealth and Victorian anti-discrimination legislation.
- Bullying is a broad concept which may generally be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying generally involves a series or pattern of events in which one individual has demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards another individual. Please refer to St Thomas the Apostle Bullying Prevention Policy for further details.
- Challenging behaviour is behaviour that significantly challenges the day to day functioning of the school. The behaviour impacts on learning and interrupts students' and staff capacity to feel safe or function in a safe and orderly environment.
- At Risk behaviour is any behaviour that has the potential to cause harm or injury to self or other. This includes physical, emotional or psychological harm.
- Criminal offences refers to forms of unacceptable behaviour that may be serious enough to constitute a criminal offence. If St Thomas the Apostle becomes aware that an offence has been or may have been committed, these concerns will be reported to the police or other authorities, as appropriate.

## Legislative Context

The *Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.) (sch 4 cl 12) outlines the School's obligations to ensure that the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the School. In discharging its duty of care responsibilities, the School and teaching staff must exercise professional judgment to achieve a balance between ensuring that students do not face an unreasonable risk of harm and encouraging students' independence and maximising learning opportunities. Non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers must exercise judgment appropriate in the circumstances. The school must also comply with legislation related to Occupational Health and Safety for staff.

This document is informed by relevant Australian and Victorian legislation including:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.).

This document should be read in combination with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018 and is also informed by the following resources:

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) policy requirements
- National Safe Schools Framework <http://www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0>
- Excel: Wellbeing for Learning in Catholic School Communities
- Health Promoting Schools Framework [www.ahpsa.org.au](http://www.ahpsa.org.au)
- CECV Intervention Framework 2015 [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au/publications/CECV-Intervention-Framework.pdf)
- Diocesan policy and regulations
- [CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines](#)

## Shared Behaviour Expectations

The School recognises the importance of providing clear guidance and expectations which are applicable to all members of the school community.

The table below sets out the School's expectations for its students, parents and staff.

Students are expected to:	Parents/Carers are expected to:	Principals/Teachers & Staff will:
<p>1. take responsibility for their learning and have high expectations in themselves that they can learn</p>	<p>1. have high expectations of their child's behaviour, understand and support the implementation of the School's behavioural expectations</p>	<p>1. promote positive reinforcement and enhance student self-esteem by having a planned approach for recognising and responding to appropriate behaviour</p>
<p>2. model the School's core values of respect, endeavour, communication, trust and teamwork</p>	<p>2. openly communicate with the School in regard to their child's circumstances</p>	<p>2. deliver an inclusive and comprehensive curriculum which promotes positive behaviours and emphasises the well-being of every child focusing on pro-social behaviours</p>
<p>3. take responsibility for their own behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others</p>	<p>3. cooperate with the School by assisting in the development and enforcement of strategies to address individual needs</p>	<p>3. employ whole school and classroom practices to establish a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm for all students and focus on the implementation of preventative and early intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behavioural issues</p>
<p>4. comply with this Policy and work with teachers and parents in developing strategies to improve outcomes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) obey all reasonable requests of staff</li> <li>b) respect the rights of others to be safe and learn</li> <li>c) respect the property of others.</li> </ul>	<p>4. provide complete, accurate and up to date information when completing an enrolment form and supply the School, prior to and during the course of enrolment, with any additional information as may be requested, including copies of documents such as medical/specialist reports (where relevant to the child's schooling), reports from previous schools, court orders or parenting agreements</p>	<p>4. consistently apply this Policy through a shared collegiate understanding and only exclude students in extreme circumstances</p>

	<p>5. comply with the school's behaviour aims and the school's Code of Conduct and to support the school in upholding prescribed standards of dress, appearance and behaviour, in accordance with the terms of your child's enrolment at the School.</p>	<p>5. plan for the professional development needs of all staff to enable them to develop and maintain positive relationships with their students</p>
	<p>6. acknowledge and understand that unacceptable behaviour by a child, or repeated behaviour by a parent or guardian that, in the school's view, is unacceptable and damaging to the partnership between parent/guardian and school, may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.</p>	<p>6. recognise that for some students additional support may be needed in the form of staged responses and staff are committed to working with families to reintegrate students in an educational setting after exclusion</p>

## Attendance Expectations

Ensuring that students attend school each day is a legal requirement. It is also a shared expectation of all students, parents and the wider school community, focusing on positive and pro-social behaviours together with prevention and early intervention.

The school recognises the importance of providing clear guidance on student attendance that is applicable to all members of the school community.

## School Actions and Consequences

Student engagement, regular attendance and positive behaviours will be supported through relationship based whole-school practices, as well as targeted and individualised support when required. Effective student behaviour change and student behaviour support is enhanced through internally-based school support structures, and externally-based family, education, community and interagency partnerships. The School will apply a range of supports and measures to address inappropriate student behaviour. Where a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, the School will institute a staged response, in accordance with the [CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018](#). Where applicable, an incident report will be completed and provided to the Principal or relevant staff member noting the templates provided in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines

### Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour

St Thomas the Apostle will implement culturally inclusive strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviour which may include verbal recognition, individual or class rewards, communication with parents/wider school community, as appropriate.

### **School Wide Positive Behaviour - Management**

Student behaviour management (SWPBS) at St Thomas the Apostle aims to prevent incidents of inappropriate or wrongful behaviour from occurring in the first place by acknowledging and reinforcing appropriate behaviour.

### **Whole-School Procedures for Reinforcing Appropriate Behaviour**

#### Gold Awards

Gold Awards are awarded by teachers to students who demonstrate astounding examples of our school values or have reached a given target that has been worked towards a period of time (eg. reaching 10 stars in our SWPBS reward system).

Students that receive 5 Gold Awards are eligible for a Pin, which is presented at the office and recognised at a whole-school assembly.

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#### Principal Awards

Principal Awards recognise students for setting out to achieve a classroom focus, demonstrating effort towards accomplishing a personal goal, or demonstrating our school values consistently.

#### Star in the Yard

Students are given a star for displaying our school values outside the classroom setting or following a whole-school focus presented by school captains at assembly. The recipient gives it to a peer mediator on duty who records the reason and puts it in the Star on the Yard box.

Each fortnight the school captains discuss and select two recipients who have, in their opinion, been the strongest examples of the school values and/or school focus. These two students are presented with the Star in the Yard award at assembly.

### **Tier 1: School-wide supports**

St Thomas the Apostle implements culturally inclusive, school-wide preventative and early intervention strategies and practices for all its students to support positive behaviours, including:

- establishing predictable, fair and democratic classrooms and school environments
- providing physical environments that are conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- ensuring student participation in the development and implementation of whole school expectations
- empowering students by creating opportunities to take responsibility and be involved in decision making
- monitoring attendance and academic progress of students with the view to recognising students at risk and intervening early
- developing Personalised Learning Plans (PLP) in consultation with the Program Support Group (PSG) where appropriate for individual students.

### **Tier 2: Targeted supports**

In addition to Tier 1 supports, some students may require targeted support or interventions to meet behavioural standards, including regular attendance. These students will be supported through a culturally appropriate staged response, including:

- understanding the student's background and needs
- ensuring a clear understanding of expectations by both students and teachers
- providing consistent school and classroom environments
- scaffolding the student's learning program
- data collection and documentation of incidents relating to the management of student behaviours to inform decision making
- revision of the Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) and creation of a Behaviour support Plan (BSP) or Attendance Maximisation Plan (AMP) as appropriate
- parent consultation via phone, videoconference or interview
- the Design and Implementation of support strategies that assist the student to self-calm such a quiet space or designated alternative area that they can go to if they are feeling overwhelmed
- case conference with specialist providers or MACS consultants (this may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or EAL/New Arrival/Refugee Learning Consultants where culturally appropriate).

### **Tier 3: Intensive intervention**

When Tier 1 and Tier 2 systems are in place, the foundation for implementing Tier 3 supports is established. Complex behaviours are targeted to remediate and prevent further escalations. Support provided to students at St Thomas the Apostle will be aligned directly with the goals and targets set out in the students' Personalised Learning Plan (PLP), Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and Student Safety Plan. Data systems provide school personnel with accurate, timely and practical information for making decisions about the fidelity and impact of individualised interventions that:

- value the student and support positive interaction
- have a clear data-informed strategy focused on preventing the occurrence of an identified behaviour by avoiding or adapting the circumstances that usually trigger this behaviour
- focus on building skills and developing alternative preferred behaviours
- consider the motivation for or functions of behaviours
- use the student's strengths and interests to increase success.

St Thomas the Apostle will implement more intensive intervention strategies for students presenting with complex and ongoing difficulties or extended school refusal. Development of plans will require support from parents/carers and will often require consent to access specialised services.

St Thomas the Apostle will support students with complex behaviours of concern through a culturally appropriate staged response which will generally include:

- ongoing implementation of universal and Tier 2 strategies
- use of data to inform and monitor the implementation of evidence-based interventions
- regular Program Support Group meetings to review PLP, BSP, safety plans and/or Attendance Maximisation Plans
- consultations with mutually agreed specialised support services
- implementation of explicit, data informed strategies designed to support the student to display safe behaviours. The design of the individualised support will be informed by the identified function of the behaviour and the explicit teaching of skills and desired behaviours.

### **Consequences for student misbehaviour**



St Thomas the Apostle adopts a staged response to challenging behaviour and appropriate reinforcement of appropriate behaviour noting that an effective Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is developed to support the student in learning skills required for positive social interaction, along with the ability to become a more effective and successful learner. Consequences for misbehaviour are also implemented which may take the form of:

- non-verbal warning – e.g. eye contact / hand movement / shake of head / teacher positioning to stand near misbehaving student(s)
- verbal warning which identifies the misbehaviour and gives student the opportunity to change his/her behaviour
- moving student in the room to a less disrupting situation
- separating student from the class for a short period of time to provide an opportunity for the student to settle
- readmission to class activity based on student being de-escalated
- student required to stay in after class for set period of time
- student required to complete work during recess / lunchtime
- student engaged in restorative actions supervised by classroom teacher
- student re-entry meeting.

When concerns arise about a student's on-going behaviour or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of problem behaviour, St Thomas the Apostle will implement a targeted response to identify and address the presenting issues and reinforce replacement behaviours. This may involve the following support strategies:

- convening a Program Support Group (PSG) meeting involving parents/carers/Learning Diversity/Wellbeing coordinator and the student where appropriate.
- developing/Revising a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) or attendance plan
- development/Revision of a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) and/or Safety Plan where appropriate for individual students
- referral to Catholic Education or external Health or Allied Health providers
- consultation with external professionals, paediatrician, psychologist specialist practitioner
- contact with the Regional/Diocesan Office.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to challenging behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to address the range of factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour. Measures should always be proportionate to the nature of the behaviour, and are best used with support measures to identify and address causes of the behaviour and implementation of strategies to limit reoccurrence of inappropriate behaviour. Supportive actions and any disciplinary measures will be implemented in accordance with the CECV Positive Support Guidelines 2018 and may include:

- review of Behaviour Support and Safety Plans with specialised support
- restorative practice
- withdrawal of privileges
- withdrawal from class activities for a specified period. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of such withdrawals
- detention
- withdrawal from class if a student's behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class. In situations where the student is not able to comply with the instruction to relocate, the class (all other students) will be re-located/evacuated. The student may be temporarily isolated from regular classroom activities to provide an opportunity to de-escalate or for a specified period of time. Parents/carers should be informed of such withdrawals.
- in circumstances where the student is unable to calm, remains in a heightened state of anxiety or is a danger to self or others, the parents will be asked to take the student home for the remainder of the school day.

- contracts for conduct/attendance/bullying
- suspension (in-school and out of school)
- negotiated Transfer
- expulsion
- referral to police, DHHS, emergency service or appropriate agency.

A student may be excluded from school in situations where all other measures have been implemented without success, or where an immediate suspension is the only appropriate course of action in response to the student's behaviour which may put the health, safety and well-being of other students, staff or themselves at significant risk or where actions require reporting to police or appropriate agencies.

If other strategies are unsuccessful in modifying student behaviour, the School will follow the Melbourne Archdiocese Pastoral Care Policies regarding suspension, negotiated transfer and expulsion.

St Thomas the Apostle specific procedures are as follows:

### **Procedures for Minor Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour**

If a minor incident occurs in the classroom or on the playground, the teacher will engage the students involved in restorative dialogue (see above) aimed at restoring relationships that have been harmed.

Minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour can include:

- disagreements
- mild and "accidental" inappropriate language
- name-calling
- playing in out-of-bounds areas
- conflicts causing slight distress
- disrupting learning.

Dialogue should lead to an agreement between the teacher and student(s) on the restorative action that should take place.

### Repeated Minor Incidents

If a student repeats an inappropriate behaviour, the teacher may pursue a formal response. This involves having students complete a "Thinking about My Behaviour" pro forma on which they analyse and reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others. The completed pro forma should be the basis for further restorative dialogue.

The pro forma should also be taken home by the student for discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s). It is then signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to school. The student's classroom teacher keeps the pro forma as a record of the inappropriate behaviour and restorative actions agreed .

If a student is required to complete three "Thinking about My Behaviour" pro formas in a term, parents will be contacted to take part in a formal conference with their teacher and a member of the school leadership team.

### **Procedures for Major Incidents of Inappropriate Behaviour**

If a major incident occurs in the classroom or on the playground, the students involved are to be sent to the school office where the incident can be followed-up by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Student Services Coordinator.

Major incidents of inappropriate behaviour can include:

- endangering the safety of others
- misusing property
- defying staff
- leaving the school grounds
- deliberate physical or verbal aggression
- inappropriate communication with others
- bullying (defined as repeated action that causes harm to another individual).

Follow-up should include restorative dialogue between the Principal (or Deputy Principal or Student Services/Wellbeing Coordinators) student(s) and, where possible, the teacher present at the incident, aimed at restoring relationships that have been harmed and reaching agreement on the restorative action that should take place. Student(s) should complete a “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro forma on which they analyse and reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others.

The completed pro forma should also be taken home by the student for discussion with parent(s)/guardian(s). It is then signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to school. The student’s classroom teacher keeps the pro forma as a record of the inappropriate behaviour and restorative actions agreed .

If a student is required to complete three “Thinking about My Behaviour” pro formas in a term, parents will be asked to take part in a formal conference with their teacher and a member of the school leadership team.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the Principal may also decide to contact the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) directly to discuss the incident and agreed restorative actions.

If the level of harm caused by the student warrants further management, or the incident is part of a pattern of major, inappropriate behaviour, the Principal may pursue one of the following management procedures:

#### Behaviour Management Plan

A Behaviour Management Plan addresses individual students' behaviour management needs. It is an agreement reached formally between the school, a student, and the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) (supported by authoritative advice, if and when required, in relation to the student's medical or mental health needs) about the future behaviour of the student and its management.

The following matters need to be considered and written into a Behaviour Management Plan:

- the positive, formative purpose of the plan
- duration of the plan
- expectations regarding the student's future behaviour
- means by which the student will be supported in achieving this behaviour
- means by which the student's behaviour will be monitored and managed
- circumstances which could require the plan to be amended or reviewed (eg medical or mental health advice)
- arrangements to apply following a satisfactory conclusion of the plan
- arrangements to apply if the student’s behaviour is not in accord with the plan’s stated expectations

The Behaviour Management Plan will be recorded in writing, signed by the parties involved, and dated.

#### In-school Withdrawal

If judged necessary as a behaviour management procedure, withdrawal from class, the playground and/or other school activities will be done in-school rather than out-of-school, as this maintains a student's connectedness and engagement with the school. The processes for the withdrawal of the student will be structured positively to assist in the student's return to acceptable behaviours. An example is the provision of time, in an appropriate and supervised setting, for the student to reflect upon their behaviours and attitudes, the impact of these on themselves and others, reasons for preferring acceptable behaviours, and ways to find encouragement and assistance to achieve this goal.

#### Out-of-school Suspension

If out-of-school suspension is judged appropriate by the school, it will be for the shortest time necessary. At least one day prior to the day on which the suspension is to commence, the school will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), if possible by verbal communication initially and by confirmation in writing. The communication will include the reason for the suspension, the purpose of the suspension, and the date(s) on which the suspension will occur.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be offered the opportunity to participate in a meeting to consider these and other related matters, including:

- the legal and pastoral responsibilities of the parent(s)/guardian(s) during the time of suspension
- the school's responsibility for providing learning material during the time of suspension
- the process of settling back into the school environment, and how this is to be facilitated
- arrangements for monitoring the student's progress following his/her return to school.

If an initial verbal contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s) is not possible, it may be necessary to ask the student to take the written notice home to them as their first notification.

It is an expectation of the school and the CEOM that a student shall not be suspended for a total of more than nine school days in any one school year.

#### **Corporal punishment**

The use of corporal punishment is expressly prohibited at St Thomas the Apostle and under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

#### **Consultation**

As every child's educational needs can change over time, it will often be necessary for the school to review any additional assistance that is being provided to the child, in consultation with parents/guardians and the child's treating medical/allied health professionals, in order to assess:

- whether the additional assistance remains necessary and/or appropriate to the child's needs
- whether the additional assistance is having the anticipated positive effect on the child's individual physical, functional, emotional or educational goals
- whether additional specialised assistance is required
- whether it remains within the school's ability to continue to provide the additional assistance, given any limitations that may exist.

#### **Restraint and Seclusion**

St Thomas the Apostle will undertake actions to prevent the need for the use of restraint or seclusion in accord with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

In alignment with the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018

**Physical restraint** is defined as the use of force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body where the student is not free to move away. Restraint does not include 'protective physical interventions', which involve physical contact to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage from a student's grip.

**Seclusion** is the solitary confinement of a person in a room or area from which their exit is prevented by a barrier or another person. Seclusion includes situations where a person is left alone in a room or area and reasonably believes they cannot leave that room or area even if they may physically be able to (e.g. the door is not locked). In extreme circumstances, e.g. in response to behaviours that cause harm to self or others, teachers will respond by exiting the other students from the learning space to ensure their safety. Where the student continues to display threatening and dangerous behaviour (e.g. wielding a bat), staff will seek to limit harm to others by isolating the student for the minimum amount of time required for the student to calm. Seclusion does not include the use of a safe place, time out or chill out rooms, being conditions that are set up to support the student and often included in Behaviour Support Plans.

If a student is placed in a separate room as a means of seclusion, staff will maintain appropriate supervision of the student.

Whilst St Thomas the Apostle acknowledges that that prevention is the best strategy, there are limited circumstances in which restraint or seclusion may be deemed appropriate. In making a decision to implement any form of restraint or seclusion, St Thomas the Apostle staff are aware that their actions may directly increase the risk of injury and trauma, both for the student and for the staff member themselves. Such decisions are usually required to be made in times of high stress. Actions that may be considered reasonable will be made by staff present and will depend on the individual circumstances of each case as a matter of professional judgment.

The use of restraint or seclusion does not form part of any of St Thomas the Apostle's Behaviour Support Plans or Student Safety Plan. Restraint and seclusion will only be used in limited emergency situations, as outlined below.

1. The student's behaviour poses an imminent threat of physical harm or danger.
2. The action is reasonable in all the circumstances.
3. There is no less restrictive means of responding in the circumstances.

In the event that restraint or seclusion is used, the least restrictive form of restraint/seclusion will be used for the minimum time possible. The restraint/seclusion will cease as soon as the immediate danger for the student or others is averted.

The clear priority when managing such an incident will be the safety of all concerned. St Thomas the Apostle's staff involved in an incident of restraint or seclusion will immediately notify the principal and provide for the immediate care and safety of those concerned. The student's parents will be contacted. A post incident evaluation and report will be completed in accord with the templates and processes outlined in the CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018.

## Assessing and Mitigating Risk

To assist the school to discharge its safety responsibilities, St Thomas the Apostle will adhere to an Occupational Health & Safety Program through which potential safety hazards are identified and analysed in terms of the likelihood of an event occurring, and the potential consequences if the event was to occur. A similar risk based approach is taken with respect to Student Duty of Care, with the definitions of likelihood and consequences. St Thomas the Apostle will refer to CECV publications and may engage the services of the Catholic Education Office for the purpose of assessing student safety risks and determining how best to support the needs of the students, staff and broader community.

It is important that all staff consistently enforce school rules and safety policies, and actively engage in ensuring the physical and emotional wellbeing of students.

References:

- CECV Positive Behaviour Guidelines 2018 – Templates
- Behaviour Support Template
- Student Safety Plan Template (A&B)
- Record of Restraint and Seclusion
- Post Incident Checklist for Principals
- Risk Assessment Tool
- Diocesan policy and regulations
- CECV Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines

## Appendix 1 – General Information relating to disciplinary measures

- **Withdrawing privileges** – St Thomas the Apostle can withdraw student privileges as a consequence of breaching classroom or school behavioural standards. St Thomas the Apostle notes that the specific privileges withdrawn may vary between students based on the individual student’s support plan, however they may include things such as representing the school at inter-school sports or attendance at a school event. This must be time-limited and the risk to the student’s engagement should be taken into account. The student must be told why privileges are withdrawn, and how they should behave for privileges to be reinstated.
- **Withdrawal from class** – If a student’s behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn or the capacity of a teacher to teach a class or where there is possibility of harm to others, that student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities. In more serious cases the student may be required to leave the classroom for a specified period of time. Schools have a duty of care to ensure that students are supervised at all times, including when they are removed from a class. Where appropriate, parents and carers will be informed of such withdrawals.

Withdrawal from class does not constitute formal school exclusion such as suspension (including in-school suspension) or expulsion.

- **Detention** – Detention is an appropriate response for a wide range of less serious classroom and school behaviour breaches. Detention can effectively reinforce to students the importance of maintaining appropriate behaviour standards.

During detention teachers may instruct a student to finish school work which has not been completed in regular classroom time as a result of the behaviour, new work or other duties. No more than half the time allocated for any recess may be used for this. Where students are required to undertake detention after school hours, the time should not exceed forty-five minutes.

Where the decision is made that an after-school detention is appropriate, the principal should ensure that parents or carers are informed at least one day before the detention. Where family circumstances are such that an after-school detention would create undue hardship, St Thomas the Apostle may choose to negotiate alternative disciplinary measures with the parent or carer. Examples include where students regularly supervise younger siblings in the absence of parents or carers. Schools are permitted to detain students but are encouraged to take into account family circumstances and negotiate with parents and carers as appropriate.

- **Suspension, Negotiated Transfer or Expulsion.** In some instances it may be appropriate to suspend or expel a student who consistently compromises the safety and order of the school in order to protect the learning environment for remaining students and continue with effective teaching.

Suspension and expulsion are serious disciplinary measures and are for when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response, or where there is a threat to another person and immediate action is required.

- **Suspension** occurs when a student’s attendance at school has been temporarily withdrawn on the authority of the principal, for a set period of time.

Suspension allows the parties involved to reflect on and enter into dialogue about the behaviour and circumstances that have led to the suspension, and to plan and/or review learning and behaviour supports to assist a student to engage positively with school and learning.

- **Negotiated transfer** means a documented and mutually agreed move to another school is arranged. Negotiated transfer occurs when all other pastoral and discipline measures, including suspension, have failed to resolve an issue of serious inappropriate student behaviour. A negotiated transfer ends the enrolment agreement with the first school and requires an enrolment in another school.
- **Expulsion** – Expulsion involves the termination of the contract entered into at the time of the

enrolment by the parent(s)/carer(s)/relevant person. St Thomas the Apostle's enrolment agreement explicitly records at the time of acceptance of the enrolment of a student that unacceptable behaviour by a child, or parent may result in suspension or termination of the child's enrolment.

St Thomas the Apostle will ensure that policies and processes associated with negotiated transfer, suspension and expulsion align with [Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Policy 2.26 Pastoral Care of Students](#).