



# Thomas More Student Conduct Policy

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of a Student Conduct Policy is to help students learn how to address issues of dispute, develop empathy and give witness to the Catholic faith, both within and outside of the school community. At St. Thomas More we endeavor for all of our students to live their vocation in the light of faith. We are reminded that “the specific purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of children who will be good citizens of the world. Catholic schools have a straightforward goal: to foster the growth of good Catholic human beings who love God and neighbor and thus fulfill their destiny of becoming saints” (The Holy See Teaching on Catholic Schools, 2006).

## GROUNDING IN OUR CATHOLIC FAITH WE BELIEVE:

All students are created in the image and likeness of God. As such, all human beings are inherently sacred and must be treated with dignity and respect. All efforts to support a welcoming, inclusive, respectful, safe, and caring learning environment within our school, in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church, remains central to our mission (Administrative Policy 138).

### Guiding Principles:

- ❖ **Honesty** takes courage and is always rooted in truth. As part of our human weakness we all make mistakes. In order for growth to occur we are all called by our Heavenly Father to learn from our mistakes and be accountable for our words and actions. Integrity and trust is rooted in truth and honesty.
- ❖ **Respect and Dignity** must permeate all that we say and do whether in our words, deeds, or actions
- ❖ **Reverence of the Catholic faith** is permeated in all aspects of our school life. We participate in the traditions of our faith so that we might grow as children of God. We are called to be attentive to our personal and communal Catholic identity. In times of distress we are called to reflection and prayer so that the guiding wisdom of the Holy Spirit be ever present in all of our relationships

## INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE LEARNER PROFILE:

We at St. Thomas More aspire to the ideals set out in the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile as a guide for work and behavior. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers	Open Minded
Knowledgeable	Caring
Thinkers	Risk Takers
Communicators	Balanced
Principled	Reflective

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY:**

All efforts to support the inclusive, safe, and caring learning environment at St. Thomas More will be accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and shall be grounded in the understanding of the child as a whole (Administrative Regulation 138).

### **Student responsibilities (Alberta Education Act, Section 31):**

- ✓ attend school regularly and punctually,
- ✓ be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education,
- ✓ ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- ✓ respect the rights of others in the school,
- ✓ refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behavior directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
- ✓ comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- ✓ co-operate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- ✓ be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
- ✓ Positively contribute to the student's school and community.

### **Students Can Contribute to Creating a Positive Learning Environment by:**

- ✓ smiling at peers and adults in our school
- ✓ speaking to their friends about their behavior (in a nice way) when they are not contributing to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment
- ✓ greeting visitors to their classroom or school
- ✓ being friendly and helpful towards students that are new to the school and others
- ✓ sitting with someone who is alone at lunch, inviting someone to join games or sit with their group outside, or working together to complete a project
- ✓ keeping our school and school grounds clean and tidy
- ✓ coming to school/class on time and as prepared as possible
- ✓ treating everyone with respect even if they don't agree with their beliefs and/or values
- ✓ having empathy for others
- ✓ following classroom and school expectations so everyone is able to learn
- ✓ Not engaging in behavior such as put downs or snickers when questions are asked in class – no one should feel afraid or nervous about coming to school.

Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, *Series on Alberta's Education Act*, November 2014

### **Parent responsibilities (Alberta Education Act, Section 32):**

- ✓ act as the primary guide and decision-maker with respect to the child's education,
- ✓ take an active role in the child's educational success, including assisting the child in complying with section 31,
- ✓ ensure that the child attends school regularly,
- ✓ ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment,

- ✓ co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to the child,
- ✓ encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school,
- ✓ Engage in the child's school community.

**Parents Can Help Students Meet Their Responsibilities by:**

- ✓ modelling kindness
- ✓ paying attention to how they talk about other children and the school in front of their children
- ✓ taking responsibility for their mistakes
- ✓ reporting any problems at school to the teacher as soon as they can. Problems are easier to solve when they haven't been going on for a long time. The best place to start is with their child's teacher. If parents are not satisfied with the results of this conversation, the next step would be to make an appointment to speak with their child's principal
- ✓ Modelling peaceful problem solving when you have a conflict.

Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, *Series on Alberta's Education Act*, November 2014

**Other ways that Parents Can Contribute to a Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environment**

- ✓ speaking respectfully to and about school staff
- ✓ speaking positively about the school, staff, other students and their families in front of their child
- ✓ making appointments to ensure the person they want to speak with has sufficient time to have a focused conversation.
- ✓ communicating with the teacher or other school staff – e.g. positive notes or emails to their child's teacher and/or other school staff, positive comments when parents drop off or pick up their child

Excerpted from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, *Series on Alberta's Education Act*, November 2014

**Staff Responsibilities include:**

- ✓ Educate students by fulfilling the mandate of the Alberta Education curriculum, the IB curriculum and our Catholic faith
- ✓ Deliver appropriate educational programming that meets the needs of all students and enables them to be successful.
- ✓ Encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with students, parents, colleagues.
- ✓ Model mutual respect, Catholic values and conduct that contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment
- ✓ Discipline consistently, maintaining dignity and respect
- ✓ Administer consequences for inappropriate and/or unacceptable behaviors.
- ✓ Maintain open communication, be accountable and provide assurances to students and parents with regard to student learning outcomes
- ✓ Review conduct policy with students
- ✓ Communicate classroom expectations
- ✓ Recognize diversity and individual differences
- ✓ Respect confidentiality as appropriate

- ✓ Provide supports, as appropriate, for individuals impacted by inappropriate behavior or discrimination.

### **ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS**

We know that most students behave appropriately most of the time. We also believe that people perform better when they know what is expected of them. St. Thomas More Catholic School is committed to providing students with a school environment that is both safe and conducive to learning. We are dedicated to teaching students appropriate behavior towards themselves and others. We expect students to behave in an appropriate manner, which does not interfere with the learning or behavior of others. Students are to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful.

### **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR**

At St. Thomas More, we are dedicated to learning in a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. Anything that interferes with teaching or learning is not allowed. This includes inappropriate dress, gum-chewing, head gear, sunglasses, inappropriate use of electronic devices or games, behavior that is in conflict with our district responsible use agreement, and physical contact between students. School-wide expectations are communicated to our students by teachers in classroom discussions, by school administration in assemblies, during morning announcements, through the school newsletter and through our school website. We have set behavioral guidelines for the school as a whole and have asked each teacher to set programs and procedures designed to maximize student learning and responsibility. Since each teacher has a different style, specific expectations and procedures will vary from class to class.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

We concentrate on positive behavior and attitudes; however, there are times when a student has difficulty recognizing their responsibility as a student. In such cases, we have outlined a number of possible consequences for behavior. When a student behaves inappropriately, they can expect that the staff member present (teacher, administrator, teacher assistant, support & caretaking staff) will take the most appropriate action. One or more of the following can be expected to occur:

- Verbal reprimand
- Restriction of privileges and activities
- Noon hour detention of student
- Parental involvement.
- Parent-student conference with school staff
- Verbal or written apology by student
- Problem solving, monitoring or reviewing behavior expectations
- Replacement or repair of damaged property
- Temporary exclusion of student from class
- Bus suspension for students riding the bus
- In-school suspension
- Out-of school suspension
- Referral to Attendance Board
- Behavior contract
- Involvement of outside agencies
- Involvement of Police
- Expulsion
- Record of incident retained in PowerSchool

In dealing with inappropriate behaviors, consequences are fair, but not always equal. A number of factors are taken into account when dealing with inappropriate behavior. As might be expected, the behavior, the more severe the consequence. The context, frequency, and maturity of the students is always considered.

## **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

The following are considered major forms of misbehavior and will be dealt with severely:

### **Bullying/Cyberbullying**

**Section 1(1)(d) of the *Education Act* defines bullying as:**

*“Repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual’s reputation.”*

Bullying can take different forms:

- ✓ Physical – pushing, hitting
- ✓ Verbal – name calling, threats, put-downs
- ✓ Emotional/Social – exclusion, rumors, extortion of money or possessions, intimidation
- ✓ Cyber – using the computer or other technology to harass or threaten

Bullying is not a normal part of growing up and it does not build character. No one should have to put up with bullying. Bullying is a learned behaviour – children and youth often learn bullying behaviours when they either experience being bullied or see it happening to others.

Bullying is different from conflict. Conflict is defined as a disagreement or struggle over opposing beliefs, needs, feelings or actions and is a normal part of life. From time to time everyone has conflicts with friends, family, teachers, co-workers. It is important to learn how to resolve conflict peacefully and recognize the difference between conflict and bullying.

Students are expected to report bullying behaviour as soon as they can after seeing it or experiencing it. Students may do this by telling an adult in the school. Students who are uncomfortable with coming forward to school personnel are encouraged to talk with parents or friends, who could then assist them in notifying the school about bullying.

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Bullying or cyberbullying of students could result in an immediate suspension from school. As well, the police may become involved in the investigation of bullying incidents. Bullying is defined in law as “the

repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted or emotional abuse.” Any person who repeatedly bullies a minor (under the age of 18) in a public place could be subject to a \$250 fine.

### **Defiance**

Any act of defiance, that is, refusing to comply with a reasonable request from a staff member, can result in an immediate suspension.

### **Physical / Verbal Abuse or Harassment**

Physical abuse of any type to anyone will result in an immediate suspension. Verbal intimidation or harassment will also result in an immediate suspension. At St. Thomas More, there is no such thing as “play fighting” – and therefore this will not be considered an acceptable excuse for physical contact with another student. Police may be involved if this is deemed to be appropriate by school administration. IMPORTANT NOTE: Students who choose to watch or encourage other students in a physical fight might also be suspended from school. The fact that they have an audience encourages those students who are fighting to continue the conflict, as they do not want to “lose face” in front of their peers. Thus, the spectators are viewed by school administration as being a major contributing factor to the continuation of the fighting, and they will be treated accordingly.

### **Improper or Profane Language**

The use or display of improper or profane language could result in a suspension from school. Students who use profane language in addressing a teacher will be suspended from school.

### **Vandalism or Willful Damage to School Property**

Vandalism or willful damage to school property will result in an immediate suspension and/or service within the school community\* depending on the circumstances. Students will be expected to pay fully for any damages caused deliberately or through carelessness.

\*Service within the school community occurs when a student is assigned to do work to assist any of the adults in the school (i.e.: teachers, custodians, support staff). This is for a specific number of hours in a specified period of time.

### **Theft**

Theft of property, either from the school or from another person is strictly prohibited and will result in a suspension. Restoration of the stolen property is mandatory. In some instances, cases of theft are referred to the police.

### **Illegal Drugs or Substances**

Possession or use of illegal drugs or substances on school property or in sight of school property will result in an immediate suspension and may lead to expulsion from the school. In cases of drug use, the police will be involved in the investigation and charges could be laid.

### **Behavior Dangerous to Self or Others**

Students who engage in reckless or dangerous behavior will be suspended from school. If appropriate, the police will also be involved in the investigation.

### **Weapons**

Possession of a weapon or presentation of any object meant to threaten or intimidate will result in an immediate suspension. Any weapons brought to school will be confiscated and turned over to the police. Police may be involved if this is deemed to be appropriate by school administration.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This rule also applies to toy knives and guns. Simulated weapons will be treated in the same fashion as real weapons. They have no place in a school environment.

### **Repeated Violation of General Expectations**

Repeated violation of general expectations or a continual disregard of classroom rules will result in an out-of-school suspension.

### **Guiding Documents:**

Catechism of the Catholic Church  
The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools  
Alberta Human Rights Act  
Education Act  
International Baccalaureate Learner Profile  
District Administrative Policies and Regulations



**International<sup>®</sup>  
Baccalaureate**

**"WHATEVER YOU DO, DO EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."**