



Walk in the Light



Parent Information Handbook



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St Thomas of Villanova Parish School, Mareeba

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Philosophy Of Catholic Education

‘The school aims to develop the intellect towards right understanding and true judgement. It draws on the cultural heritage to transmit a wholesome appreciation of the past and establishes a VALUE SYSTEM for the young, preparing them for adult life. The school aims to promote understanding among individuals and acts as a centre of educational co-operation involving families, teachers and the cultural, civic and religious groups that make up human society.’

(Extract from Policy and Practice, CEO Brisbane, 1979)

Dear Parents

It is with my greatest pleasure that I welcome you and your family to our school. We hope that your association with St Thomas' will be long and lasting, and one filled with many memorable experiences of it not only as a school of learning dedicated to providing a quality education, but also as a community of faith which openly recognises Christ and seeks to live and proclaim His Gospel message.

Here at St Thomas', we are committed to supporting you as the first and primary educators of your children. We assume the belief that schooling is a partnership operation. It is in working as partners – in supporting and encouraging each other's efforts that we benefit in bringing children to a genuine knowledge of themselves and of the world in which they live. Together it is hoped that efforts of co-operation and mutual support will complement each other through the sharing of a common vision and of common goals.

As our logo states, we hope each child will strive to "Walk In The Light" academically, socially, physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Each child and parent wishing to enrol at St Thomas' must strive to uphold the values of this school, is called to participate actively in maintaining the special character of the school's faith and cultural identity and agrees to becoming a part of a community of learners who are seeking knowledge of the world and of its Creator. By sending your child to this Catholic school you openly, and at some personal cost, affirm your belief in Catholic Education. Hopefully, what we endeavour to offer at St Thomas' is far more than just 'another education'. Our commitment is to bring together faith and learning in ways that are real and meaningful to our own lives and which ultimately reflect the life and message of Jesus Christ.

We at St Thomas', therefore, look forward to journeying with you and sharing the challenge of bringing your children to a greater knowledge of themselves, their world and their God.

Yours in providing the very best in Catholic Education

Paul Rayner

OUR SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Since education takes place only when people are in a real relationship with each other, the aim of St Thomas' School is to be a community where genuine and interpersonal relationships provide a stimulating educational environment in which each child is encouraged and challenged to achieve his/her highest potential academically and spiritually.

It is recognised that within such a community the religious faith of the individual members of staff and their commitment to gospel values in their daily lives, contribute powerfully to the child's growth in faith and moral maturity.

Within this community, children feel respected. They are treated with fairness and kindness and are encouraged and expected to show a like respect and concern for their fellow pupils and teachers. Self-discipline and personal responsibility are fostered but always in an atmosphere of trust, friendship and forgiveness.

Since St Thomas' draws its vitality and the long-term effectiveness of its mission from the life of the local Christian community, close communication with parents is seen as the means of fostering mutual understanding and the involvement of the wider community in the life of the school.



VISION STATEMENT

**To foster our children's individual strengths and talents
and to encourage spiritual and academic growth
to equip them with the skills for life long learning**

OUR PRIVACY POSITION

Cairns Catholic Education is bound by the *Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000*, and has adopted the ten (10) National Privacy Principles. A privacy statement detailing Cairns Catholic Education's principles and procedures for the use and management of the personal, sensitive and health information it collects and records can be accessed on the Diocese of Cairns' website – www.cns.catholic.edu.au or alternatively, a hard copy of the statement may be provided on request.

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

St Thomas' is a Catholic P-6 school, situated in Mareeba, approximately one hour drive west of Cairns in Far Northern Queensland.

Established in 1909 by the Sisters of Mercy, St Thomas' has a current enrolment of approximately 450 children. The school was named Good Counsel up until the early 1950's when it was renamed St Thomas' after the patron of the Parish, St Thomas of Villanova. Initial enrolments were around 50 students, however from the 1920s an increase in numbers became evident. In 1932 the school had 119 children and a teaching staff of five sisters.

For a period of two years during World War Two, the state school was taken over by the army, so St Thomas' accommodated the entire school population of Mareeba. The Catholic children had school from 8.30am until 12.30pm and the state school children had school from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. By the mid 1950s, the school's enrolment had increased to 220 (a preschool was also introduced during this time but was discontinued in 1955).

The first lay teacher, Mrs Elaine Seary was employed in 1966 and in 1974 the old school building which had been in use since 1909 was demolished to make way for a new block of classrooms and a staff room.

The convent was demolished in 1999, with the land being used to build a double-unit Preschool (100 children).

Between 1999-2010 St Thomas' has undergone several major capital works and a change of name.

In 2003 the school sports houses were changed and increased from 2 to 4. One house was named **Power (YELLOW)** after Mother Gertrude Power, one of the founding Sisters of Mercy and another **Mills (BLUE)** after the last Sister and Religious Principal, Sister Mary Mills. The other two houses **Phelan (PURPLE)** and **O'Connor (ORANGE)** are named after the two longest serving Augustinian Priests, Fr Joseph Phelan and Fr Maurice O'Connor.

Today there are approximately 430 students enrolled at St Thomas' and the school continues the goal of Catholic Education; to foster a Christian community and a belief in the message of Jesus Christ alongside a balanced and quality education.

St Thomas' has a welcoming feel to it and a group of highly dedicated and motivated parents who truly assist with the provision of the best educational environment possible for their children, through their hard work and commitment. St Thomas' is also fortunate to have a skilled staff who see their role as nurturers of the faith and are committed to their role as Catholic Educators.



ENROLMENTS

Parents requesting enrolment of their child should contact the Principal for an appointment. Online enrolment link is on our website.

It is the policy of the school that enrolment of children will be in the following order:

- Siblings of existing families (Catholic or Non-Catholic)
- Catholic children
- Where positions are available, children from Non-Catholic families

ENROLMENT POLICY

PREAMBLE:

St Thomas of Villanova Parish School is a faith community that maintains a Catholic identity and serves the mission of Christ. Students are nurtured in their faith in Christ and assisted in their total development.

GOSPEL VALUES:

Faith, Truth, Learning, Service, Justice, Respect, Witness/Commitment

POLICY:

St Thomas' School welcomes children whose families value Catholic Education and demonstrate a willingness to support the school's Mission Statement. Every effort will be made to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school. Enrolment is dependent upon discernment.

CONSEQUENCES:

Enrolment procedures will reflect the need to maintain the Catholic spirit and identity of the school.

Enrolment procedures, modelled on Diocesan guidelines, are inclusive and accepting of students with diverse needs.

- Parents/guardians and students must be given adequate information about the Mission Statement;
- Families must make themselves aware of, endorse and where appropriate, undertake to participate in all activities of the school curriculum and community;
- Families must undertake to contribute their time and support to the various active groups in the school community, for example, P & F meetings, fund-raising efforts and school maintenance activities;
- Non-Catholic families must permit their child/children to take part in all the activities of the school, including religious education and Mass;
- Parents/guardians must agree to pay in full, all fees and levies in accordance with the Fee Schedule detailed in the School's Handbook, as a minimum financial contribution to the running of the school.
- Enrolment is dependent upon the capacity of the school to provide the physical and human resources necessary for the education of the student. A discerning group consisting of the Principal, Parish Priest, Professionals, Parents, Staff and CES Officer will assist the Principal in discernment.

ENROLMENTS

All children enrolling must meet the following Queensland Government age requirements:

FOR PREPATORY YEAR

Children born 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020 are eligible for Prep Year in 2025.

Preparatory year will be offered as full-time for five (5) days per week. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, parents will be required to send their children for the full-time (five (5) days a week)

For the purpose of enrolment, documentary evidence of the date of birth is required.

To assist in future sacramental preparation, we also require an extract or a copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate (if applicable).

An amendment to the Education Act has allowed for the possibility of early entry for some students who will turn five by July 31st in the year they are in Prep, however that entry is conditional on the principal also being satisfied that they are ready for schooling in terms of:

aptitude and ability; and

- social and emotional competence; and
- physical development; and
- level of knowledge and understanding

This is not a change for all children born in July and it is certainly not compulsory to send your child to Prep if he or she turns five during July.

Most children commence Prep in the year they become eligible (turning 5 by June 30th), however parents who are concerned their child is not ready to start Prep at that time can choose to start their child a year later – the year they become of compulsory school age (6 years and 6 months).

If you have questions or concerns about your child's readiness for Prep, speak with your child's Kindergarten teacher or school principal.

While Preparatory year is not compulsory, it is recognised as the first formal year of schooling. It is offered as full-time for five (5) days per week.

ENROLMENT – SPECIAL NEEDS' STUDENTS

Process:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) make an application for enrolment for the student through the usual school enrolment form. (This form should include questions that will indicate a need for an extended enrolment application support process.)

The Principal initiates the use of the Enrolment Application and Support Procedures where necessary.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES – OTHER YEARS

Enrolments may be taken at the beginning of, or during the school year. Parents are asked to provide a copy of their child's birth certificate at the time of enrolment.

However, in keeping with the enrolment policy of this school, non-Catholic students are welcome on the grounds that they are committed to the values of the Catholic Church and are willing to take part in all school activities, including Religious Education and Mass.

In addition to the information contained on the enrolment form, parents should notify the school of:

1. Reports from the previous school attended
2. Details of anything out of the ordinary in respect to the child's health e.g. any special allergies, treatment, etc
3. Details of any disability, impairment or syndrome the child has
4. Details of any medicine to be taken while at school
5. Reasons why the child cannot participate in sporting activities
6. Any reasons why the child may not be performing as well as he/she should

It would be appreciated if parents would be quite open about these matters.

PRAYERS – MASS – SACRAMENTS

At the centre of the Catholic community is the celebration of the Eucharist. It is from the Eucharist that we remember the life and message of Jesus, which nourishes the way in which each Christian lives this out in their own life.

Therefore the development of the value of prayer is an important part of educating young Christian people. This is easier to achieve when children experience prayer in the home environment as well. Care is taken to ensure that children will be encouraged and led to an appreciation and practice of prayer in such a way that they feel free to develop at their own rate and in their own particular way.

Within that general aim the school:-

1. Teaches the formal prayers of the Church
2. Encourages informal prayer (spontaneous)
3. Makes provision for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be celebrated by the children
4. Provides a quiet time each day for children
5. Provides a regular prayer time each day
6. Gives the example of staff praying together
7. Ensures it prays for particular people or for particular events
8. Follows a planned sequential program of formal Religious Education
9. Sees religion as part of every facet of school life
10. Involves pupils in planning their own liturgy for the Mass and for other forms of liturgical celebration
11. Provides opportunities for whole school and class Masses.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Formal Religious Education lessons are held regularly. They are aimed at helping children to come to a sound understanding of God, the Holy Spirit and the person of Jesus Christ. They also aim to give students knowledge of the Church's tradition and teaching.

LITURGY / WORSHIP

Liturgies are advertised through the school newsletter. It is our expectation and a condition of enrolment that all students fully participate in all activities. All parents and friends are warmly invited to share in these celebrations.

SACRAMENTS

Students are prepared in Year 4 for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

**ALL STUDENTS WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO BE
ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF
THE SCHOOL**



CURRICULUM – GENERAL

The primary school program aims at the growth and development of the total person. The school includes in its goals, not only the development of knowledge, but also the spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional skills and values necessary for participation and leadership in a rapidly changing world.

Learning Areas (LA) to be covered each year include:

1. English
2. Maths
3. Religious Education
4. Humanities and Social Sciences
5. Science
6. Technologies
7. The Arts (Music, Dance, Drama, Art & Media)
8. Health and Physical Education
9. LOTE (Language Other Than English) - Japanese

DANIEL MORCOMBE CHILD SAFETY CURRICULUM

Each year, every Primary School in the Cairns Diocese is mandated to teach the Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum. The Curriculum is based around three key messages: **Recognise**, **React** and **Report**. Lessons topics include:

	PREP – YEAR 2	YEAR 3 – YEAR 6
Lesson 1	Safe & Unsafe	Safety Clues - Situational Awareness
Lesson 2	Safety Clues	Risk Taking
Lesson 3	Body Clues	Rules, Rights, Responsibilities
Lesson 4	Private Body Parts	Private Body Parts
Lesson 5	Body Ownership	Problem Solving
Lesson 6	Safety Options	Strategies
Lesson 7	Safety Helpers	Safety Helpers
Lesson 8	Phone and Online Safety	Online & Mobile Phone Safety
Lesson 9	Saying No	Review of Personal Safety

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

St Thomas' also offers a diverse range of extra curricular activities for students to be involved in they include:

- Chess
- Readers Cup
- Mini Vinnies
- Musical Instrument Lessons including piano and guitar with a specialist teacher.

SCHOOL YEAR

In accordance with the Queensland State Government Department of Education, all school programs and student assessment programs are divided into two, six monthly periods called semesters. Semester One finishes in June and Semester Two finishes in December. Each semester is broken into four terms ending in April, June, September and December. Specific dates are supplied well in advance for parents' information.

DATES FOR 2024

Term Dates		
Term	Dates	Duration
1	Tuesday 23 January – Friday 28 March	10 weeks
2	Monday 15 April - Friday 21 June	10 weeks
3	Monday 8 July - Friday 13 September	10 weeks
4	Tuesday 30 September - Friday 6 December	9 weeks

Student free days will be published online and in the monthly newsletter.

SCHOOL TIMES

8:15 am	Staff supervision
8.30am	Classrooms Open
8:40 am	School commences (Session 1)
11:00 am	First Break
11:40 am	School resumes (Session 2)
1:40 pm	Second Break
2:00 pm	School resumes (Session 3)
3:00 pm	Dismissal

Children should not be in the school grounds BEFORE 8.15am. Supervision commences at 8:15am. Extraordinary reasons for arriving early must be discussed with School Administration.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Unless there is some extraordinary reason, children should not arrive at the school before 8:15am. It is very important that the children are at school in time for the 8:40am bell.

Children are obliged to leave the school grounds immediately upon dismissal, unless waiting for the arrival of parents or buses.

LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS

Children are not permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours unless accompanied by a parent or unless a note is presented indicating parental permission. Please refer to Early Release section below. Stranger danger warnings are important.

EARLY RELEASES

If it is necessary to collect your child earlier than 3:00pm, you must sign the child out on the ipad, which is kept in the school office. This is so we account for all children in an emergency situation. If your child returns again throughout the same day, they must be signed back in via the ipad.

LATE ARRIVALS

Children who arrive at school after 8.40am need to collect a late slip from the office. This slip is to be presented to their teacher.

PERSONAL DEVICES/MOBILE PHONES/SMART WATCHES AT SCHOOL

If students bring their own personal devices to school, they are required to drop them off at the front office where they will be locked away safely for the day. They can then collect their devices at the end of the school day at 3pm. If parents/carers need to have a message passed onto a student during school hours, they may ring the school office and the message will be relayed to the student.



BUS TRANSPORT

Families requiring bus transport to and from school are serviced by the following operators. Families will need to contact the operator of the relevant service to register.

Route	Route Name	Registered Operator
P586	Aerodrome Road Ray Road/ Jennings Road Slape Road Agius Crescent	Ruggeri's Bus Service
P1546	Ellery Road Wylandra Estate Tilse Street	Ruggeri's Bus Service
P1773	Tinaroo Creek Fichera Rd	Ruggeri's Bus Service
P1874	Marinelli Estate Keanelly Rd Kay Rd Kennedy Highway to Kanervo Rd	Ruggeri's Bus Service
S83	Mt Molloy	Robert Bambino 0429 451 861
P568	Bibohra	Robert Bambino 0429 451 861
P110	Springs Road	Michael Baksaj Ph: 4092 4390 Mobile: 0447 737 554 miknelbaksaj@bigpond.com
P650	Paddys Green	Michael Baksaj
P507	Emerald End Hastie Rd Gilmore Road	Ruggeri's Bus Service Silvano Ruggeri Mobile: 0437 455 888 silvanolinda@bigpond.com Frank Ruggeri Mobile: 0417 613 406 Ph/Fax: 4092 7125
P1545	Malone Road Ceola Drive	Ruggeri's Bus Service
Kuranda	Kuranda	Ruggeri's Bus Service
Atherton/ Rangeview	Atherton/Rangeview	Robert McCarthy Ph: 4092 6462 Fax: 40926462 Mobile: 0417 787 301 Email: robjen02@bigpond.net.au
P609	Chewko Road Roiko Road	Robert Bambino 0429 451 861

ABSENTEES

If a student is absent for whatever reason, please inform the school either by Skoolbag app, telephone, email at secretary.mareeba@cns.catholic.edu.au on the morning of the absence or in advance if the reason is known.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE – SMS MANAGEMENT ALERT

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve our communication with parents and caregivers, St Thomas' has implemented an SMS Message System. The purpose of this system is to improve the efficiency of our communication of student absence to parents.

For this system to be effective it is most important that we have accurate student information data. The system will automatically send the SMS message to the first recorded mobile number listed in the student contacts' section of our student administration system. This will mean that the SMS may be sent to an emergency contact (and not a parent) if this is the first recorded mobile number in our system.

I also ask that parents contact the school if they wish to change the preference order of the recorded emergency contacts.

The school sends SMS Messages to advise parents if their son or daughter is marked absent (unexplained) or are recorded as arriving late to school without explanation.

In situations where the parent has informed the school of the absence there will be no SMS message sent. I encourage all parents to provide timely advice of absence via Parent Portal, email or phone the school.

Advantages of SMS Messaging

- Improve your child's safety with early notification of absence
- Improve the school's ability to reach and contact parents
- Faster communication between the school and parents
- A personal, confidential and discrete service.

A note is also required if a child is unable to participate in any aspect of the school program (eg, sports, physical education, etc).

If your child is to be away for a number of days and requires schoolwork, please give the class teacher at least overnight notice. We ask for your co-operation in this matter.

CUSTODY ISSUES

Where the school is provided with documentation regarding particular court orders that are in place, the school will make every effort to ensure that such orders are adhered to in accordance with the conditions outlined. Parents are advised that the school will under no circumstances take sides in such matters and can only act on the directions given by a court of law. It is up to parents concerned to resolve the legal aspects in such cases and to provide the school with written proof of any alterations to decisions as handed down by the courts.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

When your child is enrolled at school, we will seek information from you which will enable us to act, as far as possible, in accordance with your wishes should the necessity arise. There is a responsibility on the part of parents to see that our school records are up to date as far as addresses and telephone numbers are concerned. In the case of an accident, whether at school or on an excursion, we will firstly attempt to contact a parent.

The school is supplied with First Aid Kits to deal with minor accidents which occur in the playground. In cases of severe accidents or serious illness, the school will contact the ambulance and endeavour to contact parents as soon as possible. If a parent is unavailable, the school will take steps to have the ambulance transport the child to hospital if necessary.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

If a child falls ill at school, after a short period of observation, a decision will be made regarding resumption of normal classes or the contacting of parents/caregivers.

MEDICATION POLICY

The school has the following procedure should your child have prescribed medication by their medical practitioner:

1. Parents or guardians must make a written request to the principal.
2. The student's medication, with the pharmacist label instruction on the container, must be lodged with us for security purposes.
3. Administration of that medication will be carried out by a staff member designated by the Principal.
4. NON-PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL AND WILL NOT BE ADMINISTERED BY SCHOOL STAFF.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS/SEVERE ALLERGIES

Students with diagnosed medical conditions who require treatment and/or management of such conditions must have an Action Plan prepared and signed by a Medical Practitioner supplied to the school.

The school must be kept informed of any changes to an Action Plan during a student's enrolment.

Medical conditions of concern may be, but not limited to:

- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Anaphylaxis

EXCLUSIVE DISEASES

The school is obliged to follow the Health Department's exclusion regulations. Information on exclusion from school periods is as follows:

Chicken Pox	Excluded for at least five (5) days AND until all blisters have dried.
Mumps	Exclude for nine (9) days or until swelling goes down
Rubella (German Measles)	Exclude until fully recovered for at least four (4) days after the onset of rash
Measles	Exclude for at least four (4) days from the appearance of the rash or until a medical certificate of recovery is produced
Whooping Cough	Exclude for fourteen (14) days from onset of coughing or until child has taken five (5) days of an appropriate course of antibiotics
Diphtheria	Re-admit after receipt of a medical certificate of recovery from infection
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received. But not before seven (7) days after the onset of jaundice or illness
Hepatitis B and C	Exclusion not necessary
Influenza & influenza-like illness	Exclude until well
Ringworm/Scabies/Head Lice	Exclude until day after approved treatment has commenced
Impetigo (School Sores)	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing
Conjunctivitis (acute infection)	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased
Meningitis (bacterial)	Exclude until well
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed
Cytomegalovirus	Exclusion not necessary
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased for 24 hours (amoebiasis campylobacter, cryptosporidium, Giardia, rotavirus, salmonella, shigella)
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present
Glandular Fever	Exclusion not necessary
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried
Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while sores are weeping (sores should be covered with a dressing where possible)
Human immune-deficiency virus	Exclusion is not necessary unless the child has a secondary infection
Parvovirus	Exclusion not necessary
Streptococcal infection	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the person feels well
Tuberculosis	Exclude until well and approval to return has been given by a Public Health Unit Physician or delegate
Typhoid Fever	Exclude until well and approval to return has been given by a Public Health Unit Physician or delegate

HEAD LICE

The occurrence of head lice is the most common insect infestation in humans throughout the world. In Queensland, infestation occurs mainly in children of primary school age. However, head lice infestation may affect people of any age, nationality, gender or socio-economic status. It is as much a social issue as a health or educational issue, and the way that it is approached can have significant influence on a student's emotional, social and educational development.

Head lice do not pose any serious health risks but they can be difficult to manage.

Schools have a responsibility for minimising risk to school community members of being affected by head lice while at schools, but parents have responsibility for prevention, detection and treatment of head lice among their own children.

The guidelines for minimising the presence of head lice at school and managing head lice incidents are:

- Kill the lice by using an appropriate shampoo / lotion
- Remove the eggs (nits) by regular combing with a fine tooth comb
- Prevent re-infestation by:
 - regular checking every week
 - checking and treating other family members
 - cautioning children not to use others' brushes and combs

Further information on head lice and its treatment is available at the School.

COMMUNICATION

A vital component of our work together as partners in education is the building and maintenance of good communication. The following procedures are utilised to ensure good two-way communication.

NEWSLETTER

In an endeavour to keep parents fully informed regarding events, happenings and programs occurring in our school, a newsletter link will be emailed monthly on a Wednesday to each family. Other relevant information for students is sent via Parentslips.

INTERVIEWS – PRINCIPAL

Parents wishing to discuss any concerns with the Principal should contact the school to make the necessary arrangements.

INTERVIEWS – TEACHERS

Parents wishing to speak to class teachers are requested to contact the teacher to arrange a suitable time. Teachers are unable to arrange or conduct interviews with parents during teaching time. They are also unable to come to the telephone during class hours, but a message will be taken. Parents should feel welcome to contact the class teacher when any concern or query presents itself.

SMS ALERTS

The SMS Alert system will allow the school to send an SMS in cases of school emergencies or cancellations if required. The SMS system will be integrated with our school and student administration system. For this system to be effective it is most important that we have accurate student information data. The system will automatically send the SMS message to the first recorded mobile number listed in the 'student contacts' section of our student administration system. This will mean that the SMS **may** be sent to an emergency contact (and not a parent) if this is the first recorded mobile number in our system.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Schools have always had a responsibility to assess the achievements of their students. The main purpose of assessment is to provide guidance of one form or another; to the student, so that she/he can identify her/his weakness and strength; to



parents, so that they are aware of their child's progress and to teachers to assess the effectiveness of teaching programs and techniques.

At this school, assessment is of the cumulative type, with evaluation taking place throughout the school year.

To supplement the student's assessment, opportunities to meet in regards to reporting will be provided twice a year (Terms 1 & 3). During these sessions, teachers will confer with parents regarding the attainments and behavioural patterns of students. A written report card will also be issued at the end of each semester.

Parents are most welcome to arrange interviews throughout the year at times other than the formal interview time. These can be arranged with the appropriate teacher.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

The Parents and Friends' (P&F) Association represents all the parents/carers in the school and acts in their interests and on their behalf.

The P&F exists to support the school community and is involved in the total life of the school. Parents/carers, as first educators of their children, have a vital collaborative role to play in the development and implementation of the educational philosophy and policy of the school.

The P&F plays a significant role in the development of a collaborative and cooperative school community where parents/carers are recognised as authentic partners, with teachers and the administration, in the education of our children.

Objectives:

The St Thomas' P&F Association participates in the optimum spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development of pupils in the school by:

- providing a medium of support, information and involvement of parents/carers in our children's education and the School community
- developing collaboration between parents/carers and school staff
- promoting the principles of Catholic education
- fostering a distinctive Christian environment in the school
- providing a medium for parents/carers to participate at Diocesan, State and National levels

Meetings are held once per term as per school calendar and facebook reminders at 5.30pm in the staff room and each family is encouraged to be represented by at least one parent.

The school needs and welcomes the interest and involvement of parents in many ways:

- Tuckshop
- Sporting events/coaching
- Mareeba Markets
- Choir
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Library
- Christmas Carols
- Funtastics
- Clubs eg Chess, Robotics, STEAM
- Reading
- Musical/Talent Quest
- BBQs
- Art/Craft
- Assisting in classrooms
- Making resources
- Band/Instrumental Program
- Excursions/Camps

Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something. ~ Author Unknown

INFORMATION EVENINGS

At various times throughout the year special meetings may be held in order to explain particular aspects of the curriculum.

In the first few weeks of the new school year, an open night or parent information session is conducted. This is an excellent opportunity for parents to discuss aspects of the curriculum and various expectations for the year ahead.

ASSEMBLY

A whole school assembly is scheduled every Friday afternoon at 2.30pm. This is an important point in the week where we pray as a community, sing the National Anthem, acknowledge achievements and pass on important notices. Parents are always most welcome to attend.



SCHOOL FEES

As our school is part of a system, our need to charge fees arises from the policy of successive governments over the years that significantly lower per capita grants provided for students in non-government schools compared to students at Education Queensland schools. This means tuition fees and levies must be charged, but at the same time, ensures we are able to maintain some independence as a system and achieve the ideals of the Catholic Church in operating schools.

It is appreciated that some families may face hardship in meeting these fees. It is important that families who want to access Catholic education for their children are not excluded because they do not have the means to pay fees. It is our expressed policy to assist any family in this situation. Families who will experience personal financial hardship in meeting school fees should contact the principal to discuss fee concessions.

A school fee is charged for children attending a Catholic school in the Cairns Diocese. These fees are fixed by the Catholic Education Services (CES) and are reviewed annually.

Accounts are sent out each term. Fees can be paid on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly or term basis according to your preference. Payment should be made at the school office. The statement of account must accompany payment. School fees are due two weeks after the date of issue.

Parents experiencing financial difficulty may seek to obtain some remission of fees by contacting the school Principal or Parish Priest. If full or partial exemption is granted, it is done only on an annual basis.

SCHOOL FEES FOR 2024

2024 per Student Schedule will be published on the school's website prior to the end of the 2024 school year.

TUITION FEE DISCOUNTS FOR HOLDERS OF MEANS-TESTED HEALTH CARE & PENSIONER CONCESSION CARDS

In 2024 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Cairns will continue to provide a discount on tuition fees for holders of means-tested Health Care and Pensioner Concession Cards.

The discount applies to tuition fees and not to school levies and charges.

The cards must be current and list, as dependents, the students for whom the discount is sought.

HOW TO APPLY

Parents and carers should present their eligible card to the school office for verification. The school will make a copy of the card and provide a Health Care Card Tuition Fee Discount Scheme Form for the parent/carer to complete – this is a single page form. The fee discount will then be applied to tuition fees on future term invoices. For families with children at a number of Cairns Catholic schools this process must be repeated for each school.

The discount arrangement will expire on the expiry date of the card or at the end of the school year. Parents and carers receiving the discount have a duty to inform the school of any renewal or change in eligibility for the card.

In 2023 a discount of 70% on tuition fees will apply to holders of eligible cards.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICES LEVY

A part of our school fees go to the Catholic Education Services (CES) which helps to pay teachers' wages and to support staff with in-service courses to keep the teaching staff up to date on current education initiatives. Every school pays a percentage of their fees to the CES for this purpose.

SCHOOL LEVIES

In addition to this Tuition Fee there will be:

PER FAMILY FEES:-

- Building Levy
- Maintenance Levy
- P & F Fundraising Levy

PER STUDENT LEVIES:-

- PREP
- Year 1 - Year 6

The levy is used to cover the following:

- Arts Council Performances
- Water Safety
- Resources – classroom
- P&F State Levy
- Excursions
- Supplementary learning materials and teaching aids for the classroom
- Licensing
- First Aid supplies
- Art and craft material
- Duplicating and photocopying
- Year 6 Senior Shirt

ADDITIONAL FEES:

YEAR 5 & 6 DIARY

Please return the accounts with payment in order to ensure the correct account is receipted.

Payment options are available. We have facilities for this to be taken out of your wages, bank account, BPay or transfers can be made via internet banking. Please call into the school administration for further details.

No child will be denied a Catholic education purely on financial grounds. No student will be excluded from St Thomas' School because of his/her parents' inability to pay school fees and levies due to legitimate financial hardship, however St Thomas' has employed the services of a Debt Collection Agency to recover outstanding fees.



UNIFORM POLICY

GOSPEL VALUES:

Community, Justice, Respect, Compassion

POLICY:

Because we are equal before God, St Thomas' School will require that all students wear the prescribed uniform as set down in the Parent Handbook.

CONSEQUENCES:

Each child will feel part of a faith family where a sense of unity and pride is extended through the wearing of a school uniform.

Class, economic and social distinctions will be minimised through the wearing of a uniform, eliminating inequity brought about by competition and fashion.

All pupils will adhere to a prescribed summer and winter uniform.

Changes to the uniform will be rare and undertaken only after due consultation and in the interest of economy, suitability and durability.

Personal neatness and grooming will be encouraged through our personal development program.

IMPLEMENTATION:

A letter must accompany any deviation from the prescribed uniform by a pupil from a parent/guardian.

All clothing and apparel should be clearly marked with the child's name.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

School uniform is to be worn to and from school. Lack of uniform or part thereof, is to be explained in a note to the class teacher.

Bare feet, thongs or reef sandals are not allowed.

HAT	School Navy Blue wide-brimmed bucket hat (Years 1-6) School Navy Blue Legionnaire's Hat (Prep)
SOCKS	White (visible)
SHOES	Black school shoes/black joggers – (Plain)
SHIRT	School shirt
SHORTS	School Navy shorts/skort (With school name embroidered)
WINTER UNIFORM	A plain regulation navy blue, V/round necked sweatshirt pullover / tracksuit. (No variation eg white stripes, fashion labels, etc)
SPORTS' UNIFORM	Worn on Fridays. Sports House shirt (Mills – Blue, O'Connor – Orange, Phelan – Purple, Power – Yellow) and Black Shorts

Uniforms are available from our supplier in Mareeba (Credit Card and Layby Facilities)

Tina's Fashions
Uniform Supplier, Alterations and Repairs

Byrnes Street, Mareeba

Telephone : 40924 096

Email: gtmontagner@activ8.net.au

Trading Hours – Monday - Friday 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

HAIR

Hair must be kept off the face for personal hygiene. Ribbons/scrunchies are to be in school colours (blue, red or white)

All long/shoulder length hair is to be tied back or plaited. This applies to males and females as it discourages head lice. No hair colour/tints

JEWELLERY

Due to Workplace Health & Safety the wearing of jewellery is limited to the following:

- Earrings – Studs or small sleeper – (Maximum two per ear)
- Watch
- One neck chain with religious medallion or cross attached
- Medical alert chain/bracelet acceptable.
- Rings – Flat signet ring – one only

No body piercing

No fingernail polish (clear nail polish allowed)

No makeup



HOMEWORK - GUIDELINES

Reading is considered a priority and is the most important element of the homework set for each year level. Homework is designed to consolidate and support the learning of concepts taught at school and to establish positive habits and routines. In the upper year levels, homework is regarded as important in promoting time management skills and self-discipline, which are essential as students prepare for secondary education.

Guidelines for time spent on homework (Monday to Thursday)

Year Level	Reading	Other	Total per day
1	10 minutes	5 minutes	15 minutes
2/3	10 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes
4/5	10 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes
6	20 minutes	25 minutes	45 minutes

The parents' role is to provide support and encouragement and above all, to take an interest in the work being done. This does not mean that they do the homework for their child.

Why is homework so important?

1. It encourages independent learning skills that are so important for later schooling.
2. It establishes good work habits. A regular and consistent approach to study prevents last-minute panic.
3. Homework, which involves practise and revision of what is known, helps to consolidate learning. Students need to exercise skills that are already acquired.

Homework tips for parents

1. Help your son or daughter to find a quiet place where noise is not intrusive, lighting is adequate and where there is a suitable surface for spreading out books and papers.
2. There is no ideal time. However, help your child establish a time when he or she can work best and keep this time consistent so that a routine develops.
3. Balance the amount of time spent on homework with other needs such as sport, having fun, watching a television program and spending time with the family. Alienation from school can grow if your child never seems to be finished with homework.
4. Provide support for project work by helping to find materials such as books, maps, pictures and websites.
5. Take an interest in what homework is being given and discuss this with your child.
6. Remember, praise and taking pleasure in your child's efforts and achievements is a much better motivator than punishment and fear.

*****CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW*****

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

All parents are requested to ensure their child's behaviour upholds the values of the school at all times whilst wearing the school uniform.

The School's Code of Behaviour is based on three rules. Teachers use these three rules when developing individual classroom discipline plans and refer to them during preventative, corrective and supportive actions of behaviour management.

Management of student behaviour is based on a whole-school approach ensuring consistency and fairness throughout the school.

ST THOMAS' SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

BELIEF STATEMENT

"Fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything we love and honour and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you have learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the peace of God will be with you"

Philippians 4:8-9

St Thomas' Catholic School Community holds the following core beliefs about student behaviour and its management.

We believe that:-

- Students choose their behaviour
- Every single student can behave acceptably in school
- Students will vary in their ability to control their own behaviour
- Managing student behaviour is a skill, procedure and a set of techniques which teaching and non teaching staff can develop and use effectively for the benefit of all students
- Our school and community can positively influence students' behaviour and academic performance
- A student's every action has a consequence
- Ongoing professional development of staff can enhance student behaviour.

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

St Thomas' Community will provide a supportive school environment where:-

- All members (school staff, parents and students) feel safe and are valued
- Physical, emotional, social and academic learning outcomes are maximized for all through quality curriculum, interpersonal relationships and school organisation
- School practices involve a continuum of action from proactive to the reactive
- Non-violent and non-discriminatory language and practices are defined, modeled and reinforced
- Suspension and exclusion procedures are considered only when all other approaches have been exhausted.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The School's Code of Behaviour is based on the three rules of respect listed below. Teachers will use these when developing a classroom discipline plan. The rules are also reflected in students' Behaviour Contracts and will be referred to during preventative, corrective and supportive action. Our Behaviour Management is based on Restorative Justice Principles.

- **Treat ourselves with Respect**
- **Treat all people with Respect**
- **Treat all property with Respect**

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - STUDENTS

RIGHTS

Have the right to:

- learn in a pleasant and safe environment
- learn without being interrupted by others
- be treated with courtesy and respect by everyone in the school community
- express themselves and be individuals in a socially acceptable manner
- have possessions respected by others
- feel proud of their school



RESPONSIBILITIES

Have the responsibility to further their learning by:

- being prepared for classes
- caring for property

Have the responsibility of treating others with respect by:-

- showing courtesy
- being considerate
- being tolerant of others' views
- obeying instructions

Have the responsibility to care for their school by:

- Respecting our grounds, buildings and equipment and other people's property
- Playing safely and obeying safety instructions

Have the responsibility to act in a manner that promotes a good public image of themselves and our school

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

RIGHTS

Have the right to:

- be treated with courtesy and respect and recognized as the major influence upon their child's development
- be able to express themselves on matters of school policy
- know that their child's school environment will be safe
- meet with school personnel at a mutually convenient time
- be fully informed of their child's progress

RESPONSIBILITIES

Have the responsibility to:

- provide support and feedback to the school regarding this Behaviour Management Plan
- ensure their child accepts the School Code of Behaviour
- consult with school personnel at a mutually convenient time about any concerns
- ensure your child is appropriately prepared for school activities
- inform the school of their child's particular needs

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ALL STAFF – TEACHING AND NON TEACHING

RIGHTS

You have the right to:

- be treated with courtesy and respect
- be free from disruption in the classroom
- work in a safe, attractive environment
- use professional judgement in meeting the diverse needs of the students
- receive support from parents and the school community
- express a point of view within a collaborative problem solving process
- co-operate with the other staff in both personal and professional matters

RESPONSIBILITIES

You have the responsibility to

- encourage and maintain acceptable patterns of behaviour in the classroom and school environment
- establish classroom/workplace rules performance of their duties and procedures
- familiarize children with school rules and be a role model
- see that the Behaviour Management planning is consistently implemented
- care about our school, its people and equipment
- be punctual and thoroughly prepared to maximize learning for all students

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – ADMINISTRATION

(Including Principal, Assistant Principal & CES Officers)

Rights

You have the right to:

- be treated with respect and courtesy
- be informed of information relevant to:
 - student behaviour and learning
 - Staff
 - Catholic Education Services policies and directives
 - Opportunities for professional development
- exercise discretionary rights/powers when deemed necessary
- manage student behaviour

Responsibilities

You have the responsibility to:

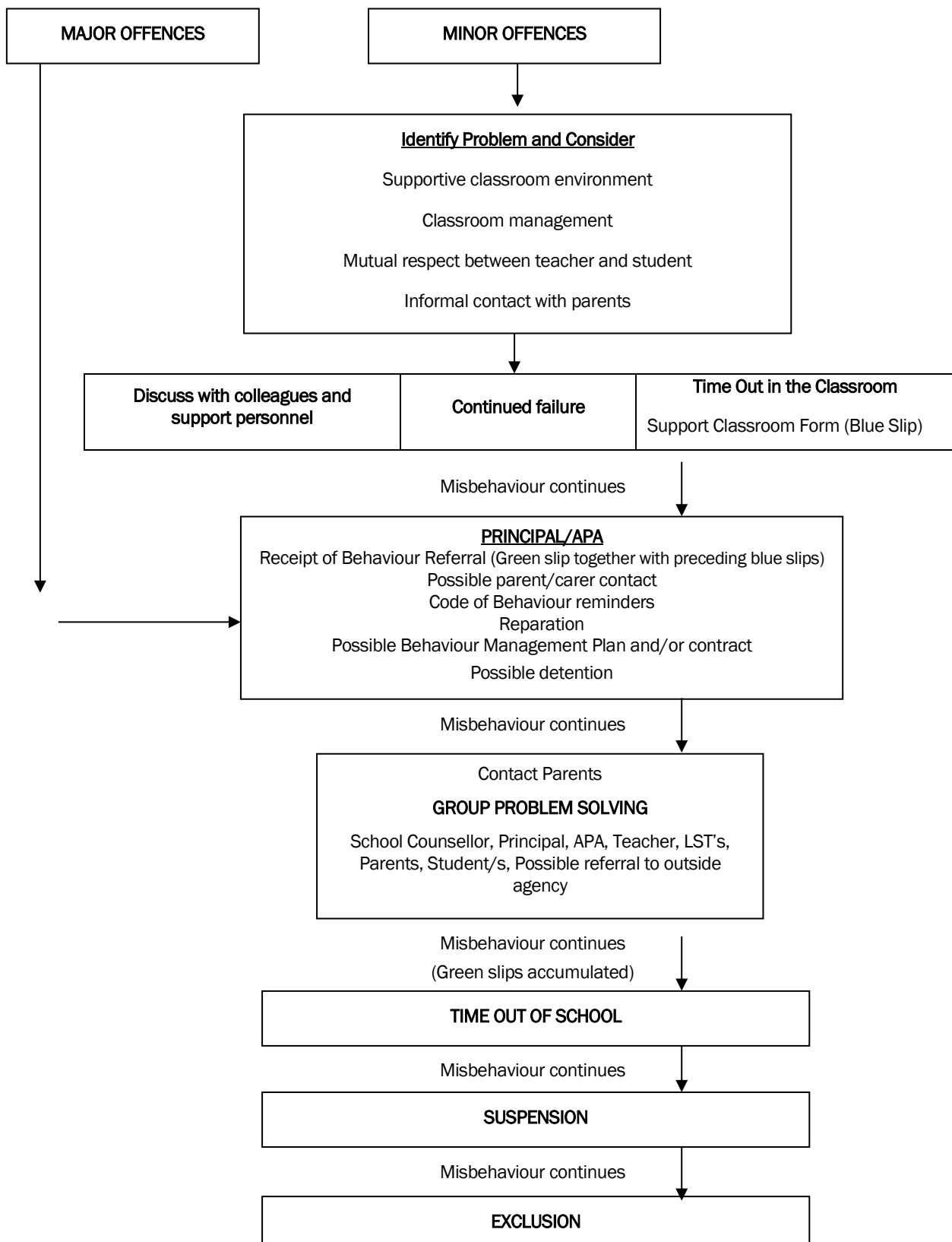
- respect other people's rights
- communicate relevant information to interested parties
- facilitate school decision making
- ensure the rights of all school community members are preserved and that their responsibilities are carried out
- ensure the implementation and maintenance of this policy
- continue building an open and supportive school

MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

In cases where students have not complied with school rules, have not respected the rights of others, or have not fulfilled their own responsibilities, steps and procedures from Classroom and Playground Behaviour Action Plans may be followed. See *Classroom Behaviour Flow Chart* and *Playground Behaviour Flow Chart* for details of these processes.



MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT BEHAVIOUR - CLASSROOM





GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS WHO HAVE ISSUES/CONCERNS REGARDING STUDENTS:-

In these cases the correct procedure is to contact:-

- The teacher concerned
- The Assistant Principal
- The Principal
- The Parish Priest

It is not appropriate for a parent to take it upon themselves to approach another parent or child/student while on the school grounds about any concern which should have been directed through the above channels. All concerns must be referred to the appropriate school employee.

GENERAL

PROCEDURE FOR BRINGING CHILDREN TO AND FROM PREP:

We ask your cooperation to ensure children are delivered and collected promptly from Prep by a responsible adult. If you have any problems or delays with collecting your child, please telephone as soon as possible.

If your child is to be absent from Prep, please notify the teacher.

The school must be notified beforehand if another person has been nominated to collect your child.

Parents whose children travel by bus to and from Prep should inform the teacher in writing, so that appropriate procedures are adopted. Parents should phone the office on any day on which these arrangements are to be changed ie. Parents will be collecting the child in person that day.

HOME AND SCHOOL:

At St Thomas', we understand that children learn both in and out of school.

It is essential that the role of parents as educators is recognised, and that a complementary partnership between teachers and parents/caregivers is developed and maintained for the benefit of the children and the community as a whole.

We also recognise that young children are very dependent on their immediate family and take into account the particular needs of the family in today's society.

CELEBRATIONS:

At St Thomas' we love to celebrate the life with which God our Father has gifted us. Please feel free to share with us any exciting or special days in your family's life. All birthdays at Prep will be remembered in prayer and celebration. Please feel free to bring a cake to share with the children. Parents are welcome to stay and share this special time with your child. (Please note that lolly bags are not appropriate)

TOYS:

We do not allow children to bring toys or jewellery to Prep. Your child is most welcome to bring other things of interest which he/she may have found and about which he/she might like to talk to the other children.

AFTERNOON TEA:

We recommend that a piece of fruit, sultanas or other healthy snacks are included for afternoon tea. (Sweet, high sugar level foods are not appropriate)

LUNCH:

As we teach good nutritional habits, a salad or sandwiches with fruit and a drink of milk or fruit juice is an option for each day. Lunch should be provided in a lunch box clearly named and include an ice pack to keep your child's lunch fresh. A drink bottle of water is optional as bubblers are on each patio.

SCHOOL LIBRARY

An excellent library and resource centre has been established at the school.

Borrowing facilities are available to the children and parents. Loans are limited to two books for two weeks. To protect books in transit, students are expected to have a school library bag which can be purchased from the front office. It is expected that books damaged, or lost through careless handling will be replaced by parents. A fee of \$15 will apply to each lost or damaged item.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC MAIL – CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF CAIRNS

We are pleased to offer students of St Thomas', Mareeba access to the CENet computer network for electronic mail. Access to e-mail and the Internet enables students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, St Thomas' School supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

ST THOMAS' SCHOOL INTERNET USER AGREEMENT

St Thomas' School actively supports students accessing information resources with the development, by staff, of appropriate skills to analyze and evaluate such resources. We recognize that technology continually changes and evolves and with that student instruction and learning will change and evolve as well. The school recognizes that electronic information research skills are now required as essential tools.

St Thomas' School expects staff to incorporate appropriate use of information technology throughout the curriculum. Teachers will provide both guidance and instruction to students in their daily use of this resource. Teachers will facilitate and support students when accessing information to help enrich their learning, while taking into account the various learning styles, abilities, needs and development levels of students. Access is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility!

Students must have signed a permission form before being allowed to access the internet. This form is given to parents who enrol their child/ren. Parents are asked to discuss the guidelines of usage as stated on the Information and Communication Technologies Acceptable Use Policy.

SCHOOL COMPUTER NETWORK

Students are responsible for good behaviour on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behaviour and communications apply. The network is provided for students to conduct research and to communicate with others in our collaborative learning community. Access to network services is provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access entails responsibility. Individual users of the school computer network are responsible for their behaviour and communications over the network. It is presumed that users will comply within school standards. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review student documents to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly.

The following are not permitted:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging computers and computer networking equipment
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another's password
- Trespassing in another's folders, work or files

- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes.

Violations may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary action.

SPORT

All children are given the opportunity to participate in the school's sporting program. Organised games and skills development are a regular and important component of the school curriculum. Participation in these programs is compulsory and we confidently anticipate your support in encouraging your child to take part. A note must be given to teachers which details reasons if a child is to be excused. The whole school also participates in the annual athletics carnival and cross country.

SWIMMING

A Water Safety Awareness program is conducted in either Term 1 for Years 4 - 6 or Term 4 for Prep – Year 3. The program promotes water confidence, awareness and safety. For this program to function effectively, parents are asked to assist with taking small groups. Year 4 – 6 also participates in the annual swimming carnival.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

Class, individual and family photos are taken each year. Parents who wish to purchase photos must order and pay for them before they are taken. Details are sent home as soon as they are received from the photographer.

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

Excursions form an important part of the school program. These are usually class-based and are designed to reinforce and consolidate what the students have been learning. If your child's class is planning an excursion, your child's teacher will notify you in advance. A consent form will be sent home for you to complete and sign.

LOST PROPERTY

It is inevitable that, from time to time, children's belongings will be mislaid or lost. All found items are placed on the Lost Property stand which is located near the Administration block. Parents should encourage children to check there when items have been lost. Parents are invited to check it at their own convenience. It is essential that all property, especially hats and jumpers, be marked clearly with the child's name. Regular checks are necessary to ensure that the name is still visible. These baskets are emptied regularly and unclaimed/unnamed articles sent to the St. Vincent de Paul's shop.

UNIFORM SHOP

A second-hand uniform pool is in operation at the school. Parents are encouraged to donate any uniforms/shoes etc. that your child may have out-grown. Second-hand uniforms may be obtained from the office at any time when items become available.

TUCKSHOP

The school's Tuckshop is open every day for first break. Our Mini Vinnies students will be opening the tuckshop every Friday at second break commencing Friday 23rd February 2024 with a minimal snack menu. This second break is not available on Flexischools.

Online Ordering – www.flexischools.com.au

SCHOOL BUSES

Bus services to most outlying areas transport children to and from school each day. Teachers supervise the boarding of the buses each afternoon.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & GENERAL EVACUATION DRILL

The school has an evacuation procedure in place in the event of fire, bomb threat or natural disaster. The staff and students are aware of the procedures and regular practices are carried out. Evacuation maps and procedures are displayed in all areas of the school.

EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of cyclones or flooding, students will be sent home after parents have been contacted. In emergency situations the local radio stations will broadcast messages with regard to school operation.

CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

It is important that parents inform the school of any changes in address, contact names, telephone numbers or other particulars stated on the original Enrolment Form. This information must be given to the school as soon as a change occurs for the safety and well-being of your children. Online options such as Parent Portal can be used to notify the school of any changes.

SUN-SAFE POLICY

At St Thomas' School, we have a 'NO Hat, NO Play' Policy to reduce the risk of sun-related skin damage. This applies to all playground activities including Physical Education lessons, sports activities, etc.

MONEY

There may be instances when money is needed to be sent to school ie school photos. You will be fully informed about these activities beforehand. All money coming to the school should be in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with name, grade, purpose, and should be handed in to the school office.

PLAY AREAS

All play areas are available to all students. However, play equipment designated for older children is to be used only for students in years 4 – 6.

- When children leave the classrooms at break times, they must wear a hat. The "NO HAT, NO PLAY" rule applies.
- Children are encouraged to play fair and to play safely.
- Objects considered dangerous to health or safety or which are offensive or could cause disruption should not be brought to school.
- Children bring toys, equipment and games to school at their own risk.
- HARD balls (i.e. cricket and softballs) are to be used only in organised games supervised by teachers.

OUT OF BOUNDS FOR PLAY

Footpaths, bike racks, under buildings, stairways, and the Infant playground are out of bounds before school.



INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Definition:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) refers to any

- computer hardware and associated equipment e.g. Computers, cameras, scanners, video
- computer software
- school internal network
- school internet – world wide web and email

Educational Rationale:

St Thomas of Villanova Parish School is committed to providing a technology rich environment for our students. We see the inclusion of ICT as a valuable resource across the curriculum.

The Internet provides a tool for students to research and discover information from around the globe. It provides students with learning opportunities that may not be possible in the traditional classroom as well as catering for different learning styles. The Internet allows our students to link instantly with students from other nations and to discover more about the world in which we live. It provides students with an opportunity to publish their own work for others to share and the opportunity to work collaboratively with others.

The school's email system is provided through Google Apps. Consequently staff and student emails and email account details may be transferred, stored and processed in the United States or any other country utilised by Google to provide the Google Apps services. In using the school's email system, staff and students consent to this transfer, processing and storage of that information.

School personnel responsible for the email system may have the ability to access, monitor, use or disclose emails and associated administrative data for the purposes of administering the system and ensuring its proper use. In using the school's email system staff and students consent to such access, use and disclosure.

Student Access to ICT:

Students from P – 6 have individual logins to the local area network as well as the internet. St Thomas' School has ventured into the exciting world of cloud computing. Google Apps provide students with access to a broad range of tools they can use for creating, communicating and sharing, in order to enhance the students' individual learning experience. The individual login consists of a username and password.

Security and Safety Measures:

- Filtering software is in place to prevent access to inappropriate web sites. No filtering is fail-proof, so students are instructed on the process to follow if inappropriate content appears.
- Emails are filtered. Unacceptable language and content will be redirected to a nominated staff member.
- Students are expected to inform teachers of bullying or inappropriate emails they receive or unacceptable websites they find.

School Responsibilities:

- Provide and maintain adequate computer technology.
- Offer a curriculum where ICT is integral and allows for the development of skills, which students will use in the future.
- Provide a monitoring, filtering and virus protection service.
- Monitor the use of ICT, ensuring students and staff rights to privacy and personal wellbeing are maintained.
- Ensure that information published on the internet by students or the school meets legal requirements and standards in relation to copyright and safety.

Students have the right to:

- Use the internet and network for educational purposes.
- Send and receive emails for educational purposes.
- Send and receive emails for personal use provided they comply with the ethos of St Thomas of Villanova School.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students will remember their personal password for access and will not give this information to another student.
- Students will respect the work of others that may be saved and shared via the network or the internet
- Students will send emails with appropriate language and content.
- Students who receive inappropriate email must notify their teacher immediately.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Parents are asked to support the school:
 - In the selection of suitable sites.
 - By discussing privacy and safety issues with their child.
 - By discussing with their children copyright laws.

Staff Responsibilities:

- To supervise Internet usage and email.
- Monitor and teach responsible use of printing.

Breaching the Acceptable Use Policy:

If a student misuses the resources provided, appropriate consequences will be negotiated with student, parents and teacher/s. These consequences may result in the following:

- withdrawal of use of computers in the school for a period of time as deemed appropriate.
- withdrawal of internet access for a period of time as deemed appropriate.
- parents notified.



Students and parents must sign the 'Acceptable Use of Computer and Internet Resources' agreement before students can access the school network and Internet.

BULLYING POLICY

Policy Statement

St Thomas' Mareeba, practises a 'zero tolerance' approach to bullying in all its forms. Our school and school community endorses the right to safety of all school community members. Bullying undermines this right and prevents students from achieving their full potential in the educational and social setting. Bullying affects all members of the school community, not simply the person doing the bullying or the victim, and can damage the supportive environment of the class and of the school in general. For these reasons, bullying cannot be tolerated and must be addressed with immediacy and consistency.

Definitions of Bullying

Bullying involves the abuse of power with the intention of causing distress to the other person(s), or for personal gain or gratification. Behaviours may include repeated behaviour that can be covert and subtle, and be social, psychological, verbal, physical, and/or sexual in nature.

For ease of student understanding and identification of bullying, the school has defined bullying for students and staff in relation to three specific behaviours. (Charts in wording appropriate to specific age groups to be displayed in rooms and play areas.) The three behaviours are:-

1. Teasing

- Use of name-calling, actions and gestures, words, rumours to hurt or ostracise.

2. Stealing

- Unauthorised removal of possessions.
- Preventing others from being involved in social opportunities.
- Preventing others from accessing teaching and/or learning time.

3. Unwelcome Touches

- Any deliberate touch of a person's body without their permission.

Aims of this policy

1. To counter views that bullying is an unavoidable part of school life.
2. To overcome communication barriers associated with bullying.
3. To create a safe and supportive teaching/learning environment for students and staff.
4. To proactively promote a school climate where bullying behaviours are not tolerated and are infrequent in incidence.

Responsibilities of the school community

Parent/caregiver responsibilities

1. Watch for early warning signs, including a reluctance to go to school, unexplained illnesses or injury, missing possessions, moodiness.
2. Take an active interest in your child's school and social life. Encourage talking about daily events and occurrences.
3. If you suspect bullying of your child at school, record any details and contact the class teacher or school administration.
4. Encourage your child to report persistent school bullying to those in the best position to provide immediate help, i.e. the teaching staff and administration.
5. Assure your child that seeking help is okay and an assertive measure.
6. Do not encourage your child to hit back or verbally abuse the bully.

7. Be prepared to assist the school in modifying your child's behaviour if he or she is identified as being involved in bullying behaviours. Do not accept personal blame for the child's actions; instead, support the school in its endeavours to assist your child.
8. Bullying procedures to be included in Handbook, the school internet site and advertised at P&F meetings and through school newsletters.

Student responsibilities

ACTION PLAN FOR PERCEIVED BULLYING

Students will adopt an assertive, sequential response to all incidents of bullying involving themselves or others. This response will take the following form:-

- **Tell the bully to stop**

This identifies for the bully that his/her behaviours are unacceptable to the victim, and provides the bully with the opportunity to modify his/her behaviour without further consequence. It also establishes the victim's control over handling the situation.

If the bullying does not cease immediately, or has caused significant physical or emotional harm, tell someone in authority (e.g. Teacher, Teacher Aide, Assistant Principal, Principal)

1. The student, if unable to stop the bullying, should report all incidents to the nearest available staff member. Immediacy of reporting is essential.
2. Students (victim, bully and witnesses) may be required to discuss reported incidents with a Teacher, Assistant Principal or Principal. Such discussion will occur as soon as possible after the incident.
3. Parents/caregivers of students involved may be informed of the outcomes of investigations, and a record of an incident attached to the student's file, if deemed appropriate and necessary.
4. Bullies will be requested to apologise to their victim/s, in the form of a verbal or written apology, as an early step in dealing with the situation. Failure by the bully to exercise this option will result in further consequences being applied.
5. In the case of frequent or significant incidents of bullying by a student, the parents/caregivers may be required to attend an interview to discuss possible consequences and assist the school in planning a strategy to modify the child's behaviour.

Staff responsibilities

IDENTIFICATION OF BULLYING

1. Watch for early warning signs of bullying in students (e.g. apparent behaviour change, physical injuries, emotional distress).
2. Record all incidences of bullying, including action taken. Complete Behaviour Incident Referral Forms to submit to Administration. Where deemed necessary, specific incidents will be recorded in relevant student files. Administration to keep a register of bullying incidents, offer the victim immediate support and help, but avoid 'bullying' the bully.
3. Use the Six Thinking Hats Reflection and/or Class Meetings to discuss bullying in class sessions when the need arises (e.g. after incidents).
4. Monitor all areas of the school during breaks and in between lessons.

EDUCATION OF SCHOOL COMMUNITY

1. All students and parents, on enrolment at the school, should be made aware of the school's Bullying Policy, including expectations and consequences.
2. Education of all year levels will occur through the school's social skills programmes (Social Emotional Learning Plan – SEL), within the context of the curriculum and during monthly school assemblies.
3. Where possible, parents/caregivers will be included in the education process and informed of developments within the school in the area of bullying at P&F meetings and through school newsletters.

4. All teaching staff will undertake regular professional development (termly – at staff meetings) in regard to bullying issues and their professional responsibilities in combating bullying.

ACTION PLAN FOR BULLYING INCIDENTS

Teachers will adopt a logical and sequential approach when responding to reports of bullying, using the following process:-

1. Teacher/Leadership interrupts any ongoing bullying that may be occurring.
2. Teacher/Leadership listens to all sides of the story (victim, person bullying and available witnesses to the incident, where possible).
3. Teacher/Leadership requests an apology from the identified student/s doing the bullying. This may include the reporting student (victim), if bullying behaviours on their part have been identified. Bullies may also be requested to replace any personal property damaged.
4. Any student who refuses to apologise, or who re-offends after the apology, will complete a Reflection Form in class, at detention, or in Administration. This will then be discussed with the teacher/Leadership.
5. If the student re-offends after reflection, then in-class withdrawal (via seating plan) or short-term playground withdrawal will occur to separate the bully from his/her victims.
6. If the student continues to bully despite previous measures, then alternative classroom withdrawal (movement to another classroom for a period ranging from one session to one day) or long-term playground withdrawal (one day to one week) will be used.
7. In unison with Step 6, parents will be contacted either by phone or in writing, and informed of the situation. If deemed necessary, a parent conference will be held to discuss issues and collaboratively formulate a solution. This may take the form of an Individual Behaviour Management Plan.
8. For extreme incidences of bullying (e.g. physical assault) or where previous steps have failed to modify student behaviour then suspension (1-20 days) and possibly exclusion of the student may occur.

Referenced from: Miles, P. (2003). Don't Just Stand There. Yell Something! North Ryde: McGraw Hill.

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