RATIONAL
At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we believe that the relationship between the home and the school is a very important part of ensuring that children are happy, secure and open to learning. We recognise that parents, students and teachers need to work closely together to provide the best educational opportunities for the children. As a school community we are committed to working together to meet the differing needs of the various members of our community. This occurs most effectively when staff, students and parents are working towards the same ends. Central to achieving this is trust and open, effective communication between the people within the school community.

AIMS
To ensure:

• That effective communication between school community members takes place.
• That processes are in place that allow for open and honest communication amongst school community members.
• That confidential information is managed in a manner consistent with community expectations, professional standards and legal obligations.
• That clear, positive and fair processes are provided that allow issues or concerns be aired and resolved in a timely and effective manner.
• That a positive, productive and harmonious school environment is maintained.

*All members of the St Thomas More Community are expected to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the Communications Policy. All members need to acknowledge that they have read and understood these expectations by signing an agreement register at the beginning of each school year.

**The school does not at any stage use corporal punishment
**Ways in which STM will communicate with Parents / Caregivers:**

Communication with parents in the school community occurs in a variety of forms:

- **Assemblies**
  Whole school or level assemblies are held regularly and parents are invited to attend.

- **School Newsletter**
  A regular Newsletter is provided to families through email, the school website and by hard copy upon request. Teachers read the Newsletter with their class of students in order to ensure they are also aware of its content. The newsletter aims to keep parents informed of current school events, school routines, future events and current educational issues.

- **Email**
  Regular emails are sent from the school notifying caregivers of important dates, events, forms, newsletters and more. Emails are also sent from individual staff members/classroom teachers as the need arises.

- **Blogs:** Each year level communicates through a Blog (accessed through the school website, under the Learning & Teaching link) that outlines the curriculum foci for that term. The Blogs also include updates on what students are covering in class, important dates, notices and information about excursions etc for that term. Parents are encouraged to check the Blog weekly to remain up to date with what is happening in their child’s class.

- **Flyers & brochures:** Whilst most of the information sent to parents is done electronically, copies of notes and brochures are always available from the office. For these either see the brochure holders in the office foyer or ask at the front desk.

- **Parish Newsletters:** Parish newsletters are forwarded to all families via email but are also available from the Church.

- **Information sessions**
  Information sessions are held each year. These sessions focus on Teaching and Learning across the curriculum and Sacramental Programs. An annual information session for new enrolments is also held.

- **Parent Reps:** Each class will select a parent to act as parent representative. Parent Rep’s will act as a link between the classroom teacher and parents. They will assist in communicating information about class events, organising help for class activities and building community between the parents in their class.

- **STM Website:**
  The school website contains information about the school which is pertinent to families and appropriate for viewing of the wider community.

- **First Aid slips:** Parents will receive a slip from the office if their child has received treatment in the first aid room.
- **Phone calls**: STM staff will make phone calls to parents / caregivers for a variety of reasons. These include: relaying information about children’s progress, arranging appointments, notification of behavioural issues, notification of bumps to the head, ongoing absenteeism, outstanding fees etc.

- **Information Packages**: Information packages are given to each new family as they enter the school. They are also given to prospective families. The package contains an enrolment form, school flyer and the link to the parent information booklet which is also housed on the school website.

- **Sacramental Parent/Child Workshops**
  Parent/child workshops are planned for families who have children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation for the first time.

- **Celebrations of Learning**
  Celebrations of Learning are held at the conclusion of a unit of inquiry and/or at other times. This provides families with the opportunity to view the achievements of students in the form of presentations created by the students about their learning.

- **Parent / Teacher Meetings**
  At the beginning of each school year, a *Parent/Teacher Exchange Meeting* will take place. The purpose of this meeting is for parents to provide the child’s classroom teacher with information about their child.

  At mid-year, parents are invited to attend a *Three Way Conferences*, where they will receive their child’s *Report* and *Student Portfolio*. This opportunity provides parents and students with information regarding student achievement and progress.

  At the end of the year, parents receive a *Report* and *Student Portfolio* and are provided with the opportunity to meet with their child’s teachers upon request.

- **Program Support Group Meetings (PSG meetings)** For those students who are eligible for:
  - LNSLN funding,
  - New Arrivals funding
  - EAL support (English as an Additional Language),
  - Support for specific learning needs

  A *Program Support Group Meeting* is held once each term. The purpose of these meetings is for student progress and achievement to be communicated to families and for goals to be set for the following term.

- **Parent notice board**: Notices given throughout the term will be displayed on the parent notice board currently located in between the office and the library.

- **Parent Helper Timetable**: Parents helping in the classroom are requested to record their availability on the timetable placed in the office on the windows next to the front desk.
How the STM Community can communicate with STM Staff

1. **Daily Parent and Teacher Communication time:** For quick updates or brief messages, classroom teachers will be in their classrooms and available to see Parents/ Caregivers between 8:40 – 8:50am each morning.

2. **Student Diaries:** Feel free to communicate information or arrange meeting times through your child’s diary. These are checked often by your child’s teacher and are a good medium for communication.

3. **Making appointments:** Members of the STM Community are most welcome to make appointments to see staff. Appointments with teachers can be made after school, however as Mondays and Tuesdays are meeting nights, please avoid making appointments on these days.

4. **Letters/ emails:** Parents can communicate in writing via the Principal’s email – principal@stmhadfield.catholic.edu.au or their classroom teacher’s email (refer to the office for individual emails).

   Please allow time for your communication to be responded to.

   **If a parent chooses to use email to contact the Principal, they should only identify the issue and make an appointment to speak in person.**

Please ensure that all communication is respectful and as objective as possible.

   Please take into account how the communication will be received.

Anonymous communication (excluding feedback forms provided by the school) will not be addressed.
For extenuating circumstances or for communicating family matters please see the following flow chart:

**Communicating family matters**

1. **The parent contacts the Principal to discuss the matter.**
2. **If necessary the parent and Principal will meet with the classroom teacher to discuss the matter and the possible implications for the student in the school setting.**
3. **At the request of the parent, counselling can be sought for the child.**
4. **In the event that the parent contacts a staff member other than the Principal in the first instance:**
   a. The staff member must direct the parent to meet with the Principal, and/or
   b. Record the purpose and content of the meeting and communicate it to the Principal.
It is essential that staff members of the school communicate information in agreement with established protocols so as to preserve the professionalism of the school, to protect the rights of individuals, to uphold our duty of care to students and comply with CEOM, CEVN and legal requirements.

- Our school has a policy of open and cooperative communication. This practice, however, recognises that staff members have legal, departmental, local, professional and social obligations with regards to the communication of information.
- We will provide annually two formal written reports, individual learning plans (where appropriate), three way conferences and celebrations of learning for students, additional interviews upon agreement and a community report.
- The Information Privacy Act and the Health Records Act 2001 require that schools protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual’s right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- The school will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.
- Any person seeking information from the school that falls outside the school’s previous practices must be directed to the Principal who may require that a formal written letter of request be made.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students must be directed to the Principal. Requests from Department of Human Services personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- All staff will comply with restraining orders and court subpoenas to provide information at all times.

**Staff protocols for communication with parents:**

Information that staff will need to communicate to the school in writing includes:

1. requests for paid / unpaid leave
2. maternity leave
3. resignation

**Information that staff must communicate in writing to the Principal**
Confidentiality is a fundamental attribute of any professional organisation. The protection of confidential information relating to others is a serious moral, professional, ethical and legal responsibility that our school recognises and upholds.

- Confidential information at our school may only be transferred from one person to another when it is professionally appropriate and legally acceptable to do so.

- All staff will be reminded regularly about workplace confidentiality and professional expectations, as well as privacy obligations as detailed in the *Information privacy Act* – 2000.

- All highly confidential information relating to any current or past parents, families, students or staff members will be maintained in individual files in the school office and can only be accessed with the Principal’s approval.

- Staff members provided with confidential documentation relating to students or families should present the documentation to the Principal so that it can be retained on the confidential individual files.

- Staff members are to direct any requests for confidential information to the Principal.

- Staff members will not disclose confidential information about students, families or staff, or be drawn into discussions about students, families or staff, with any third person or agency, which has no legal or compelling need to discuss such issues.

- While staff members may have confidential discussions with others, particularly students, all staff members are compelled to report all disclosures of intentions to self-harm or to harm others.

- Breeches of confidentiality relating to complaints, staff selection or staff performance etc are all serious offences. The Principal will thoroughly investigate any alleged breeches of confidentiality or privacy.
St Thomas More Primary School is a place of learning where all contributions are valued and encouraged. We hold high expectations for the learning and behaviour of all. All stakeholders (students, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors) are expected to nurture positive relationships and conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies Gospel Values.

The flowcharts below detail the expectations for both students and members of the STM community:
Expectations for students

At St Thomas More Primary school
We hold high expectations for learning and behaviour.

Through the cultivation of positive relationships, we can foster constructive behaviour where good choices are made by students.

The following expectations underpin the actions students are expected to take both in the classroom and on the playground

1. Follow directions
2. Speak appropriately
3. Listen to the speaker without interrupting
4. Move safely at all times
5. Take care of all equipment, belongings and property
6. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
Expectations for staff, parents, visitors and volunteers

St Thomas More Primary School is a place of learning where all contributions are valued and encouraged. We hold high expectations for learning and behaviour of all stakeholders (staff, parents, volunteers and visitors) are expected to nurture positive relationships and conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies gospel values.

1. Follow and adhere to school protocols and procedures

2. Speak honestly and respectfully

3. Listen with empathy and understanding

4. Move safely at all times (in the school grounds, car park and streets surrounding the school) and obey all council parking signage

5. Respect and assist to maintain school property

6. Be sensitive to the personal space of adults and children
CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENTS

For students who do not follow the school expectations, the following Assertive Discipline procedures will be put in place.

All incidents- recorded on monitoring sheet

1. Verbal Warning

2. Move away

3. Time out (Length of time determined by teacher)  
   - Inside (Time out area/ chair)
   - Outside (Time out seats)

4. Exit  
   - Inside (To other classroom – Teacher to follow up with a call to parents)
   - Outside (To office – Teacher to follow up with a call to parents)
   - TIME TO BE MADE UP WITH TEACHER SUPERVISION

5. Severe  
   - Students sent straight to office
   - Parents contacted by Leadership
   - Restorative Action Prevention Plan (signed by teacher involved – follow up with a call to parents)
   - Letter of Apology & Verbal apology
   - Review date set for action prevention plan

6. Ongoing Severe  
   - Negotiated behaviour agreement (incorporating exclusion from school if required)
   - All parties to agree and sign behaviour agreement
   - Set regular reviews with stakeholders

• Complaints or grievances/concerns may be resolved informally by the classroom teacher or Principal however, appropriate procedures in dealing with complaints must be clearly communicated to the school community, these include:
  - Students being aware of the ability to approach their teacher or the Principal if they have a complaint or grievance/concern.
  - A knowledge that all complaints will be heard, discussed and resolutions sought.
  - Records of interviews and meetings and all documentation of the process, procedures followed and resolution are taken and kept.
  - The services of the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Student Counsellor may be engaged to assist in the resolution of the grievance or complaint.

• St Thomas Catholic Primary School may also seek the advice or services of the CEOM – Student Services to assist in the resolution of the complaint or grievance/concern.
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

At St Thomas More Primary School, Restorative Practice strategies are implemented alongside the Assertive Discipline procedures.

The features of Restorative practice are as follows:

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE FOCUS AREAS

1. Focus on the specific behaviours or incidents without blaming
2. Draw out who was affected and how they were affected
3. Direct questions toward problem solving what needs to happen to ‘make things right’

Affective Questions

1. What happened?
2. How did it happen?
3. How did you act in the situation?
4. Who do you think was affected?
5. How were they affected?
6. How were you affected?
7. What needs to happen to make things right?
8. If the same situation happens again, how could you behave differently?
The social, emotional, moral, spiritual and physical wellbeing of our students, in light of the values of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, is pivotal to their success at school and in their future lives. Students’ ability to positively resolve conflict and grievances/concerns is an important part of their positive social and emotional health.

As with the students, we acknowledge that the adults of the school community can sometimes feel aggrieved also. Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances/concerns between the school and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety, and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment.

Key elements of our grievance/concerns handling procedure:-

**Impartiality**: If you make a complaint, it will be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. No judgments or assumptions will be made, and no action will be taken until the investigation is complete. If a complaint is made against you your rights will be protected and you will be given an opportunity to tell your side of the story.

**Confidentiality**: You can feel secure that if you do make a complaint under this policy, it will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to information about the complaint will be the person making the complaint and the person investigating.

**No victimisation**: You can also rest assured that if you make a complaint you will not suffer in any way as a consequence. The school authorities will ensure that a person who makes a complaint is not victimised in any way.

**Timelines**: Each complaint will be finalised within as short a period as possible. All complaints could be finalised within one month.

- It is important that all complaints, ensuing procedures and outcomes are fully documented.
- The Principal may choose to respond to a complaint through an informal process in cases where the complaint is minor, the complainant wishes the matter to be dealt with informally or the complaint has arisen from lack of or unclear communication.
- Formal processes will be used when informal processes have not been successful, a complainant seeks a formal process, or the Principal believes the complaint warrants formal investigation.
- Parents may be accompanied by a support person at appointments arranged to resolve grievances/concerns.
- The Principal and Deputy will not act upon anonymous complaints.
- The Principal will seek the support of the CEOM - Pastoral Team if grievances are not resolved.
- Full details regarding formal complaint resolution procedures are contained within the CEOM Conflict Resolution Policy.
Students with Grievances
ABOUT OTHER STUDENTS

1. Talk to the student/s upsetting you
Tell the person/people that they are upsetting you and ask them to stop.
Speak to the person/people respectfully at all times.

2. Tell a teacher
If the problem can’t be resolved or is becoming too difficult, tell a teacher.

3. Allow Teacher to address the issue
Please allow a reasonable time frame for the teachers &/or the Principal to address the issue and speak to the parties involved.

4. What to do next?
If issue is unresolved by teachers, speak to your parents/caregivers.

5. Make an appointment
Parents arrange a time for parents and student to meet with the teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal.
Process for parent’s/teacher’s concerns about students:

- Goals or targets should be set by the student with the support of the parent and teacher.
- An agreement based on those goals may be drawn up between the student, teacher, and parent to be monitored on a regular basis, agreed upon by all concerned parties.
- Follow up meetings should be determined to monitor progress.
- Relevant notes should be taken and kept by the teacher to monitor.
- Support from Leadership may be requested by the teacher.
- If inadequate progress is made, discussions about a referral should take place.

For concerns about students  
St Thomas More Primary
Parents with Grievances

ABOUT OTHER STUDENTS

Maintain appropriate communication & behaviour.
Keep calm and use appropriate language.

Make an appointment:
If a parent has an issue with a student in the school, they must take it to their classroom teacher.

Parents must not approach other people’s children.

Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed by the classroom teacher.
The classroom teacher may seek assistance from the Principal or Leadership team.

If still no resolution:
Parents should contact the Principal who will arrange a meeting between the necessary parties and pursue an appropriate course of action.

If still no resolution:
The Principal may discuss the issue with the Parish Priest and seek his assistance.

The Principal may wish to involve the Regional Consultant of the CEOM.

At no time should any parent approach another parent or child with a grievance. All grievances should be directed to the teacher and or the Principal / Leadership team.
Parents with Grievances

ABOUT OTHER PARENTS

Maintain appropriate communication & behaviour. Keep calm and use appropriate language.

Determine if it is a school issue:
If there is an issue between parents that doesn't concern a child from the school or is not school related, then parents must deal with it in a calm and rational manner, not involving staff.

Make an appointment:
If a parent has an issue with another parent concerning a child or school related problem, they must take it to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed.

If the issue is not resolved:
The Principal may arrange a time to resolve the issue with the Parish Priest.

If issue is still unresolved:
Contact may be made with the Regional Office of the CEOM.
Parents with Grievances

ABOUT SCHOOL POLICY

Address grievance in writing to the principal.
Anonymous complaints will not be addressed.

The Principal may choose to call or arrange an appointment to discuss the issue further.

The school advisory board may be consulted at the Principal’s discretion.

For further clarification on issues, grievances can be expressed in writing to the President of the School Board to be tabled for the following meeting.

The school Board will respond in writing.
Parents with Grievances

ABOUT THE CLASSROOM

Make an appointment:
Talk to the teacher about the issue. Discuss the issue clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve the issue in a way that respects the needs of those involved.

Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed.

If no resolution:
The parent should contact the Principal who will arrange a meeting between the parent, classroom teacher and any other relevant staff.

All parties should strive to maintain a positive relationship beyond the meeting.

Maintain appropriate communication & behaviour.
Keep calm and use appropriate language.
Staff with Grievances

**Talk to the person**
Discuss the concern directly with the person involved, stating the problem clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve it in a way that respects the needs of those involved.

**Allow time for the issue to be addressed:**
Please allow a reasonable time frame for the person to address the issue.

**Support from these people entails:**
* speaking to the person involved on your behalf
* monitoring the situation
* investigating your concern
* acting as mediator

**If grievance is not resolved:**
Speak to Principal or Deputy Principal or the nominated grievance contact eg. Union Representative from VIEU.

**If grievance is not resolved within a reasonable time frame:**
The Principal may arrange a time to speak to the Regional Consultant from the CEOM to seek advice.
# APPENDIX

## TABLE OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS with a grievance should:</th>
<th>STAFF with a grievance should:</th>
<th>PARENTS/CAREGIVER with a grievance should:</th>
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</table>
| **1. Talk to the student/s upsetting you**  
Tell the person/people that they are upsetting you and ask them to stop.  
Speak to the person/people respectfully at all times. | **1. Talk to the person**  
Discuss the concern directly with the person involved, stating the problem clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve it in a way that respects the needs of those involved. | For issues related to classrooms:  
1. **Maintain appropriate communication & behaviour.** Keep calm and use appropriate language |
| **2. Tell a teacher**  
If the problem can’t be resolved or is becoming too difficult, tell a teacher. | **2. Allow time for the issue to be addressed:**  
Please allow a reasonable time frame for the person to address the issue. | **2. Make an appointment:**  
Talk to the teacher about the issue. Discuss the issue clearly and objectively. Seek to resolve the issue in a way that respects the needs of those involved. |
| **3. Allow Teacher to address the issue**  
Please allow a reasonable time frame for the teachers &/or the Principal to address the issue and speak to the parties involved. | **3. If grievance is not resolved:**  
Speak to Principal or Deputy Principal or the nominated grievance contact eg. Union Representative from VIEU. | **3. Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed.** |
| **4. What to do next?**  
If issue is unresolved by teachers, speak to your parents/caregivers. | **4. Support from these people entails:**  
Speaking to the person involved on your behalf, monitoring the situation, investigating your concern, acting as mediator. | **4. If no resolution:**  
The parent should contact the Principal who will arrange a meeting between the parent, classroom teacher and any other relevant staff. |
| **5. Make an appointment**  
Parents arrange a time for parents and student to meet with the teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal. | **5. If grievance is not resolved within a reasonable time frame:**  
The Principal may arrange a time to speak to the Regional Consultant from the CEOM to seek advice. | **5. All parties should strive to maintain a positive relationship beyond the meeting.** |
**TABLE OF GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES Cont...**

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>PARENTS/CAREGIVERS with a grievance should:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Issues related to school policy:</td>
<td>For Issues with other parents:</td>
<td>For issues with other students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Address grievance in writing to the principal. Anonymous complaints will not be addressed.</td>
<td>1. Maintain appropriate communication &amp; behaviour. Keep calm and use appropriate language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Principal may choose to call or arrange an appointment to discuss the issue further.</td>
<td>2. Determine if it is a school issue: If there is an issue between parents that doesn’t concern a child from the school or is not school related, then parents must deal with it in a calm and rational manner, not involving staff.</td>
<td>2. Make an appointment: If a parent has an issue with a student in the school, they must take it to their classroom teacher. Parents must not approach other people’s children.</td>
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<td>3. The school advisory board may be consulted at the Principal's discretion.</td>
<td>3. Make an appointment: If a parent has an issue with another parent concerning a child or school related problem, they must take it to the Principal or Deputy Principal.</td>
<td>3. Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed by the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher may seek assistance from the Principal or Leadership team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. For further clarification on issues, grievances can be expressed in writing to the President of the School Board to be tabled for the following meeting.</td>
<td>4. Allow a reasonable time frame for the issue to be addressed.</td>
<td>4. If still no resolution: Parents should contact the Principal who will arrange a meeting between the necessary parties and pursue an appropriate course of action.</td>
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<td>6. The school Board will respond in writing.</td>
<td>5. If the issue is not resolved: The Principal may arrange a time to resolve the issue with the Parish Priest.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. If issue is still unresolved: Contact may be made with the Regional Office of the CEOM.</td>
<td>6. The Principal may wish to involve the Regional Consultant of the CEOM.</td>
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<td>7. At no time should any parent approach another parent or child with a grievance. All grievances should be directed to the teacher and or the Principal / Leadership team.</td>
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</table>
Minutes of meetings will be taken for all meetings with a copy given to parents. Minutes will follow this format. 1. G. R. O. W.

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<td>What is the goal of this meeting?</td>
<td>What is the current reality?</td>
<td>What options do we have?</td>
<td>What will be done next?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other

**EVALUATION & REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed by the School as part of the School Improvement cycle, in consultation with the following spheres:

- Leadership & Management
- Student well-being and
- School community

Last Ratified: ___5/5/14______________