Rationale

Pastoral care is based on respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the individual person who is made in the image of God. It is an individual and community response to Jesus' call to: love one another as I have loved you (John 13.34). When Catholic Education is faithful to the call of the Gospel, compassion, justice and reconciliation are evident throughout the life of the education community.

Definition

Pastoral Care: The action taken within the educational community by its leaders and community members to promote and enhance the wellbeing of the individual of a personal, social, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual nature. Key elements of wellbeing are positive self-regard, respect for others, positive relationships, responsible behaviours and personal resilience.

A safe and supportive school: The risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing (National Safe Schools Framework).

School Commitment Statement

St Thomas More School is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that respects the dignity of each person and allows all within the community to pursue fullness of life.

Principles

Foundational to the nature of pastoral care at St Thomas More School is the belief that each person is created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis* 1:27), with the inherent dignity that this implies. Each is created as a social being, with the mutual rights, obligations and needs that this implies.

Pastoral care at St Thomas More School affirms and gives expression to the belief that '*the person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching.*'

St Thomas More School exercises its pastoral responsibilities under the leadership of the Principal. Parents exercise their responsibility by providing positive support and collaborative engagement with the school in support of staff, student and school community wellbeing

Respectful and cooperative school-family relationships provide an effective channel of pastoral care for students. The school and its families share responsibility for developing and maintaining such relationships of trust, characterised by respect for the goodwill of the other and a willingness to engage collaboratively

Student and Staff wellbeing is best achieved within a school environment that is safe, supportive, inclusive and empowering, where diversity is respected and valued, where human rights and the common good are honoured, where inter-relationships are positive, where students experience connectedness and engagement, and where those experiencing difficulty or special need receive particular care and support

Enhanced student wellbeing contributes significantly to improved student learning outcomes. Effective pastoral care is therefore recognised as promoting the achievement of learning outcomes and thus contributing to a School Improvement Framework

Effective whole-of-school approaches to pastoral care require age-appropriate behavioural education and skilling of students, and pastorally driven management of student behaviour through processes focused on both individual and community wellbeing, and on ensuring a just and reasonable balance of individual and community rights, needs and responsibilities.

Effective school-community partnerships offer opportunities for networks of pastoral care for students. Appropriate local services and agencies may be identified, and links or partnerships developed, to support the needs of students and their families and to enhance the school's own pastoral initiatives.

St Thomas More School's pastoral care policies and procedures are developed collaboratively and reviewed periodically. They are published on the school website if appropriate and readily accessible to staff, students, parents and guardians.

Procedures

- An ethos of effective pastoral care and wellbeing is to be permeated in all aspects of school life and the policies and procedures for learning, pastoral care and student safety and wellbeing.
- The principal has a leadership role in monitoring and responding to the overall needs and sets directions for pastoral care in the school.
- The principal monitors pastoral care of staff as well as students and families. The principal supports the Pastoral Care Committee through consultation and collaboration.
- The Pastoral Care Committee monitors and responds to the pastoral care and wellbeing requirements of staff and students and families.
- The Pastoral Care Committee works in collaboration with the Risk Management Committee in identifying and mitigating risks in pastoral care and wellbeing.
- The pastoral care leader is responsible for informing the principal on the work of the pastoral care committee and issues and concerns that have arisen.
- The Leadership Team leads the review of relevant polices and procedures that enhance pastoral care.
- Staff interaction with students and family are to be based on developing and maintaining positive relationships and effective communication.
- All staff are responsible to raise issues and concerns to the Pastoral Care Committee regarding student and families, and where relevant to the principal (see Referral Form Appendix A).
- Staff complete the Student Pastoral Care Referral Form before referring students to the pastoral care committee.
- Staff are to ensure that there is procedural fairness and consistency is applied in dealing with incidents in student behaviour. Processes are to be consistent with the Behaviour Management Policy
- Incidents in the classroom/playground are followed up with parents and recorded in incident book. The Pastoral Care Committee monitors this data.
- Where an issue is regarding child abuse, staff must follow procedures outlined in the Child Safe policies for reporting all forms of child abuse including grooming. The staff members should also inform the principal so that appropriate procedures can be in place within the school environment as required.

- Professional learning meetings include the analysis of student wellbeing, safety and engagement data to further enhance student outcomes.
- Engaging learning and teaching that has high expectations for students is to be embedded in teaching strategies to enhance wellbeing in students. This supported by individual student plans that take into account learning, safety and wellbeing.
- Learning and teaching strategies are designed to assist and meet the diversity of all student needs and meets the requirements of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Strategies

St Thomas More School has the following strategies and programs to enhance student pastoral care, safety and wellbeing and supports inclusion and diversity:

Staff and Community

- staff induction including emergency teachers
- staff mentoring and coaching
- staff reflection and professional learning days
- school and staff professional learning plans
- staff anti-bullying, and anti- harassment policy (including cyber bullying)
- occupational health and safety policy and procedures
- school assemblies, liturgies and masses
- family buddy program and welcome meetings
- engagement in learning session for parents
- surveying staff, parent and students on student engagement and wellbeing including the School Improvement Survey
- family communication app
- School Advisory Council such as open meetings and surveys
- partnerships with external organisations such as school chaplaincy
- staff, administration and parent handbooks that outline specific procedures
- Pastoral Care Committee
- procedures to ensure that the school complies with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and Privacy Act 1988
- procedures for maintaining teacher registration checks and Working With Children Checks for non-teacher staff volunteers and external providers
- regular monitoring of the school environment
- implementation of a performance and development culture

Students

- student buddy program
- student achievement awards
- student leadership strategies such as class and school leaders
- implementation of strategies that support student voice to empower and engage students
- inclusive curriculum and teaching strategies that are adjusted within reason for individual students. This includes adjusting assessment modes, timelines and provision of LSO where required

- provision of different pathways for completing senior secondary requirements
- supporting students in defined circumstances with the opportunity to participate in and complete their secondary level studies. The school is guided by VCAA Special Provision.
- PSG meeting for specific student needs and circumstances
- whole school three tier strategy and intervention approach to learning and teaching and student safety and wellbeing (see Pursuing Fullness of life: Student Outcomes)
- ongoing student feedback on learning
- restorative justice processes
- student surveys for wellbeing and safety
- pastoral care team to monitor student wellbeing
- cybersafety curriculum
- child safety curriculum
- resilience programs incorporated into curriculum
- student attendance monitoring and procedures
- processes to ensure that all students have a learning program that promotes ongoing improvement
- learning and teaching with in a safe and supportive environment policy
- behaviour management policy (including procedures for serious offences that may require suspension, exclusion, or termination of enrolment)
- student anti-bullying, and anti- harassment policy (including cyber bullying)

Communication

St Thomas More School communicates this policy and related policies and procedures through:

- staff and parent handbook
- policies provided on school website
- information sessions for parents
- staff induction and professional learning
- staff meetings
- student class meetings
- curriculum design
- assemblies

Related Policy and Documents

- St Thomas More School's Anti Bullying and Anti Harassment (including cyber bullying) Policy (staff and student)
- St Thomas More School's Complaints and Grievances Policy
- St Thomas More School's Duty of Care-Supervision of Students
- St Thomas More School's Code of Conduct
- St Thomas More School's Digital Technology Policy
- St Thomas More School's Behaviour Management Policy
- St Thomas More School's Child Safety: Reporting Obligations
- St Thomas More School's Student Care and Health Policy
- St Thomas More School's SunSmart Policy

- St Thomas More School's Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- St Thomas More School's Emergency Management Plan
- CECV Child Safety Commitment Statement
- Out-of-home Care Partnering Agreement
  http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/a4partnering.pdf
- VCAA Special Provision available at
  http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialprovision.aspx
- National Safe Schools Framework
  https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/national_safe_schools_framework.pdf

Governing Authority Ratification Date: *June 2018*
Policy Updated: June 2018
Policy Review: June 2022

Appendix A

Pastoral Care Referral Form

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Classroom /Homeroom Teacher: _____

Who requested referral? _____

Reason for referral :(e.g. safety, wellbeing, and learning)
_____
_____
_____
_____

What strategies have been tried so far?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Has the problem been discussed with parents/guardian?: YES/NO (Please circle)
If yes, last date of contact: _____

In what ways do you hope the student can be helped?:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Other Information (e.g. external provider reports)
_____
_____
_____
_____