# ST THOMAS MORE COLLEGE MIDDLE & SECONDARY SCHOOL ŻEJTUN



# SCHOOL POLICIES

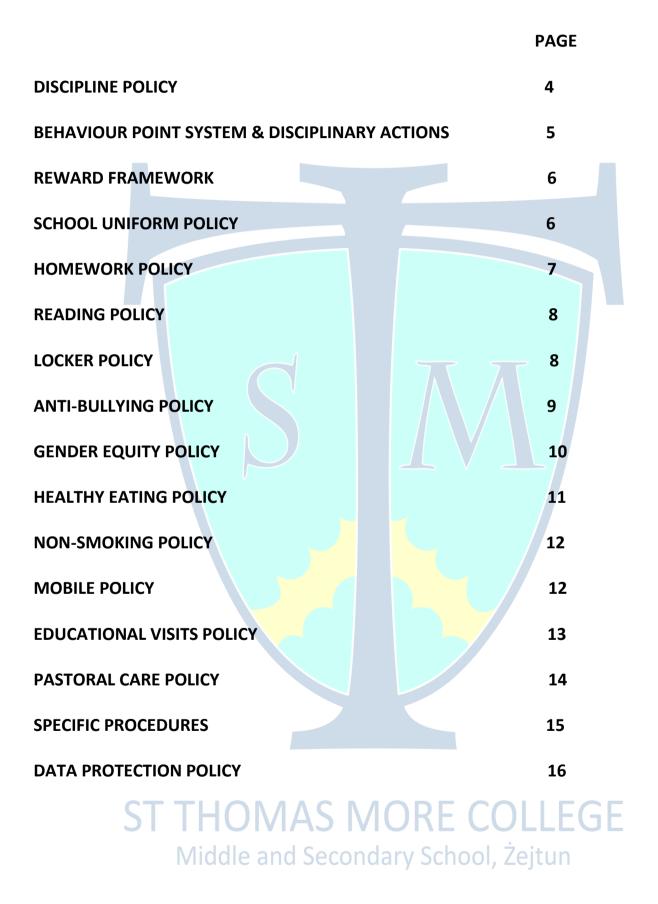
FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS/GUARDIANS

2023-2024

# OUR SCHOOL VISION -TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A POSITIVE CLIMATE

ST THOMAS MORE COLLEGE Middle and Secondary School, Żejtun

#### CONTENTS



# **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

**AIM OF POLICY -** A clear guide of good behaviour and discipline giving rise to:

- a **positive environment** within the school to help us achieve aims;
- staff is **guided** on how to react when the need arises;
- a high level of good conduct and discipline is maintained, and
- students are made **responsible** for their own actions.

The years that the students spend within the school is a time in which they:

- change **physically** and **mentally** from childhood into adolescence;
- develop emotionally and intellectually;
- gain a better understanding of the world around them;
- strengthen their general education, and
- prepare themselves for higher education and for the world of work.

## STUDENTS' DUTIES - RESPECT TOWARDS SELF AND OTHERS.

The student must:

- show respect towards the Head, Assistant Head, teachers and all members of staff;
- show respect towards his/her classmates and schoolmates;
- discuss with the Form Teacher/Guidance Teacher problems that he/she may encounter;
- conduct himself/herself with good manners, especially on school transport;
- attend school daily and be punctual for school assemblies;
- wear the school uniform daily, ensuring a neat and clean appearance;
- hairstyle should conform with the school uniform regulations;
- schoolwork and homework to be done regularly;
- exit school in an orderly fashion in the afternoon;
- keep school environment in a good and clean state;
- make good use of **school facilities** textbooks, tools, apparatus, desks, chairs, etc;
- participate in schools' activities organised during the mid-day break, and
- be responsible for **personal belongings**.

## WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED - The following is STRICTLY PROHIBITED:

- leaving classroom without permission;
- disrupting lessons;
- loitering in corridors in-between or during lessons;
- running and/or playing in corridors;
- consuming food and drinks in school building;
- going to the Out of Bounds Areas;



St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun

- throwing rubbish around the place/throwing objects;
- fighting, insulting, lying, rudeness and bullying in any form on other students;
- discrimination, arrogant behaviour, foul language, swearing, vulgar behaviour;
- playing truant from school;
- use of other toilets besides ground floor and first floor during break time;
- chewing gum/large amounts of money;
- verbal abuse/physical aggression on staff and peers;
- cigarettes, alcohol and/or other dangerous substances;
- cutting/pointed instruments, which could cause permanent damage;
- pornographic material;
- mobile phones, Smartwatches and portable speakers;
- any other electronic gadgets, and
- medicine kept by the students.

The school is not liable for damage and/or loss of objects brought to school against school regulations and/or which have been confiscated. The school staff will not assist students in the recovery of any missing items brought to school against school regulations.

# POLICY FOR BEHAVIOUR POINT SYSTEM & DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS



The school has a Behaviour Point System to control students' behaviour. This will help us **Reward Positive Behaviour** while **Sanctioning Unacceptable Behaviour.** If for example a student comes to school with missing homework, parents are being informed that they will be receiving a note on the school diary and/or email when this is reported.

If a student misbehaves in the school, on school transport or during an outing, he/she will incur points according to the seriousness of the offence. **Records of these offences will be kept** being exchanged for deterrents as described below:

With every -10 Points – Yellow Sheet Report to be signed by parents/guardians and student is given a break session.

With every -30 Points – Green Sheet Report to be signed by parents/guardians and student is given an afterschool session.

More than -90 Points – The College Principal will be informed, and further action/s will be taken.

The level of behaviour of a student can vary from Very Good, Good and Needs to Improve. The behaviour of each student will be recorded in the Annual Reports and Secondary School Certificate & Profile.

# **REWARD FRAMEWORK POLICY**

The school has a Merit Reward System **to recognise students** who excel in their behaviour and progress, as an incentive. Each time a student receives a mrit report (3 points), parents/guardians will be informed via an email. These positive points will be exchanged for **Certificates of Merit**, as follows:

+15 Points (5 Merit Cards) – Students will receive a Bronze Certificate of Merit.
+24 Points (8 Merit Cards) – Students will receive a Silver Certificate of Merit.
+39 Points (13 Merit Cards) – Students will receive a Gold Certificate of Merit.
+60 Points (20 Merit Cards) – Students will receive a Platinum Certificate of Merit.

Every month a student from every year group is going to be selected by the teachers according to five criteria as **'Student of the Term'**. The name of the student/s is going to be engraved on a shield which will later on be hanged in the school's corridors. The five criteria are:

- 1. Overall good marks in the assessment.
- 2. Tasks are done on time, carefully and with dedication.
- 3. On-going effort and evident improvement.
- 4. Continuous exemplary behaviour both in and out of class.
- 5. Shows respect towards authority and other students.

# SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY



It is the **parents' responsibility** to check that their son/daughter wears the school uniform daily as described below:

- Summer uniform College short sleeve polo shirt, College chino trousers (long), white gym shoes & blue socks.
- Winter uniform College anorak, College long sleeve polo shirt, College tracksuit trousers, College tracksuit jacket, white gym shoes & blue socks.
- PE uniform College PE T-shirt and PE shorts (to be worn beneath the chino or tracksuit trousers and used during PE lessons only), College tracksuit jacket during the winter, College PE cap, white Gym shoes & blue socks.

Uniforms which have been **scribbled upon are not acceptable** and in such cases they need to be cleaned or replaced immediately.

Hair must be of ONE NATURAL colour.

WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED WITH THE SCHOOL UNIFORM -

- any type of fancy hairstyles (including lines or any form of design);
- any type of fancy eyebrows and eyelashes;
- excessive use of stiff/sculpture hair gel;
- long hair hanging (long hair to be tied back everyday);
- coloured hair bands (only blue/black hairbands allowed);
- make-up of any kind, nail art, long fingernails and/or nail polish;
- bracelets, rings, necklaces and foot bracelets;
- body piercing;
- any kind of earrings other than a pair of matching small studs, and
- tattoos on any part of the body.

# HOMEWORK POLICY

#### PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK - Homework:

- is an important part of a student's learning experience;
- promotes academic growth and responsibility;
- fosters creativity through independent study;
- should encourage students to develop academically;
- aids in developing good work and study habits;
- is an extension of class work and strengthens skills already taught, and
- is defined as written or non-written tasks to be completed outside the classroom.

## KINDS OF HOMEWORK

- **Preparation** given to prepare a student for coming lessons.
- Practice given to reinforce lessons already taught in class.
- **Creative** given to provide challenging learning opportunities.
- **Continuous** assignments/tasks which are part of the continuous assessment.

## HOMEWORK GUIDELINES – Homework/assignment is:

- given with explanation so student will know what he/she is expected to do;
- not given as a punishment;
- carefully planned, corrected by the teacher or as a class correction;
- meaningful and given in every subject, and
- expected back by all teachers and should be given in on its due date.

# The students are responsibile to write their HWs in their school diary and update it regularly.



# PARENTS'/GUARDIANS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Respond to school's request for **support** for homework.
- Expect daily homework and insist that their son/daughter completes it regularly.
- Provide a suitable **study atmosphere** that is quiet, well-lit and supervised.
- Maintain the home/school connection through calls, parents' days and contact with school teachers when necessary.
- Show interest in the HW being done but not do the work for their son/daughter.
- Encourage reading and try to read with their son/daughter.
- Make a special time each day for homework supervision.
- Encourage their son/daughter to read newspapers, magazines and books.
- Check regularly to see that the homework is done.
- Check the school diary for any messages from teachers.

Teachers will inform parents of missing homework through school diary/email/phone call as they deem fit. Students will be assigned disciplinary points by the subject teacher and kept for detention to do the missing HW.

# **READING POLICY**



AIM OF POLICY: to promote a **reading culture** and to create an environment where reading is celebrated, appreciated and respected. Reading is **the core of the curriculum** and thus very important to the students' **personal, social and academic success** and their **general wellbeing**.

As a school we are **responsible to cultivate love of reading** in students:

- **Reading nooks** in every school foyer where our students can go and find books to read.
- Promoting the use of **our school library during the break time slots**.
- Students are required **to read for at least 15 minutes during replacements** (free lessons). They can either bring their own reading book or else take a book from the next reading nook.
- **Rewarding avid readers** with positive points: students who are enthusiastic about reading, who read as much as they can and whenever they can should be rewarded and encouraged.

# LOCKER POLICY



The locker provides a lockable place where students can store unnecessary books to decrease the heavy load of the school bag. Thus, students will avoid carrying extra weight within the school premises. This facility helps students learn to become

St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun responsible and organized citizens.

- The lockers:
- are the property of the school;
- are to be used only to store books and other school items;
- should not be used to store prohibited items;
- incur a yearly expense of €3 per scholastic year;
- are locked using a padlock and key provided by the students;
- The school administration is to be provided with a spare key along with a labelled tag. No code padlocks can be used and padlock size should be as instructed by the school administration;
- are numbered and each locker will be listed against the student's name. Students may NOT exchange lockers with other students unless permission is granted by th the block Assistant Head;
- the lease runs from the second week of October until the second week of May;
- can be used during Form Teacher time, or during the first 5 minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> lesson (in case of assembly) and of each break ONLY. If a student forgets his/her things in the locker **permission will not be granted** to go to the home class since it will disturb other teachers giving their lessons;
- it is the students' responsibility not to forget their locker key at home. The Assistant Head is not obliged to open the locker when the key is forgotten;
- **might be checked** for their contents by the Head, Assistant Head and/or other staff members as directed by the school administration without the student's consent, and
- lockers are NOT to be opened during lessons.

If a student repeatedly shows lack of responsibility in the use of the school locker, he/she will be stopped from using the locker for some time. The school locker might be taken away and students should not expect to be given back the money paid for it.

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**



AIM OF POLICY - to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is:

- an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone;
- unacceptable and will not be tolerated, and
- a deliberately hurtful behaviour, which is repeated over a period of time.

**TYPES OF BULLYING** - The various types of bullying are:

- **physical** (example: hitting, kicking, theft, harassment); a.
- b. **verbal** (example: name calling, racist and religious remarks, harassment);
- indirect (example: spreading rumours, excluding someone from group/s), and с.

d. cyberbullying (example: harassment through the use of social media). **School Policies** 

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

#### Students must be encouraged to report bullying in school.

**DUTY OF THE SCHOOL** – The school is alert to the signs of bullying and acts promptly and firmly against it. In an attempt to eradicate such behaviour, the nature of bullying is discussed through lessons of PSCD, form teacher period and assemblies.

ACTION TAKEN IN RESPECT OF VICTIMS - They will be supported by:

- being offered an immediate opportunity to **discuss the experience**;
- being offered continuous support, and
- being reassured to restore self-esteem and confidence.

ACTION TAKEN IN RESPECT OF PERPETRATORS - They will be helped by:

- **discussing** what happened and **understanding** why the student got involved;
- offering the student the necessary support, and
- act upon the wrong doing.

# **GENDER EQUITY POLICY**



# **RESPECT FOR GENDER DIFFERENCE - A WHOLE SCHOOL CULTURE**

**AIM OF THE POLICY** - Gender Equity is the process of treating girls and boys fairly. Gender equality means that males and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights.

A GUIDE TO RESPONSIBILITIES – It is everybody's responsibility to contribute to gender equity in education and to guarantee equal opportunities for everyone, irrespective of gender. The school will ensure that:

- teaching and learning within the school are gender inclusive;
- teaching and learning meet the education entitlement of both girls and boys;
- curriculum materials do not include stereotypes and gender discrimination;
- curriculum provided takes into account changing family roles;
- gender inclusive language in all aspects of school life will be used;
- equitable access for all girls and boys in the use of educational facilities;
- strategies dealing with incidents of harassment/discrimination based on gender, are developed;
- high expectations for all girls and boys are maintained, and
- disruptive and dominating behaviour will be challenged.

Every member of our school is responsible to work towards a whole school culture where the principles of **respect**, **fairness** and **dignity** are always applied:

- the SMT, teachers and LSEs must ensure that they treat **all** students with respect, fairness and dignity when dealing with behavioural issues;
- a positive school discipline emphasises and celebrates good practice of **all** students;
- **all** disciplinary problems should be dealt with immediately;
- zero tolerance towards gender remarks;
- zero tolerance towards bullying;
- during school assemblies and instances where students need to line up, students should line up in **alphabetical** order;
- Form Teachers should apply the principle of gender equity when choosing the class **prefect** and **sub-prefect**;
- Assistant Heads should apply the principle of gender equity when choosing the school prefects;
- teachers organising **school outings** must ensure that boys and girls attend, and
- teachers organising **non-formal activities** during mid-day breaks as well as throughout the scholastic year must ensure that boys and girls participate in such initiatives.

# **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**



**AIM OF THIS POLICY** – clear guidelines to empower students to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The following **foods should not be brought to school:** 

- foods high in fat, sugar and salt;
- packets of snacks;
- soft drinks and sugar sweetened drinks, and
- sweets and chocolates.

The following guidelines are suggested:

- Before leaving home for school, students should be given a healthy breakfast.
- Students should bring water only to school for drinking.
- Students can make use of the water fountain during break times.
- Students should be given a healthy lunch to eat at school such as fresh bread rolls with a healthy filling.

The Healthy Eating Policy also applies for school outings and activities. The school tuckshop is duty bound to sell only healthy foods and drinks according to a list of Permissible Foods and Drinks and a list of Prohibited Foods and Drinks.

# **NON-SMOKING POLICY**

Under Act 27 of 2000 of the Laws of Malta, the school is required to ensure the health and safety of its employees and students through the adoption of a Non-Smoking Policy. Specific requirements are imposed through Legal Notice of 2003.

Schools have a major role to play in working against smoking. Therefore, within the school premises the school administration:

- strives to provide work areas with suitably clean air, and
- ensures that employees who are non-smokers are protected from the discomfort of tobacco smoke anywhere on the premises.

This policy applies to all school staff, students, parents/guardians and visitors while on school premises and including Parents' Day/Evening. Teachers on duty with students outside school premises are to follow the same policy.

# **MOBILE PHONES POLICY**

#### Use or possession of mobile phones by students on school premises is prohibited.

The Senior Management Team is highly aware that sometimes, family circumstances crop up where students need to bring their mobile phone with them to school. **This should be the exception and not the rule**. If such is the case, parents must follow a strict code of procedure whereby:

 $\cdot$  at least two days before, parents/guardians write a note to the Assistant Head explaining why their son/daughter had to bring a mobile to school, and

 $\cdot$  on the day, student presents the parent's/guardian's note together with mobile to the Assistant Head upon his/her arrival at school.

#### Unauthorised possession and/or use of mobile phones leads to:

- the automatic confiscation of the device for a minimum period of 20 school days (SIM may be returned if removed by student), and
- the 2nd instance of unauthorised possession will lead to confiscation of the device until the last day of the scholastic year.

#### This also applies for other gadgets, including Smartwatches.

Use of mobile phones in connection with **Continuous Blood Glucose Monitoring** devices is to be allowed in line with **Letter Circular DES 19/2022**.





# **EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY**



AIM OF POLICY - To assist in the organisation of educational outings that:

- support and enhance class-based work;
- broaden the students' experience through stimulating and enjoyable experiences;
- provide opportunity of outdoor activities not possible on the school site; and
- encourage students to integrate with others and make social contacts.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Each outing must be **educational** and relevant to the National Curriculum.
- Educational outings must be well-organised and planned carefully in advance.
- No outings can be organised in the **three weeks** preceding the examination period.
- No more than **one educational visit a month** for each class can be planned.

#### **BEFORE AN EDUCATIONAL OUTING**

- Teachers must get approval for the educational outing from the Assistant Head in charge of outings **and** the Assistant Head in charge of the year group involved at least **three weeks** in advance.
- Once the organising teacher gets the approval for the outing, details of the educational outing are to be logged in with the Assistant Head in charge of outings.
- Teachers must fill in the **Educational Outings Information template** with all the relevant details and email it to parents of students involved at least **two weeks** in advance. This information is likewise to be uploaded as an announcement through the appropriate Teams channel by the teacher.
- The organising teacher must check with the Assistant Head in charge of the year group that the parents of all students involved have signed the general consent for outings and that no parents have communicated with the school to refuse consent for their son/daughter to attend the outing in question.
- Money for the outing is to be collected and handed in to the Assistant Head in charge of outings by not later than **two days** prior to the outing.
- The organising teacher must prepare a list of students who are eligible to attend the educational outing. A template can be collected from the Assistant Head in charge of outings.
- **One** staff member for every **fifteen** students will be sent for each visit with never less than two teachers per outing.
- It is at the discretion of the SLT members to choose the teachers who are going to accompany students on any outing, taking the teaching load and replacements into consideration.

#### ON THE DAY OF THE EDUCATIONAL OUTING

- Teachers are to meet their students in front of the year group Assistant Head's office at the agreed time.
- The school **uniform** is to be worn during outings as it aids identity.
- Teachers must check that students are wearing the school uniform properly.
- Students having shortcomings in school uniform and an inappropriate hairstyle and/or colour are not to be allowed to the school outing.
- Students should not carry valuables on educational visits.
- Teachers in charge of outings are to hand a copy of the students' attendance sheet to the clerks (marking all present **and** absent students) **before** leaving school premises.
- Teachers in charge of the outing are to collect the first aid box from the reception area before leaving school premises.
- It is of utmost importance that all students are under the teacher's continuous supervision and for no reason should they be left on their own.
- Teachers must remain with the assigned students on school outings for the whole duration of the period indicated in the weekly What's On.
- It is recommended that teachers have a list of students with parents' contact numbers in case of emergency.
- It is advisable that teachers take photos and video clips of the educational outing. Kindly upload on the Dropbox link in the Collection of Photos and Videos channel on the Staff team.
- No refund can be given to students who are absent or have incomplete uniform since transport still needs to be paid for.

# **PASTORAL CARE POLICY**



**AIM OF POLICY** - to ensure the holistic development of our students, who are valued, cared for and respected. Students feel a sense of belonging, are socially at ease and educationally successful. This policy stems from the school's mission statement.

High-quality pastoral care comes about if we **help students to make their good better, and their better best**. All members of staff are, especially by being vigilant, to notice students who are vulnerable and in need of help. We commit our school to:

- provide a loving, caring and secure environment;
- recognise the individuality and dignity of each student;
- foster life-giving relationships within the school;
- foster and nurture teacher-student cohesion, making teachers positive role models, and
- maintain a strong culture that centres on respect and harmonious interaction.

Effective pastoral care is becoming increasingly vital because of the rapidly changing home backgrounds of our students, family instability, child protection issues and other personal matters.

#### STAKEHOLDERS WITH DIRECT INVOLVEMENT

Head of School Assistant Heads Heads of Department School Counsellor Year Coordinators Guidance Teachers Form Teachers Teaching Staff LSEs Students' Council School Prefects Class Prefects Parents/Guardians

## **SPECIFIC PROCEDURES**



**Non-Class Time Supervision** – During mid-morning, mid-day breaks and at dismissal time students are supervised by teachers/LSEs. Students are invited to participate in the various mid-day break activities.

**Sickness or Injury** – Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately so that their son/daughter is taken home.

**Medication** - At the beginning of each school year parents/guardians are asked to supply the school with information of any current or on-going medical problems. Students in need of medication during school hours **cannot take their medication on their own** and **cannot keep the medication in their school bag**. School personnel cannot provide students with medications. If the need arises, parents/guardians are to fill in the necessary forms so that the nurse is contacted.

**Absences** - When a student is absent due to sickness or other reasons, parents/guardians should explain the absence by a written note/medical certificate. Parents/guradians have to scan the note/medical certificate and send it via email to <u>stmc.zejtun.ss@ilearn.edu.mt</u>, before the student returns to school. Unexplained

St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun absences will be followed up in the interests of the student.

If a student needs to leave the school early, he/she must present a note to the Assistant Head in charge of the Year Group at least one day before stating the reasons for leaving early and signed by the parents including their I.D. Card No. The Assistant Head will then advise the student what to do.

**Emergencies are the exception not the rule**: Parents cannot expect to turn up at school unannounced and have school staff run around to find their son/daughter.

**Door Security System** – School gates close at 08.25am. No entry into the main building is possible without knowledge of the visitor's identity and purpose. An intercom system allows immediate communication between the office and all visitors.

**Parental Interviews**– Parents' Day will be held online on two consecutive days and by request as necessary. Parents/guardians are encouraged to arrange meetings with Assistant Head or Head of School if they have concerns regarding aspects of school life. Such meetings are encouraged, in order to dispel worries before any possible distress is caused.

**Parents/Guardians cannot expect to turn up at school unannounced** and speak with the Head of School, Assistant Heads, Guidance teachers or teachers. **Appointments must be set.** 

**Personal and Social Well-being** – The school regularly reminds students that they may speak to any member of staff in the strictest confidence about any matter which is worrying them. The teacher spoken to is duty bound to be very prudent and responsible and refer student if s/he feels the issue merits more competency.

# DATA PROTECTION POLICY



St. Thomas More College, Middle and Secondary School, Żejtun, fully complies with the Data Protection Act 2001 which regulates the processing of personal data whether held electronically or in manual form. This school processes personal data to comply with legal obligations under the Education Act 1988.

The Head of school, being the data controller in terms of the Data Protection Act, has overall responsibility for ensuring that records are correctly processed. All staff within the school is aware of their duties and responsibilities in line with this policy.

**PROCESSING PURPOSES** - The school processes personal data in relation to students and parents/legal guardians for the following purposes:

- administration;
- academic progress monitoring;
- student welfare;

St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun

- health, and
- statistics and research

**PROCESSING OF VISUAL IMAGES** – The school allows the taking of photos and videos in school activities. The school is only responsible for visual images taken by school representatives. Persons taking visual images for personal use during an activity are held responsible for the use of such images. When the press attends school activities, the Head of School points out any objections to visual images of particular students.

Consent will be sought when visual images are taken by school representatives to be used for communications purposes by publishing them on:

- printed material (example: school magazines);
- school notice boards;
- media including newspapers and TV, and
- the internet (school and Education Directorates websites).

Consent may be withdrawn by informing the Head of school **in writing**. No visual image of the student in question will be taken after the consent has been withdrawn.

When a professional photographer is engaged by the school, the school ensures that the photographer understands data protection considerations.

**RECIPIENTS OF DATA** - Personal data will not be disclosed to third parties without the consent of the parent/guardian, unless obliged by law and unless it is in the best interest of the child. Personal data will therefore be accessed and disclosed to the following without need for permission from parents:

- Education Directorates;
- College Principal;
- other schools;
- examination authorities;
- health authorities;
- hospitals/clinics/other medical professionals;
- Police;
- social workers/support agencies;
- Jobsplus, and
- Courts

**STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS** - Students and parents/guardians are entitled to be provided with:

- a) actual information processed about them;
- b) a description from where this information has been collected, and
- c) the purpose for processing such information.

#### St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun

Scholastic Year 2023/24

If personal data is incorrect, this is rectified on presentation of the parents'/guardians' I.D. card. The request must be addressed to the Head of School in writing.

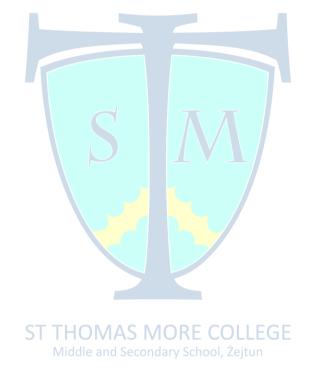
**RETENTION OF PERSONAL DATA** - The school does not hold any data longer than necessary. All personal data relating to students and their parents/guardians will only be held for the period during which the student attends the school.

Policies are revised every year and implemented by the whole school.

Senior Management Team, St. Thomas More College, Middle & Secondary School, Żejtun.

October 2023









 $\boxtimes$ 

