

Community Standards

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St. Thomas University Community Standards

Mission: St. Thomas University is a Catholic university with rich cultural and international diversity committed to the academic and professional success of its students who become ethical leaders in our global community.

Community Standards Introduction: St. Thomas University is committed to developing and providing world-class education that is industry-relevant through our undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of study, supported by superior teaching and scholarship within the Catholic intellectual tradition. At STU, we challenge our students to use the Catholic teachings to examine their lives, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others.

To fulfill our commitment, we seek to develop a community where students can experience and develop through our community standards. The community standards that will guide STU are Individual Worth, Integrity, Self-Control, Critical Thinking and Community Responsibility and it is our intention that these values will infuse everything we do.

These Community Standards serve as guiding principles, practices, and policies for the university community aligning with our Catholic Identity. These stated guidelines serve as the foundation of our community and create the bare minimum of expectations that our community members are expected to uphold in order to create a community based in faith and mutual respect.

- **Individual Worth:** STU is committed to demonstrating God's love by recognizing individuals as unique and worthy of respect. This commitment is expressed through respect for differing opinions, attitudes, and cultures with fair and just treatment for all. Further, civil communication, interactions, and resolutions are essential to the recognition of another's dignity and worth.
- **Integrity:** The St. Thomas University community values ethical behavior in all our endeavors, whether scholarly, socially, or intellectually. We encourage and expect all conduct to be grounded in integrity, mutual respect, and civility.
- **Self-Control:** The STU community is committed to self-control and to creating a culture of accountability. Individuals are accountable for the effects their behaviors have on themselves and others. This recognition of personal responsibility prepares all individuals to develop intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
- **Critical Thinking:** The STU community will live out our mission through a commitment to the pursuit of truth and knowledge. The community encourages students to develop the ongoing capacity for critical, independent thinking and judgment both inside and outside the classroom. This commitment affirms individuals' rights to teach and learn, and one's opportunity to engage in a transformative experience that educates students for their whole life.
- **Community Responsibility:** STU seeks to develop students who have a sense of responsibility toward their fellow human beings, respect for all life, and toward all the resources of the earth that God has placed in our care. The STU Community is committed to its students successfully living and learning together and to maintaining respectful interactions with individuals in the communities beyond our campus. Students are also expected to comply with the laws of society



and the just administration of those laws. STU encourages responsible citizenship, service, and stewardship.

The Community Standards in conjunction with the Student Handbook and student facing policies assist the university in meeting its mission and values, while informing students of their rights and responsibilities as a part of the STU community.

The Community Standards apply to incidents that occur involving STU community members, no matter whether the incident occurs on or off campus. A member of the STU community is always representing the brand and mission of the university, regardless of physical location. Therefore, these policies and standards are applicable to on campus conduct, off campus conduct, and through virtual means including but not limited to social media.

1.1 INDIVIDUAL WORTH

The policies below define behaviors that would betray our community standards and STU's commitment to Individual Worth. Students may be held responsible for any violations of the University Standards, as well as any other behavior (on or off campus) that betrays our commitment to Individual Worth.

1.1.1 Appropriate Clothing

The wearing of inappropriate clothing, accessories, and head or foot coverings while utilizing any university facility is prohibited. Appropriate attire is required for formal convocations, formal receptions, and other formal occasions of a ceremonial nature. Clothing with derogatory, offensive, and/or lewd messages either in words or pictures is prohibited.

1.1.2 Disorderly Conduct

Loud, threatening, or aggressive behavior or any other behavior which disrupts the orderly functioning of the university or disturbs the peace, and/or impedes the rights of other people is not allowed.

1.1.3 Harassment

Members of the St. Thomas University community are expected to respect the rights of others by refraining from any inappropriate behaviors that may negatively impact other community members' experiences. The university's prohibition on harassment applies to members of the university community, visitors to the campus and contractors, and others who do business with the university or utilize university facilities. Harassment may include a single or repeated acts.

1.1.4 Hazing

St. Thomas University believes that true community is nurtured in an atmosphere of social and moral responsibility, respect for individuals, and loyalty to the principles of higher education. This basic philosophy coupled with the university's adherence to state, local, and federal guidelines is the basis for the adoption of this formal hazing policy. Hazing is dangerous and unnecessary and contrary to the educational goals of St. Thomas University. If a student or



student organization is involved in a hazing incident, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

1.1.5 Non-Discrimination Statement

St. Thomas University is committed to providing an environment in which all persons are safe from discrimination, and which adheres to all federal and state laws banning discrimination. Aligning with this commitment, STU will not discriminate against any employee, an applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission based on race, color, religion or creed, disability of a qualified individual, military or veteran status, age, national or ethnic origin (including ancestry), citizenship, pregnancy, sex, or sexual preference/orientation.

1.1.6 Sexual Misconduct

St. Thomas University is committed to encouraging and sustaining a learning and living community that is free from harassment, violence, and discrimination. Consistent with this commitment and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination based on sex/gender in any of the institution's programs or activities, STU has developed this comprehensive Sexual and Gender Based Misconduct Policy applicable to all STU community members. Further, STU conducts education and awareness programs with the goal of preventing and discouraging sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

The Office of Compliance oversees all matters related to this policy. Individuals who have been involved in incidents such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, discrimination based on sex or gender, stalking, and sexual exploitation. The complete Sexual Misconduct Policy and how to report an incident covered within the Sexual and Gender Based Misconduct Policy is available at www.stu.edu/titleix.

1.1.7 Sexual Values

As a Catholic community, we seek to create a climate of mutual respect and uphold high moral standards regarding sexual behavior. Sexual deviance and provocation can create a disruption for roommates, friends, and others sharing in a living-learning environment. Based on these philosophies, STU expects that students refrain from overt (or sexual) public displays of affection while on university premises or at university-related events to respect the values of the Catholic community STU aspires to create. This policy also prohibits exposing oneself in an indecent manner while on campus.

2.1 INTEGRITY

The policies below define behaviors that would betray our community standards and STU's commitment to Integrity. Students may be held responsible for any violations of the University Standards, as well as any other behavior (on or off campus) that betrays our commitment to Integrity.

2.1.1 Children and Minors on Campus

St. Thomas generally does not permit non-student, minor children to be present on a frequent or continuing basis in the workplace, classroom, residence halls, or any other areas of the



university campus, even when accompanied by a supervising parent or legal guardian. If minors are present for a camp or event on campus, the sponsoring entity on campus must follow the protocols outlined in the *Minors on Campus Policy*.

2.1.2 Classroom Decorum

Classroom rules and expectations may be established by the instructor and communicated to the students via the syllabus and classroom discussion at the outset of the course. Classroom rules and expectations must be reasonable and appropriate and may vary depending on the classroom and instructional setting, learning objectives, and teaching strategies.

Any activities or behaviors that disrupt the learning environment can be considered as interfering with the learning process and a violation of this policy.

2.1.3 Tolerance

Students associated with, or present during the commission of an act(s) that constitutes a violation of university policy, may also be charged if the student's behavior constitutes permission, contributes to, or condones the violation by another student.

2.1.4 Deceptive Behavior

Students will be held accountable, if responsible for the following behaviors:

- Falsifying information submitted to a university official
- Forgery
- Deliberate deception (lying or omissions of truths)
- Intentionally interfering with an investigation or disciplinary procedure
- To give, offer, promise, request, solicit, accept, or agree to accept for oneself or another any financial or other benefits with an intent or purpose to influence the performance of any act or omission is prohibited.
- Students living in a residence hall room that is not assigned to that student (Squatter)
 - The person residing illegally will be charged for housing
- Producing or possessing a false record or instrument of identification (e.g., Fake ID)

2.1.5 Distribution of Unauthorized Material on University Property

To effectively convey information of importance to the STU community and to keep the campus free from litter, the distribution of any flyers not authorized by St. Thomas University administration will be removed, and the issuer(s) will go be subject to the community standards disciplinary process.

All postings must be approved by the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, or the Director of Residence Life & Community Standards (if not available, a member of the Student Affairs Staff). Postings contrary to the mission of the university or the Catholic values of the university are strictly prohibited.



2.1.6 Dining Rules

All St. Thomas University community members must present their issued STU ID card to access meal plans in the dining operations on campus. Failure to provide proper identification will result in denial of access to dining services unless the individual pays via cash or credit card.

ID cards and meals are not transferable. If a resident student would like to treat a guest, the resident student can utilize their Flex Dollars, but must be present to do so. Any student who gives their ID to another student to use in on-campus dining facilities will have their ID confiscated and will be subject to a Community Standards disciplinary process.

No outside containers may be brought into the dining facility to be utilized for the removal of food or beverages. All patrons are expected to clean up after themselves by taking their plates, flatware, and cups to the dish racks in the dining facility before leaving. Removal of university owned property serves as a violation of this standard.

2.1.7 Computers and Internet Usage Policies

Members of the university community are to use these resources responsibly. Technology shall not be used to facilitate conduct that violates the university's policies or the law. Information composed, stored, or transmitted through university technology is accessible by university staff. Actions in violation of the computer usage agreement or *Acceptable Use Policy* will be adjudicated through the Community Standards Disciplinary Process.

2.1.8 Guests and Visitation

Students are welcome to bring guests to the campus, but they assume responsibility for the conduct of their guests and must always accompany them. To be admitted entrance to the university, guests must be registered by an STU community member through the online guest visitation form and show legal identification at the entry gate.

If a guest is asked to leave a specific area of campus, it is the responsibility of the student host to cooperate with the university official(s) making the request. The university reserves the right to exclude all guests from any area on campus in times of impending or actual crises or emergencies, such as but not limited to, hurricanes, campus disruptions, or any reason the university deems appropriate.

2.1.9 Overnight Guests

Residential students are permitted overnight visitation on campus. Each resident is permitted to have overnight guests reside in their residence hall room up to nine (9) nights per semester, with no overnight guest stay lasting more than three consecutive nights.

Overnight guest requests must be submitted through the online overnight guest form 72 hours prior to the arrival of the guest and the residential student must receive written approval from



Residence Life professional staff. No minors will be approved as an overnight guest. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in the denial or removal of the unapproved guest.

Throughout an approved guests stay; the resident must escort their guest on campus and remains responsible and subject to discipline for their guests' actions. The residential student is required to properly identify their guest upon request by university officials. Guests are not permitted to reside on campus while the resident student requesting access to guest privileges is not present on campus.

If a guest is creating a disruption that affects a roommate, suitemate(s), other residents, and the community, they will be asked to leave, and the host will be held accountable for their guest's actions. Residents are subject to sanctions for the misconduct of a guest and are liable for any damages caused by their guest.

2.1.10 Squatters

St. Thomas University has a "zero squatters" policy. A squatter is a non-resident who remains in a residence hall room, or various rooms, for more than three days. Any resident or residents who allow a non-resident to be a squatter is subject to daily fines equivalent to the daily room rate, as appropriate, along with other sanctions.

2.1.11 University User ID, Password, and Email

Students are not allowed to share accounts or passwords with friends or relatives, run password checkers on system password files, run network sniffers, break into other accounts, disrupt service, abuse system resources, misuse email, or examine other user's files unless asked to do so by the file owner, download PC binaries, copy any software, or allow other users to copy software.

2.1.12 Failure to Comply

Failure to comply, or respond to, a legitimate oral or written request by a university official.

Students are expected to be cooperative and respectful to university officials who are acting in performance of their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, university administrators, faculty, staff, and student leadership positions of authority (such as Resident Assistants), maintenance and custodial staff, as well as Public Safety Officers.

3.1 SELF-CONTROL

The policies below define behaviors that would betray our community standards and STU's commitment to Self-Control. Students may be held responsible for any violations of the University Standards, as well as any other behavior (on or off campus) that betrays our commitment to Self-Control.

3.1.1 Quiet Hours

During the established quiet hours, loud noise, including but not limited to music, voices, and laughter, coming from a student's room must not be audible within the rooms of other students or within another floor, section, suite, hallway, or building. Students must also keep noise in the



hallways and common areas to a minimum. Residence Life staff will address violations with or without a complaint from another student.

Quiet hours are established as follows: Sunday – Thursday 12 am – 9 am & Friday and Saturday 2 am – 10 am.

3.1.2 Courtesy Hours

Courtesy hours are always in effect; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Compliance is necessary to maintain community standards and to ensure an environment suited for academic success.

3.1.3 Threats, Assault or Abuse

STU has expectations of the student body to resolve differences in a mature and respectful manner. Students will be held accountable for any acts of violence, including but not limited to:

- Physical abuse, assault, or fighting
- Verbal abuse, threats, or intimidation
- Any conduct that threatens or endangers the health, safety, and/or welfare of others

If the university deems these behaviors have occurred to any other member of the university community, on or off campus, the party, or parties, responsible will be subject to the university Community Standards Disciplinary Process.

3.1.4 Alcohol Use

All students are expected to comply with all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to alcohol as well as STU's policy on alcohol. Students are responsible for their conduct and actions, while under the influence of alcohol. The consumption of alcohol does not constitute a mitigating factor when the student violates the university's community standards while under the influence. Potential violations of the Alcohol Policy include, but are not limited to:

- a. Possession, consumption, manufacturing, or transportation of alcohol by a person under 21 years of age under any circumstances.
- b. Distribution of alcohol to persons under the age of 21.
- c. Behaving in a disruptive, intoxicated, or disorderly manner while under the influence of alcohol.
- d. Consumption of alcohol in common areas of campus, unless at a university sponsored event.

3.1.5 Consumption Alcohol at University Events

Alcoholic beverages may be served on campus at student-sponsored functions with the approval of the Associate V.P. of Student Affairs or designee. The sponsoring organization must be registered with the university and will be responsible for enforcing state law regulations, including ensuring that all individuals consuming alcohol are of legal drinking age. Such privileges are limited to the area where the event is taking place.



All alcohol made available at university events must be purchased by university professional staff or through the university dining services vendor, Sodexo. Alcohol may not be sold at events, unless through Sodexo, as they hold the liquor license for campus.

The sponsoring organization or office is responsible for ensuring that all university guidelines are strictly obeyed. These guidelines do not override existing university policies, rather, these guidelines should be used in conjunction with all other university policies.

Under no circumstances should anyone be forced to drink alcohol. All drinking games, contests, or events that encourage excessive drinking are prohibited. Violations of the guidelines during an event may result in the closing of the event and discipline for the sponsoring organization. All individual violations will be referred to the Residence Life & Community Standards Office for review and disciplinary action will be taken.

3.1.6 Drug-Free Campus

St. Thomas University is committed to fostering a learning environment free from illegal drugs, legal items intended to mimic the effects of illegal drugs, and misuse of legal or prescription drugs (substances). Students are responsible for their conduct and actions, while under the influence of drugs. The consumption of drugs does not constitute a mitigating factor when the student violates the university's community standards while under the influence. Potential violations to the Drug-Free Campus Policy include but are not limited to:

- a. Possession - Possession is the actual presence of a substance(s) on the student's person or within the student's custody or control at the time of the incident.
- b. Consumption - does not necessarily require a finding of impairment. Consumption pertains to smoking, injecting, snorting, inhaling, swallowing, or otherwise consuming pre-obtained, illegal drugs and controlled substances.
- c. Impairment - where a student is in a diminished state due to the use of a substance(s). Due to the danger to the student and the university community, impairment escalates the university's response.
- d. Distribution - the provision of a substance(s) to others, whether for profit or not. Due to the danger and disruption to the university community, distribution escalates the university's response. Distribution or intention to distribute leads to automatic expulsion from STU.
- e. Paraphernalia Indicative of Prior Consumption, Possession, or Distribution - items found during an incident that would indicate to an objective, reasonable person that the student engaged, or intends to engage in consumption, possession, or distribution of substance(s).
- f. Toleration - a student being in the presence of a substance(s) but not engaging in any of the above behaviors, while not reporting the Community Standard violation.



3.1.7 Parent and/or Legal Guardian Notification

University personnel may use administrative discretion in parental or legal guardian notification in writing and/or by phone of a student under 21 years of age when alcohol or drug violations of the university policy occur or when a student's health or safety is at issue.

3.1.8 Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus

St. Thomas University is an educational institution dedicated to the promotion of healthy lifestyles and personal development and a tobacco-free campus will promote these objectives. STU is committed to providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment for the students, faculty, and staff on its campus. As smoking is incongruent with the university's commitment to a safe and healthy environment, the university does not permit smoking or vaping on its premises.

The Tobacco-free Policy applies to all STU facilities, grounds, and vehicles located on STU property. Smoking shall not be permitted in any place on campus. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, and other persons on campus, regardless of the purpose for their visit. Repeated violations may result in suspension or expulsion of student status and termination of employment.

Additionally, smokeless, chewing tobacco, (snuff, spit, twist) of any form is not permitted in any STU vehicle, building, or facility. Potential violations to the Tobacco and Smoke-Free Campus Policy include but are not limited to:

- a. Possession - Possession is the actual presence of cigarettes, vapes, cigars, or any other tobacco products on the student's person or within the student's custody or control at the time of the incident.
- b. Consumption - does not necessarily require a finding of impairment. Consumption pertains to smoking, injecting, snorting, inhaling, swallowing, or otherwise consuming pre-obtained, cigarettes, vapes, cigars, or any other tobacco products.
- c. Toleration - a student being in the presence of cigarettes, vapes, cigars, or any other tobacco products but not engaging in any of the above behaviors, while not reporting the Community Standard violation

3.1.9 Advertising, Sponsorships & Promotions regarding tobacco

No tobacco-related advertising or sponsorship shall be permitted on university property, at university-sponsored events, or in publications produced by the university, except for advertising in a newspaper or magazine that is not produced by STU, and which is lawfully sold, bought, or distributed on university property. For the purposes of this policy, "tobacco related" applies to the use of a tobacco brand or corporate name, trademark, logo, symbol, or motto, selling message, recognizable pattern or colors, or any other indicia of product identical to or like, or identifiable with, those used for any brand of tobacco products or company which manufactures tobacco products.



3.1.10 Vandalism or Destruction of University Property

Vandalism is any act that intentionally, recklessly, or negligently causes damage to the university's or an individual's property. Defacing, littering, or damaging property of the university or of an individual is prohibited and subjected to disciplinary action and could lead to criminal charges.

3.1.11 Fire Safety

Unnecessarily setting off a fire alarm, tampering with fire hoses, extinguishers, exit signs, and alarm equipment, or blocking fire exits and otherwise impeding traffic may result in immediate university disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution. Failure to evacuate any building on campus during a fire alarm is also prohibited.

Fire hazards such as candles, restricted appliances in residence halls, unauthorized possession or misuse of combustible materials including fireworks, incendiary devices, gasoline, gunpowder, flammable chemicals, explosives, etc., are prohibited.

3.1.12 Gambling

Gambling may include, but is not limited to, wagering on or promoting pools on any event, possessing on one's person, premises (e.g., rooms, residence unit, car), or in a computer account or electronic format, any card, book, or another device for registering bets, knowingly using or permitting the use of one's premises or one's telephone or another electronic communication device illegal gambling, knowingly receiving or delivering a letter, package, or parcel or electronic or telephonic communication related to illegal gambling; or playing or engaging in any game, at any place, by any device whatever for money or another item of value.

Students found in violation of the prohibition against gambling may be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university.

4.1 CRITICAL THINKING

The policies below define behaviors that would betray our community standards and STU's commitment to Critical Thinking. Students may be held responsible for any violations of the University Standards, as well as any other behavior (on or off campus) that betrays our commitment to Critical Thinking.

4.1.1 Publications and Student Media

St. Thomas University recognizes that student publications can be a valuable aid in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and of intellectual exploration. Such publications can be a means of bringing student concerns to the attention of the university community and formulating student opinion. All student publications shall be published in accordance with guidelines established by the policies and procedures set forth by the governing documents of each publication, which shall be approved by the Division of Student Affairs. Editors and managers of student publications shall be subject to sanctions only



for proper and stated clauses in violation of the conduct in their roles as editors and managers, and when the conduct in question pertains to publications as defined within the Community Standards.

Posting or distribution of printed materials on and/or off university premises shall be in accordance with the Mission of the university.

4.1.2 Speech

The right to free speech and expression does not include unlawful activity or activity that endangers or threatens to endanger the safety of any member of the university community or any of the university's physical facilities. In addition, any activity that disrupts or obstructs the functions of the university or threatens such disruption or obstruction is not permitted. An expression that is indecent is obscene is grossly offensive on matters such as race, ethnicity, religion, or gender is inconsistent with the university's community standards.

4.1.3. Student Assembly and Protest

Students are encouraged to raise concerns and grievances through the Student Government Association which is charged with advocating student issues to the administration of the University. Students that wish to form an organized demonstration, protest, display, or make statements outside of the Student Government, must register their request with the Associate VP of Student Affairs no less than five business days before the event date. With the approval of the Associate VP of Student Affairs or his/her designee, a permit will be issued allowing the activity and outlining the date, time, nature, and place the event may take place.

At no time shall a demonstration, protest, display, or statement be permitted to interfere with classes, classrooms, residence halls, roadways, or in an area that would prohibit the day-to-day operations of the university. Every effort will be made to accommodate the legitimate request of the students. Denials of such requests by the Associate VP of Student Affairs may be appealed to the Vice President for Administrative Affairs.

4.1.4 Non-Student Assembly and Protest

No organized demonstration, protest, display, or statement by a non-student group will be permitted on the campus of STU without prior authorization of the Associate VP of Student Affairs.

4.1.5 Solicitation and Sales

Sales, solicitations, and commercial ventures are not permitted on the St. Thomas University campus. Exceptions are subject to the discretion of the Associate VP of Student Affairs and Vice President for Administrative Affairs. Questions regarding commercial ventures can be answered through *Advertising, Distributing, Selling, and Soliciting on Campus Policy*.

4.1.6 Communications to Administration and the President



Students are expected to communicate in a respectful manner with university staff and administration. Students should not engage in matters with the President unless all other outlets have been exhausted and no remedy has been found for their specific situation.

5.1 COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

The policies below define behaviors that would betray our community standards and STU's commitment to Community Responsibility. Students may be held responsible for any violations of the University Standards, as well as any other behavior (on or off campus) that betrays our commitment to Community Responsibility.

5.1.1 Arson

No student shall commit or aid in the intentional commission of an act that results in a fire being ignited, which negligently causes or is intended to cause damage, to the property of the university or the personal property of any member of the university community.

5.1.2 Bomb Threats

Making a bomb threat is an intolerable violation of university policy, which will result in expulsion from the university.

5.1.3 Health and Safety Incidents

St. Thomas University is committed to providing the best possible education for all its students and a good working environment for all its employees. In striving to achieve this goal, it is important to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all students, faculty, and staff.

The university prohibits threats and acts of violence on university property and within university facilities. In addition, St. Thomas prohibits threats or acts of violence at any university-sponsored event, while engaged in university business, educational or athletic activities, or while traveling in university vehicles. The university will also evaluate any conduct that occurs off-duty or outside the above-listed activities when that conduct may impact an employee's or student's relationship with the university community.

5.1.4 Breaking and Entering

Entering, or attempting to enter, any room, building, motor vehicle, or another form from another form of property, without proper authorization or consent is prohibited.

5.1.5 Weapons and Firearms

Students may not be in the possession of firearms (guns of any kind), tasers, archery bows, live ammunition, or knives (including swords) of any length. Furthermore, items meant to look like guns or weapons are also restricted from campus. An exception is made when approval is given



by the Office of Student Affairs for specific timeframes and only when supervised by a university administrator.

5.1.6 Theft or Unauthorized Possession

Students involved in the taking, sale, or possession of property without the consent of its owner or without proper remuneration may be subject to university disciplinary action as well as potential criminal action through local authorities.

5.1.7 Trespass Policy

St. Thomas University reserves the right to prohibit trespass onto its property. A trespass warning may be issued to students or nonstudents and may apply to an individual's vehicle, as well. The revocation of a person's privilege to be on the premises of the university may be restricted to time and place by the agent of the university issuing the trespass warning.

5.1.8 Unauthorized Possession of University Property

Students in possession of property owned or controlled STU without authorization for such property will be subject to university disciplinary action. Students may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution.

5.1.9 Identification Cards

The STU Identification (ID) card is the official university identification mechanism. STU students are expected to identify themselves and present their ID card upon request by a university official, Resident Assistant, Public Safety, or a law enforcement officer always correctly.

A STU ID card is to be used only by its owner. This card may not be loaned, sold, fabricated, altered, or transferred. The possession, use, manufacture, or sale of falsification of government-issued identification cards is strictly prohibited.

Any lost or stolen ID must be reported to the Student Success Center immediately. There is a \$10 replacement fee.

5.1.10 Auto Registration

All vehicles must be registered through Public Safety or receive a temporary parking pass to be on campus. Upon registering a vehicle each student is then issued a parking decal, which is to be fully affixed to the outside of the lower left corner of the rear windshield in a manner to permit quick inspection by Public Safety Officers and other university officials.

Failure to register a student vehicle by the 10th day of classes in any term will possibly result in a late registration fee penalty and the possibility of having the vehicle towed from the university campus. Students will be responsible for the towing fee as well as impound fees.

5.1.11 Parking & Traffic Violations

Each student is responsible for operating their vehicle in a safe and courteous manner on the St. Thomas University campus. Students must adhere to all traffic and parking signs. Parking of any



motor vehicle on the grass, medians, sidewalks, and places not designated as parking areas is prohibited.

All traffic control signs posted on university property are to be obeyed as stipulated in the State of Florida Driver's manual. St. Thomas University will adopt and implement the directives set forth in each of the Florida Statutes regarding the operation of a motor vehicle on public regulated roadways.

A maximum speed limit of 20 MPH will always be enforced on the campus. Speeding, failing to stop at a stop sign, or failing to obey traffic signs will be considered moving violations and citations will be issued accordingly. Motorcycles and mopeds will follow the same rules as automobiles for registration and operation on the St. Thomas University campus.

5.1.12 Pets and Animals

No pets or animals, other than fish in a ten gallon or smaller tank, are permitted on campus, including all residence halls, except for trained service animals or properly emotional support animals. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a daily fine until the animal is removed in addition to the Community Standards Disciplinary Process.

5.1.13 Emotional Support Animals

An Emotional Support Animal ("ESA") is a therapeutic animal that provides comfort to its owner but has special rights under the Federal Housing Administration to allow them to live in "no pet" housing. ESAs cannot go beyond the immediate living space of its owner. This means that the animal is restricted to the room or suite of its owner.

All ESAs be properly registered and documented through the Office of Compliance and may not be present on campus until a formal approval is provided. Please note it is a crime, felony fraud, to claim your pet, or ESA, as a Service Dog with ADA rights.

ESA owners sign a contract stating that they are responsible for the cleanliness of the animal, its behavior, and care. Failure to adhere to the contract will result in a Community Standards Process and potentially the removal of the ESA.

Comprehensive Disability Services policies, including Emotional Support Animals, can be found in the *University Policy Library*.

5.1.14 Removal of Assistance Animals

The university has the authority to exclude an ESA temporarily or permanently from its grounds or facilities if the animal's behavior is unruly or disruptive, in ill health, poses a direct threat to the community, or the owner is not properly caring for or cleaning up after the animal. Health concerns and disruption issues will be addressed by Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Director of Residence Life.

5.1.15 Floor & Building Meetings



All building and floor meetings for residents are mandatory. Failure to attend a floor or building meeting will result in a fine. Each subsequent meeting will result in a progressive fine.

5.1.16 Door Propping

Door propping in any building on campus is strictly prohibited. Video surveillance will be pulled for door propping and if the wrongdoer is identified, the individual will face disciplinary action.

5.1.17 Trash disposal and removal

All community members are expected to properly dispose of their trash in appropriate receptacles on campus. This includes individual items and bags. Items are not to be thrown on the ground, indoor or outside.

6.1 Disciplinary Procedures

The disciplinary process of the university is an integral part of its educational mission. The discipline system emphasizes the acceptance of each individual's personal and social responsibilities. The university recognizes its responsibility to all members of the academic community, and the protection of personal and institutional rights and property is a primary focus of the disciplinary process.

6.1.1 Defined Terms

1. *Community Standards Officer (Officer)* – the staff member in the Office of Student Affairs who oversees the adherence to the University Community Standards, reviews alleged conduct violations, and issues sanctions for violations of the Community Standards.
2. *Appellate Officer (Appellate)* – the Community Standards individual assigned as to hear the appeal; this may be the Director of Residence Life or their designee. The Appellate Officer is responsible for reviewing appeals of disciplinary outcomes and sanctions.
3. *Accused Student* – the individual who has allegedly committed behavior(s) that betray the Community Standards.
4. *Complainant* – the individual who has brought forth a complaint against another student. In those cases where the complaint comes in the form of an Incident Report through Residence Life or Public Safety, the report itself exists as the complainant. The individuals named in the report may be asked to provide more information during the investigation or to be present if a conduct review meeting is held.
5. *Preponderance of the Evidence* – the evidentiary standard used to determine a student's culpability. "Preponderance of the evidence" means that the information as a whole, shows that the facts support the conclusion that it is "more likely than not" that the student committed the alleged behavior that violates a Community Standard.
6. *Responsible / Not Responsible* – the accused student will be asked to make a declaration of "Responsible" or "Not Responsible" during their conduct review meeting. When a student declares that he or she is "Not Responsible" for an alleged violation – the Community Standards Officer(s) appointed will decide whether the student is responsible by the preponderance of evidence after reviewing all the information presented during the review meeting.



7. *Days* – refers to business days (Monday—Friday), not class days or calendar days.

6.1.2 Summary Action:

The university reserves the right to take summary action and/or dismiss a student who is charged with or convicted of a felony while enrolled at the university or commits an egregious policy violation that causes concern for the safety of the campus community. In these instances, the conduct officer will draft a suspension/expulsion letter that includes the policy violations, the rationale for the summary action, and the grounds for appeal.

6.1.3 Procedural Deviations

The Officer may implement procedures that are not specifically prescribed in these policies or procedures if such implementation would serve to arrive at a full and true disclosure of the facts. Deviating from the procedures set forth in this policy may be warranted depending on the nature and circumstances of the alleged charges, accused student’s conduct record, availability of witnesses or other involved parties, and other relevant factors.

Any deviation along with the rationale for the deviation must be logged in the case file.

6.1.4 Investigations

Any member of the university community may file a complaint against a student for violating the Community Standards.

Upon receiving an alleged complaint that an individual or group of students has violated one or more Community Standards, the complaint shall be investigated by the Division of Student Affairs.

1. If it is determined that the allegation is without merit, the investigation will cease.
2. If it determined that a violation may have occurred, a conduct review meeting with the Officer, or their designee, will be scheduled and the student will receive written notice within twenty-four (24) hours of their scheduled meeting time.

To protect the health, safety, and security of the university community and its members, the university reserves the right to impose interim, protective measures. Sanctions may be issued on a case-by-case basis depending on the alleged charges and other relevant considerations such as an ongoing threat to an individual, an ongoing threat to university property, or a risk of disruption to university activities. Such measures and sanctions may include, but are not limited to, no contact orders, loss of privileges, or interim suspension.

6.1.5 Community Standards Review Meeting

A Community Standards review meeting consists of a private, one-on-one meeting, with a single community standards officer to review the alleged conduct violation and determine an outcome



for a disciplinary charge. Review meetings may be recorded at the sole discretion of the assigned conduct officer, and the consent of the individual in the meeting.

Community Standard review meetings will be held individually with each party involved to gather evidence, ask clarifying questions, and learn of the charges alleged. Additionally, the accused student will have the opportunity to present information, to challenge or clarify information, and to submit questions.

The accused student will have an opportunity to either accept or not accept responsibility for the charges alleged. If the accused student accepts responsibility, the Officer will move on to issuing the appropriate sanction. Acceptance of responsibility may be considered a mitigating factor in the sanctioning process, depending on the circumstances, the charges alleged, the accused student's disciplinary record, and other relevant factors.

The Officer will consider the severity and frequency of the charge(s) and will determine the appropriate disciplinary meeting format. The Officer, or his/her designee, will make the ultimate decision on who will hear the case. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis.

Admission of any third party to the Community Standards review meeting shall be at the sole discretion of the assigned Officer. Review meetings are designed to ensure accountability for the STU Community, individuals who are not a part of this community are not normally permitted to participate. Third parties include, but are not limited to, parents/guardians, peers, faculty members, staff, and other students who are not part of the complaint, incident report, or involved in the review process. Legal counsel is not allowed during the disciplinary process at STU. If the accused student wishes to request admission of a witness, the accused student must submit a written request to the assigned Officer, within a reasonable time, prior to the scheduled review meeting. The request must include the witness's name and an explanation of why the witness should be included in the review meeting.

In cases involving more than one accused student, the Officer may choose to consolidate the review meeting and conduct a single meeting with all accused students present together, as long as the facts of the case are similar in nature, or the conduct arises out of the same incident.

The format for incidents that fall under the university's Sexual Misconduct Policy will follow the processes listed in that policy. Those policies and procedures supersede those listed here.

6.1.5.1 Community Standards Review Meeting Order of Events:

1. If the review meeting will be recorded, audio and/or video recording begins, with notice provided to the student.
2. Statement of charge(s) are read aloud, including a summary of the incident report; procedural points and questions are addressed by the Officer.
3. The accused student will be asked to accept or deny responsibility for the charges brought against them.



4. The accused student will be provided with an opportunity to respond to the charge(s) and any related case documentation and provided the opportunity to present any evidence they wish to be included in the case file.
5. The Officer will ask clarifying questions and determine if any witnesses need to participate in the process for an appropriate determination to occur.
6. Either party may request that a witness appear, but such request must be accompanied by supporting rationale for the request. The Officer will have sole discretion to determine whether or not a witness is permitted to appear.
7. If the Officer admits written witness statements, the accused student may be read relevant portions of the statement as needed to fully inform the accused of allegations made against them. Depending on relevant circumstances and at the sole discretion of the Officer, the accused may receive a copy of such statements, which may be redacted for sensitive information such as witnesses' names.
8. The Officer will have an opportunity to ask any follow-up questions for the accused student, and/or any witnesses present.
9. The meeting will conclude and all files, including evidence, statements, recordings, and any images will be placed in the case file within Maxient. The Officer will deliberate and provide a written determination (the outcome letter) to the accused party within five (5) business days. The outcome letter will include a summary of the alleged charges which violate the University Community Standards, the determination of the accused student's responsibility, the rationale of that determination, the sanction issued, and a statement of the appeals process.

6.1.6 Appeals Process

Decisions or sanctions made as a part of a Community Standards review meeting may be appealed. Only one (1) appeal per case may be submitted and will be considered. Appeals must be submitted within forty-eight (48) hours of the delivery of the Outcome Letter, via STU email.

The Appellate Officer hears all appeals. If the Appellate Officer is not able to hear an appeal, they will designate an alternate Appellate (who played no role in the case) to hear the appeal. All appellate determinations are final.

Unless otherwise stated, if an appeal is initiated, the original decision or sanction will not become effective until the appeal process or timeframe is complete.

6.1.6.1 Appeal Procedures

1. Appeals must be submitted in writing in the form of an Appeal Letter to the Appellate Officer within forty-eight (48) hours of delivery of the Outcome Letter. Appeals received after the forty-eight (48) hour time frame, will not be considered and the original decision will be considered final.
2. Appeal Letters must be authored and signed by the student submitting the appeal. Appeal Letters must be delivered by e-mail and must contain the student's name, student identification number, and the date the appeal was written. Third parties may not file an appeal on behalf of the student.



3. The Appeal Letter should state the reason(s) for the appeal and the supporting facts. For an appeal to be considered valid, the request and supporting facts must be directly connected with one or more of the Scope of Appeal Criteria.
 1. The Scope of Appeal Criteria list the grounds which a student must establish for an appeal. To be considered valid, an appeal must reference one or more of the following grounds for review:
 1. *Procedural Defect in the Community Standards Review Process* – which had a substantial impact on the original decision rendered in the case. The Appeal must describe the procedural defect in detail and include an explanation of how that defect substantially changed the decision that was reached. Deviations from prescribed procedures will not necessarily invalidate a decision or proceeding unless there is significant prejudice to the student or university.
 2. *New Information* – which was not available at the time of the original conduct review meeting and would have a substantial impact on the original decision rendered in the case. The Appeal must describe the new information in detail, explain why that information was not previously available, and how it would substantially change the decision that was reached.
 3. *Bias* – Information demonstrating that there is no way a reasonable person could have arrived at decisions similar to the original decision absent of bias.

Appeals of determinations made based on the acceptance of responsibility can only be made on the grounds that the sanction was disproportionate to the actions responsible for.

6.1.7 Appeal Procedures

1. Appeals are closed to outside participation. No participants, advisors, attorneys, or other observers are to be present during these proceedings.
2. An Appellate Review Meeting shall be conducted within five (5) business days of the appeal being received by the Appellate. Inability to schedule an appeal within five (5) business days due to scheduling conflicts of the Appellate (or their designee), will not be grounds for dismissal.
3. Evidence that was not presented during the original conduct review meeting, may be presented, only if it was previously unavailable.
4. Failure to appear at the Appellate Review Meeting, without proper notice, will result in a voiding of the appeal and makes the initial determination final.
5. Appeal decisions are final and will be delivered in writing, via email, to the charged student. These decisions may include:
 - A finding that there is no merit to the appeal and affirming the decision of the adjudicating body.
 - A finding that the student's appeal on procedure is valid and deferring to the adjudicating body to determine the way the case should be reconsidered.



- A finding that the sanction assessed by the adjudicating body was too severe or lenient and assessing what it deems to be an appropriate penalty.

6.1.8 Sanctions

In all cases, sanctions for violation(s) of the Community Standards can include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Verbal Reprimand.
2. Written Reprimand.
3. Removal from Residence Halls. A person removed from STU housing for accountability reasons will be responsible for all housing charges assessed for the semester in which he/she is removed. Students will forfeit any housing deposits. Additionally, students will be responsible for the complete payments of his/her current meal plan.
4. Restitution and/or fines.
5. Reflection Essays.
6. Letters of Apology.
7. Required attendance to an educational or intervention program, seminar, etc.
8. Required participation in assessments and screenings to assist in determining additional actions to be taken by the student.
9. Random Drug Testing and/or referral to substance abuse treatment.
10. Loss of privileges, such as the privilege to move off-campus, to live on campus, membership in STU co-curricular organizations or activities, athletics, attendance at special events, etc.
11. Permanent No-Contact Orders between involved individuals.
12. Permanent No-Trespass Orders on university campus(s) or properties for an individual.
13. Disciplinary Probation – a conditional retention of a student’s status for a specific period of time. Students found responsible for violations of the Community Standards during their probationary period will be separated from the STU Community by either Expulsion or Suspension.
14. Suspension – Separation from the university for a specified period of time, which includes loss of all tuition, fees, coursework, and other privileges of an enrolled student.
15. Expulsion – Separation from the university without the possibility of readmission. A Student will lose all tuition, fees, coursework, and other privileges of an enrolled student.
16. Delay of Degree – The university reserves the right to delay the awarding of a degree.
17. Revocation of Degree – The university reserves the right to revoke any degree, and such revocation would be noted on the student’s academic transcript.

Factors that may be considered when determining an appropriate sanction may include but are not limited to the nature of the violation, the circumstances surrounding it, whether the student has any prior violations, and the impact of the violation on the community.

Students must comply with the sanctions rendered in their case. Failure to comply will result in a referral to the Officer for further evaluation and results in additional disciplinary action.

