

Mount Saint Agnes Academy

Parent Handbook

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES K-5)

This handbook consists of guidelines that provide a framework for the school's day-to-day operation. The Administration reserves the right to vary these policies so specific problems are treated on an individual basis. The policies are subject to amendment or discontinuation as the need arises. The school will attempt to keep parents/guardians informed of all the changes as soon as it is practical. However, some changes must be made to meet unforeseen circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Mount Saint Agnes Academy is to provide quality education in a caring, Christian environment. Belief in Christ and fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church form the foundation upon which all academic learning and social interaction take place. To this end we make a strong commitment to recognize each child as an individual and to help him/her to develop according to his/her own potential in order to become a responsible member of the community.

HISTORY

Mount Saint Agnes Academy was founded in 1890 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (Halifax) who owned and operated the school until 1975. Since then, Mount Saint Agnes Academy has been owned and operated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, Bermuda assisted by a Board of Governors. Saint Agnes was chosen by the Sisters as the Patroness of the school at the request of the Archbishop of Halifax (Agnes was his mother's name) and this was most appropriate since St. Agnes is the Patroness of youth. The educational structure of Mount Saint Agnes Academy is based on the North American system. Throughout its long history Mount Saint Agnes Academy has remained dedicated to the principles of Christian education which forms a base for the school's philosophy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mount Saint Agnes Academy leads and guides each student to the knowledge and maturity required to assume a position of Catholic Christian leadership by:

- ✓ *Bearing witness, through example, to the message of Jesus, teaching the doctrine of Roman Catholic Faith through providing opportunities for faith experiences, and community service, and promoting the richness, depth and goodness of Catholic moral traditions and values;*
- ✓ *Striving to develop each student's academic, physical, social and aesthetic skills in a happy, safe environment;*

- ✓ *Fostering a Christian community which is sensitive to the needs, dignity and rights of others;*
- ✓ *Fostering a standard of behavior which encourages self-discipline, a positive self-image and sound moral character;*
- ✓ *Strengthening an appreciation of all students' cultures and heritage and inspiring all to make a lifelong commitment to their individual learning;*
- ✓ *Encouraging respect for bodily health and exercise, a joy in team endeavor, and confidence in physical abilities, along with a mature sense of sportsmanship.*

Mount Saint Agnes Academy will continue to keep its traditions alive, and will meet the challenge to make whatever changes are necessary to ensure that it always provides a quality Catholic education. Our success in providing this will be measured not solely by tests and academic achievement but also by the happy, productive lives of our graduates using their faith and talents to contribute to their community.

SPIRITUALITY AND ADHERENCE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mount Saint Agnes Academy is a part of the Catholic Diocese of Bermuda and serves as a very visible part of the work of the Catholic Church in our country. All students, Catholic and non-Catholic alike must respect and show courtesy for the work of the Diocese through the ministry of the school. This respect manifests itself in many ways including but not limited to:

- *Full participation of all students in the prayer and the spiritual life of the school.*
- *Respect and good behavior during school liturgies.*
- *Respect for the Blessed Sacrament during liturgies with regards to Catholics.*
- *Receiving Holy Communion.*
- *Full participation in Religion classes.*
- *Participation in service opportunities to the Church, school and community whenever possible.*
- *Respect for all religions by teachers and fellow students and an encouragement for all students to practice their faith and religion so that all our students may grow to be spiritual adults.*



SCHOOL PLEDGE

We pledge allegiance to Mount Saint Agnes Academy and fidelity to its ideals of faith, loyalty and truth. United in a noble cause, one in purpose, one in high resolve, we pledge our influence to uphold throughout the world the principles of Christian education.

SCHOOL SONG

Nil Sine Deo, to learn and then to lead the way.
For courage, loyalty and truth are fostered here the home of youth.
So lift your voice in loud acclaim, for M.S.A. God bless her name.

CHORUS For M.S.A., for M.S.A. her standards to uphold we'll fight.

As years roll by, until we die, we'll stand on guard
for the Blue and White.

As years roll by, until we die, we'll stand on guard for the
Blue and White.

Humanities and sciences and sports and class activities
are blended here at M.S.A. to guide our steps to sure success
So let your voice ring clear and true, be loyal to the
White and Blue.

As Juniors come and Seniors go, the torch is passed
and kept aglow. Ideals run high, school spirit strong.
Past grads return to join our song make the joyful
chorus swell to praise the school we love so well.



ST. AGNES
Courageous Teenager
Patron Saint of MSA

Long ago there was a beautiful thirteen-year-old girl named Agnes, who was put on trial for being a Christian. At the trial, the judge described the comfortable life she would have if she gave up her faith and married. Agnes said no. The judge threatened her with torture. Agnes still said no. So the judge had her taken to the altar of the goddess Minerva to offer a gift. Agnes made the Sign of the Cross instead. The judge condemned her to death. It was said that she went to her death more cheerfully than others go to their wedding. Agnes knew she would be going straight to God.

How we honor St. Agnes

This saint is one of the best-known early martyrs. Her memory is kept alive in the First Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. The Roman Emperor Constantine built a church in her honor over her tomb. She is the patron saint of young girls.

Prayer

*St. Agnes, you refused to give up your faith; help us to be proud of our faith,
to love it, to be strong in it, and to give witness to it daily.*



STAFF AND FACULTY

Principal	Mrs. Susan Moench	smoench@msa.bm
Assistant Principal	Mrs. Margaret DiGiacomo	mdigiacomo@msa.bm
Curriculum Support		
Director of Development & Alumni	Mr. Matthew Sinclair	msinclair@msa.bm
Guidance Counselor	Mrs. Bonnie Exell	bexell@msa.bm
Librarian	Mrs. Janet Laing	jlaing@msa.bm
Administrative Assistants	Mrs. Theresa Fletcher	tfletcher@msa.bm
	Mrs. Nélia Pimentel	npimentel@msa.bm
Business Manager	Mrs. Gloria Araujo	garaujo@msa.bm
Bursar	Mrs. Jackie Rodill	jrodill@msa.bm
Facilities Manager	Mr. Bruce Pimentel	bpimentel@msa.bm
Cleaning	Ace Cleaning Company	

EARLYING PROGRAM & ELEMENTARY

Early Learning Program	Mrs. Kristina Amaro
Kindergarten	Mrs. Susana Pimentel
Grade 1	Mrs. Karen Camara
Grade 2	Mrs. Valerie Martins
Grade 3	Mrs. Marina Resendes
Grade 4	Miss Maura Almeida
Grade 5	Mrs. Anna Faria Machado
Science	Mrs. Lexi Rego
Diverse Learning Teachers	Mrs. Dina Allen /Mrs. Erna Taylor
Music	Miss Sophia Sontag
Physical Education K – 5	Mrs. Kim Raymond
	Mr. Dustin Ferris

*Please note that the email addresses for all faculty and staff are their first initial and last name i.e. teacher@msa.bm

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

MSA COMINGS AND GOINGS

Each Monday, during the school year, a letter will be prepared detailing upcoming events and discussing pertinent issues. It will be available on the school's website and emailed every Monday. Parents/Guardians may request a printed copy by contacting the school office.

MSA SHORT NOTES

Whenever we have an emergent announcement, for example a school closure due to a storm, we will send this information out using the MSA Short Notes. If you see this arrive in your email box you will know this is very important information, not to be ignored.

MSA INFO

The MSA Info email address is used when we need to send information to parents that is in addition to the Comings and Goings. This information is important and has not been included in the weekly Comings and Goings.

Our goal with our communication is to keep all members of the MSA Community informed and involved. If you feel you are not receiving communication promptly, please do not hesitate to contact the school's office. We also recommend that you keep the school informed of any changes to your email address.



GENERAL SCHOOL GUIDELINES

ATTENDANCE

All students must attend school daily unless excused by their Parents/Guardians, or by the school. Any student absent from school must have an acceptable explanation. On the day of the absence the parent or guardian must telephone the school by 8:45 to advise of the student's absence.

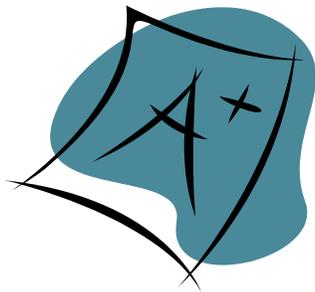
Student, Grades K-5, must check into the office before going to homeroom or class if they are late. Students in the Early Learning Program should go directly to the classroom.



If there is a special/unavoidable circumstance for which a child misses school, the teachers will do everything that they can to work with the child and family to keep abreast of school work. **Students missing school for vacations should note that the teacher is under no obligation to provide work in advance for the student.**

EVALUATION

Students in the lower grades are evaluated in many ways, all of which must be age and developmentally appropriate.



Students in ELP and Kindergarten are assessed throughout the year and will receive a progress report plus two report cards. Students in Grades 1- 5 will be issued report cards three times a year. Please consult the school calendar for the dates that these report cards will be distributed.

In addition to the regularly scheduled Parent/Teacher meetings, parents may request a conference with a teacher at any time during the school year.

HOMEWORK

The mark of a successful student is one who does homework on a nightly basis. Students will bring a variety of homework tasks home for completion. Many of these are review and reinforcement activities while others are classroom tasks requiring completion. Parents/Guardians play an integral part in trying to set up a time and quiet place for their children to study and to assist them when needed. The classroom teacher will give guidance on how much homework is needed at each grade level.

One of the most important components to homework is reading nightly. This can be done as independent reading for the older children or as shared reading with parent and child. Please take time to talk to your child about what they are reading. These are valuable conversations for both you and your child.



Some of the purposes of homework Include:

- To complete assignments the student has not been able to complete at school
- “Catch up work” may be assigned if the student was absent from school
- If a student is experiencing difficulty with certain concepts or skills, the teacher may assign additional homework to aid in developing these skills
- To enable Parents/Guardians to see their child's progress
- To help students develop self-reliance and good study habits

- To strengthen the tie between home and school

It is important to remember that parental support and interest has a large influence on student attitudes towards homework. It is not necessary that parents know how to do all the assignments. If a student does not understand a homework assignment please let the teacher know via a note or send them an email. Students in Grades 2-5 will receive a Homework Slip if homework assignments have not been done or returned on the day that the assignment is due.

MEDICATION

During registration you were asked to complete the medical information section which would ensure that teachers have up-to-date medical information on each student.



Students are occasionally required to take medication during the school day. Please fill out the form so that the office knows the proper procedures for dispensing the medication.

At no time is the school able to supply any form of medication.

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Good conduct on the part of all students helps to create a safe and fair environment for students, staff, teachers and visitors. In addition, we believe that learning, experiencing and accepting consequences for inappropriate behavior is essential for the social, moral and spiritual development of all students. Various incentives are given by each class teacher to encourage all students to work together to help the class foster a safe and happy environment which is conducive to learning. All classes have an outline of the school rules posted in their classroom for all to see. This code of behavior is an attempt to list the major rules. However, other acts not listed could be disciplined if the act is disruptive to the educational process.

LISTEN AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- Follow directions the first time
- Do not speak when others are speaking
- Respond politely when spoken to
- Do not distract others from listening
- Do not leave assigned areas unless you have permission
- Be in complete uniform at all times
- Do not bring or use any electronic devices



KEEP HANDS AND FEET TO YOURSELF

- No fighting or play fighting
- No hitting of others of any kind

RESPECT FOR OTHERS AND PROPERTY

- Do not hurt others' feelings
- No teasing

- No swearing
- Do not destroy property
- Do not threaten or bully others
- Do not chew gum
- Do not litter

WORK HARD

- Be prepared for class; have all appropriate materials
- Work quietly in class
- Allow others to work quietly
- Finish all assignments and homework
- Do your best work

BE HONEST

- Do not take things that belong to others
- Do not copy others' work or cheat
- Tell the truth
- Accept responsibility for your actions
- Be prepared to do something to make up for your mistakes
- Tell both sides of the story, not just your own

PLAYGROUND RULES

- At all times, students are to show respect to Parents/Guardians on playground duty. In cases of blatant disrespect, Parents/Guardians are to tell a Teacher or Administrator so that the problem can be rectified



- Lunch is to be eaten in the lunchroom only – not in the courtyard or the field
- Students should pick up their garbage and leave their tables clean before going out to play
- Students are to stay out of the lunchroom once the teacher or Parents/Guardians on duty have sent them out to play
- There is to be **no soccer or kicking of the balls** in the courtyard at any time
- Running in the lunchroom is dangerous and not allowed
- Students must not play between the planters and the wall along Washington Street as this is the bike parking area
- Students are to ask permission from a parent on duty to leave the courtyard if they are sick or hurt
- Students need to stay off of the steps leading up to St. Joseph's Courtyard, Kindergarten, Senior Lunchroom, and all steps leading to the gym
- Students are allowed to play soccer on the field only if there are enough parents to supervise the field and the courtyard
- Students should not be running in and out of the bathrooms
- Yellow lines in the courtyard are to remind students that these areas are off limits
- Students are not allowed on the walls or the garage ramp near the high school lunchroom

CONSEQUENCES (Grades 1-5)

Rule Reminder

If a rule is broken the teacher fills out a **Rule Reminder** form which is a checklist of the rules posted in the classroom. A Rule Reminder is just as its name implies; a reminder for students to follow the rules. The teacher will check off both a box next to the specific rule which was broken, and a box to indicate the consequence which was given to the student. These forms **must be signed by a Parent/Guardian and returned the following day.**



Depending on the circumstance, the following consequences may be given:

- Verbal warning
- Miss playtime/detention (per reminder)
- Parent conference

In cases of severe misbehavior students will be referred to the Principal/Assistant Principal and a **Red Infraction Card** will be given. These may be given for the following:

- Blatant disrespect of an adult
- Bullying
- Cell phone use
- Cheating
- Defiance/refusing to comply with a teacher's request
- Destructive behavior/vandalism
- Endangering the safety of others
- Swearing
- Fighting
- Stealing
- Violent behavior
- Biting

Depending on the circumstance, the following consequences may be given:

- Verbal warning
- Miss playtime/detention (per reminder)
- Parent conference

PERSONAL BELONGINGS



Students are discouraged from bringing expensive electronic games, cell phones or precious personal items to school. Students will not be allowed to use electronics in the courtyard between 8:00 and 3:00.

MSA will not be responsible for missing or damaged electronics.

PROTOCOL FOR PARENT CONCERNS

Mount Saint Agnes Academy recognizes the freedom of all parents to voice their concerns in an appropriate manner to the appropriate school personnel. All parties must recognize and respect the protocol. This means that the person who has the concern has a responsibility to begin addressing the concern directly with those whom they have the concern with before taking their concerns to the Administration.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

Conferences, report cards, and student portfolios are used to promote good communication between Parents/Guardians and Teachers in the reporting of student progress. The reports for Grades Kindergarten-5 are prepared from data maintained by teachers. The progress is based on the principle that assessment of the academic performance of students is an ongoing process. Teachers assess students by using students' oral and written work, test results, and quality of assignments produced.

Meetings between Parents/Guardians and Teachers may be required in addition to the scheduled conferences. Either Parents/Guardians or Teachers should initiate such a meeting whenever concerns arise.

Reporting Time Lines for Grades ELP-5

September: The school will host a Meet the Teacher Night, where parents can meet their child's Teacher. At this meeting, Teachers will review their classroom expectations as well as answer any questions Parents/Guardians may have.

Report One: This is the first written report card which will be sent home in December.

Report Two: This is the second written report card which will be sent home in March.

Report Three: This is our final written report card which will be sent home in June.

THE SCHOOL UNIFORM

Students are expected to be in uniform each day. During and after school hours, students must be neat, clean, well groomed and modest at all times while on campus and at all school-related functions. It is important that students keep in mind they serve as ambassadors for Mount Saint Agnes Academy.

In keeping with these principles, students at Mount Saint Agnes Academy are required to abide by the uniform guideline. These guidelines will be strictly enforced and parents will be notified if the uniform policy is not adhered to.

Uniform items may be purchased through the school's Uniform Shop.

HATS

All students in Grades ELP-5 must wear hats during recess and lunch. Students who do not have hats must sit inside the Junior Lunch Room during recess and lunch. Hats are available from the uniform shop.

NAVY JACKETS

The navy school jacket may be worn to and from school. It is for outdoor use only. The jacket may only be worn over a sweater or vest on very cold days. **The jacket may not be worn to Mass or assemblies.**

BOYS

SHIRTS:

- K – Gr. 5, white polo shirts with school crest (short or long sleeve)
- ELP, blue polo shirt with school crest (short or long sleeve)

SWEATERS

ELP to Gr. 5

- Choice of navy sleeveless vest, v-neck pullover or v-neck cardigan all with school crest
- No other type of jacket/coat is permitted – only raincoats on rainy days

TROUSERS/SHORTS:

- K – Gr. 5, Grey Bermuda shorts or Grey trousers
- ELP, navy blue pull-on/elastic waist shorts or trousers

SHOES AND SOCKS:

K – Gr. 5

- Brown or black of polished leather - only docksiders, loafers or tie (buckle/Velcro) permitted.
- No athletic or suede shoes permitted, no two-tone or bowling style shoes permitted
- **Grey knee socks with shorts**
- Grey, black, or white socks with long pants
- **Sports socks are not permitted**
- **Socks may not have designs or sport's logos**
- ELP, navy blue or white sock with brown or black shoes or sneakers

The following applies to all boys:

- Boys are permitted to wear a watch, medical alert bracelet or chain, or silver or gold chain with one Christian medal on it
- Hair should not be longer than the top of the collar

- Only natural hair color is permitted
- No extreme hairstyles such as Mohawks, faux hawks, tracks or tails are permitted

GIRLS

SKIRTS/JUMPERS/SHORTS:

K – Gr. 5

- Year round - choice of plaid kilt, drop waist plaid jumper, or plaid shorts
- Winter - long navy blue pants
- ELP, navy blue pull-on/elastic waist shorts, skort, skirt, or pants.

SHIRTS:

- K – Gr. 5, white polo shirt with crest embroidered (long or short sleeve)
- ELP, blue polo shirt with school crest (short or long sleeve)
-

SWEATERS:

ELP – Gr. 5

- Choice of navy sleeveless vest, v-neck pullover or v-neck cardigan with school crest
- No other type of jacket/coat permitted – only raincoats on rainy days

SHOES AND SOCKS:

K – Gr. 5

- Brown or Black polished leather - docksiders, loafers or tie (buckle/Velcro) are permitted
- No athletic or suede shoes permitted - shoe height no taller than 2 inches
- Summer - white knee or ankle socks
- Winter - navy knee socks, or tights
- **No sports socks are permitted**
- ELP, navy blue or white sock with brown or black shoes or sneakers

The following applies to all girls:

- Only **small** stud earrings may be worn (one in each ear). No other body piercing jewelry is allowed
- Girls are permitted to wear a watch, medical alert bracelet or chain, or silver or gold chain with one Christian medal on it
- No nail polish, lipstick or make-up of any kind is permitted
- Only natural hair color is permitted, highlighting or other extreme colors are not permitted

NON-UNIFORM DRESS GUIDELINES

From time to time, the administration may permit students a Non-Uniform Day when students are excused from the usual uniform guidelines. On such days, students will be expected to follow these guidelines:

- Jeans, shorts, sweatshirts, flannel shirts, T-shirts, sweaters, and athletic shoes are permitted. T-shirts must not have any advertisements or cartoons that are tasteless or offensive in nature.
- No “wheelie” shoes allowed
- No high heels

Boys:

1. Baggy/sagging pants are not permitted

Girls:

1. Midriff-revealing blouses, tight-fitting, low-cut blouses, spaghetti-strap tops, tank tops, halter tops, bare shoulders, and mini-skirts are not permitted.
2. Shorts must reach mid-thigh—halfway between the thigh and the knee. Leggings are permitted as long as the top worn over the leggings reaches halfway between the thigh and the knee.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety of our students and all people in our school building is a priority. We have put into place a number of procedures to help ensure everyone's safety. All outside gates are kept locked at specified times during the day. Students are to use Elliott Street/St. Joseph's Courtyard entrance when arriving late, go to the office to sign in with one of the Administrative Assistants before proceeding to their classrooms.

A very extensive CCTV camera system is installed throughout the school. These cameras are monitored throughout the day.

All visitors must report to the office. If a visitor is working at the school or volunteering their services they must sign in and out of the office.

An intercom system is located at each of the exterior entrances for all visitors to use to access the school.

We ask that if there are any changes to the regular pick-up and drop-off routine of your children that we are kept informed.

SUPERVISION

Outdoor supervision is provided in the Main Courtyard from 8:00 am until the commencement of morning classes, as well as during recess and lunch periods. There is NO supervision outside of specified times listed, and school is NOT responsible for your child's safety outside of these times. At the end of the day, any children using the courtyard area are required to have a parent/care-giver there supervising the children. The school cannot accept responsibility for children playing in the courtyard after school with no parental/care-giver supervision. The school does not provide after school supervision in the Courtyard.

ELP - Gr. 5, students are provided with after school supervision through the MSA After School Program which is located in the ELP Classroom for ELP – Gr. 1 students and Woodmont (next to MSA Field) for Gr. 2 – 5 students. You may contact Mrs. Joanne Chisnall by calling the school at 292-4134 and leaving a message on extension 1970 or emailing afterschool@msa.bm.

If your child(ren) are here, unsupervised by a parent/caregiver, after 3:30 they will be brought to the office and a parent will be contacted to either pick them up or they will be taken to the After School Program.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL

To help keep the “Spirit of MSA” alive we encourage the participation of all Alumni, Parents, Teachers, and Students in several different ways through their involvement of school associations.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We welcome parent volunteers in our school to assist in a wide variety of areas such as lunch duty, field trips, class activities, assisting in the library, helping with school pictures, classroom supervision for Christmas Concert Please write your child’s homeroom teacher or the office to express your interest. For the safety and security of everyone in our school, you will be asked to report to the office and sign in and out of the office upon your arrival and when you leave. We also thank our parent volunteers for continuing to have their own children follow the school expectations even when they are volunteering in the school.

HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Every year, dedicated volunteers devote countless hours to help the initiatives of the school. Becoming involved is a great way to get to know the school, meet other families, get to know the teachers, and contribute to the well-being of our students. There is a role for everyone to play, regardless of talent or time constraints.

Parents may become involved in

- Fundraising
- Social events
- Helping teachers

For more information please contact a member of the Home and School Association. Please check the MSA website for email contact.

BAZAAR COMMITTEE

The Bazaar, an annual tradition of the school, raises funds every year to assist in the operations of the school. This event is by far our leading fundraiser and requires the participation of all parents to be successful.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Be a part of the MSA Spirit! Membership in the Mount Saint Agnes Academy Alumni Association is all about spirit —spirit in MSA and spirit in being connected to some of the greatest people in Bermuda. As we look to reconnect with our many former students, please become an active member in the Alumni Association. It is an easy way to give back to MSA and a way to reconnect with fellow alumni as well as current students of the school. Join other alumni who are working to make a difference.