

THE HONOR SYSTEM

As part of the process of total education, we at St. Margaret's believe that each student must learn to live with others under a code of honor. The Honor Code requires that each student act responsibly; that she not lie, cheat, or steal; and that she provide a positive example and encouragement to others. Each student is accepted with the understanding that she can and will support the Honor Code and will be asked, after a period of orientation, to take a test on the Honor Code and its application to specific situations.

THE ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL HONOR CODE

On my honor, I will not lie, cheat or steal. In addition, I will take responsibility for those in our community who do so.

When she signs the Honor Book, a St. Margaret's student is agreeing to the following:

- I will report myself to an Honor Council member if I break the Honor Code.
- I will speak to another person in the community who has broken the Honor Code and ask her to report herself to an Honor Council member.
- I will speak to an Honor Council member about another person who has broken the Honor Code after she has been given every chance to report herself.

HONOR CODE EXAMPLES

The following examples of lying, cheating, and stealing are not intended to be all-inclusive. Every instance of lying, cheating or stealing is a violation of the Honor Code.

Lying. A student is *not* to lie. Lying means being untruthful, making an attempt to deceive or mislead, or creating a false impression. Creating a false impression means leading someone to believe that you are doing something that you are not actually doing. **Forgery** (that is, the unauthorized signing or initialing of any document or statement for another person) is also considered lying. **Misuse of a fire pull station, the alarm system, or extinguisher is creating a false impression, and is therefore an honor offense.**

Cheating. A student is *not* to cheat. Cheating is the giving or receiving of **unauthorized help** with academic work. Academic work includes tests, quizzes, papers, or homework. Unauthorized help includes discussing tests or quizzes with those who have not taken them. **Plagiarism**, the copying of anything from another source and without proper acknowledgment of that source, is considered cheating. It is most important to understand these definitions. Whenever you are unsure, ask a teacher or Honor Council member for help.

Students are expected to exercise academic honesty on all assignments. Upon completion of any test or quiz, a student is expected to write and sign the honor pledge (see next page).

Stealing. A student is *not* to steal. At St. Margaret's, we consider it stealing to borrow without permission. **Vandalism**, or the willful

destruction of school property, is considered stealing because it takes away from the community. **The use of another student's telephone code**, telephone credit card, or other credit card without permission is also considered stealing. **Removal of reserve materials** from the library is considered stealing.

If a student has questions or concerns regarding the Honor Code at any time during the year, she should seek out a member of the Honor Council for advice.

THE HONOR PLEDGE

On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this test/quiz.



MAJOR SCHOOL RULES

As members of the St. Margaret's community, students should keep in mind that they represent the school at all times. When under school jurisdiction, each student will be held accountable for her behavior. Any student in the presence of another student breaking a major school rule while under school jurisdiction may also be held accountable.

POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF DRUGS, ALCOHOL, OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Policy. St. Margaret's School prohibits the use or possession of harmful, dangerous or illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products by any student

while she is under the jurisdiction of the school. This rule is prompted, in part, by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia that require a person to be 21 years of age to consume any alcoholic beverage. They are also the result of the school's belief that such activities jeopardize the health and welfare of its students, and are not in their best interests.

Jurisdiction. A boarding student is considered under the jurisdiction of the school at all times when school is in session unless she is signed out with her parents or another adult with whom her parents have given written permission for her to sign out. A day student is considered under the jurisdiction of the school at all times when she is on campus or is participating in a school-sponsored off-campus activity. A day student is under school jurisdiction when she is transporting or spending time with a boarding student who is under school jurisdiction.

It is also prohibited for a student to be under the influence of harmful, dangerous, or illegal drugs or alcohol while she is under the jurisdiction of the school. **Any student returning to school** showing the effects of drinking or drug use will be considered in violation of this rule.

Medications. Medications, including over-the-counter stimulants, sleeping pills, and diet pills are included in the category of harmful, dangerous, or illegal drugs. Use or possession of such substances is considered a violation of this rule unless they are being used under the supervision of the School Nurse.

Athletic Policy on Possession and Use of Unhealthy and Illegal Substances.

The Athletic Department strongly discourages all students, particularly athletes, from using

substances (e.g., tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs). The Dean for School Life, the Athletic Director, coaches, and captains of varsity teams will convene a meeting to discuss and decide consequences for any athletes using substances during the sports season while on or off school jurisdiction.

ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE (AWOL)

A boarding student may *not* leave campus except:

- at times specified by the school,
- when accompanied by another member of the school community or other person with whom school policy permits her to leave campus, and
- after having followed proper sign-out procedures.

Day students are subject to the same rules during the time they are under the jurisdiction of the school, except that they may leave campus alone after signing out at the end of the school day.

In addition, a boarding student may *not* leave campus in a private vehicle except:

- at times specified by the school,
- when the driver of the vehicle is her parent or another adult or other person who is eligible, under school policy, to be listed and is listed on a parental permission form already on file with the school, and
- after having followed proper sign-out procedures.

Day students are subject to the same rules, except that they may leave campus in their own vehicles after signing out at the end of the school day.

RESPECT

Students should at all times be respectful to others, including their fellow students. Respectful behavior includes appropriate language, tone, and demeanor. A student found to be disrespectful is subject to discipline for violation of a major school rule.

HARASSMENT

St. Margaret's School will not tolerate any form of physical or mental harassment, including (but not limited to) the following: hazing; physical or emotional abuse; racial, ethnic, gender, or sexual discrimination; or sexual harassment.

A student who believes that she has been subjected to harassment or to physical or emotional abuse should report such behavior immediately to the Assistant Head for School Life or to the Chaplain. These administrators shall notify the Head of School immediately and begin an investigation of the matter. Any person found to have engaged in conduct in violation of our policies shall receive disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

GENERAL STATEMENT ON CONDUCT

Any student who engages in unlawful conduct or any conduct that endangers the health, safety, or reputation of herself or other members of the school community is subject to discipline for violation of a major school rule.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Discipline is addressed on two different levels:

- Minor problems are addressed in person and can result in receiving marks or restriction of activities, such as signing out.
- Serious disciplinary matters are referred either to the Honor Council for violations of the Honor Code or to the Administrative Council for infractions of the major school rules.

Problems falling between the levels (e.g., repeated minor infractions) are handled by the Dean for School Life, the Community Council, or, in the case of residential concerns, the Director of Residence. Matters involving the athletic training rules are handled by the Athletic Review Board. Student leaders who fail to live up to the expectations for leadership positions may meet with the Leadership Review Board.

DISCIPLINARY COUNCILS

Honor Council. The Honor Council upholds and enforces the Honor System. The Honor Council hears and discusses cases to determine whether a violation of the Honor Code has occurred. If so, it recommends to the Head of School consequences for that violation. The Head of School makes the final decision. All proceedings of the Honor Council are confidential. The Honor Council consists of two appointed faculty members and five girls elected by students and faculty. Honor Council members are available at any time for questions about the Honor System.

Administrative Council. The Administrative Council upholds and enforces the major school rules. The Administrative Council hears and discusses disciplinary cases involving a potential violation of those major school rules that are not violations of the Honor Code. It

determines whether a violation of a major school rule has occurred and, if so, makes a recommendation to the Head of School concerning the penalties for that violation. The Head of School makes the final decision.

The Administrative Council consists of the Assistant Head for School Life, one faculty member, the student's advisor, a member of the Honor Council, a member of Student Government, a prefect and either the Director of Residence (for a case involving a boarding student) or the Day Student Sponsor (for a case involving a day student).

Community Council. The Community Council gathers to address a student's unacceptable behavior when it may not have involved a violation of a major school rule. In cases involving a boarding student, the Community Council is made up of the Resident Faculty Sponsor, the Director of Residence, a senior boarding prefect and a member of the Student Government. When meeting with a day student, the Council is made up of the Faculty Sponsor, the Day Student Sponsor, a prefect and a member of the Student Government. Meetings with individual students are arranged to evaluate and discuss the student's behavior with her and her advisor. The Assistant Head for School Life reviews recommendations and consequences.

Athletic Review Board. The Athletic Review Board upholds the athletic training rules prohibiting student use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco during competitive seasons. The Athletic Review Board is comprised of the Dean for School Life, the Athletic Director, the athlete's coach(s), and all the varsity captains for that season. Violations will be handled by this group on an individual basis. Disciplinary action may include

suspension from competition or dismissal from the team. A captain who violates the rules will automatically lose her captaincy. Two violations during one season will, at a minimum, result in an automatic expulsion from the team. The Assistant Head for School Life reviews recommendations and consequences.

Leadership Review Board. The Leadership Review Board meets with a student who is not living up to the expectations set out for her leadership position. An organization's sponsor may request this meeting. (See the Leadership Handbook for more details). The Review Board consists of the Assistant Head and/or Dean for School Life, the organization's sponsor, an elected faculty representative, the School President and the Head of Honor Council.

The Review Board meets with the student and her advisor and makes a recommendation to the Head of School, which may include a probationary period or removal from office.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences for violations of the Honor Code or major school rules are determined on a case-by-case basis and take into account the seriousness of the offense, previous offenses, and any mitigating circumstances. Possible consequences are as follows:

- **Expulsion.** In all cases of violation of the Honor Code or a major school rule, expulsion may be the consequence. If the first violation has not resulted in expulsion, a second violation of the Honor Code or a major school rule usually will.
- **Off-Campus Suspension.** If a student is suspended, her parents will be responsible for

removing her from the campus for the period of suspension. Her absence may be considered unexcused and she will be responsible for make-up work. See the “Attendance Policy” section of this Handbook.

- **In-School Suspension (ISS).** If a student is on ISS, she may be asked to move out of the dormitory to a faculty residence. She will serve her suspension on campus in an assigned location. If a student misses class, she will be responsible for make-up work. See the “Attendance Policy” section of this Handbook. Weekend ISS begins with room restriction starting at 9:00 PM the evening before the first full ISS day, and includes the following:

Saturday

- Marks detention at 8:00 AM.
- Breakfast and lunch alone.
- Saturday study hall.
- Afternoon supervision by the AOD until 5:30 PM.
- Floor restriction at 7:00 PM if serving Sunday ISS.

Sunday

- Report in at the Latane Duty Office at 9:30 AM.
 - Supervised by AOD until 5:30 PM.
- **Probation.** A student is considered on probation when an offense results in either off-campus or in-school suspension. If a student holding a school office is placed on probation, she may be asked to relinquish her office. If a student violates a major school rule or the Honor Code while on probation,

the consequences will reflect her previous record.

Note to Seniors: As a member of the National Association of College Admission Counseling, SMS adheres to the practice of notifying all schools to which a senior has applied or been accepted of a “change in status” during the senior year. Departure from school, suspension, whether in-school or out-of-school, are considered a change in status, and colleges and universities must be notified promptly after the student serves her suspension. See the College Counselor or Dean for School Life if you have any questions.

- **General Restriction.** When a student is on general restriction, she will abide by the restrictions detailed on her restriction card. These may include the following:
 - She must attend all classes, activities, and commitments.
 - She may not leave campus except to fulfill school responsibilities.
 - She may not leave for a weekend or overnight during the restriction period.
 - She may not attend social events, either on or off the campus; this includes socializing with those visiting others on campus.
 - She may not entertain visitors, except her own parents. This visit may only be an on-campus visit.
 - She may not visit other floors (A-House and McCuan House are considered one

floor). Visiting the common areas of her own dormitory is allowed, providing that she is not violating any of the other guidelines.

- She may not have overnight guests in her room.
- She may not use the Faculty/Student Center.
- She may not use the pool, gym, tennis courts, or waterfront except when fulfilling a school responsibility.
- She may not visit on-campus faculty residences, except for academic reasons.
- She may not have a phone in her room.

Check-in During General Restriction. A student may have her card signed by any of the following faculty members: Dorm Head, Assistant Head for School Life, Dean for School Life, Director of Residence, Administrator on Duty, Cabinet Member on Call, or faculty member on duty. In addition, a student must have her card signed at all meals and at the Latané front desk each day at 5:00 PM. On weekends, she must check in at all meals and at the Latané front desk at 3:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

Room Restriction. When a student is on room restriction, she must remain in her own room during her free time, with no visitors. If she has a telephone, it will be removed for the period of her restriction. A student is allowed 10 minutes after room bell to shower or use the bathroom.

Floor Restriction. When a student is on floor restriction, she must remain on her own floor during her free time.

ROOM SEARCHES

St. Margaret's reserves the right to conduct searches of students' rooms and possessions when there is reason to believe that there has been a violation of the Honor Code or a major school rule.

In such cases, the school prefers the person whose room or possessions are being searched to be present; some circumstances, however, may require an immediate search. The Head of School or a member of the Administrative Cabinet must authorize room searches. Any search will be conducted by two staff members.

