



SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

Accommodations Handbook

Academic Support

2015-2016

This handbook provides information regarding the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities. Questions should be directed to Academic Support staff.

Saint Mary's School
Accommodations Handbook
2015-2016

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Overview

I. Philosophy and Purpose

Saint Mary's School provides a rigorous academic program for its students. All students enrolled at Saint Mary's School are expected to receive their high school diplomas and to matriculate to college. Saint Mary's School does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities.

The mission of Saint Mary's School is to create a community dedicated to academic excellence and personal achievement, preparing young women for college and life. It is the goal of Academic Support to provide students with the tools by which they can better accomplish their educational goals.

Academic Support staff provide, arrange, and coordinate accommodations for students with physical and/or learning disabilities and for students with cognitive disorders. Our staff maintains disability-related documents, certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for the provision of such accommodations for students with disabilities.

In post-secondary settings, it is the student's responsibility to request accommodations, if desired. As a college preparatory school, we strive to help students develop the ability to self-advocate and to empower them to become increasingly responsible for managing their disabilities independently.

II. Departmental Goals

Academic Support staff

- Provide appropriate accommodations and support services.
- Consult with faculty, advisors, and other appropriate campus personnel.
- Encourage and assist students with disabilities to develop greater independence.
- Increase faculty understanding of the needs of students with disabilities.
- Consult with community professionals, parents, and other support personnel to provide appropriate referrals and continuity of services.
- Coordinate student documentation needed to provide support services at school.
- Facilitate requests for accommodations on standardized testing.

III. Students with Disabilities at Independent, Religiously-affiliated High Schools

Saint Mary's School does not discriminate against students with disabilities who otherwise meet admission criteria. The Office of Admission seeks to admit students capable of meeting academic requirements regardless of disabling status. Students with disabilities must satisfy all the essential qualifications for participation in Saint Mary's School programs that a non-disabled student must satisfy.

As an independent, religiously-affiliated high school, Saint Mary's School is exempt from many of the provisions outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Saint Mary's School, does however, have a moral and ethical understanding of students with disabilities and strives to provide appropriate support for otherwise qualified students with disabilities.

IV. Confidentiality in a School Setting

Academic Support staff understand the sensitive nature of documentation and discussions related to students with disabilities. It is in the best interest of most students to share relevant educational information with faculty and staff. Academic Support staff will work with you to disclose appropriate information and your consent will be sought to do so.

There are some situations in which Academic Support staff would be legally required to act on behalf of your child without your consent. These include situations in which

- We believe the student presents an imminent danger to herself or to others.
- We believe that an individual is being subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- We are required to present records or other information regarding a student as a part of any legal proceedings.

Records regarding students with disabilities are kept in locked filing cabinets in locked offices. Academic Support staff are the only personnel with access to these files.

V. Rights and Responsibilities

The support of students with disabilities is a partnership among the school, parents, and the student.

Parents of students with disabilities at Saint Mary's School have the ***right*** to

- Expect equal opportunity to work and to learn and to receive reasonable accommodations for their daughter.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their daughter's disabilities and the opportunity to choose to whom information about the disability will be disclosed, except in cases where disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- Request or withdraw accommodations at any time by contacting Academic Support staff.

Parents of students with disabilities at Saint Mary's School have the ***responsibility*** to

- Identify their daughter as a student with a disability when an accommodation is needed and to seek information, counsel, and assistance within a reasonable amount of time.
- Demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate professional) how the disability limits their daughter's participation in courses and activities.

- Follow policies and procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations and services as defined by the Accommodations Handbook.

In order to provide the best support for your daughter, it is essential that she be involved in any discussion regarding her disability and/or possible accommodations.

Policies and Procedures

I. Certification Process

Parents requesting accommodations on behalf of their daughter are required to complete the following certification process:

- 1. Contact Academic Support staff and request services.* (For students new to Academic Support only.) You may fill out the “Student Identification Form” sent to you upon enrollment or contact Academic Support via phone or e-mail.
- 2. Submit documentation of the disability from an appropriate licensed/certified professional.* A letter or summary statement will not suffice. A complete evaluation is required, dated within three years of the request for accommodations. Specific guidelines for documentation are listed in section II – Documentation Guidelines. Please note that if we receive this information during the admission process or during the summer, we can begin preparing for your daughter’s needs before she arrives on campus.
- 3. Complete an accommodations interview with Academic Support staff.* An accommodations interview takes about 30 minutes. During the interview you will be asked to provide information regarding how your daughter’s disability impacts her life functioning. This interview also provides an opportunity for students to become acquainted with the support services available to them. When possible, documentation should be submitted before the interview session.
- 4. An accommodations plan is created and distributed to appropriate faculty.* See section V for academic accommodations procedures. Individual teachers and students will discuss how the selected accommodations will be specifically implemented in each class.
- 5. The accommodations plan is reviewed at the end of each year* with input from faculty, students, and parents, when appropriate. Accommodations are eliminated or modified as needed. If revised, the new accommodations plan will be distributed to the appropriate faculty, parents, and student.

II. Documentation Guidelines

Saint Mary's School recognizes the special needs of students with physical and/or learning disabilities and students with cognitive disorders and encourages testing and diagnosis prior to enrollment, or, if indicated, while enrolled at Saint Mary's School.

Documentation of physical, learning and/or psychiatric disabilities and cognitive disorders must meet the following guidelines:

- All documentation must reflect the current (within the past three years) array of symptoms/features and level of functioning; if the documentation does not, parents will be asked to submit updated information and/or documentation.
- Information on functional limitations should define specifically how the disabling condition currently impacts the student. Documentation on functional limitations should demonstrate how a major life activity in the school environment is substantially limited.
- A qualified professional, such as a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist who has expertise in diagnosing AD/HD, learning disabilities, and cognitive disorders must perform the evaluation. Information from medical doctors alone is sufficient only in cases where physical disabilities require accommodations.
- Documentation regarding attention deficits, learning disabilities, and cognitive disorders must state a clear diagnosis, describe the comprehensive testing and techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis (including the results of both an aptitude and achievement test), describe the current functional limitations, and describe the specific accommodations recommended.
- Documentation supporting accommodations for students with physical disabilities must state the specific disability, describe the current functional limitations, and describe the specific accommodations recommended.
- Documentation supporting psychiatric disabilities must include a clinical diagnosis of a psychiatric disability based on current DSM criteria and a rationale for the diagnosis. A qualified professional must perform the evaluation, i.e., a psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, clinical social worker, or licensed professional counselor. The documentation should include information regarding the severity of the disability and the functional limitations the disability or medication imposes on the student. Documentation should also include recommendations for accommodations based on specific features of the disability. ***Documentation supporting psychiatric disabilities must be updated annually in order to reassess the need for continued accommodations.***

Neither a 504 plan nor an individualized educational plan (IEP) constitute sufficient documentation but may be submitted along with a clinical evaluation.

Parents of students with learning disabilities must be aware that Saint Mary's School cannot provide testing or diagnosis for learning disabilities at school expense. Academic Support staff can assist with referrals to community professionals and can help these professionals understand the Saint Mary's School environment and our requirements for documentation.

Academic Support staff reserve the right to determine eligibility and appropriate services based on the quality, recency, and completeness of the documentation submitted.

III. Provisional Status

Once the steps for certification have been completed it is possible that documentation may not be sufficient for full certification. In some cases, a provisional status is allowed which enables students to receive accommodations for one semester while the family pursues obtaining current and complete documentation.

IV. Available Accommodations

Upon receipt of current evaluation results, an appropriate support plan will be developed in collaboration with parents, community professionals, and Saint Mary's School faculty and staff. The plan will include which accommodations are extended for the student, if appropriate, and suggestions for faculty and advisors working with the student.

Saint Mary's School expects all students to complete our academic program with minimal accommodation. Because of this expectation, the accommodations available to students are limited and include

- 50% extended time on tests and timed, in-class assessments. Extended time is not provided for out-of-class assignments.
- Use of a calculator on tests and timed, in-class assessments. This accommodation does not extend to math tests where students are being tested for mastery of basic math facts.
- Use of tablet on tests, quizzes, or timed in-class assessments requiring significant amounts of writing.
- Classroom notes provided by the instructor or an in class note-taker.

Additionally, Saint Mary's School will accept a non-standard administration of the SSAT for admission purposes. Arrangements for accommodations on the SSAT must be made by the student's current school.

Saint Mary's School faculty have much flexibility over their work with students. In addition to the accommodations listed above, some faculty may allow for other accommodations in the classroom. Please be aware that these kinds of accommodations are not "official" and the allowance of an extra accommodation in one class may not translate to the extra accommodation being extended in other classes.

All students enrolled in Saint Mary's School are expected to meet curricular standards and expectations established as the normal course of study. Accommodations plans are designed to support students with physical and/or learning disabilities or cognitive disorders without altering the curriculum or grading policies. We can, however, work with parents to provide referrals to supplemental educational support, e.g. private tutors, psycho-education evaluations, and/or academic coaches.

Academic Support staff make every effort to make teachers and advisors aware of a student's particular learning challenges so that everyone involved in her education may best support her on our campus.

V. Considerations Regarding Eligibility for Accommodations

Saint Mary's School does not change its basic nature, character, or purpose to accommodate a student with a disability. Additionally, not all students with a documented disability qualify for accommodations. Thus, even if a student has a diagnosed disability, but has overall average intelligence scores and is able to progress through school without accommodations the student is not considered functionally limited and therefore does not qualify for accommodations at Saint Mary's School.

Academic Support staff consider each student's documentation and situation on an individual basis. In effort to prepare students for college, Saint Mary's School provides a graduated level of support that will help them become accustomed to the level of independence and responsibility typically required in the college setting.

To discuss your daughter's individual situation please contact a member of the Academic Support staff.

VI. Academic Accommodations Procedures

In an effort to help students develop independence and responsibility for managing their learning needs, Saint Mary's School has implemented a tiered system for the process of notifying faculty about a student's learning disabilities and accommodations.

9th grade students:

- Are *invited* to attend the accommodations interview with her parents and Academic Support staff.
- Are *invited* to learn more about their diagnosis and how it impacts them in the classroom.
- Are provided with classroom accommodations sent directly from Academic Support to the faculty working with the student.
- Are *encouraged* to speak with their teachers about utilizing accommodations in class.

10th grade students:

- Are *required* to attend the accommodations interview with her parents and Academic Support staff.
- Are *required* to meet with Academic Support staff to learn more about their diagnosis and how it impacts them in the classroom.
- Are provided with classroom accommodations sent directly from Academic Support to the faculty working with the student.
- Are *encouraged* to speak with their teachers about utilizing accommodations in class.

11th grade students:

- Are *required* to attend the accommodations interview with her parents and Academic Support staff. Students will be asked to take the lead during discussions of requested accommodations.
- Are provided with classroom accommodations sent directly from Academic Support to the faculty working with the student.
- Are *required* to speak with their teachers about utilizing accommodations in class.

12th grade students:

- Are *required* to attend and lead the accommodations interview with or without the presence of a parent (parents will be asked for plan approval after the meeting).
- Are provided with classroom accommodations sent directly from Academic Support to the faculty working with the student.
- Are *required* to speak with their teachers about utilizing accommodations in class.

Once accommodation requests have been supplied to the appropriate faculty members, students will begin receiving accommodations. Students and parents should consult course with the teacher for information on how he or she handles the provision for extended time.

Student support plans are re-evaluated at the end of the year to ensure that appropriate accommodations are being offered and utilized.

VII. Accommodations for Standardized Testing

For external examinations such as the PSAT, SAT, and AP exams, the student must be approved for testing accommodations by the College Board. The specific accommodations given (such as extended time or extra breaks) are determined for each student individually by the College Board. The presence of an IEP or other formal written educational plan or professional evaluation does not guarantee that a student is eligible for testing accommodations on these tests.

New 9th and 10th grade students may not apply for accommodations on standardized testing until after their first full semester of attendance at Saint Mary's School. New 11th and 12th graders should apply as early as possible. Please note that in order for a student to be eligible for accommodations on these standardized tests, she must be utilizing classroom accommodations at Saint Mary's School. **Saint Mary's School does not provide classroom accommodations for the sole purpose of applying for accommodations on standardized testing.**

Please note that applying for accommodations on standardized testing requires the completion of additional paperwork. Academic Support staff are not available during the months of June and July. If you plan to register for a summer or fall SAT/ACT date, you must be sure to contact us prior to the end of school in May.

Approval for accommodations on other standardized tests such as the ACT and national Latin and math exams require a different application process. Please contact an Academic Support staff member for more information regarding accommodations on standardized testing.

Services

Advising

The advising system is an integral part of the educational process at Saint Mary's School and allows for individual attention to each student. Advisors assist advisees in course selection and monitor their overall progress in the context of Saint Mary's advising program. The advisor is the adult liaison among teachers, residential faculty, students, tutors, coaches, and parents. Your daughter's advisor may be contacted regarding any concern you have about your daughter and can help provide you with additional resources.

College Counseling

The College counselors provide help for students and parents, beginning with a student's enrollment at Saint Mary's School and continuing through her application to colleges and universities and graduation. College counseling staff can assist students with finding college environments suitable to their learning needs. As part of the academic support team, college counselors work with advisors and teachers to monitor students' progress and to give extra support when needed. College counselors are located on the first floor of Smedes Hall. For more information regarding college counseling please contact Scott Orvis, interim dean of teaching and learning and director of college counseling, at 919-424-4072 or sorvis@sms.edu.

Study Skills and Individual Academic Coaching

Saint Mary's School offers group and individual study skills instruction to all students. Additionally, Academic Support staff closely monitor the progress of all students and, particularly, the progress of students with documented learning disabilities. Saint Mary's Academic Support Specialist is available during the academic day to meet with students and teachers to help create a plan of academic support for struggling students. The Academic Support Specialist is also available to meet individually with students who need short-term, monitored support. Students in need of ongoing academic support will be referred to local tutors and academic coaches. For more information regarding these services please contact Ashley Turlington, academic support specialist, at 919-424-4119 or aaturlington@sms.edu.

Daytime Study Hall

All 9th and 10th grade students are expected to attend a proctored library study hall if they have an unscheduled class period during the academic day. Faculty act as proctors and are available to assist students with their classes. Students are encouraged to seek out help from these adults and every effort is made to help ensure that each academic department is represented throughout the week so that students may have a variety of faculty from whom to seek help.

Supplemental Academic Support

Saint Mary's School faculty are available throughout the academic day and week to provide assistance to students in their classes. The School recognizes, however, that in some instances parents may wish or, in certain circumstances, be encouraged to contract with a professional tutor and/or academic coach to provide support for their daughter. Saint Mary's School maintains a list of tutors and academic coaches which can be found on the Parent Portal of the Saint Mary's School's website. For more information regarding tutoring and academic coaching, please contact Ashley Turlington, academic support specialist, at 919-424-4119 or aaturlington@sms.edu.

Counseling Services

Counseling Services at Saint Mary's School support students' academic and personal growth as they meet and master the challenges of adolescence. Counseling Services are an integral part of the school's emphasis on wellness and healthy development. Counseling Services works closely with faculty, staff, and administrators to create and implement educational initiatives that promote healthy adolescent development.

Counselors at Saint Mary's School work in a variety of capacities. Counselors develop curriculum for and teach COMPASS Leadership Development classes, lead faculty and staff in-service training, and collaborate closely with Academic Support, Admission, and Binder Health Center personnel. Counselors work with groups of girls on campus, leading a variety of wellness-oriented programs. Counselors participate in and lead Parent Education and Support initiatives. Counselors serve as a source of support and resources for administration, faculty, and staff.

In addition to their broader wellness and prevention efforts, Saint Mary's School counselors respond to the individual needs of students and their families whenever concerns arise. Counselors serve as a sounding board for students experiencing difficulties in managing the transitions of adolescence. They work with students to develop plans to address the challenges inherent in their daily lives. Counselors meet with parents to provide resources, support, and guidance as parents navigate the sometimes-difficult task of parenting adolescents.

Counselors also evaluate students in crisis or at-risk. They assist the administration in determining an appropriate response to a problematic situation and consult with faculty and staff to develop strategies for helping students address distress arising from academic issues, residential living, and family or peer concerns.

Saint Mary's School counselors do not act as individual psychotherapists for students or adults in the school community. Should a student need regular, long-term, therapeutic intervention, counselors work with the student's family to refer the student to an outside mental health professional. If the student is working with an outside health provider, the counselor acts as a liaison between the professional and Saint Mary's School, coordinating effective strategies that provide the student with additional support.

Counselors introduce themselves to students early in the year, explaining their role and how to access Counseling Services. Students can self-refer, or faculty, staff, or parents may refer a student. For additional information or to make a referral, please contact: Caroline Costello, school counselor, at 919-424-4051 or email: CCostello@sms.edu; or Amenie Schweizer, school counselor, at 919-424-4023 or email: skschweizer@sms.edu.

Chaplain

The Chaplain oversees the Chapel program and is available to meet with parents and students to address issues of spiritual development. The Chaplain's office is located in lower Smedes Hall. For more information, please contact The Rev. Ann Bonner-Stewart at 919-424-4131 or email: abstewart@sms.edu.

Binder Health Center

Saint Mary's school nurses manage the Binder Health Center; provide care for acute and chronic illnesses; respond to campus emergencies; provide information, education and counseling concerning health-related issues; and make referrals to off-site specialists, as needed. Operating hours for Binder Health Center are 7 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. school days. A nurse is on call 24 hours/day when school is in session. For more information, please contact Stacy Finley, director of Binder Health Center or the nurse on duty at 919-424-4043.

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Appendix A
Resources

AD/HD in Adolescents and Young Women

Online resources:

http://www.addresources.org/article_adhd_teens_robin.php

http://www.addresources.org/article_adhd_women_nadeau.php

http://www.addresources.org/article_adhd_students_quinn.php

<http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/college>

Book Resources:

Understanding Girls with AD/HD
By Kathleen Nadeau (2000)

Help 4 ADD @ High School
By Kathleen Nadeau (1998)

Survival Guide for College Students with ADHD or LD
By Kathleen Nadeau (2006)

ADD and the College Student: A Guide for High School and College Students with
Attention Deficit Disorder
By Patricia O. Quinn (2001)

The Girl's Guide to AD/HD: Don't Lose This Book!
By Beth Walker (2004)

A Bird's Eye View of Life w/ ADD & ADHD
By Chris A. Zeigler Dendy (2003)

Teaching Teens with ADD & ADHD: A Quick Reference Guide for Teachers and
Parents
By Chris Zeigler Dendy (2000)

Teenagers with ADD and ADHD: A Guide for Parents and Professionals

By Chris Zeigler (2006)

Learning Disabilities – Resources for Parents and Teens

Online Resources:

<http://www.nclld.org/content/view/370/350/>

<http://www.nclld.org/content/view/827/527/>

<http://www.ldonline.org/>

<http://www.allkindsofminds.org/index.aspx>

<http://www.lidaamerica.org/aboutld/parents/index.asp>

<http://www.lidaamerica.org/aboutld/resources/frames.asp?top.asp>+<http://www.smartkidswithld.org>

<http://www.ldonline.org/article/11334>

<http://www.unwrappingthegiftofadd.com>

Book Resources:

Delivered from Distraction: Getting the Most out of Life with Attention Deficit Disorder
By Ed Hallowell, M.D. and John J. Ratey, M.D.

College and Career Success for Students with LD
By Roslyn Dolber

Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities and ADD
By Peterson Publishers

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a
Straight-A Student
By: Loren Pope

Learning Outside the Lines: Two Ivy League Students with Learning Disabilities and
ADHD...
By Jonathan Mooney & David Cole