

Making the Transition to School

As the opening of school fast approaches, the Admission Office is busy with calls from parents preparing for their daughter's arrival. In many ways, preparing your daughter for her experience at St. Margaret's is the easy part—school shopping, selecting courses, summer reading, and so forth. But you, too, need to prepare for your role in the St. Margaret's community. As we have conveyed to our families, each girl's success at St. Margaret's is a collaboration between the student, her parents, and the school. With this in mind, here are a few practical tips that parents can follow to help their child have a successful year.

Encourage your child to be involved. When a student is busy and actively involved in something she enjoys, there is less time to be homesick, or to dwell on the people and things she has left behind. There are many different ways to be involved here: community service, student government, sports, and weekend activities are just a few of the many offerings. Parents can be good role models for their child by actively supporting St. Margaret's. Plan to participate in our Fall Family Weekend, attend a sporting event, and be willing to donate time and energy to our school when asked.

Adhere to school guidelines. While our policies regarding open and closed weekends, vacation time, and travel days may seem rigid, experience has shown that following them makes the transition to St. Margaret's as easy as possible. Failure to adhere to these guidelines sends a subtle message to the student that the school's policies can be manipulated and her family's commitment to the school is a tenuous one.

Accentuate the positive! Celebrate with your daughter every success she has at St. Margaret's. While there will be many adults at school recognizing your daughter's successes, nothing means as much as hearing from you, "Great job!" or "I am proud of you."

Keep lines of communication open. This applies to both the school and your daughter. Ask her about school, her friends, and activities in which she is involved. When a concern arises, call or e-mail her advisor. Let your daughter know that you are in close contact with her advisor too, as this will reassure her that everyone is engaged in her success. We understand that all communities have their own unique language. We include at the end of the appendices of this Handbook a glossary of terms written with the student in mind.

Develop a support network. It is important for parents to have other adults who know and understand St. Margaret's. If you are a new parent, try to meet other parents from your same geographical area, or in your daughter's grade. Parents of returning students have great insight into the many questions and issues that will arise during the year. If you are a returning parent, offer to "mentor" a new family during their first year here. Other key people to enlist on your support team are your daughter's educational consultant (if you have one), and your daughter's advisor.

Remember that your daughter's time at St. Margaret's is a journey. At the beginning, it may seem like a strange and curious experience. The longer she is here, though, the better you and she will know how to succeed and take advantage of all that St. Margaret's has to offer. We look forward to taking this journey with you!