



MIRIAM
ACADEMY

2021-2022

Parent Student
HANDBOOK

MISSION

Miriam empowers unique learners by building confidence and a foundation for success. We accomplish this mission by creating a school community where students thrive both academically and socially. Miriam is committed to four core values:

- Learners First-We believe our student-centered approach defines who we are and must be at the center of planning and decision making
- Commitment to Excellence -We believe in achieving the highest professional standards through reflection and continuous improvement
- Working in Partnership- We believe that collaboration, open communication and a culture of trust are essential to a healthy and successful organization
- Respect for All- We believe in a culture which embraces diversity so that our entire community is valued, heard and understood.

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www.miriamstl.org

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL AND PARENT PARTNERSHIP

Parents and staff of independent schools work together to create and sustain effective partnerships. The following principles of good practice describe the respective roles and responsibilities of both partners.

Parents Working With Independent Schools

1. Parents recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. In selecting an independent school, parents seek an optimal match for the needs of the student, their own expectations, and the philosophy and programs of the school.
3. Parents are familiar with and support the school's policies and procedures.
4. Parents provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits.
5. Parents involve themselves in the life of the school.
6. Parents seek and value the school's perspective on the student.
7. When concerns arise, parents seek information directly from the school, consulting with those best able to address the concerns.
8. The school suggest effective ways for parents to support the educational process.

Independent Schools Working With Parents

1. The school recognizes that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. The school clearly and fully presents its philosophy, program, and practices to parents during the admission process and encourages dialogue that clarifies parental expectations and aspirations for the student.
3. The school seeks and values the parents' perspective on the student.
4. Teachers and administrators are accessible to parents and model candid and open dialogue.
5. The school keeps parents well informed through systematic reports, conferences, publications, and informal conversations.
6. The school defines clearly how it involves parents when considering major decisions that affect the school community.
7. The school offers and supports a variety of parent education opportunities.
8. The school suggests effective ways for parents to support the educational process.
9. The school actively seeks the knowledge it needs to work effectively with a diverse parent body.

The above principles are from the NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) *Principles of Good Practice* that defines high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations and helps guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be.

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See the Miriam Course Guide for course information, graduation requirements, and grading information

FACULTY AND STAFF

Administration:

Head of School	Dr. Andrea White	awhite@miriamstl.org
Associate Head of Transition Services	Terri Pruitt	tpruitt@miriamstl.org
Administrative Assistant	Karen Crews	kcrews@miriamstl.org

Classroom Teachers:

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Teaching Assistant:

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Occupational Therapist:

Cindy McFarland	cmcfarland@miriamstl.org
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CODA:

Tammy Bunger	tbunger@miriamstl.org
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Therapist:

Janene Allen	jallen@miriamstl.org
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Speech and Language Pathologist:

Carrie Lorentz	clorentz@miriamstl.org
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Director of Finance: and Administration

Cyndi Ludwinski	cludwinski@miriamstl.org
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Staff Accountant:

Susan Bennett	sbennett@miriamstl.org
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If you have general school-related questions, please call the school office at 314-962-6080 or email an administrator. The office will answer the phone personally if possible. Please note that information which requires immediate attention and call goes to voice mail, please call back in cases such as medication or pick up changes. Individual staff members may be reached through email. Staff will check their email at least once daily.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES AND SAFEGUARDS

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

School day begins at 8:30am and dismisses at 3:45pm. Early drop off begins at 7:00am with advanced sign up. Please complete Early Drop Off form on the Miriam Academy website. Students who are dropped off prior to 8:30am will use the Miriam Academy entrance. ***At this time, Early Drop Off is not available on an as needed basis and only students whose parents have signed up for specific days 30 days (not to include the first two weeks of school) in advance may attend.***

All students should complete BeSafe screening before arriving to school.

7:00 am arrivals enter at the Miriam Academy entrance. Students who drive and all upper classmen should enter the Foundation office entrance facing Warson Road and park their cars on the lane closest to Warson Rd. The drop off lane will be the lane in front of Foundation entrance for upperclassmen. Freshman and Sophomores should enter at the Miriam Academy entrance in back of building. Parents should allow their student to exit the car safely and be welcomed by staff into the building before leaving. Students may congregate in the Commons and Zen room only until 8:25 am and then proceed to their locker and then directly to their advisory. Students may not roam the building before or after school for safety and security concerns.

Any student arriving after 8:45am, must be signed in by parent at front desk. The Administrative Assistant will notify teacher of student's arrival.

Bell Schedule

Advisory	8:30- 8:44
1	8:48-9:38
2	9:42-10:32
3	10:36-11:26
4	11:30-12:20
	Lunch 12:24-12:49
5	12:53-1:43
6	1:47-2:37
7	2:41-3:31
8	DEAR 3:31-3:45

EARLY PICK UP

Please contact the school office if your student needs to be picked up early 1 hour prior to pick up time. The cutoff time for early dismissal is 3:15pm. After 3:15pm, students will not be dismissed until 3:45pm. The school office will contact student for early pick up when parent arrives. Parent must sign student out at the Academy office.

Students are engaged in their classes and it is important for learning to continue until dismissal, therefore, we ask that early pick be reserved for emergencies, doctor appointments etc.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Dismissal begins at 3:45 pm. At the end of the day, students will be dismissed from class, go to lockers and exit building. Upperclassmen will exit through Foundation office and freshman and sophomores will exit through the Academy. All faculty will remain on duty until all students have exited building. **The pick-up lane will be the lane in front of Foundation entrance for upperclassmen and student drivers. Freshman and Sophomores pick up lane will begin at the west end of the Miriam Academy parking lot.**

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL SAFEGUARDS

In order to be certain that students are safe and also to ensure that the arrival and dismissal lanes move efficiently, the following safeguards must be observed:

1. At this time, parents will be allowed to park and come into the building during arrival or dismissal. If parents would like to talk to any of their student's teachers they should call to make an appointment. Cars should also not park or leave car unattended in the arrival and pick up lanes.
2. Do not pull out of the arrival and pick up lanes until the car in front of you has left. This is especially important in the as exiting drivers need a clear view as they exit the driveway/parking lot.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

The official start of the school day is 8:30am and students will be considered tardy if they arrive after 8:45am. Parents arriving 8:45 and later should ring bell and sign student in at school office.

CAFFINNATED AND ENERGY DRINKS

Drinks such as coffee, lattes, Red Bull or other caffeinated drinks are not allowed at Miriam Academy.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, EMAIL GAURDIANSHIP OR MEDICATION

It is essential that Academy administrator have accurate and updated information in order to contact parents or guardians in the event of an emergency. Current medication information is also essential in the case of a medical emergency. Please contact the Academy office with any changes which occur and complete the forms on the Academy website.

AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Afterschool clubs will be held on Monday and Wednesday from 3:45pm to 4:30pm hosted by Academy personnel every semester. The Miriam Learning Center will host Music Enrichment on Tuesdays and a Cooking Club on Thursdays after school from 4:00-5:00pm. The Miriam Learning Center for the first semester and second semester. A flyer will be distributed with dates and contact information to sign up each semester. Also, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Young Adult Services (YAS) through Miriam Learning Center is held from 5:00-7:00pm. A flyer with information about YAS will also be distributed.

ASSOCIATE HEAD OF TRANSITION SERVICES OFFICE

Students may visit the Transition office by appointment. Students should send an email asking for an appointment 24 hours in advance. Students are encouraged to secure information about graduation requirements, college admissions, careers, work permits and other transition information from this office. Students may also see the Associate Head of Transition when personal issues arise.

DRESS CODE

Dress standards at Miriam Academy have been established to promote an atmosphere conducive to a positive learning environment. If a staff member feels that a student's attire is in violation of the Miriam dress code, the teacher may contact the parent to discuss needed adjustments. The dress code will include the following guidelines, but is not limited to the following as we have prepared this list as a general base for attire and personal items which are deemed inappropriate:

- Hats, caps or hoods inside the building
- Cut, torn, or ripped clothing
- Tank tops, halters or any top that does not cover the stomach or any clothing that is considered immodest
- Shirts with spaghetti straps, one strap, tube tops, muscle or see-through tops,
- Shirts that reveal midriff, cleavage, back or midsection
- Shorts or skirts worn above mid-thigh
- Pants worn in a way in which underwear can be seen
- Tights worn without a shirt that covers the mid-section
- Clothing with inappropriate (such as drug/alcohol, weapons, military gear or sexually explicit) text or graphics
- Sunglasses worn inside the building
- Any attire that will draw undue attention to the student in a negative manner
- Long chains, jagged pointed jewelry, dog collars

The student's age, sensory integration needs, etc., will be considered in the implementation of these recommendations and are subject to final decision by the Head of School or the designee of the Head of School.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL VIOLATIONS

Possession, use, being under the influence of, transfer of illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, drug look a likes, alcohol, cigarettes or vaping items on school property or at any school-sponsored activity is a violation of the school code of conduct. Violators of this rule are subject to a 10 day out-of-school suspension. Students may be suspended for a longer period of time or be expelled, depending on the circumstances. Parents will be notified of each violation and appropriate cases will be referred to legal authorities.

SMOKING

Students should not carry tobacco products (including electronic smoking devices such as e-cigarettes or personal vaporizers, lighters or matches) or keep them in their lockers.

Smoking and/or the use of tobacco products or electronic smoking devices will not be permitted on school property or at school activities at any time.

Infractions could result in a suspension up to 10 days.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

Miriam Academy is committed to providing students access to digital media to support learning while protecting them from harmful content. With goals in mind, we have created the following policies for our students at school and in the Early Drop Off program and after school clubs:

- Personal devices including all cell phones, iPads and laptops are not allowed at school.
- Personal gaming devices are not allowed at school.
- No personal electronic devices will be allowed during lunch or during the school day.
- Students may not use any personal device during arrival or dismissal.

Further development of this policy will be the result of a school community decision following the start of school.

For the first three days of school, students will be allowed to have their devices on their person, but turned off and not in use during instructional time. Lunch will be spent enjoying time with peers face to face and phones should not be in use or out.

From August 30th until September 10th, we ask that cell phones be turned in upon arrival. We will have padded envelopes with their names on them and they will be locked in an admin office until end of day. Should you need to reach your student, please call the Academy office at 314-962-6080. A firm policy will be in place after September 10th.

Student Texting/Gaming/Social Media

Miriam Academy acknowledges the role social media and online communication can play in the development student's social relationships. We **strongly** encourage parents to monitor and supervise their student's online presence with not only other Miriam students, but others on the outside including texting, social media channels and online or mobile gaming.

If an issue arises between students during any online communication that affects the social dynamics in classrooms during the school day, Miriam Academy will require parents to work in collaboration with the school in the best interest of the students involved. Whether the communication occurred outside of the school day or not, a positive partnership is expected between parents and school, including honest communication and support of any school enacted responses to the conflict.

Technology Use and Maintenance

In order to keep Miriam Academy laptops and/or devices safe and fully functional, the following guidelines should be followed:

- The laptops and/or devices should be stored in a designated area assigned by each teacher.
- Laptops and/or devices come with a protective bag to help minimize damage.
- Each laptop and/or device is managed by Miriam Academy and has the ability to be remotely located. Modifying, disabling or attempting to modify or disable the locator is a violation of the acceptable use policy.
- If laptops and/or devices fail to work or become damaged, the problem should be reported to the teacher who will, in turn, contact the Director of Media Services for assistance.
- Students are not allowed to sign into personal accounts or to download any content, apps or games or use any personal content on devices.

Failure to follow these guidelines could result in the suspended use of the device and not limited to disciplinary actions.

EMERGENCY CLOSING INFORMATION

Emergency closing of school will be called if the roads and/or weather conditions are considered hazardous or if building systems (heating, plumbing, electricity, etc.) are not functioning. The decision to cancel school will be based on safety considerations for students, parents and staff.

EMERGENCY WEATHER OR BUILDING SYSTEM FAILURE CLOSING

If school must be cancelled prior to the start of the school day, all parents will be contacted at their preferred phone number(s) and by text and email by the School Messenger Emergency Notification System. Please enter your preferred School Messenger phone number(s) on the online Roster and Emergency Contact Information form.

If school must be cancelled prior to the start of the school day, the following TV and radio stations will also announce and post on their websites Miriam School closing information:

Television stations:

FOX 2/11	myfoxstl.om
KMOV 4	kmov.com
KSDK 5	ksdk.com

Radio stations:

KMOX 1120	kmox.com
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If forecasts indicate that the weather will improve throughout the day, a **SNOW SCHEDULE** will be put in place rather than school cancellation. If a snow schedule is in effect, there will be **no Early Drop Off. All students may arrive at 9:20 a.m. and school will start at 9:30 a.m.** The day will end at 3:45 p.m. and no afterschool Clubs will be held.

School Messenger and the radio and TV stations will indicate whether school has been cancelled or a snow schedule is in place.

If an early dismissal is required, you will be contacted by the school. It is expected that all students be picked up within 30 minutes of the stated dismissal time. If the parent cannot be reached, the individual listed as emergency contact will be called to pick up student.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROCEDURES

In the event of a true national, state, or community emergency, we ask that parents come to the school to pick up their students as soon as possible. As phone lines may be jammed, we ask that parents come directly to the Academy rather than call us. We also encourage parents to put a family plan in place so that everyone is organized and prepared in advance.

GAMBLING

Gambling on school premises or during school activities is prohibited and could result in suspension.

HAZING

Hazing, in any form, is prohibited at school or in conjunction with any school organization or school activity and could result in suspension. Hazing includes, but is not limited to, any activity that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the student's willingness to participate.

HEALTH AND FIRST AID

Below are some guidelines on when to keep your student at home.

1. **Fever:** If a student has a fever of 99.6 by mouth or 99° under the armpit the student should stay home. Students must remain fever free for 72 hours before coming back to school. This is for your student's well-being, as well as to decrease the spread of contagious diseases. A note from your student's physician in writing will be required for your student to return to school.
2. **Flu Symptoms:** If a student has flu-like symptoms, including fever, aches, sore throat, cough, headache, chills, upset stomach and/or fatigue, he or she must be kept at home. The flu is considered contagious as long as signs and symptoms persist. A note from your student's physician in writing will be required for your student to re-turn to school.
3. **Rash:** A rash of unknown cause should be seen by a physician to determine the diagnosis. Students should remain home until the cause is determined and a **physician releases the student in writing to attend school**
4. **Sore throat, cold or cough:** Students should stay home until symptoms are gone and a **physician releases the student in writing to attend school.**
5. **Head lice:** Students must stay home and be treated with a special shampoo and may return to school when they are nit free.
6. **Ringworm:** Students can come to school once treatment is started.
7. **Hepatitis A:** If diagnosed, a student should have a physician's permission to attend school.
8. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** The student is excluded from school until treatment is given by a physician.
9. **Diarrhea:** The student should remain at home until free of diarrhea and a **physician releases the student in writing to attend school**
10. **Herpes Simplex II:** Fever blisters, "cold" sores around the mouth, lips, sometimes near or in nostrils-a student should stay home until a physician releases the student to attend school.
11. **Vomiting:** This may be a symptom of a serious disease. **Students should stay home for 24 hours after the last vomiting episode. If a student vomits at school, a parent is required to pick-up the student.**
12. **Covid 19:** Direct exposure to anyone who tested positive to Covid 19 or who is displaying symptoms

Miriam Academy is equipped to provide minor first aid care for students. Please notify the school office of any health problems that might be a concern for your student at school. If a student does not feel well during the school day, they can rest in the health room for a brief time period. The student's temperature will be taken, and a parent will be contacted if there is a fever, or if a condition merits parent consultation. **If the student has a fever they must be picked up with in the hour.** Parents will be contacted and requested to assume responsibility for any health care that goes beyond first aid or for any condition deemed to be potentially contagious.

INTIMIDATION, THREATS AND HARRASSMENT INCLUDING SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Students who threaten, intimidate or harass another person by word, act or deed are liable for disciplinary action. Parent conferences will be required for all students failing to comply.

Threats directed toward school personnel may result in an out-of-school suspension of ten days.

LOCKERS

Miriam Academy owns and maintains hall lockers, which are loaned to the students for their convenience in storing books, coats and other items during the school year. The school reserves the right of joint control over the students' lockers, including the right to search lockers at any time without prior notice. Students are to use the locker assigned to them and are responsible for keeping their lockers clean and free of debris or graffiti and for reporting needed repairs to the administrative office.

The Academy will issue combination locks to be used on the lockers. Students may not place their own locks on the lockers. Students who require a key lock will be issued a key lock.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a lost and found in the administrative office, and students and parents are encouraged to look through the items if an item is lost.

LUNCH

Students must bring a sack lunch or food that can be prepared in the microwave. Refrigerators are available in the Commons and Rec Room. Several microwaves are located in these areas as well. Students may eat in the Commons, Rec Room, Zen Zone, patio or a classroom provided those areas are supervised. Students who eat in a classroom must have approval of that teacher. Students are expected to throw away their trash from lunch and leave the area clean. Students will be supervised for their 25-minute lunch period.

Due to time constraints, students may bring only microwaveable food which can be cooked or reheated in under five minutes.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Each student must have a medical examination form completed upon entering Miriam Academy. This documentation is requested yearly. Digital copies of records are maintained by the Head of School.

All students are required to have completed immunization records prior to attending school. Student's immunization records remain on file at the school per standards set forth by Missouri State Law.

PRESCRIPTIONS AND NON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLEMENTS

Prescription medication permission forms are available on the School Forms page under the Family Resources menu of the Miriam Academy website. There is a **Medication Dispensing Release for Home Form** and a **Medication Dispensing Release for School Form** and both forms must be submitted even if your student does not receive medication. If medication changes occur or a student begins a new medication after the school year

begins, new forms must be submitted to the school office.

When a prescription medication is to be administered by the school, it **must be in its original container** with the proper pharmacy label displayed that includes the; 1)name of the student, 2) name of the medication, 3) dosage, 4) schedule of administration, 5) expiration date and 6) physician's name.

Prescription medications must be presented by a parent/guardian in its original container to school office.

Non-prescription medications or supplements are prohibited and will not be administered by Academy personnel.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES (2021-2022 EVENTS)

- **Bommarito 500 IndyCar Race**
7pm race on August 21, 2021
- **Open House/Meet the Teacher**
9am - 1pm on August 23, 2021 and
12pm- 4pm on August 24, 2021
- **First day of school**
8:30 am on August 25th, 2021
- **Parent coffee (occur monthly - see full calendar)**
9am - 10am on August 27, 2021
- **Senior parent meeting**
5pm - 6pm on August 31, 2021
- **Miriam Night at Busch Stadium**
7:15pm game on September 17, 2021
- **Picture day and Fall dine out**
October, 2021 TBD
- **Parent Conferences (adults only)**
4pm - 6pm or Zoom on November 15 - 18, 2021
- **Parent Conferences (adults only)**
4pm - 6pm or Zoom on February 14 - 17, 2021
- **Miriam Trivia Night**
6pm - 10pm on February 26, 2022
- **Spring Dine out**
April, 2022 TBD
- **Prom**
5pm - 8pm on May 6, 2022
- **Graduation**
6pm start on May 16, 2022

PROFANITY

Students are expected to be respectful in their conduct at school. The use of profanity and obscene language is not acceptable. Consequences can range from a warning to disciplinary actions. Profanity directed toward school personnel may result in a parent conference or an out-of-school suspension.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION

Miriam Academy staff are often asked to prepare documents for, or asked to participate in, due process hearings, court proceedings, or other events which do not relate directly to the Academy's program. The administrative cost that these services require are not covered in tuition. The following fee schedule has been developed as a guide to assist in requesting our professional consultative service.

- Phone or in—person consultation for non-Miriam related matters (e.g, court proceeding, due process, etc) \$300/hour
- Preparation of materials for use in due process or legal proceedings, etc. \$300/hour
- Participation by the administration or staff in legal or Due process procedures \$300/hour

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Initial school supplies are provided by the Academy. Parents are welcome to purchase additional supplies that they deem necessary.

STUDENT RECORDS RETENTION

Student Records that include progress reports, achievement tests, Individual Learning Plans, and evaluations are kept as a permanent record and are maintained by the Academy.

TAX DEDUCTION INFORMATION

Parents of children with disabilities may be able to take advantage of a number of tax deductions on both state and federal income taxes. To make the most of the tax advantages that are available to you, keep in mind the following hints:

All or part of Miriam Academy tuition MAY be tax deductible depending upon the interpretation of current IRS regulations. We will provide current families with a payment summary statement. We will assist with additional documentation regarding your payments that you need with the understanding that Miriam cannot provide legal, tax or financial advice. You will receive this letter by January 31st of each school year.

TECHNOLOGY, BOOKS AND SUPPLY FEE

There is a \$500.00 technology, books and supply fee for each student. This fee supports the technology program, curriculum program and supplies for classroom lessons and activities.

WEBSITE PARENT RESOURCES

Miriam Academy uses our website, www.miriamstl.org, to help us communicate important information to parents throughout the school year. Under the **Family Resources** menu on the academy's website we have the following informational pages.

- [Tyler SIS](#)
- [School Calendar](#)
- [Parent/Student Handbook](#)
- [School Forms](#) - Student forms must be completed online. All required forms can be found on this page and will remain available throughout the year to allow for changes to important information.
- [Parent Community](#) - An overview and schedule of the current year programs for parents and families as well as resources for at home learning are located on this page.

If you have questions regarding our website or individual pages on the website, please contact Mary Bless, Director of Media Services, at mbless@miriamstl.org.

COVID PROTOCOLS

Our community is passionate about putting the wellbeing of every student we serve at the forefront of all of our policies and plans. Following are the COVID guidelines for the 2021-2022 school year. As always, these guidelines may change at any time based on CDC and St. Louis County Health Department recommendations, mandates or changes in the incidence of infections within the Miriam community.

- Health screenings prior to coming into any Miriam building using the BeSafe app. Information on how to use the app will be sent in the coming days.
- Closed door policy to outside visitors when students are in attendance. All events and activities where no students are present can continue as planned with masks required for indoor events.
- Masks are required inside all buildings in areas where students are present.
- Masks are optional in the following situations: outdoors for all events and activities, including lunch and indoors for students during strenuous activities such as PE and Lifelong Fitness.
- Classrooms and therapy areas will be set up, where possible, with three feet of space.
- CDC and St. Louis County Department of Health guidelines will be followed for quarantining in the event someone is a close contact of a person testing positive for COVID-19.

The CDC advises that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that a high rate of vaccination in the Miriam community provides the best possible means for ensuring that we are able to deliver on our mission to your students with as little disruption to in-person learning as possible. Miriam encourages all staff and families to talk with their healthcare provider about getting vaccinated when eligible.

We are not requiring vaccination for eligible students at this time. If your student is vaccinated however, they will be exempt from quarantine per the St. Louis County Health Department as long as they do not have symptoms. We are asking all families to let us know if your student has been fully vaccinated; it will help ensure as minimal as possible a disruption to students and staff should someone be identified as a close contact. Please email us at COVIDvax@miriamstl.org and attach a copy of your student's vaccination card. If we do not receive documentation of vaccination, it will be assumed your student is unvaccinated.

The Miriam Academy community believes that our families and staff should and will do what is best for themselves, their neighbors and our school community. As always, we are confident that everyone in our community will continue to make informed decisions knowing that their decisions will impact others in our community.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Final exams are given at the end of both semesters. Students are required to take exams in all classes. The final exam may be given in sections and over several days. Teachers will have the decision over content in the final exam and the various ways students may demonstrate mastery of the subject matter.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, stealing answers, plagiarizing and academic dishonesty in any form, including inappropriate use or misuse of the school's computer network, cannot be tolerated in the school environment. The teacher will confiscate all evidence, document the situation and report it to the Head of School. This infraction could result in disciplinary action.

HOMEWORK

At Miriam Academy we believe that a successful academic program reflects a school philosophy of high expectations for all and a respect for students' innate desire to learn. Staff are skilled in providing a strong and comprehensive program founded in the acquisition of academic and social skills and practiced within the school setting. Homework is closely monitored by staff and is given on an individual basis. Students are also encouraged to read nightly, an essential skill that enables students to be successful.

MAKE-UP WORK

When a student is absent from school, teachers will allow assignments and tests to be made up. Students may email their teachers via their laptops about assignments. Teachers will work with the student on completing their individual assignments in a timely manner.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Each student's classroom placement is determined through a records review and consideration of input from faculty, students and parents. A variety of instructional methodology and materials designed to enhance students' learning styles is used within this progression. Students participate in small and large group instruction, cooperative learning groups, independent work, and self-directed learning activities.

EVALUATIONS

As students initially enroll in Miriam Academy, they are required to have a current (within the previous three years) public school or private agency evaluation. As we are an independent school, an updated evaluation is not required after this time to receive services at Miriam Academy, unless parents, teachers, and/or therapists want additional information in order to optimally program for each student.

Since federal and state guidelines for special education services may change without prior

notice, Miriam Academy strongly recommends that students' public school evaluations are updated every three years. If a student's current public school evaluation expires during the school year, the Head of School will notify parents in writing. Parents will be asked to respond to this notification and the current evaluation and reevaluation process will be explained. Parents will only be notified during the year their student's evaluation requires updating. After that time, parents assume the responsibility for initiating the reevaluation.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The mission of the Occupational Therapy Program is to evaluate and improve fine/gross motor and sensory delays in order to help maximize each student's independence. Each student is evaluated by a registered occupational therapist upon enrollment unless a recent outside agency assessment has been completed. This evaluation includes the use of standardized measurements, anecdotal information, and clinical observations to assess fine and gross motor skills development and sensory integration needs. The results of this evaluation determine the need for therapy and provide a starting point for establishing goals and objectives.

Occupational Therapy is based on a sensory integrative and developmental approach. Students are seen individually and in small groups, as well as in the classroom setting, depending on the nature of treatment and the location of the use of the targeted skill.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

The Miriam Learning Center provides speech and/or language therapy for the Miriam Academy. The mission of the Speech/Language Program is to assess and treat communication concerns so that students can become more effective communicators. Every student who is enrolled at Miriam Academy receives an evaluation of his or her speech and language skills unless a recent outside agency assessment has been completed. This evaluation includes the use of standardized tests and informal language sampling to measure articulation, vocabulary, sentence construction, and verbal interaction. A hearing screening is also provided along with other auditory tests which assess discrimination, sequencing, and memory. The results of the communication evaluation determines the need for therapy and provides a starting point for establishing goals and objectives.

Students receive speech and/or language therapy based on assessed need. Students may be seen by a therapist to monitor developing skills as well as to remediate mild, moderate, or multiple communication difficulties. Students are seen in individual, small group and classroom settings to facilitate speech and language development. These situational variations allow students to practice skills in different communication environments. Therapists are then able to monitor the development and use of speech and language in progressively more natural situations.

THERAPY

A licensed therapist is available to meet with limited qualifying students to discuss life issues through the Miriam Learning Center and St. Louis Children's Service Fund. Short-term, small group therapeutic interventions will be available based on student needs, e.g. grief, trauma, divorce, social skills and anger management.

SELF ADVOCACY

Miriam Academy administration and faculty believe that students must have strong self-advocacy skills in order to be successful in the classroom, in their social interactions and in the world at large. Miriam Academy faculty teach lessons about specific disabilities and learning styles in every classroom through formal and informal lessons that are appropriate to each student's maturity and abilities. Students are guided in the use of this information to successfully advocate for themselves in positive ways. The ultimate goal is that students grow to understand themselves and be able to advocate academic and social situations.

SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The directed development of good social skills and positive self-esteem are integral components of the educational program. Students with disabilities often miss or misinterpret essential environmental information which would allow them to function confidently and effectively in interpersonal relationships or within larger social situations. Each classroom uses a variety of formal and informal curricula, as well as in-the-moment opportunities, to teach the use of successful social and interpersonal strategies and to promote positive self-esteem.

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS

The "What" and "Why" of the Individualized Learning Plan

The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) is the "benchmark" used to guide each student's program. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) have their basis in federal law and are required for all students who receive special education services in a public school. Miriam Academy supports this mandate in both spirit and practice through our Individualized Learning Plans (ILP's). The Miriam Academy ILP serves as a means for developing a partnership between family and school personnel. It provides the foundation for programmatic decisions and helps determine curriculum, teaching strategies and preferred progress measurements based on students' individual strengths and weaknesses. It assures that differing abilities are addressed within an understandable and consistent structure while providing for the tracking of students' knowledge acquisition in a variety of settings. The Miriam Academy ILP is not a legal contract but it is a "good faith" agreement between school and parents.

The “Who” of the Individualized Learning Plan

The Miriam Academy ILP team is comprised of parents, teachers, and therapists. It may also include any other individuals who have information that would be helpful in planning for the student. This could include, but is not limited to, therapists, administrators, previous school personnel or extended family members. The case manager leads each ILP meeting and are responsible for coordinating all aspects of the process from scheduling the meeting to completing the actual plan based upon participants' input.

The “When” of the Individualized Learning Plan

It is standard practice for faculty to work with a new student's existing IEP if applicable, with reviews and revisions as needed. Regardless of whether a student enters with an IEP, Miriam Academy faculty and parents will meet to write an ILP during October, November or December of the student's first year. **Meetings will be available both in person and via zoom for the 2021-2022 school year.** All subsequent annual ILP meetings will be held near the anniversary date in order to best serve the needs of our students.

The “How” of the Individualized Learning Plan

The focus of the Miriam Academy Learning Plan meeting is the sharing of information by all participants and the summation of this information into statements which translate into an understandable educational plan for each student. Present levels of performance are established in the areas of academic skills, classroom performance, sensory-motor development and speech/language skills. Formal and informal assessments, in conjunction with parent input and teacher observation, are used to determine this information. The ILP team summarizes the areas of strengths and weaknesses and develops goals and objectives to address specific weaknesses.

Measurable criteria for achieving the goals and objectives are recorded as part of the document. Examples of classroom goal areas may include task focus, adult and peer interaction, reading, math, and written language skills. Occupational therapy and speech/language therapy goals address motor and communication skills and are also incorporated into the total educational plan when weaknesses are evidenced in these areas.

Goals and objectives are written to be attained by the end of one year. They can be achieved at any point prior to the end of the year or, if not achieved within the annual time frame, rewritten for completion during the next ILP period. If at any time during the ILP year the team determines that goals and objectives need to be changed to better address the student's needs, this revision is accomplished through an established ILP amendment process. A change in a student's diagnostic label may also result in the revision of the ILP, if necessary, to address new areas of concern. At the conclusion of the ILP period, the team meets to complete a formal review of the previous plan and to develop a new one.

PARENT CONFERENCES

There are two formal parent conferences held each year in the fall and spring. Your student's teacher will contact you prior to these dates to schedule a specific meeting time. Speech/language therapists and occupational therapists will also be available during conference times for parents who wish to confer with them.

Specific conference dates are listed on the school calendar on the back cover of this handbook. However, parent contact is encouraged throughout the school year.

Parents are always encouraged to meet with teachers outside of these scheduled conference times if specific questions arise by calling school office to leave a message or by email.

REPORT CARDS

The Miriam Academy faculty reports student progress on a quarterly basis. Progress is reported in two ways: The Progress Report and the ILP Goal Reporting Forms.

Parents will receive the first and third quarter report card at the fall and spring parent conferences. The final report card will be sent home at the end of the school year. It is important to note that each student is receiving instruction at his or her academic level.

Coursework and grades may be modified to support the individual learning needs of each student and be denoted on the report card. Modified grades will be reflected on transcripts accordingly.

The ILP Goal Reporting Forms are included with report cards. These goals, and the objectives related to them, are set at the annual Individualized Learning Plan meeting with parents, teachers and therapists. Progress in goal areas for each student's current ILP, whether written at Miriam Academy or for new students written at a former school, is reported on these forms.

Miriam Academy faculty hope to strengthen the understanding between parents and teachers through our progress reporting process. We believe our collaboration with parents is essential for each student's maximum development. If you have a question about your student's progress at any time during the school year, please call or set up a conference with your student's teacher. Teachers are encouraged to send 5 week progress reports home via email or other communication.

STUDENT CONDUCT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students at Miriam Academy are expected to demonstrate:

- Respect for themselves
- Respect for others
- Respect for school facilities and school staff

It is the responsibility of each student to:

1. Be Respectful and comply with requests and direction from faculty.
2. Be safe with body and in the environment
3. Be kind to others and to self
4. Be diligent in study, which includes:
 - completing assigned work on time
 - paying attention to the teacher
 - exhibiting good citizenship
 - doing the caliber of work consistent with the student's individual ability
 - cooperating with teachers and other students
 - regular and punctual attendance

The faculty is aware that students do not always begin attendance at Miriam Academy with the ability to successfully assume all of these responsibilities. During each student's educational experience, the faculty and staff will work cooperatively to help them achieve this level of competence.

TRANSITION FROM MIRIAM ACADEMY

As students leave Miriam Academy, they will be offered individualized guidance to help families with transition planning and implementation. Discussions will occur throughout each school year as students, staff and parents consider options for the student.

If you are considering transitioning to a new school at the end of the current year, please read the following information:

Public Schools require a current (within the previous three years) public school evaluation in order for student to receive special education services. **If you are considering transitioning to a public school at the end of the current school year, please contact the Miriam Academy Head of School by November 1st in order to ensure that the evaluation process will be finalized in a timely manner.**

Private Schools have evaluation requirements that are specific to their needs, and they may require either a public or private agency evaluation. The Head of School serves as the resource for information concerning private evaluations.

If you are considering transition at the end of this school year, please contact the Head of School or your student's teacher to discuss the specific details of your circumstance and the ways in which Miriam Academy administration and faculty may assist you with the transition process.

As graduating students leave Miriam Academy, the administration will offer assistance with the transition to life after Miriam Academy. The families of Seniors will work with the administration and faculty for general guidance and follow up regarding future endeavors. In cooperation with the Head of School, each student will also be followed by their classroom teacher to closely monitor current year progress and attend to important issues related to the transition to ensure graduation requirements are met.

Receiving schools or organizations contact Miriam Academy throughout the year and at the end of the second semester to request educational information and final transcripts. **Transcripts will be forwarded only if all outstanding tuition and fees have been paid.** This is especially important for graduating students, so that a smooth transition to college or a different educational choice for the following school year.