



2022-2023

Parent/Student

ACADEMY

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.

1138 N. Warson Road
Tel: (314) 962-6080
Fax: (314) 658-9819
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.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Administration:

Head of the Miriam Organization	Meg Bamford	mbamford@miriamstl.org
Head of School	Dr. Andrea White	awhite@miriamstl.org
Associate Head of Transition Services	Terri Harris Pruitt	tpruitt@miriamstl.org
Administrative Assistant	Karen Crews	kcrews@miriamstl.org

Classroom Teachers:

Anthony Harris	aharris@miriamstl.org
Donna Higgins	dhiggins@miriamstl.org
Jana Hildebrand	jhildebrand@miriamstl.org
Greg Kellerman	gkellerman@miriamstl.org
Lori Lipkind	llipkind@miriamstl.org
Brandi McKenney	bmckenney@miriamstl.org
Meaghan Mittler	mmittler@miriamstl.org
C. Andre Walker	awalker@miriamstl.org
Norman Rich	nrich@miriamstl.org
Gary Schoen	gschoen@miriamstl.org

Teaching Assistant: Kim Ogilvy kogilvy@miriamstl.org

Instructional/Interventionist Coach Jeron Merritt jmerritt@miriamstl.org

Occupational Therapist: Cindy McFarland cmcfarland@miriamstl.org

COTA: Tammy Bunger tbunger@miriamstl.org

Therapist: Janene Allen jallen@miriamstl.org

Speech & Language Pathologist: Carrie Lorentz clorentz@miriamstl.org

Director of Finance:
and Administration Cyndi Ludwinski cludwinski@miriamstl.org

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 voicemail, 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. ***Early Drop Off is not available on an as needed basis and only students whose parents have signed up for specific days (not to include the first two weeks of school) in advance may attend.***

7:00 am arrivals and all other students will enter at the Miriam Academy entrance. Students who drive will park in the designated student parking spaces. Parents should allow their student to exit the car safely and enter the building before leaving. Students may congregate in the Commons and Zen room only until 8:30 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 will be checked in at the front desk. The Administrative Assistant will notify the teacher of the student's arrival.

Bell Schedule

Advisory	8:33- 8:43
1	8:43-9:33
2	9:36-10:26
3	10:29-11:19
4	11:12-12:12
5A	1st Lunch/Enrichment 12:14-12:39
5B	2nd Lunch/Enrichment 12:41-1:06
6	1:09-1:59
7	2:02-2:52
8	2:55-3:45

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 3:30pm. After 3:30pm, students will not be dismissed until 3:45pm. The school office will contact students for early pick up when the parent arrives. Students will be checked out at the front desk.

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 the building. All faculty will remain on duty until all students have exited the building. **Please pull into the middle parking spots first for pick up so that the pick-up lane can begin at the west end of the Miriam Academy parking lot. Staff will be outside to assist.**

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 not 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 on arrival and pick up lanes. However, do continue to pull into the available middle parking spots.
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 as exiting drivers need a clear view as they exit the driveway/parking lot.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND TARDIES

The official start of the school day is 8:30am and students will be considered tardy if they arrive after 8:45am. Students arriving at 8:45 and later should ring the bell and check in at the front office. **Parents should call the school office or email as soon as you are made aware of your student's absence. The office number is 314-962-6080 and the email is kcrews@miriamstl.org.** Students may be excused for an absence for any internal or external school related experience.

CAFFEINATED AND ENERGY DRINKS

Drinks such as coffee, lattes, Red Bull or certain other energy drinks with caffeine as an ingredient are not allowed at Miriam Academy unless there is prior approval from Administration. This does not include Pepsi or Coke products if available in the vending machine.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, EMAIL GUARDIANSHIP OR MEDICATION

It is essential that Academy administrators 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.

BEFORE SCHOOL SPORTS AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Before School Sports and After School clubs will be held on Monday through Thursday. Before school will be 8:00am-8:30am and after school from 3:45pm to 4:30pm hosted by Academy personnel every semester. A flier will be distributed with dates and contact information to sign up each semester.

TRANSITION SERVICES

Students will visit the Head of Transition Services office by appointment. Students should send an email asking for an appointment. Families are encouraged to secure information about graduation requirements, Vocational Rehabilitation, college admissions, careers, transition programs, work permits and other transition information from this office.

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. Each senior will be monitored by their classroom teacher and administration to ensure progress and attend to important issues related to the transition to ensure graduation requirements are met and each student has a post-secondary plan.

Transcripts will be forwarded only if all outstanding tuition and fees have been paid.

This list is evolving and is increasing as opportunities arise. (04-2022)

State Sponsored Career/Employment Readiness and Exploration

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)-Program engages students with disabilities in purposeful activities to help them reach their education and career goals through job exploration, work-based learning experience, Counseling for post-secondary education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. This program is in collaboration with Mizzou and our service partner, Amanda Webb visits once per month with juniors and seniors who opted into the program.
- Missouri Connections-One stop platform for college and career readiness. A free web-based career system which provides comprehensive information for students developing college and career plans. It includes tools that encourage self-assessment, exploration, research, goal setting and decision making. (With fiscal responsibility in mind, we plan to replace Naviance with Missouri Connections.)
- Missouri Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation)-VR helps eligible students who are at the age of employability obtain, maintain or advance in employment. VR assist students obtain employment the summer prior to their senior year for summer work and seniors are eligible to participate for post-secondary services if their disability constitutes a substantial impediment to employment and they require services to assist in preparing, securing, engaging in and retaining employment. Representatives meet with students once per month.

External/Private Referral Partnerships

- Dream Big-Supplemental after school transition program designed to empower youth with disabilities who are college and or technical school bound to explore different career paths and understand the steps necessary to successfully live independently. There are three components-Career Camp (meets monthly via zoom with a different topic each month, Career Camp (a three week that combines curriculum on various topics such as reasonable accommodations and disclosure with visits to leading companies in the area.
- Pathways to Independence-Supplemental transition after school social activities coupled with a coach to build social and life skills. Families chose from a calendar of events and participate at their convenience.
- St. Louis Arc-Launch-Supplemental program where students attend sessions weekly to enhance interpersonal and self-management skills in order to achieve goals in the areas or relationship development, education, employment and independent living. Services are during school year as well as post-secondary experiences. Transition Workshops, Self-Advocacy Workshops and Life Course Connect Missouri are offered throughout the year at St. Louis Arc.
- Center on Transition Innovations Course: Get Ready for Independent Living
This course will help you identify what independent living skills are, why they are important, and figure out what you need to do to be ready for living independently. "Get Ready for Independent Living" will build your skills for success in adult life.

Partnerships within Miriam

- The Switching Post- Students have opportunity to learn skills helping customers, staffing the cash register, stocking, answering phones, processing donations, cleaning and polishing donated items, and keeping the shop tidy and clean. Shifts are as little as three hours during the summer. We would like to expand to 1-2 students volunteering during the school year in years to come.
- Enrichment-Before and After school enrichment programming.
- Young Adult Services (YAS)-offers socialization and a place to feel emotionally supported. YAS also offers services year-round which include: In-person help with online college courses, In-person and Zoom homework help, organized recreational & sports activities, fun monthly community outings, supported volunteer opportunities, open gym time and free coffee bar, video gaming, ping pong, foosball, and a relaxation area to hang

with friends.

Post-Secondary Training

- Access Point-Program which focuses on computer technology skills in various domains. The program begins in the 2nd semester of the student's senior year and continues post-graduation with a paid internship and placement into a position with a competitive salary in St. Louis' areas top companies.
- Lafayette Industries-Lafayette Industries offers workshops for workers who were unable to be serviced by VR. Lafayette Industries provides employment for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID & DD) within its contract packaging business.
- Step UP-A competitive employment training program for adults with ID and or Autism which combines a professional classroom setting and an internship within a practical worksite. Currently Pioneer Bakery Café is the partnering worksite.
- STLWorks-STLWorks is a resource for learning about all the benefits of skilled careers (the jobs that don't require a Bachelor's degree), the different paths available to students, and the resources in our city that can help individuals gain the skills needed to get employment. A resource for training, apprenticeships and more.

College Planning Information

- Journey to College-Free information packets were distributed to every student. We assist Seniors individually in applying for college as opposed to having an Apply Day event. FAFSA Frenzy will be an event where we invite an experienced college financial aid representative to meet via Zoom with interested parents to answer questions about FAFSA.
- A+ Scholarship-Students who receive a 16 on the Math sub score, have 95% attendance rate, and plan to attend a community college or technical school in Missouri may qualify for tuition paid scholarships for two years.
- College Financial Planning Webinar – Webinar offered to parents to assist in navigating paying for college.

Post-Secondary College Support for Unique Learners

- University of Missouri-St. Louis, Succeed-Program designed to encourage and develop pathways towards student independence. And provide an opportunity for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to develop the skills necessary to be a part of the larger community through inclusion in university life. Students earn the Chancellor's certificate after completing a two-year residential or commuter program.
- University of Missouri-Columbia, Strive- Program designed to improve the employment outcomes of students diagnosed with Autism through direct instruction, peer mentoring and work experiences. STRIVE participants will receive 300 hours of skill instruction, 60 hours of mentorship and up to 300 hours of work experience during the 10-month program.
- Ranken Technical College-Ranken is focused on preparing students to succeed at every level. With a commitment to hands-on training, programs for only the most relevant, in-demand careers, and strong relationships with employers, Ranken is ranked as one of the best technical schools in the Midwest.
- St. Louis Community Colleges-The STLCC system offers a variety of options for students that desire to gain skills, but do not wish to go to a traditional college or university. The programs that are offered give students a career centered focus for their future.

Additional Opportunities

- St. Louis County Pet Adoption Center- Opportunity for students to volunteer after school or weekends helping with care of animals, cleaning stalls and preparing treats for the animals.
- PreACT 8/9, PreACT and ACT WorkKeys- We provided a school wide testing day for students to experience what testing might look like if they were applying for a job and practice for students who would take the ACT.

Seniors and a few juniors took the WorkKeys which assesses job readiness skills in applied math, work documents and graphic literacy.

- Schnucks-Part time employment opportunities for junior and seniors who desire to work 16-20 hours per week as a bagger or stock clerk. Enhances social and independent living skills.

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 staff member may contact the parent to discuss needed adjustments. The dress code will include the following guidelines, but is not limited to the following list 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, tank 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
- Leggings or tights worn without a shirt that covers body in an appropriate manner for school
- 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, etc.

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, MARIJUANA AND ALCOHOL VIOLATIONS

Possession, use, being under the influence of, transfer of illegal drugs, counterfeit drugs, drug look-alikes, 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 may 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 is not permitted on school property or at school activities at any time.

Infractions could result in a suspension up to 10 days.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES, BLANKETS, STUFF ANIMALS, PDA & USE OF SPACE

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:

The policies include the following:

- **Cell phone, earbuds, other personal device (including Chromebooks & handheld devices)**
- **Blankets and large stuffed animals**
- **Public displays of affection (PDA: hugging, kissing, wrapped legs, sitting on lap)**
- **Appropriate use of spaces at assigned times (ex: OT area during lunch)**

Cell Phone Usage in School

It is our belief that our students come to school to grow their social skills. Often phones and other devices can become a barrier to communication skills. Therefore, for most of the day, students are only allowed to use their cell phones before and after school if they are not directly involved in a club or sport activity. There may be times when teachers will ask students to use their phones to take pictures, make videos or use the calendar to create reminders for events or upcoming assignment deadlines. Phone usage for these types of activities as well as opportunities to use them on outings etc will be communicated to parents/caregivers. We want to have our students develop skills to use their devices as tools. Students will be asked to put their phones in the appropriate location during class. Please do not text or call your child during the school day. If you need your child to get a message or would like to speak to them, please call the Main Office. We will assist you in any way possible.

Please note that we are always looking to have our students develop independence. Should seniors demonstrate that they are able to be responsible with their phones and model good behavior, they may earn the privilege of having their phone all day.

Behavior Issues and Non-compliance

Students may need explicit instruction regarding appropriate behavior. We will work to ensure that every child has a personalized approach to behavior correction and they develop skills and strategies to make good choices in school. However, there are times when we must be consistent with directions and follow through after we believe instruction has been given and the student still refuses to comply.

Consequences for Refusal to Comply:

- o The first time an adult asks a student to alter their behavior (e.g.: move out of the OT area during lunch, put their phone away), there is no additional action needed if the student follows through with the request. If a student does not comply, parents will be notified via email that if further noncompliance occurs, further disciplinary action will be considered up to and including Out of School Suspension (OSS).
- o The second time an adult asks a student to alter their behavior (e.g.: put a blanket or stuffed animal away), the adult will ask for the item and give the item to an administrator until dismissal. Parents will be notified that the item is in the office where they can stop in to pick it up. If a student does not give the item to the adult, parents will be notified and further disciplinary action may be considered up to and including OSS.
- o The third time an adult asks a student to alter their behavior (e.g.: put their phone away) the adult will ask for the item and give the item to an administrator and the administrator will request a parent meeting where the item will be returned and ways to prevent this from happening a fourth time will be discussed. Further disciplinary action may be considered in situations where a student does not comply with requests of an adult up to and including OSS.
- o **Every subsequent occurrence after the third occurrence meeting between administration and parents may possibly result in OSS for the student.**

PDA, Large Stuffed Animals & Blankets

- o 1st occurrence-Verbal warning: Students will be asked to stop hugging, cuddling, sitting on lap, hand holding with another student, or carrying a stuffed animal or blanket
- o 2nd occurrence- parent communication
- o 3rd occurrence- possible in-school suspension (ISS) - 1 day
- o 4th occurrence- possible ISS - 2 days
- o 5th occurrence-w 1 day of OSS and parent meeting

Please know that Miriam does not take the use of ISS and OSS lightly. We understand that the disruption to student learning is contraindicated to the goals we are trying to accomplish here at Miriam. However, we are also responsible for teaching our students how to engage in the world beyond Miriam. We also take that responsibility very seriously and know that while Miriam is a safe space where we want students to learn these lessons cannot be taught without accountability and responsibility. Our desire is for students to learn social skills that will enable them to be successful in the world and which will enable them to navigate successfully in the areas of work, family life and friendships. It is vitally important that this work be done within the safe structure of Miriam Academy where students can do this work with help from a community that understands them and their unique needs.

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. Circumstances that require disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the Head of School or the designee of the Head of School. 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 ACCEPTABLE USE AND MAINTENANCE

In order to keep Miriam Academy laptops and/or devices safe and fully functional, a technology acceptable use form will distributed via jot form and the following guidelines should be followed:

- The laptops and/or devices should be stored in a designated locker.
- 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 front office who will, in turn, contact IT for assistance.
- Students are not allowed to sign into person accounts or to download any content, apps or games or use any personal content on devices.
- Laptops and/or devices remain property of Miriam Academy.

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 canceled 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 canceled 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

If an early dismissal is required, you will be contacted by the school. It is expected that all students will be picked up within 45 minutes of the stated dismissal time. We will work to give as much notice as possible. If the parent cannot be reached, the individual listed as emergency contact will be called to pick up the 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.

Miriam will have monthly fire drills, quarterly earthquake and tornado drills. We are working toward creating an intruder drill plan that in conjunction with outside agencies to best prepare in order to keep students safe in the event of an active shooter.

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 100.4° or higher by mouth or forehead thermometer, the student should stay home. Students must remain fever free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication before coming back to school. This is for your student's

- well-being, as well as to decrease the spread of contagious diseases.
2. **Flu:** 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. Students must remain fever/or symptom free for 24 hours without the assistance of any medication before coming back to school. This is for your student's well-being, as well as to decrease the spread of contagious diseases.
 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. **Students must remain fever/symptom free for 24 hours without the assistance of any medication before coming back to school. This is for your student's well-being, as well as to decrease the spread of contagious diseases.**
 5. **Head lice:** Students must stay home and be treated with a special shampoo and may return to school until 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 for 24 hours without medication.
 10. **Herpes Simplex II:** Fever blisters, "cold" sores around the mouth, lips, sometimes near or in nostrils, a student should stay home until medically treated.
 11. **Vomiting:** This may be a symptom of a serious illness. **Students should stay home for 24 hours after the last vomiting episode without the help of medication. If a student vomits at school, a parent is required to pick-up the student as soon as possible.**
 12. **Direct Contact Covid 19:** Student should be tested if they have been in direct exposure to anyone who tested positive of Covid 19 or who is displaying symptoms. We will follow the current CDC guidelines.

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 over 100.4°, student must be picked up within 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, BULLYING, THREATS, WEAPONS, AND HARRASSMENT INCLUDING SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

Students who threaten, bully in any fashion, 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 or another student may result in an out-of-school suspension of ten days. Threats that refer to weapons or explosives will be taken seriously and the proper authorities will be notified along with parents and could result in expulsion. All behaviors outlined in Student Responsibilities of Conduct should be adhered to as well.

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/key locks to be used on the lockers. Students may not place their own locks on the lockers.

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 AND SNACKS

Students must bring a sack lunch or food that can be prepared in the microwave. Refrigerators are available in the Commons. Several microwaves are located in these areas as well. Students may eat in the Commons, Zen Zone, Quiet Zone. 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.

Students should not use class instruction time to warm up food and/or ask teachers to be excused from instructional time to go to the commons to warm food and return to class to eat. Students may eat in class upon permission from the teacher. We understand the importance of protecting instructional time and if a student is in class 30 minutes, they have missed important instruction. This does not mean students may not take sensory breaks when needed. The goal is to have students engaged in instruction as much as possible given each student's needs.

In the event a student forgets their lunch, a parent or guardian may bring it up to school. No door dash or other delivery service is allowed for students. If they would like to purchase snacks or did not eat breakfast at home, we will have a variety of food items available for purchase \$0.50 each. Items that need to be cooked or warmed up (ie: macaroni and cheese, pop tarts if eaten warmed) may only be purchased before school or during the assigned lunch period. All items will be available for purchase before school (the cutoff is 8:20 in case microwaves need to be used), at the beginning of lunch periods and after school is over.

Examples of items available:

- A Variety of Chips
- Cookies
- Pop Tarts
- Mac and cheese cups
- Ramen noodles
- Fruit cups

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.

MEDICAL INFORMATION, MEDICINE, ALLERGY AND PRESCRIPTIONS

Forms will be available to you via jot forms and communication sent as to when they will be available. Please note that all information on each form should be submitted even if your student does not receive prescription medication. Forms covers over the counter medication as well such as Tylenol, Tums etc. If medication changes occur or a student begins a new medication after the school year begins, contact the front 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.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES EVENTS

- **Open House/Meet the Teacher**
- **Parent coffee (occur monthly - see full calendar)**
- **Class Level Parent meeting**
- **Miriam Night at Busch Stadium**
- **Picture Day**
- **Fall dine out**
- **Family Fun Fall Festival**
- **Homecoming Dance**
- **Parent Conferences-Fall and Spring (adults only)**
- **Veterans Day Recognition**
- **Miriam Trivia Night**
- **Spring Dine out**
- **Prom**
- **Spring Festival**
- **Graduation**

PROFANITY

Students are expected to be respectful in their conduct at school. The use of profanity, slurs, 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 costs 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.

NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE PARENT RESOURCES

Miriam Academy uses **Smores**, our weekly newsletter, to help us communicate important information to parents throughout the school year.

We also have available:

- [Tyler SIS Parent Portal](#)
- [School Calendar on www.miriamstl.org](http://www.miriamstl.org)
- [Parent/Student Handbook on www.miriamstl.org](http://www.miriamstl.org)
- [School Forms on www.miriamstl.org](http://www.miriamstl.org) - 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 on www.miriamstl.org](http://www.miriamstl.org) - 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. We will continue to follow the current CDC and St. Louis Health Department COVID guidelines. As always, these guidelines may change at any time based on their recommendations, mandates or changes in the incidence of infections within the Miriam community.

The CDC advises that vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to prevent spread of COVID-19. 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 much 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 juncture. 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, plagiarism 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.

EVALUATIONS

As students initially enroll in Miriam Academy, they may 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 to receive services at Miriam Academy.

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 case manager will notify parents. After notification, parents assume the responsibility for initiating the reevaluation.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

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 without or without a specific homework assignment. Reading is an essential skill that enables students to be successful.

Students who access learning below grade level.	Students who are able to access learning at or near grade level.	Students who are able to access learning at or above grade level.
---	--	---

This classroom will be functional skills based (ex: telling time, counting money, phonics, word attack, etc.).	This will look more like a traditional classroom with some targeted interventions.	This will look more like a traditional classroom with minimal targeted interventions.
Targeted interventions will be the primary focus for each course with homework assigned only when in-class work is not completed.	Meaningful homework is expected to be assigned 2-3 days per week. Coursework should be designed for a successful college learning experience.	Meaningful homework is expected to be assigned 3-4 days per week. Coursework should be designed for a successful college learning experience.
Many, if not all, students receive modified grading.	Some, if any, students receive modified grading.	Few or no students receive modified grading.
Skill development that will lead to successful independent experiences (ex: transportation, purchasing items, self-care).	Skill development that will lead to successful experiences in college or other post-secondary programs.	Skill development that will lead to successful experiences in college or other post-secondary programs.
Focus should be on thoughtful responses, independent living skills, and independent task-completion.	Focus should be on constructive responses, critical thinking skills/analysis, and independent task-completion.	Focus should be on constructive responses, critical thinking skills/analysis, and independent task-completion.
Post-secondary plans will more than likely include Vocational-Rehab (VR).	Post-secondary plans could include VR, a 2- or 4- year school, or a trade.	Post-secondary plans could include 2- or 4- year school or a trade.
Accommodations & modifications are expected to be implemented and followed.	Accommodations & modifications are expected to be implemented and followed.	Accommodations & modifications are expected to be implemented and followed.

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.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

The mission of the Miriam Occupational Therapy Program is to evaluate and improve fine/gross motor and sensory delays in order to help maximize each students' 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 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 2 ½ days during week to meet with a limited number of students to discuss life issues. Short-term, small group therapeutic interventions will be available based on student need, e.g. grief, trauma, divorce, social skills and anger management. Contact Janene Allen at jallen@miriamstl.org for information.

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.

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.

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS (ILPs)

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 composed of parents, students, teachers, and therapists. It may also include any other individuals who have information that would be helpful in planning for the student. This includes, 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 student's input is encouraged as nothing should happen about the student without the student.

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 2022-2023 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 for parents to meet with teachers and staff alone. 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. 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 the 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 Report Card 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 CODE OF CONDUCT & RESPONSIBILITIES

Students at Miriam Academy are expected to demonstrate:

- Respect for themselves
- Respect for others
- Respect for school facilities and school staff
- Refrain from bullying in any form

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. However, egregious violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

WITHDRAWAL FROM MIRIAM ACADEMY TO ANOTHER SCHOOL PRIOR TO GRADUATION

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 students 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.

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.**