St. Matthew’s Episcopal Day School  
Excerpts from handbooks  
Revised 10/3/17  

Introduction  
Guided by our Episcopal values, St. Matthew’s Episcopal Day School believes children are served best by a healthy community of knowledgeable, caring and connected adults. The school promotes a culture that fosters trust, collaboration and commitment.

Policies in St. Matthew’s faculty and employee handbooks set forth the mission and values of St. Matthew’s and establish clear and appropriate boundaries for interactions between members of the faculty and staff and students. School policies also clearly articulate every employee’s duty to report any suspicions of boundary violations or abusive behavior. We also encourage parents and other members of the school community to report any concerns to the school. Excerpts from the handbooks that confirm our commitment to these values and expectations are included below.

**THE ST. MATTHEW’S WAY STATEMENT**

"A Community for the Heart, Mind and Spirit"

**COMMUNITY**

- Provide a community in which everyone feels welcome and safe - physically, mentally and spiritually.
- Live by the spirit of the Golden Rule and be inclusive and respectful.
- Act in ways that are safe, kind and appropriate.
- Work hand-in-hand.

Certain phrases and concepts guide our work in this area.

- "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- "Solve problems through respectful dialogue."
- "Use put ups, not put downs."
- "How we do things is as important as what we do."
- We work through problems, not around them.
- We all pitch in and help out.

**HEART**

We aspire to:

- Be productive and do our best.
- Help and support each other.
- Be compassionate and provide a meaningful service learning program.
- "Choose the hard right over the easy wrong."

Certain phrases and concepts guide our work in this area.

- "Assume good will."
- We try our best.
- "Why not be kind?"
- "Let it begin with me."
- "You can't say, you can't play."
• "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well."

**MIND**

We aspire to:

• Provide a challenging and enriched curricular program.
• Create an environment where it's safe to take risks.
• Teach fundamentals.
• Develop life-long learners.

Certain phrases and concepts guide our work in this area.

• "It's cool to be smart at St. Matthew's."
• Personal best.
• Those who can do more are expected to.
• Failure is OK. We learn from mistakes.
• We learn by practice and doing.
• Go beyond.

**SPIRIT**

Guided by the Episcopal tradition, we aspire to:

• Value prayer and provide regular Chapel services.
• Provide a substantive Religious Education program.
• Encourage each student to discover his or her own faith and practice it.
• Appreciate the values of all faith traditions.
• Permeate all that we do with Christian principles.

Certain phrases and concepts guide our work in this area.

• Chapel is a sacred place where we build community and create leaders.
• Prayer is an important part of our lives.

**COMMUNITY CONTRACT**

We ask that all parents, students, volunteers, and employees follow the Community Contract.

To support the St. Matthew's spirit and mission and foster a constructive and considerate partnership, we ask everyone in our community to commit to the following standards:

**HONOR THE GOLDEN RULE:**

"DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO UNTO YOU"

**MODEL THE GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

Is what I am about to do:

Safe?
Kind?
Productive?
My best effort?
Appropriate at St. Matthew's?
We ask everyone to:

- Assume that each of us acts from good will.
- Treat each other fairly and with respect.
- Take responsibility for his or her actions.
- Solve problems through respectful dialogue.
- Use put ups, not put-downs.
- Follow School, classroom and technology rules and policies.

**OUR EPISCOPAL CONNECTION**

St. Matthew's is part of the Church of St. Matthew's and is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES). As such, we are guided in our actions by Episcopal beliefs, values, and standards. We observe Episcopal celebrations and rituals, follow the Christian calendar and incorporate the spirit of respect for all that is inherent in the Episcopal tradition.

**BOUNDARIES WITH STUDENTS**

The School encourages close, warm relationships between students and teachers. At the same time, it is important that each employee’s conduct is at all times professional. Employees must maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and students to ensure that they avoid even the perception of inappropriate conduct. Some activities may seem innocent from an employee’s perspective, but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of a student or parent. The objective of this policy is not to restrain positive relationships between employees and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct. Employees must ensure that they do not cross the boundaries of a professional teaching relationship.

**Unacceptable Behavior**

Below is a list of examples of conduct that may involve inappropriate crossing of the boundaries of the professional relationship:

- Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal or intimate nature;
- Unnecessary physical contact with a student in either a public or private situation;
- Intentionally being alone with a student on campus or away from the School without supervisor permission;
- Making, or participating in sexually inappropriate comments;
- Sexual jokes, stories, or jokes/comments with sexual innuendo;
- Seeking emotional involvement with a student for an employee’s benefit;
- Discussing an employee’s own personal troubles or intimate issues with a student;
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior;
- Inappropriate use of social media with or about students;
- Excessive attention toward a particular student;
- Sending emails, text messages or letters to students of a personal nature if the content is not about school activities; or
- Failing to keep parents and supervisors informed when a significant issue develops about a student.
Duty to Report

If an employee finds him or herself in a difficult situation related to boundaries, the employee should ask for advice from the School Counselor, a Division Director or the Head of School. When any employee suspects another employee of crossing appropriate boundaries with a student, the employee must report the matter to the Head of School. In some circumstances, employees will also have the duty to report such conduct in accordance with the mandated reporter requirements.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACTS WITH STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Employees should not initiate or accept social media “friend” or “follower” requests (or otherwise establish an on-line relationship with them) on their personal social media accounts from current students (of any age) or former students under the age of 18. Employees should use professional discretion when “friending” or “following” alumni 18 years of age and older. When doing so, recognize that many former students have online connections with current students (including younger siblings and underclassmen friends), and that information shared between recent alumni is likely to be seen by current students as well. Employees are prohibited from “friending” parents of current or prospective students due to the inherent conflicts of interest that may rise.

For communications with students or other members of the School community, employees may only use technology resources provided by the School. Use of personal email or text for communicating with students or their parents is not acceptable (without authorization from a Division Director or the Head of School).

If specific needs cannot be met by the School-provided services, and an employee wishes to use another social networking site for School communications, the Head of School may approve the use of outside services. Faculty who wish to use social media sites, such as Facebook or Twitter, for communications with students and parents may, with the permission of the Head of School, create an “official” page for professional purposes. School administrators and parents must have full access to these accounts, and privacy settings should be restricted so student information is protected.

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Teachers should provide reasonable amounts of extra help to struggling students and also those who want more challenge. This can be done within the 7:45 AM- 4:00 PM time frame or, optionally, beyond. Teachers should not expect a tutoring fee for this work. If a teacher provides this support alone with a student, the teacher should do so only with the classroom door open or in a location where another adult employee can observe the support session. Teachers should also advise parents by email when they have met alone with a student to provide tutoring or support.

Before and after school and the study hall period in Middle School are the best times to give extra help. Try to avoid keeping students in at recess unless they have been remiss in doing work or would prefer to see you then. Also, avoid taking them out of other classes, including PE. Teachers in Lower School have occasionally given extra help directly before or after school.

Our school policy discourages School Faculty tutoring any current or former St. Matthew’s students for pay unless processed through the School’s business office. If Faculty do engage in tutoring of current or former St. Matthew’s students for pay, they may only do so in accordance with this policy.
• A teacher may not engage in any outside paid tutoring of students who are currently enrolled in a course or grade level with the teacher. This includes tutoring a student during the summer prior to the year in which the teacher will have that student in class.

• If the teacher tutors a student not in the teacher’s grade level or course, the teacher must have written consent from the parents of the student that acknowledges that the School is not supervising the tutoring; the Faculty member must inform both the Division Director and the parents of the time and location of each tutoring session; and the tutoring must be conducted in the presence of another adult.

If you have questions, please consult the Assistant Head or Head of School.

**BABYSITTING**

Faculty and staff may not babysit St. Matthew's students or their siblings because of concerns as to boundaries and conflicts of interest.

**OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES WITH STUDENTS**

The School encourages Faculty to participate in School sponsored extracurricular activities with students, such as coaching, field trips, camps and enrichment programs. To ensure that demands on Faculty are reasonable and do not violate appropriate boundaries with students, the Division Director will review the extracurricular involvement of each Faculty member and may limit those activities where appropriate.

Because personal contacts with students in activities unrelated to the School may raise questions about appropriate boundaries, Faculty who have contact with St. Matthew's students through involvement in outside programs (such as camps, athletic activities) must inform the Division Director and parents of the contact.