



## ST MARTIN'S PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL GENERAL SCHOOL POLICY

St Martin's Pre-Primary School is a registered, independent, co-educational school that caters for children from 3 - 6 years of age.

### VISION AND VALUES

*"We strive to offer a dynamic, relevant and Christian education which prepares young children for life-long learning."*

The Vision describes the School's purpose and core values; it states the reason for the School's existence and describes the educational product it seeks to deliver.

The Values which enlighten and deliver on the vision are:

- **Christian Ethos**  
We model, promote and prayerfully follow the loving way of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Contemporary Educational Excellence**  
We have a highly qualified and experienced staff who provide up-to-date, relevant education.
- **Active, Fun-Filled Learning Experience**  
We offer active, fun-filled, age-appropriate learning experiences to enhance the potential of every child.
- **Context of Mutual Respect**  
We value and promote mutual respect in relationships between pupils, teachers, parents and the Church.
- **Interactive, Loving Environment**  
The child and the entire family are nurtured through mutual concern, love and care.

These values are, in turn, translated into the Critical Success Factors which ensure that the vision and values go beyond simply being statements of intent but are incorporated into the School's Strategic Planning. They are:

- **Marketing**  
We strive to position St Martin's Pre-Primary as the market leader in the Durban North area by promoting an awareness of and esteem for our values-based educational programme.
- **Educational Programme**  
We continually develop a dynamic, relevant, multi-faceted and holistic educational programme which is informed by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)*.
- **Communication**  
We consistently enhance effective communication which stimulates, educates and informs.

- **Governance**

We seek to ensure transparency, accountability and responsibility in the governance of the School through the involvement and representation of all stake-holders, i.e. parents, staff and Church.

- **Finance and Administration**

We implement and adhere to sound financial policies and monitor performance regularly whilst being pro-active in management and administration.

- **Human Resources**

We attract, retain and develop our human resources in an environment which values and appreciates the talents and gifts of the staff.

- **Facilities**

We maintain and enhance the physical, educational and administrative facilities to promote optimum learning and effective functioning.

## **CORE BUSINESS**

St Martin's Pre-Primary School is a learning community which recognises learning both as an individual and a collective process. It has established school structures and processes to support quality learning. We seek to promote and protect the rights of children which guide and support their holistic growth, development and fulfilment of potential in a happy, safe, caring and stimulating environment.

The educational programme is structured to include teacher-directed, free choice and routine periods.

During the teacher-directed periods/lessons the following are offered: Music; Functional Movement/ Developmental Play (Physical Education); Expressive Movement (Laban); Dance (Laban); Drama; Discussion/Object Studies; Programme Organiser/Theme Table Discussions; Motor Development (fine and gross motor movement exercises and activities); Stories, Puppet Shows and Language Development; School Readiness Programme (Grade R); Language/Pre-Reading & Pre-Writing Development (Grade R) and isiZulu.

The following routines are scheduled during the morning: Toilet and Wash Routine; Snack Routine; Arrival & Greeting Routine; Rest Time and Home Routine.

There are two free choice periods, of approximately an hour each. The first is after the Greeting Ring and the second after the mid-morning lesson and snack time.

Extra to these periods are: Puzzle and Book Library; Life Skills' Outings (Grade R); Entertainment and Information Talks.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

At St Martin's Pre-Primary School, all policy is framed within the context of the School's mission and its Christian values. We view our policies as general statements of purpose and intent, as guidelines for planning and decision-making and for the implementation of said plans. The Policy File is available for perusal in the School Office.

## **STAFFING**

The qualified staff, in collegial co-operation, implements a learning programme which is informed by the National Curriculum Statement, as developed by the Department of Education. Planning takes cognisance of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) of the NCS and the School's assessment and reporting is based on these. The pupil:teacher ratio in each class is 26:2, with a teacher (with specialised pre-primary training) and a full-time assistant (generally a certified teacher or an in-service student teacher).

## **PUPIL POPULATION**

The School has 144 pupils in 6 classes ranging from Grade 000 to Grade R. There are two classes in each of the age groups. In enrolment, preference is given to past pupils' children and the siblings of children who complete Grade R in the School. Consideration is also given to the parents of Church members.

We are open to children of all faiths, races and cultures whose parents identify with the ethos and mission of the School. These children are those who are mentally and physically able to benefit from group instruction to the extent that they meet age-appropriate developmental norms. (We also consider whether parents are able to meet their financial commitment to the School, as we are an independent school that receives no form of subsidy and we are, therefore, entirely reliant on fees as a source of income.)

## **CULTURE AND RELIGION**

The School is not a multi-cultural school in the accepted definition of the word, as we do not teach nor promote specific cultural mores. "Similarities" not "differences" are celebrated and respectful, caring, giving and serving behaviour is modelled and encouraged. Responsibility and accountability are promoted.

St Martin's is sensitive to the fact that we draw children from a variety of religious backgrounds, however, the School is Christian and parents enrol their children with that understanding. The Christian festivals of Easter, Ascension Day and Christmas are observed. A belief and understanding of the triune God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ are promoted in songs, stories and prayers.

## **GENDER**

It is the policy at St Martin's to actively work against gender stereotypes which may limit the horizons of either boys or girls. We do, however, recognise that boys learn differently and often display growth at dissimilar times to girls, and our curriculum delivery supports learning styles resulting from varied types of intelligence and gender difference.

## **LANGUAGE**

English is the language of learning and teaching. However, isiZulu is taught to promote a sense of community and citizenship.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The whole School is engaged in the discipline process. The teachers establish the rules for behaviour and interaction; they also model self-control and respect, to provide examples to the children. They enforce the rules for discipline and help the children to understand that there are consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Corporal punishment is not permitted.

A positive, ordered environment creates a climate of co-operation and acceptance in the School and fosters good relationships. This is conducive to sound learning and happy social interaction. Courteous and respectful behaviour is required from all children and the teachers ensure that the pupils speak, respond and interact appropriately at all times.

It is necessary to have clear and decisive school rules for the following reasons: orderliness; fairness and justice; effective functioning; safety, health and hygiene; whole child development, i.e. self-control and self-management, and life skills. Parents are kindly asked to adhere to them for these reasons, as all children have the right to be treated equally and without favouritism.

### **AFTER-CARE AND HOLIDAY-CARE**

The After-Care and Holiday-Care Programmes are those after-hours, supervised care facilities offered to the children of working parents in the school community. They may use the Programmes on a full-time or casual basis.

These Programmes are less formal than the school morning but are, nevertheless, controlled and well-structured.

Similarly to the Morning Programme there are teacher-directed, free-choice and routine periods. The School employs a suitably qualified and experienced After-Care Supervisor. An assistant and a domestic helper complete the staffing component.

### **EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES**

A number of privately run extra-mural activities are available after school hours. Parents liaise directly with the extra-mural organisers, who have full responsibility for the children for the duration of the activity, and until the children are collected by their parents, or join the After-Care group, as the case may be.

Except for swimming, which is regarded as a life skill, we recommend that pre-school children (especially three- and four-year olds) are not "overloaded" with extra-mural activities. The "over-organised child" who has little time for the freedom of unstructured play, has difficulty relying on his/her own resources and developing creativity and imagination.

### **COMMITMENT OF STAKE-HOLDERS**

The School is constituted as an "*in universitas*" association and all of the stake-holders at St Martin's Pre-Primary School play a part in creating a values-based and committed community which fulfils our vision.

Our stake-holders are the learners, the parents (including the Parents' Association Committee), the staff (Principal, administrative staff and support staff), Church and the Governing Body.

The children are the purpose and focus of the educational programme. As three to six year olds, they obviously do not play a management role in the School but they do have a responsibility to reflect the ethos and embrace the curriculum. (Implicit in this is the understanding that their parents act, in most instances, on their behalf, as well as guiding and directing them.)

Realistic engagement on behalf of the **children** includes:

- Behaving in a manner which reflects the values of the School.
- Being respectful, courteous and co-operative towards the Principal, teachers, admin and support staff, other learners, parents and visitors.

- Acknowledging the worth and value of others and displaying an awareness of and appreciation for their ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- Demonstrating responsibility and gratitude in the care of property, facilities and equipment.
- Attending School regularly and on time.
- Participating fully and positively in the learning experiences offered to them.
- Adhering to school rules, with the assistance of their parents.

**Parents** make a choice to send their children to St Martin's. This decision should be sustained by a commitment to:

- Helping children develop strong moral values through their own words, actions and behaviour but also by supporting the ethos of the School.
- Taking an interest in the School, its programme, functions and events and in its future developments and indicating this through their active personal involvement.
- Offering their time and expertise to the School through representation on the Parents' Association Committee or by working on various sub-committees or by assisting where required.
- Respecting and recognising and the specialised qualifications of the teachers, as well acting on as their objective perspective, input, advice and suggestions. The teachers act for the long-term benefit of their children, referencing the innate potential of each child.
- Acknowledging the authority and discipline of the School and demonstrating this when the code of conduct is applied to their children.
- Encouraging children to abide by school rules.
- Supporting and taking an interest in the school's developments.
- Meeting their contractual financial obligations as per the Fee Payment Liability Form and the Parent Contract (both attached).

The interests and views of parents are protected and represented on the **Parents' Association Committee**. The Executive of this Committee serves on the Governing Body. This group is:

- Acting on behalf of the parent body at large.
- Encouraging an involvement and commitment to the School through organising social events.
- Promoting respectful and enjoyable social relationships amongst parents and families.
- Fundraising for special projects which enhance the School's facilities, programme and school experience for the children.
- Providing financial resources which add to and extend that which is garnered through school fees.

The **Principal, administrative staff and support staff** work together in offering an educational programme of excellence. In so doing, they are:

- Perpetuating the ethos and values of the School.
- Creating a learning environment which fosters engaged, active and exciting educational opportunities.
- Establishing foundational learning which enhances later formal education.
- Providing boundaries and behaviour management which encourages independence and self-management in children.
- Observing, identifying and making recommendations for extension and/or intervention to grow and develop each child to his/her full potential.

- Listening to parents and learners and respecting concerns by providing appropriate times and places for full and/or confidential discussion.
- Upholding the rights and dignity of all who are a part of the school community.
- Fostering empathic and respectful relationships with all members of the school community.
- Behaving in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the South African Council for Educators and/or the School's Code of Conduct.
- Keeping the terms of their Employment Contracts and Job Descriptions.

The **St Martin's-In-The-Fields Church** started the School as a mission outreach to the community. Their involvement continues to the present, through proximity and representation on the Governing Body. In so doing, they are:

- Protecting the Christian ethos of the School.
- Offering their committed service to God through their work on the Governing Body, thereby demonstrating faith in action.
- Fulfilling the Church's commitment to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the community.
- Acting as on-going stability in the school population through the lengthier tenure of their representation.

The **Governing Body** draws together all of the stake-holders. Representation is made up of the Rector and five Church representatives, the Executive of the Parents' Association Committee, the Principal, the School Secretary and a teacher. This organisation is committed to:

- Upholding the Independent Schools' Association of Southern Africa's (ISASA) principles of good practice as they apply to the roles of the Governing Body and individual Governing Body members.
- Safe-guarding that the School operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Working in partnership to ensure that the School's mission, vision and strategic goals are fulfilled and establish policies and plans consistent with this.
- Governing the School with fairness, reason and wisdom, to the best of its ability.
- Utilising the expertise and experience of stake-holders to the benefit of the School.
- Ensuring the future of the School through sound effective management; accepting accountability for both the financial stability and financial future of the School, engaging in strategic financial planning, and overseeing operating budgets.
- Offering support to the Principal and the staff as they strive to fulfil the key purposes of the School.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Information relating to "housekeeping issues", such as school hours, requirements, snack/lunch suggestions, open days, clothing, etc., shall be distributed to parents at the Orientation Mornings (new pupils) or at the start of each school year.