



HOSTEL POLICY



CONTROL SHEET

POLICY TITLE	HOSTEL POLICY
POLICY REFERENCE NUMBER	STMS16.2024
STATUS	Approved 14 March 2024
DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION	14 March 2024
DEVELOPED BY	POLICY COMMITTEE
REVIEWED BY	HOSTEL COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY	SGB
DATE APPROVED	14 March 2024
NEXT REVIEW DATE	2027
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER	HOSTEL SUPRINTENDENT
RELATED POLICIES	ANTI-BULLYING POLICY; SMS CODE OF CONDUCT; FINANCE POLICY; DISCIPLINARY POLICY; DEBTORS POLICY; RELIGIOUS POLICY; SCHOOL SAFETY POLICY; NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT; CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA; SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT; DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND WORK PLACE POLICIES FOR EDUCATORS; HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY



St Michael's School for Girls Hostel Policy

1. Background

In terms of the Constitution, the Bill of rights, Section 24, everyone has a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing. It further stipulates that every child has the right to family or parental care or to appropriate care when removed from the family. That is, whether willingly or unwillingly. Hostel facilities should therefore be safe, secure, meet the needs of learners and support them in raising problems and issues that concern them. In addition, hostel facilities should also protect their privacy, promote their welfare and provide them with the opportunity to develop positively within reasonable boundaries.

St Michael's school for girls (SMS) has a long and proud tradition of boarding and seeks to uphold this tradition of providing a safe, orderly caring environment; promoting self- discipline; giving hostel learners an opportunity to achieve academically and participate in extra-mural activities; and most of all fostering the culture of respect for and acceptance of others.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- (a) Provide minimum standards to be met by the hostel facility.
- (b) Regulate the interaction between the SMS hostel community.
- (c) Update and incorporate the current hostel meals, discipline and transport policies drafted in 2008.

3. Who is it intended for

The policy is applicable to all

- (a) Learners in the SMS hostel facilities of SMS;
- (b) Parents/Guardians/Trusts/Benefactors ('Parent') of a child/ children who are in SMS hostel facilities;
- (c) Hostel staff and service providers; and
- (d) Those responsible for hostel governance.

That is, at or from the date of implementation of this policy.

4. Regulatory Framework

The policy has been drafted in accordance with the applicable provisions of the following:

- (a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996).
- (b) The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996).
- (c) The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996).
- (d) Guidelines for the Provision of Boarding Facilities in Public Ordinary Schools.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the following SMS policies and procedures:

- (a) Debtors policy of 18 May 2017 (STMS2017.05), specifically sections 61-70.
- (b) Religious policy of 16 August 2017 (STMS2017.R01)
- (c) Smoking policy of 18 May 2017 (STMS2017.03)
- (d) Disciplinary policy.
- (e) Admissions policy STMS2018.A01.
- (f) Disciplinary and grievance procedure and work place policies for educators.
- (g) School safety policy.
- (h) SMS code of conduct.
- (i) Code of conduct for visitors of St Michaels' School for Girls.
- (j) Anti-Bullying policy.

5. Terms and concepts

- (a) Where the policy gives discretion to the hostel superintendent or delegated person, such decision should be clearly indicated in the hostel code of conduct, rules or standard operating procedures.
- (b) Boarding/hostel – the words will be used interchangeably and to refer to the St Michaels' School for Girls (SMS) boarding facilities.
- (c) School refers to SMS
- (d) Parent is the lawful and natural father or mother of a learner, including adoptive paren(t). The word will also be used to refer to a guardian who is entrusted by law with the care of a learner or a learner's property, as a minor, someone legally incapable of managing his or her own affairs.

Hostel facilities

- 6. **School property** – All learners are expected to treat school property with respect. Learners who destroy hostel property will be disciplined in accordance with the sanctions stipulated in the school's code of conduct for learners.
- 7. **Cleanliness** – It is the duty of all learners in the hostel to keep their dormitories clean at all times. The younger primary school learners may be assisted with certain tasks.

- 8. Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC)** - All spaces should be provided with heating, ventilation and air-conditioning that meet the demand of the building and at the same time, are necessary for the comfort of the hostel learners. Care should be taken that the HVAC system is integrated, low cost, using less energy and running more efficiently over time.
- 9. Use of electrical appliances** – Only irons that are in a working condition will be allowed. No other electrical appliances will be permitted unless prior permission has been given by the housemistress/master.
- 10. Connectivity** – the hostel should have at least an intercom and if feasible wifi access for learners.
- 11. Swimming** – Hostel learners may use the pool on Saturdays and Sundays with the permission of the housemistress.
- 12. Laundry-**
 - (a) A laundry room with basins, washing machines, washing lines and ironing boards is available.
 - (b) Laundry should not be hung from windows, showers and beds.
 - (c) Unclaimed clothing from the hostel laundry room will be removed at the end of every term and given to charity.
 - (d) A service provider external to the school should be engaged to collect laundry and drop it off at a designated area at the hostel, once a week. Billing for this service will be done privately between the service provider and parent(s) of hostel learners. The hostel's role in this regard is to streamline and facilitate laundry collection and drop off only. The school is free of liability in this regard.
- 13. Use of common rooms**
 - (a) The hostel should have a safe and secure space for playing in, appropriate to learners' ages; space to meet with friends, family and others in private without disrupting others; and space for recreation where learners can pursue their own individual interests; study and do homework.
 - (b) Rules governing the TV and or common room will be determined by the hostel superintendent and incorporated into the hostel code of conduct.
- 14. Areas that are out of bounds to learners** should be clearly marked and communicated to hostel learners.
- 15. Emergency evacuation plan** – Emergency exits should be communicated to hostel learners and learners must undergo fire drills every term. New learners should undergo drills and be taught school hostel safety measures as part of their orientation programme. Proctors shall be trained as evacuation officers to assist during emergencies. Fire equipment must be in a working condition at all times.
- 16. Health and Safety Certificates as well as the Certificate of Acceptability for Food Premises** should be kept up to date and available on demand should the need arise.

Hostel services

17. Meals and meal times

- (a) All hostel learners, including those with special dietary or medical needs should be provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. Withholding of food should never be used as a disciplinary measure.
- (b) Hostel learners should have access to safe drinking water.
- (c) It will be assumed that all learners will take standard meals.
- (d) If a learner wishes to take vegetarian option, the request must be made in writing by the learner's parent. The request must be received no later than the first day of the term.
- (e) If a learner wishes to change back to the standard option, this request must again be made in writing by a learner's parent on the first day of the term. No changes can be made during the course of the term.
- (f) Food allergies will be catered for only on receipt of a valid medical certificate. The school reserves the right to seek a second opinion and, if so advised by a reputable medical professional, to reject the request for special meals due to a food allergy.
- (g) The hostel is not able to cater for individual diets, individual preferences, Kosher, Halaal or other meals that need to be prepared according to specific religious or cultural rules.
- (h) Learners must be dressed in school uniform for breakfast during the week. Neat dress is required for all other meals.
- (i) The hostel superintendent should determine conduct to be followed during meals and times of meals.

18. Learner transport – The following shall apply with respect to learner transport:

- (a) Transport will only be provided free of charge for school related services and doctor appointments made by the wellness centre. Any other trip will be charged at a price determined from time to time by the school's board of governors. Transport tickets can be purchased from the Bursar.
- (b) All transport requests shall be recorded before or after supper of the previous evening. Learners should however still be assisted in case of an emergency (must go to hospital).
- (c) A learner shall forfeit the transport service if she is late.
- (d) NO school transport will be provided to other churches.
- (e) No learners are to be allowed to walk in Captain Proctor Street; not alone or in a group.
- (f) Transport for takeaways or group entertainment may be provided only if approved by the housemistress.

Wellbeing of hostel learners

19. Medical and health issues- Hostel learners who become ill or suffer from minor ailments shall be seen by the nursing sister at the school's wellness centre, where they may be given medication if necessary. The cost of such medication shall be added to their student account. The wellness centre has a room with beds for when medical observation is necessary or if learners have to lie down for a while. Wellness centre information form with medical details of a learner, copy of ID's of parent(s) and copy of medical aid card must be completed and submitted to the nursing sister to enable hostel staff to take learners to a nearby private hospital if the need arises. If wellness centre information form is not received, the learner will be taken to a state hospital.

20. Counselling and spiritual wellbeing - Spiritual wellbeing of hostel learners is important. The hostel superintendent, the nursing sister, the school social worker, the chaplain as well as all members of the hostel staff will be available to talk to any learner and or their parents. In times of personal need, hostel learners are encouraged to contact any of them for advice, support and encouragement. Proctors, learners and housemistresses will respond to and deal with unhealthy hostel situations. If the need arises, the hostel superintendent will become involved.

In accordance with the Christian values of the school, attendance of Chapel on Sundays is compulsory. Girls shall be given an opportunity to attend denominational services held outside the school, generally on Sunday mornings.

21. Prohibition of corporal punishment and initiation practices –

(a) No person at the hostel may administer corporal punishment to a learner. On contravention, and upon conviction a sentence which could be imposed for assault shall be issued.

(b) Conducting or participating in any initiation practices against another learner at hostel will result in disciplinary action being instituted against such person. In addition, a learner may institute civil action against a person or any group of people who manipulated and forced that learner to participate in any initiation practices.

22. Protection of hostel learners against abuse- Younger learners in hostel should not be victims of neglect and regular parental visits should be encouraged in such instances. School safety policy shall apply.

23. Safety and security –

(a) Arrangements should be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of hostel learners including vetting of staff and criminal record checks for all staff aged 16 and above, living on the same premises as hostel learners even though not employed by the school.

(b) Given the need not to intrude unreasonably on the hostel learners' privacy, but taking into consideration their safety and security needs, closed circuit cameras should be placed in all corridors. However, no cameras are to be placed in bathrooms and the learners' hostel rooms. In turn the school shall maintain strict controls to ensure the security and the integrity of the recorded images.

- (c) Learners are given a room key at the beginning of each year. A lost key will be replaced at the learner's expense, to be debited to her school account. Lost keys must be reported to the housemistress immediately.
- (d) The front door shall be locked during school hours, prep, meals, chapel and rest. Outside these hours, the front desk shall be manned by the hostel student supervisor on duty.

Hostel learner conduct

24. Learners' property

- (a) Learners should respect other learners' property.
- (b) Stealing is a serious offence.
- (c) Learners should be discouraged from bringing large amounts of money into the hostel, as the school cannot be held accountable for any learner's lost property.
- (d) Maintenance performed by external service providers should always be done under supervision and when possible, during school hours.

25. Learners' rooms

- (a) No learner may enter any hostel room apart from his/her own, unless with the necessary permission, or accompanied by the relevant fellow hostel learner.
- (b) Learners are allowed to personalise their sleeping area with suitable things. However writing on the walls is prohibited.

26. Class attendance – Class attendance is compulsory. No learner should be allowed in hostel during school times. Suspended learners may not serve their term of suspension in hostel. Suspended hostel learners should be fetched by their parents on the day agreed upon by both the school authorities.

27. Prep – Prep takes priority over ALL other activities except extra academic classes and school related activities.

- (a) Prep should be adequately supervised.
- (b) There should be weekly prep at times determined by the hostel superintendent. In addition there should be additional prep one week before and during the exam period. Late prep arrangements should be arranged with the housemistress and should not go beyond 23h00.
- (c) Top achievers may prep in their rooms at the housemistress's discretion.

28. Mobile Phones – Mobile phones and tablets give opportunity for greater ease of communication and research.

- (a) Hostel learners may have their mobile devices, but conditions should apply. Contravention of rules applying to mobile phones and tablets should result in confiscation of the devices.
- (b) Mobile phones may not be used during school, silence, afternoon activities, prep, and meal times or after lights have been switched off (lights out). On weekends, hostel

learners may use their mobile phones and tablets throughout the day, except during meal times, silence and after lights out.

- (c) Learners may use electronic devices for research purposes during prep with permission from the student supervisor on duty.
- (d) Security of the mobile phone shall be the responsibility of the hostel learners.

29. Entering and leaving the hostel –During the course of their stay and including at the beginning and end of terms, on weekends and during exeat weekends, the following shall apply:

- (a) Learners must sign out on leaving the hostel and sign in immediately upon return.
- (b) Only a parent or guardian may give permission for a learner to be signed out of the hostel by the person whose name appears on the learner information form. The form should reach the hostel matron before Thursday 13h00 or the day before the start of the weekend, with the name and contact details of the person who will be assuming responsibility for the learner, giving permission for the learner to accompany or visit this person. It is the responsibility of the parent to determine suitability of the host family. The host family must also send the matron an email confirming the arrangement. The hostel matron reserves the right to reject any requests in this regard.
- (c) Over compulsory exeats and at the end of term, the hostel will be locked at 17:00 and opened from 13h00 for returning learners.
- (d) The school hostel provides breakfast on the last day of the term and dinner on the day before a new term starts.
- (e) School uniform is to be worn when leaving and returning.
- (f) After exeat and during weekends that learners are not at hostel, all girls should return by 17:00 on Sunday unless they have special permission from the housemistress to return on Monday morning.

30. Visits- Visits shall be in line with the school's visitors' behaviour code of conduct. Rules governing such visits shall be reflected in the hostel code of conduct.

Discipline

31. Random search and seizure – The following should be borne in mind when a search is conducted at the hostel:

- (a) The search must be authorised by the hostel superintendent.
- (b) The search should be conducted by the housemistress on duty.
- (c) The learner whose room or belongings are being searched must be present while the search is being carried out.
- (d) If it is necessary to conduct a body search, this must be done in a private room. The person being searched must be accompanied by a senior learner or student of her own choice to support her. The search must be carried out by a person of the same gender.

- (e) Any suspicious items confiscated during a search must immediately be handed to the search supervisor.
- (f) All searches must be conducted with the minimum disruption and invasion of privacy possible to the girl whose belongings or person are being searched.

32. Serious offences In addition to the list of offences listed in the school's code of conduct, the following offences are regarded as serious in the school hostels and are to be reported to the hostel superintendent. These are:

- (a) Presenting false information to the housemistress about her or another learner's whereabouts.
- (b) Continuous infringement of hostel rules.
- (c) Leaving school grounds without permission.
- (d) Vandalism or destructive behaviour.
- (e) Theft or being in possession of stolen property.
- (f) Using or being in possession of or being in the company of someone using cigarettes, alcohol or illegal substances.

Sanction for the above-mentioned offences shall be determined by the hostel superintendent and may include a disciplinary hearing. Parents of the learner shall be notified.

33. Misdemeanours – Misdemeanours are categorised into two groups, namely Category A handled by hostel student supervisors and proctors; and Category B handled by the housemistresses. These misdemeanours, their punishment, guidelines and appeal process are shown in Annexure A.

34. Concerns and grievances –

- (a) Theft, bad behaviour, repairs, maintenance and hygiene issues, and general concerns of hostel learners may be reported to housemistresses in writing.
- (b) Food issues, transport and bullying complaints are to be reported to the housemistress on duty.
- (c) Parents or guardians can register their concerns and complaints with the hostel matron and if dissatisfied follow the normal grievance reporting system of the school. In all cases there needs to be a record of such reporting.
- (d) Hostel staff shall follow the school's disciplinary and grievance procedures for educators.

Hostel Administration

- 35. Admissions to hostel and appeals** shall be handled in accordance with the school's admissions policy. The following shall also apply:
- (a) Admission to the school does not imply automatic admission to the hostel. There is no constitutional right to hostel boarding.
 - (b) The governing body reserves the right of admission to the hostel.
 - (c) Preference may be given to applicants who apply for admission to the school hostel if it is in the best overall interests of the learner to be accommodated in a hostel rather than at home and for the overall continuance of the hostel facility.
 - (d) Hostel applications of learners already admitted into the school shall be handled by the hostel superintendent who shall consider the best interest of the applicant, availability of space at hostel and parent(s)' affordability based on school fee payment history and proof of sustainable income.
- 36. Hostel fees** are regulated in line with the SMS debtors policy (STMS2017.05). Specifically:
- (a) A deposit is due at the beginning of the first term. The amount of and terms associated with such deposit will be determined by the Board of governors from time to time and communicated to parents accordingly.
 - (b) The deposit is refundable (that is, credited to the hostel learner's school account) (i) at the end of by the end of the first term of the year that follows; or (ii) at the end of the learner's stay at hostel, after all necessary and reasonable deductions for any damage that the learner might have caused in or outside their hostel rooms.
 - (c) Each hostel parent is responsible for full boarding fees.
 - (d) Hostel fees are payable in advance each term.
 - (e) Learners may stay on in the hostel only if their hostel fees are paid up.
 - (f) Learners must give one term's notice if they will be leaving the hostel at the end of the year. Matriculants will be deemed to leave the hostel at the end of their matric year. Matriculans who must or want to repeat their matric year must re-apply for admission to the hostel.
 - (g) All payments received towards hostel or boarding fees will firstly be used to cover any outstanding school fees, despite any option that the relevant payer may select with regard to the allocation of payments.
- 37. Funding of hostel facilities** – Funding for the School's Hostel is regulated by Paragraphs 146 to 150 of the Norms and Standards for School Funding as amended by Government Gazette No 29179 of 31 August 2006. Budgeting, non-capital and non-personnel costs of the hostel shall be regulated by the Purchasing and Procurement Policy of the School. The hostel's running costs should be funded from hostel fees and other non-school fee funds (eg fundraising). Running costs include, but are not limited to, normal operating expenses, such as catering, municipal services, day-to day maintenance, etc. The total running costs of the hostel shall be determined by proper planning, budgeting and cost estimations.

- 38. Temporary boarding facility for day girls-** SMS hostel offers temporary accommodation to day students. The benefits of such a facility are daily routine, supervision, safety, elimination of school transportation, daily prep and meals. Procedure for use of the facility, cost and contact details for enquiry shall be communicated through the school communicator.
- 39. Hostel management structure-** The hostel management structure and conditions of service shall be governed by the school's human resource policy. Hostel management shall consist of:
- (a) *Hostel student supervisors* employed on a one year renewable contract and paid by either the Department of Education or the School Governing Body. Hostel student supervisors' rules, duties and conditions of service are further stipulated in the rules and duties guidelines and may change from time to time with the approval of the hostel superintendent.
 - (b) *Housemistresses* who supervise hostel student supervisors, hostel prefects and learners. House mistresses in addition, support the hostel committee of the SGB. They also liaise between the school and parents of hostel learners and take full responsibility for learners and their wellbeing, including their entertainment such as hostel week and birthdays.
 - (c) *Matron or senior housekeeping supervisor* who coordinates day to day running of the hostel including inspections; handling of holiday groups; and overseeing use of money allocated to the hostel, security, cleaning and facilities upkeep.
 - (d) *Hostel superintendent* who shall be the head of the school and responsible for the implementation of the policy. In addition she/he among other things is responsible for the: (i) final budget of the hostel and utilisation thereof; (ii) all administrative duties of the hostel such as recommendations in respect of staff appointment, periodic reports on the hostel, general and performance management of hostel staff, collection of boarding fees and so forth; (iii) hostel discipline relating to serious offences; and (iv) overall spirit in the hostel including welfare, studying and recreation activities of boarders.
 - (e) *Hostel grounds manager* who oversees general maintenance of the hostel and surrounds.
 - (f) *Hostel management structure support* that, although not governed by the school's human resource policy is critical to the functioning of the hostel. This includes (i) proctors that assist the housemistress in the day to day running of the hostel including the ringing of bells for meals; inspections; and ensuring order is kept; (ii) staff for outsourced services such as cleaning and kitchens.
- 40. Lodging and boarding fees for staff** – Hostel staff residing in the quarters made available by the school shall pay rent for such accommodation, as determined by the Board of governors. Staff appointed by the Board of governors where free accommodation forms part of their package, will be responsible to pay tax on the market related benefit. Staff will furthermore be responsible to pay for extra meals when they are not on duty.
- 41.** The superintendent shall determine rules, code of conduct and procedures governing:
- (a) **Silence** - These should be reflected in the hostel code of conduct.



- (b) **Major hostel fundraising** such as accommodation of holiday groups in the hostel.
- 42.** All rules of the school shall apply to the school hostel.
- 43.** The following hostel forms should be uploaded on the school communicator:
- (a) Hostel learner information form that includes learner and parent(s)/guardian information, signing out details in the absence of a parent(s)/guardians and recurring activities.
 - (b) Hostel indemnity form.
 - (c) Hostel room inventory form.
 - (d) Wellness information form.
- 44.** Annexure B indicates the procedures to follow at the beginning and end of the term.
- 45.** Annexure C shows the procedures to follow when holiday groups visit the hostel.
- 46.** The School's board of governors shall be responsible for **monitoring** the implementation of this policy through its hostel committee.

Annexure A: Misdemeanours, punishment, and appeals for hostel

Category	Misdemeanour	Punishment	Person to handle (Including the recording of the punishment and guidelines)	Person to handle appeal
A	(i) Late for meals, school, prep and bedtime	Early reporting for 5 days	Hostel student supervisors and or Proctor	Housemistress

	(ii) Late for duty	Extra duty	<p>Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small menial tasks like washing windows; cleaning/tidying communal areas may be used. ▪ Only student supervisors may confiscate items. In such instances they are to label them clearly, indicate start and end date of punishment term and then hand them over to the housemistress for safekeeping ▪ Early reporting is 10 minutes before official time ▪ Extra inspection is 10 minutes before breakfast; fully dressed and ready for inspection. ▪ Punishment must be recorded in a punishment book. 	
	(iii) Late for Chapel	Early reporting x5 days		
	(iv) Not adhering to set times for silence	Early reporting x 5 days		
	(v) Not adhering to set times for silence time on Sunday	Stay in room for visiting time		
	(vi) Untidy room	Extra inspection x 5 days		
	(vii) Use of bad language	5 page essay within 24 hours		
	(viii) Loud music	Confiscate radio x 5 days		
	(ix) Rudeness towards someone in authority	Apology and 5 pages essay within 24 hours		
	(x) Late in making transport arrangements or late for transport departure	No transport		
	(xi) Bringing any person(s) into the hostel without permission from student on duty	Front door duty for 1 hour		
	(xii) Unauthorised use of mobile phone or tablet	Confiscate for 5 days		
B	(i) Bunking prep	<p>Any of the punishments for category A misdemeanours can be used and or Partial or full gating. Full gating entails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full school uniform ▪ No Television ▪ No Mall ▪ No visitors ▪ No phone 		
	(ii) Leaving school grounds in incorrect or incomplete uniform			
	(iii) Signing in late			
	(iv) Not attending chapel			
	(v) Missing meals			
	(vi) Having visitors outside authorised times			
	(vii) Inappropriate or unbecoming behaviour			
	(viii) Leaving campus unaccompanied			
	(ix) Having unauthorised medication in your possession			
	(x) Getting a lift without permission			



	(xi) Leaving the campus in civvies			
	(xii) Not carrying out punishment			
	(xiii) Serious offences (<i>see paragraph 33</i>)			
C			Hostel Superintendent	<i>See school disciplinary policy</i>