

THE STUDENT'S GUIDE TO LIFE AT ST. BERNARD PREP

To all students: Welcome to SBP. You're a St. Bernard student so that you may take advantage of a great opportunity, the opportunity of living, working, studying and praying with a school community. And this community is all about stretching yourself into a good and full life, a life of knowing what is true and choosing what is really good. That's the recipe for true, lasting happiness – being a real man, a real woman; make the best of it. There are all kinds of people here to help you at that: teachers, dorm directors, coaches, counselors, staff members and fellow students. Just remember, don't try to do this thing alone; all of us need support. Also, read the *Student Handbook*, know it well and live by it; it's a good guide to help you go for the good things and avoid the not-so-good things of living life together. Finally, though you will have a great deal of freedom at SBP, you will also be under the direction and discipline of others, learning to live under and even appreciate their authority, even when that's hard.

To Dorm Students (new): Living in an SBP dorm is exciting and challenging. In many ways you'll be on your own. You will make many decisions about study, free time, dedication, friendship, etc. This will probably be the first time you have lived away from home for an extended period, and you might even get a little homesick. This is natural enough; so don't be surprised. But you will survive and even prosper. P.S. Don't forget to write home; once a week would be great!

Making adjustments will be a way of life for you in the next few weeks and months. You'll have to learn to adjust to many things during this time: new people, room, bed, food, surroundings. And you will share your life with others. That won't always be easy, but you can learn how to live closely with other people – and enjoy it. You might not have a dorm room all to yourself – with only your music and only your way of life. You will learn how to share a bathroom, a T.V. room, a laundry room, a dining hall. This will be a great experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Work hard at it.

Know your dorm director. He or she is there for your good and knows how to organize a group of people for the benefit of all. Expectations will be made of you; know what they are, accept them and learn to live with them. They will help you live well and mature in your life at SBP.

A Few Tips For All Students

1. Organize your school life by using a calendar that reminds you of commitments such as homework, tests, papers, final exams, sports practice, other school events.
2. Develop a routine sleep pattern of going to bed and rising at the same times each day, getting plenty of sleep and eating breakfast. This helps assure needed rest, good health and reduced stress.
3. Practice your faith by praying (privately, and publicly at Mass and other worship opportunities) and by volunteering your time for the good of others through Campus Ministry and other organizations. Your faith keeps you focused, balanced and living in the real world.
4. Get involved in campus activities, e.g., sports, clubs, etc. Be a joiner, a team player, but know your limit; you can't do everything!
5. Get to know your fellow students. Just introduce yourself and talk a while. You need one another.
6. Get to know your teachers and other school personnel. They are a part of the St. Bernard family and they care about you.
7. Set goals for yourself; make tough but reasonable demands of yourself; don't always live in the "comfort zone." Make a "to do" list and stick by it.
8. Take up the exciting challenge of being where you are supposed to be and doing what you are supposed to do, even though in some ways you'd rather not. That is one of the great challenges of life.
9. Learn to listen to good advice, be your own person and do the hard work of making good choices. That's what growing up is all about, the "R" word: Responsibility.
10. Be honest with yourself and others. If you make a mistake, admit it and go on. Easy? No, but it works.
11. You are bound to get hurt or offended in life. Learn how to forgive. And learn how to say, "I'm sorry."
12. Have a good sense of humor about yourself, about others, about everything!

How To Get Along With A Roommate

As an SBP boarding student you might have a roommate, which is a totally unique experience. When else would you immediately share your life with someone you just met? This can produce some anxiety, but living with a roommate can be relatively painless and even fun if you practice a few communication techniques. Here they are:

1. Make some agreed-upon guidelines: When will music be played? When and how will music be cut off? When will headphones be used? Do we want to share food and other items or keep things separate? Hammer out simple house rules.
2. Organize the room and decide how to share space.
3. Take care of problems as they occur. If your roommate does something that bothers you, calmly explain why and see if a compromise can be worked out.
4. Know one another, what the other likes and dislikes.
5. Always ask before you borrow something.
6. Learn how to forgive, and how to say "I'm sorry." Both are frequently necessary.
7. If there's a big problem, be sure to talk it out, enlisting the aid of a floor supervisor, the dorm director or the guidance counselor. You'll learn a lot from communicating and problem-solving.

Communicating your concerns isn't always easy, but doing so will make your "roommate experience" more successful. The best roommates aren't always the best of friends, but they do know how to share space and respect each other.

Making The Grade: How To Study, Write, and Take Tests

Central to the St. Bernard experience is the academic life. That life is all about the human desire and need to know and understand the reality we live in. Academics have to do with the learning process – in the classroom and outside it. Up until now your idea of outside-of-class study (homework) has probably been limited to a particular assignment that a teacher has given you. That is no longer enough. Some tips:

1. There is no such thing as "no homework," or "nothing to do." Never!
2. When assigned homework is completed, do the following as time allows: review the material (text) covered in class that day, review/rewrite that day's class notes so that you can understand them fully, and review older material in preparation for future tests.
3. Be fully attentive in class, ask reasonable questions and make full use of your time – no daydreaming!
4. Go to your teacher if you need extra help. Your teacher is here for that. Don't wait.
5. Develop excellent class notes. Practice makes perfect.
6. Go to your fellow students for help. Study groups can be beneficial, but it's very important that you learn to study on your own, too.
7. When you read, read to learn. How? Skim a reading assignment to get the general idea (summaries are helpful, as are pictures, maps, graphs, etc.). Then read the text, highlighting important phrases and/or taking notes. Get a feel for the overall view; see the forest, not just the trees.
8. Don't procrastinate. Do what needs to be done today. Get to work on projects and papers immediately.
9. Keep all assignments in a special notebook.
10. Do the most difficult homework first, but manage your time well.
11. When you study, try to use the same place; sitting, not lying on the bed; quiet (no music), undisturbed.
12. Dorm students have a 2-hour study hall nightly; typically that's not enough and you must find the extra time. Remember, even if "homework" is done, that's just the beginning.
13. Be reasonable; don't work for two solid hours. Take a break occasionally.
14. Get to know the school's excellent library resources and how to use them. The librarian is there to help you.
15. Tests:
 - a. Don't cram; the best test preparation and the best way to really learn is to follow the guidelines above.
 - b. Get plenty of sleep. At test time, relax, take a deep breath, think positively, say a prayer.
 - c. As a test begins, write down hard-to-remember facts & formulas on the paper.
 - d. If time allows, do the easier questions first, marking and returning to the difficult ones.
 - e. Don't rush, you'll get anxious; relax.