



**ROSS UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

**PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

# RUSVM Preparatory School Parent-Student Handbook

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## **Introduction**

This handbook is intended for both new and returning students and their families. The prep school wants to especially welcome new parents and students. We hope that the information offered herein will provide you with adequate details about the prep school, its goals and objectives, and the overall program.

Although returning families may already be acquainted with most of the information in this handbook, some changes have been made and you are asked to review it.

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# ROSS UNIVERSITY

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## SCHOOL OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Ross Preparatory! Whether you are new or returning, Welcome!

At Ross Prep you become a part of a warm, welcoming environment that nurtures learning and self-worth while instilling self-discipline and a sense of global awareness and responsibility. You will not only find age appropriate, rigorous and relevant curriculum for your child(ren) but also a dedicated staff who take the time to know each child and his/her family. Our cross grade groupings, small classes and student driven classrooms make up the foundations of our ethnically diverse community.

We anticipate a great year of exploring our curriculum, learning about our friends and this beautiful island that we call home, even if for some its temporary, and pushing ourselves to be even better than where we started. I personally take the motto of "I want to be better today than I was yesterday" and I apply that to all aspects of my life. I think that for all of us that's what we want for ourselves and our children so that's what we are here to help you do.

My team and I love being a part of this community and we are dedicated to working cohesively with our community stakeholders. We are here if you need us.

Sincerely,

Michelle Phillip-Mitchell

Interim Superintendent, RUSVM Preparatory School

# Brief History and Overview of the RUSVM Prep School

The RUSVM Preparatory School was founded in 2000 in response to the need for faculty of the university to have a school with a U.S. curriculum for their children. The first year consisted of seven students meeting in a faculty lounge until a three room building was constructed. Then, students were separated into three groups (daycare-kindergarten, grades 1-4, grades 5-8) and instructed without any set curriculum. As more students registered and the university needed the space being used by the prep school, the decision was made to build a separate building in 2009. Curriculum specialists were brought in to train teachers and set up essential programs. The school initially used the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) assessment until 2010-2011 when the MAP was instituted as the primary assessment mechanism.

From 2014-2019 the prep school continued to progress and move forward with a long-term team of teachers who provided experience, consistency, and continuity to the program. Significant improvements were made to create an excellent and rigorous academic curriculum. There was a strong focus on building and clearly defining the middle school program. Courses such as Informational Technology, Social Skills, Integrated Arts, and daily P.E. were added to the program. The strengths of cross age grouping, low student teacher ratios and student-centered classrooms make for a solid foundational learning environment where diversity, respect, perseverance and responsibility are promoted.

The school population is transient by nature. Many of our students are the children of veterinary school students who are on the island for just over two years. The program serves children of university faculty, staff, and students, as well as children from both the local and expatriate island community. Although transient by nature, many consider the community's diversity a strength.

A calendar is developed for each school year with 180 academic days. The academic program aligns with the DVM program, so the school operates during U.S. and local holidays, with one exception of the St. Kitts-Nevis Independence Day (September 19<sup>th</sup>). The school has established some traditions such as Mother's Day Meatballs for Moms, Father's Day Pizza with Pops, Halloween Trunk or Treat and the Costume Campus Parade, American Thanksgiving (students and staff prepare a traditional meal to share with families and faculty) and Holidays Around the World, At the end of the 180 day academic year, students may attend a Summer Camp program, designed to explore a different theme each week. The school also offers an additional two hours of inclusive childcare each weekday between 3:10 and 5:00 p.m.

RUSVM Prep School has been a proud partner of the children and families of Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine for 18 years. We look forward to continue this strong tradition for many more.

# **RUSVM Preparatory School**

## ***Educating Students for a Better Future***

### **Our Mission:**

“The Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine (RUSVM) Preparatory School provides an enriched U.S curriculum for children of faculty, staff and students of RUSVM, and members of the St. Kitts and Nevis community. Our curriculum is taught by highly qualified teachers who in partnership with parents and the community, motivate students to develop a love for lifelong learning, achieve academic success, and become responsible global citizens”

## **Our Beliefs:**

*We believe that . . .*

- All individuals have equal intrinsic worth.
- All individuals will be respectful and responsible for their actions.
- Our diversity promotes fairness and compassion.
- Our parents, students, and teachers share the responsibility for education, understanding that success builds self-esteem, which motivates further success.
- The school climate encourages honesty, consistency, and perseverance.
- We all share responsibility for our global community and environment.

## **Our Goals:**

- Provide a well-rounded program of instruction using the best educational practices appropriate to the cultural, intellectual, and social needs of our students.
- Provide educational resources for a safe, challenging, tolerant, and supportive environment in which students are encouraged to actively participate.
- Foster a sense of independent thinking, self-discipline, skillful communication, and self-reliance.
- Orient students to the world of technology and media, developing familiarity, competence, and awareness of the tools they will utilize as they continue their learning process.
- Provide opportunities for families and friends of RUSVM Prep School to strengthen community bonds through a range of inclusive activities and programs.
- Have all of our students choose to demonstrate social responsibility through active involvement in serving the community.



## Our Strategies:

- **Strategy 1 – Philosophy and Mission**
- “We will ensure the existence of an updated mission statement supported by a list of core values and beliefs that reflect the school community we serve.”
- **Strategy 2 – Governance and Leadership**
- “We will ensure that governance and leadership support a school environment where teaching and learning will thrive.”
- **Strategy 3 – School Improvement Planning**
- “We will ensure that school improvement planning is a collaborative effort closely aligned with school’s mission and operational priorities.”
- **Strategy 4 - Finances**
- “We will insist that financial resources and sound business practices promote confidence in all sectors of school operations.”
- **Strategy 5 – Facilities**
- “We will ensure that school facilities and the school’s physical environment meet the high standards required to support a quality school program.”
- **Strategy 6 – School Climate and Organizations**
- “We will ensure that all school personnel understand and are committed to the schools core values (beliefs) and will consistently model behavior that demonstrates that commitment.”
- **Strategy 7 – Health and Safety**
- “We will ensure that updated policies and procedures support the school’s commitment in providing a healthy and safe leaning environment.”
- **Strategy 8 – Educational Program**
- “We will provide an updated, written curriculum that will reflect what is understood about research-based instruction and learning theory and that is understood and communicated to the widest audience that includes parents, etc.”
- **Strategy 9 – Assessing Student Learning**
- “We will ensure that all student learning is supported by assessment evidence and progressively measured.”
- **Strategy 10 – Student Services**
- “We will ensure that written policies and procedures communicate the school’s commitment to provide student services that are age and developmentally appropriate.”
- **Strategy 11 – Student Life and Student Activities**
- “We will ensure that a balanced, age-appropriate, properly funded activities program be in place and supported by leadership, teachers and parents.”
- **Strategy 12 – Information Resources and Technology**
- “We will ensure and sustain a forward-thinking information resource program, including making available the technology to support that program.”

## **Our Parameters:**

- We will accept no new program or service unless:
  1. It is consistent with the school's plan;
  2. Its benefits clearly justify costs;
  3. It includes provisions for staff development and program evaluation;
  4. It has sufficient funds for effective implementation.
- We will retain no program or service unless:
  1. Its benefits continue to justify costs;
  2. It makes an optimal contribution to achieving mission.
- We will always insist on a high standard of performance by faculty, staff, and students.
- We will not tolerate any behavior that diminishes the dignity or self-worth of any individual or group.
- We will manage the school consistent with requirements.

# Admissions Policy

## Admissions Policy, Procedures, and Entrance Requirements

Potential parents may meet with the superintendent to tour the school and have their questions answered if they are on island. The Parent-Student Handbook is online or it can be emailed upon request. The admissions process is complete only when the application and all the required documents have been provided to the school.

The following must be received for each applicant:

- Completed application
- Copy of first two pages of passport
- Copy of birth certificate
- Official school records from previous years (if applicable)
- Completed medical form
- Copy of Immunization record
- Student release form
- Signed statement from parents and students that they have read the current Parent-Student Handbook
- Map of directions to family home in St. Kitts
- Technology Agreement Form (Gr. 5 and up)
- Acceptable Use Policy + Parent Permission Form (PreK and up)

## Age Policy

An age policy is essential in order to ensure that students who enter each grade are physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally prepared. It also ensures they will be in the appropriate grade level when they transfer to another American or international school. A student from a duly accredited school with a US curriculum will be placed in the grade deemed appropriate by that student's school records. The age policy is effective when there is a question as to placement for new students.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Age</b>
Daycare	Birth to 18 months prior to September 30 of that school year
Preschool	18 months to 2 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Preschool 2	3 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Pre-Kindergarten	4 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Kindergarten	5 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade One	6 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Two	7 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Three	8 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Four	9 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Five	10 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Six	11 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Seven	12 years prior to September 30 of that school year
Grade Eight	13 years prior to September 30 of that school year

The superintendent may use discretion when reviewing individual cases in regard to admissions and grade level placement.

## Enrollment Priorities

Enrollment will be limited at the prep school based on class size, space and personnel.

Priority will be given to students as described below.

### ***Daycare/Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten***

**Priority I** All children and legal dependents of faculty and students of Ross University in one-parent families or when both parents are Ross vet students or faculty members will be accepted.

**Priority II** Children and legal dependents of faculty and students of Ross University in two-parent families where one parent is not a student or faculty member at Ross.

**Priority III** Children and legal dependents of staff members of Ross University, as long as they have a foreign passport and providing their acceptance would enhance the overall school environment.

**Priority IV** Other children as determined by the superintendent.

### ***Kindergarten through Grade 8 and online HS students***

**Priority I** All children and legal dependents of faculty and students of Ross University will be accepted providing the child does not have challenges that cannot be met at the prep school. The superintendent will make the final decision.

**Priority II** Children and legal dependents of staff members of Ross University will be considered as long as they have a foreign passport and providing their acceptance would enhance the overall school environment.

**Priority III** Children not connected to Ross University. Acceptance is totally at the discretion of the superintendent and will be dependent upon space, teachers, grade level, welfare of the student population, and any other factors deemed appropriate. Siblings of currently enrolled students will be considered first within this category.

## Wait List

When a grade level is filled, a wait list is established. As vacancies occur, students are placed in classes according to the priority considerations listed above. When space limitations indicate that there are more candidates in any one category mentioned above than spaces available, then admissions will be based on a first come, first serve basis. The date the original application was received will be used. Being on a wait list is not a guarantee of acceptance.

## **Class Size**

Every effort is made to keep class sizes reasonable with no more than 14 children per class.

## **Placement Test**

Students in grades 1-8 coming from accredited US schools or other recognized American curriculum schools will be admitted based upon official records from the previous school which show the student has been succeeding at or above grade level. RUSVM Prep School will generally honor the grade placement of these schools. Entrance exams may be required if the previous grade results are marginal. Applicants may be required to complete placement tests.

The placement tests include assessment in mathematics, written expression, and reading. Students are expected to score at or above grade level in all of the above areas in order to be granted regular admission. In some instances a child may be admitted on a provisional status. As part of the admissions process, an interview with the student and parents will be conducted and records from the previous school will be reviewed. A child will be denied admission if he or she has a specific learning or behavioral disability that cannot be adequately addressed by the school. Decisions are made at the discretion of the superintendent.

## **Students with Special Needs**

Only students who have been identified as having a mild learning disability, and/or children identified as having ADHD who are on a successful modification plan or under the care of a physician (if prescribed medication), are eligible for placement in the school. The school does not have the resources to successfully administer a program for children with more serious disabilities. Decisions are made at the discretion of the superintendent.

Students who are admitted to the prep school with special needs or with academic delays are required to have a psycho-educational assessment on file, conducted by a licensed school psychologist within the last two years. Once the assessment results are received, a determination will be made as to whether or not the child can be served in the program.

## **English Language Learners (ELL)**

Children will be admitted with no prior knowledge of English as long as it is determined they will be successful in the program. The standards based grading system will be used for these students as with English speakers, thus a number of standards will not be met initially by the non-English speaker. Children have become highly successful in English as the result of the small class sizes and the total immersion into an English speaking environment. The higher the grade level, the more difficult it may be for non-English speaking students to meet the school standards provided at the prep school.

Prior to relocating parents are encouraged to immerse their children in English as much as possible at home. They are also encouraged to utilize online resources like (starfall.com) that will review basics of the English language. Helping with day to day vocabulary related to using the bathroom, eating, social activities will help children transition into the school with a bit more confidence.

# **School Faculty and Structure**

## **Advisory Board**

### Purpose:

1. To support and guide the prep school in adhering to campus and Adtalem policies and procedures
2. To assure the school is financially solvent and all positions remain filled
3. To address issues related to the facility, safety, hiring, or litigation
4. To support and collaborate with the Management Team
5. To encourage a positive school climate
6. To recognize the accomplishments of prep school staff
7. To mediate issue between school staff and parents

### Policies:

1. The Advisory Board will not interfere with the daily operations of the school.
2. Matters brought to the attention of the Advisory Board should be of a serious nature, not personal preference. All complaints and concerns will follow the Escalation Protocol (Teacher, Superintendent, RUSVM Vice President of Operations) before contacting the Advisory Board. The Board will determine the need for mediation in all cases. Decisions mediated through the Advisory Board will be final.

### Board Members:

1. RUSVM Dean
2. RUSVM Vice President of Operations
3. RUSVM Prep School Superintendent

### Evaluation:

1. Board members will be evaluated annually by school staff and parents through a school climate survey.

## Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

### Purpose:

1. To discuss general topics related to the school.
2. To improve communications and understanding between the RUSVM Prep School and the community it serves, and to provide staff and parents with an avenue through which issues involving the total school community can be discussed.
3. To encourage parent and community participation in school related activities

### Policies:

1. The Parent Advisory Committee **shall not become a policy making body or manage or direct the school administration.**
2. Matters for consideration by the PAC may be initiated by request of the school administration or members of the council itself. However, council members should direct concerns to school administration so they are given the opportunity to address the same through established protocols.
3. The PAC meets once a term, unless additional meetings are deemed necessary.

### Responsibility:

1. Advise the school administration regarding significant issues of the parents or others citizens of the community.
2. Assist in establishing and strengthening communication between the school and community by providing a forum for discussion.

### Committee Members:

1. Prep School Superintendent
2. A Prep School Teacher
3. RUSVM Campus Administrator in charge of Finance
4. One parent who is RUSVM student or spouse
5. One parent who is a RUSVM faculty, staff or spouse
6. One Non-RUSVM affiliated parent

### Term of Service:

1. The term of service is one year.
2. Each vet school semester (three times a year) a new appointee replaces a member whose term is ending, thus providing continuity as one member leaves and a new one joins.
3. When a vacancy occurs within a specific term, a new individual will be appointed to finish *that term*. That member may or may not be appointed to a subsequent term.

## **Administration:**

A superintendent who is responsible for the organization, operation, and overall management of the total school program administers the school. There is also a head teacher, a director of the daycare/preschool, and an executive assistant.

### **Profile of a RUSVM Prep School Administrator**

#### **A RUSVM Prep School Administrator:**

- Is a knowledgeable and well-informed professional educational leader.
- Supports and enhances the philosophy, vision, beliefs, values, and mission of our school.
- Respects and supports the prep school's rich cultural diversity.
- Is a reflective and continuous learner who demonstrates a passion for learning.
- Supports teaching models that are adopted school-wide.
- Understands the school's policies and works to manage fiscal resources well.
- Is an instructional leader who facilitates a program with high academic standards and clearly defined learning goals.
- Is a team player and shares responsibility and leadership for accomplishing the goals and priorities of the RUSVM Prep School.
- Supports and enhances the RUSVM Prep School Student, Teacher, and Parent Profiles.
- Encourages differentiated teaching strategies for the diverse student population.
- Actively evaluates and supervises staff and programs.
- Facilitates the design of action plans for improvement.
- Maintains appropriate standards of behavior, mutual respect, and safety on campus and at all school related activities.
- Is visible and available.
- Takes responsibility for keeping students, faculty, and community well-informed.
- Makes well-informed and appropriate decisions.
- Is a good listener and effective problem solver.
- Seeks to make work meaningful and achievable



## **Teachers:**

The prep school employs approximately 18 full and part time teachers and teacher assistants. Teachers in grades K-8 have come with a broad variety of professional experiences. Teachers have been trained to administer the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP).

### **Profile of a RUSVM Prep School Teacher**

#### **A RUSVM Prep School Teacher:**

- Actively works to be an accomplished teacher and demonstrates a positive attitude, flexibility, and enthusiasm for subjects taught.
- Is up to date regarding curriculum content and supports and participates in curriculum development.
- Uses a variety of teaching methods, techniques, and strategies creating an environment that is positive for student learning and involvement.
- Monitors students' understanding of the curriculum and adjusts instruction, materials, or assessments to meet developmental and academic needs of diverse learners.
- Plans effective and varied assessment of student learning and keeps accurate records of student progress.
- Demonstrates competence in using technology.
- Maintains appropriate standards of behavior, mutual respect, and safety both in and out of the classroom.
- Encourages critical thinking and problem solving through prompts, questioning, and application.
- Evaluates, tries innovative approaches, and refines instructional strategies to increase student learning and confidence to learn.
- Communicates learning goals, high standards, and expectations of quality to students.
- Promotes confidence and perseverance in the student that stimulate increased personal student responsibility for achieving the goals of the curriculum.
- Demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to diversity among individuals and differentiates for students with special needs.
- Takes responsibility for reading and responding in a timely manner to information distributed by the administration.
- Is constructive and cooperative in interactions with administrator, teachers, parents, and students, and is receptive to their contributions.

## **Support Staff**

The vet school supplies accounting, IT, security, housekeeping, purchasing, and grounds and facilities maintenance services for the prep school.

## **Management Team**

Purpose:

1. To review and determine school policies and daily operations/procedures
2. To develop and implement a rigorous curriculum according to standards
3. To discuss and plan school-wide events
4. To communicate with stakeholders and address concerns

Members:

1. Ross Prep lead grade-level teachers (PK, K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8)
2. Superintendent

Meetings:

1. Full team meets weekly during Collaboration
2. Full Staff meets monthly after school

## **PTA**

Purpose:

1. To support and organize school-wide events/activities based on approval of Management Team
2. To gather feedback after events and activities
3. To organize school and charitable fundraisers approved by the Management Team

Policies:

1. PTA is not a decision-making body and will not interfere in the daily operations of the program.

Terms of Service:

1. Members are elected by staff and parents at an annual meeting at the start of the academic year.
2. Superintendent or Advisory Board can remove any member who violates the purpose or undermines the authority of or disparages the school program or personnel.

# **School Structure:**

## **Daycare/Preschool**

A full day daycare/preschool is scheduled for vet students and faculty who need a safe and secure environment for their babies and toddlers while they are in classes and labs. Children other than those from the RUSVM community are generally not accepted at the daycare/preschool level. Children may be dropped off at 7:30 am and picked up at 3:10 pm.

In preschool, emphasis is on visual motor skills and social development. Children are exposed to numerous appropriate readiness skills to prepare them for the academics that will follow. They spend time on projects and activities inside the classroom and out in the play area.

## **Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten**

Emphasis at this level is on reading readiness skills, hands on math, and social skills development. There is an adage that one learns everything one needs to know in kindergarten and the prep school program definitely prepares children for life. In Pre-Kindergarten the Prep School utilizes the integrated program OWL – Opening the World of Learning. In Kindergarten the students follow the United States Common Core Curriculum. In Language Arts, Reading Street is utilized. In Math, enVision math is used. Specialists teach art, music, health/social skills and fitness, library, foreign language, and technology.

## **Elementary School**

The elementary school consists of grades one through four. Classes are self-contained with a classroom teacher or teachers. Students are also given instruction in art, music, health/social skills and fitness, library, foreign language, and technology. Following the US Common Core Curriculum we are further supported by Reading Street and enVision Math programs.

## **Middle School**

The middle school includes grades five through eight. In addition to core subject teachers, instruction is provided in art, integrated arts, health and fitness, library and technology. enVision Math is used in grades 5 & 6 while Digits is used in grades 7 & 8. Language Arts and Social Studies are taught in thematic units that integrate Social Studies topics with Language Arts standards.

## **High School**

A high school program is not offered. However, when a student needs a US high school education, parents may select and fund an online program from an accredited school in the US and their students are allowed to attend the prep school. Students follow the guidelines of the school and participate in the various activities that are appropriate for them.

# Academic Program:

The academic program at the RUSVM Prep School is based on the United States Common Core Curriculum. It is also designed to develop a student's awareness of the international environment in which they live with standards relating the St. Kitts & Nevis and the Caribbean region. The academic year is divided into three semesters.

## Course of Study

Teachers use and follow the guidelines provided for the curriculum in the preparation of their written lesson plans. There are specific standards listed for each subject and grade level, and the grading system is based on these standards.

## Four Themes for a Global Curriculum Framework

Parents, educators, and business leaders worldwide were asked to give feedback about the abilities they believed young people graduating from high school should possess. Ideally, they agreed graduates would be:

- Critical thinkers and problem solvers
- Responsible, productive citizens
- Self-directed learners
- Effective communicators

Because of the importance of these global themes to all areas of learning, the RUSVM Prep School has purposely woven elements of the four themes into the mission, goals, standards, and benchmarks of the curricula.

## Student Assessment

Standards based grading is utilized by the RUSVM Prep School. Standards are clearly stated for each subject at each grade level. Students are assigned a number that indicates where they are in meeting each standard as follows:

1 = Below Standard (acceptable at the beginning of the year)

2 = Approaches Standard (expected during the academic school year)

3 = Meets Standard (the goal for all students at the end of the year)

4 = Exceeds Standards (used in rare instances when a student demonstrates ability significantly beyond the stated standard)

Standards are stated for each specific grade level. Students are expected to meet these standards by the end of the school year. Therefore, students are expected to get ones and twos in the beginning of the school year and threes by the end of the year. Fours are given only when students have *surpassed* the standard and are rarely given. Through the use of assessment and evaluation, teachers are able to monitor student progress, identify and meet individual student needs, and enhance instruction in the classroom. Assessment and evaluation are defined as follows:

- Assessment determines student knowledge or learning progress at one specific time.
- Evaluation assigns a ranking, grade, or score to student learning.

It is important for teachers to engage in ongoing assessment of their teaching methods and of student learning. Specifically, they endeavor to:

- Use multiple teaching methods and systematically gather data about student understanding and ability.
- Analyze assessment data to guide teaching.
- Guide students in self-assessment.
- Use student data, observations of teaching, and interactions with colleagues to reflect on and improve teaching practice.
- Use student data, observations of teaching, and interactions with colleagues to report student achievement and learning opportunities for students, teachers, parents, policy makers and the general public.

Assessment will be consistent with goals.

- Assessment tasks will be authentic and valid.
- Assessments will be fair. They will assess only what has been taught in the program.
- Assessments will be weighted according to the importance of the learning outcomes being assessed. Large-scale assessment will be statistically sound.
- The inferences made from assessments about student achievement and opportunity to learn will be sound. Data will be used to make instructional decisions.

## **Progress Reports**

At any time during the school year, if a student's progress is not satisfactory, the teacher will contact the parents and ask them to come in to work together to develop a plan of action that will promote success for the student.

## **Report Cards**

RUSVM uses a web based reporting system with standards based grading. Report cards are issued at the end of each trimester. Parents are requested to sign the report cards and return them within three days.

Although we do our best to accommodate parents, unless there is an emergency or special circumstance, our policy is that report cards will not be issued before the last day of school for these reasons:

- Our academic program continues through the last day of the school year.
- Our system is set up to finish classes and turn grades in at a specific time each trimester.

## **Standardized Testing**

Standardized testing is done several times each year for students in grades 3-8. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is currently used. Parents may meet with the child's classroom teacher to review the results.

## **United States Common Core Curriculum**

### ***Language Arts***

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening remain the cornerstones of elementary instruction and a necessary requisite in middle school for all subjects. The importance of the language arts for school and work success has made this area one of the most researched, and often one of the most controversial, of all disciplines. Recently, with the global economy demanding high levels of literacy, public attention has been sharply focused on education, in particular language arts instruction.

RUSVM Prep School emphasizes the interrelatedness of all forms of communication and the importance of the processes involved. It has adopted an integrated language arts instructional program with the following parameters:

- Reading and writing must be taught together.
- Reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be integrated.
- Students should write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- The writing process should include pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing.

### ***Reading Street: (Grade K-4)***

Reading Street Common Core helps prioritize instruction to support high levels of reading and writing.

- Increase text complexity in reading
- Balance fiction and information texts
- Build content-area knowledge
- Focus on informative/explanatory, argumentative/opinion, and narrative writing

### ***Mathematics***

The prep school's mathematics curriculum is grounded in the philosophy of learning described below.

1. There is a mathematician within each of us.
  - This mathematician can be accessed.
  - Students should experience mathematics in a way that is both understandable and challenging.
  - All students should learn to recognize, respect, and nurture the mathematician within them.
2. Experience with models for math concepts helps us understand, invent, and remember important math ideas.
  - Through the use of manipulative materials, models, sketches and diagrams, students develop an understanding of mathematical concepts and processes. This creates meaningful mental images that help them retain and recall information.

3. Learning mathematics is a social activity.

- The process of examining and discussing our thoughts can reveal contradictions, insights, inconsistencies, and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed.
- We learn when we question, explain, and listen to ideas.
- Math discussions can be fascinating, instructive, reveal the variety of ways in which a mathematical situation can be approached, and broaden the understanding of those engaged in discussion.

4. Learning mathematics is an ongoing process of knowledge construction.

- We construct new understanding each time we consider an idea from a different point of view.
- The cyclical structure of the curriculum, in which ideas resurface regularly in new contexts, is based on a constructivist view of learning.
- The importance of continually looking for new perspectives is emphasized along with “mastery” of any one idea and memorization of procedures.

5. Disequilibrium stimulates new learning.

- We develop deep and broad knowledge when we allow time for confusion to be processed.
- Concrete experiences, social interactions, and reflection provide the student with perspectives that may contradict their present points of view.
- Learning occurs as a result of the students’ efforts to reformulate their conceptions. It is important that students view their struggles with problems as evidence that learning is “in progress.”

6. Mathematics is a fascinating world of its own.

- The world of mathematics provides a rich and engaging context for developing an understanding of what it means to think mathematically – to grapple with difficult problems, to question and challenge ideas, and to conjecture and generalize about relationships.
- As students explore the world of mathematics, they build confidence in themselves and develop a sense of the power and beauty of mathematics.

***enVision Math K - 6***

The new enVisionmath2.0 is a math program that empowers every teacher and learner. Prioritize learning, emphasize content connections, and invite in-depth student exploration on major topics with the innovative new content organization focused on clusters of Common Core standards within each grade. Problem-based learning and visual learning paired with personalized learning!

- Focuses on Common Core Math Clusters
- Develops in-depth understanding
- Connects mathematical content and practice standards
- Interactive learning aids and video tutorials
- Personalized practice and immediate feedback

### ***Digits Math (Grade 7 & 8)***

The first middle school mathematics core curriculum that leverages technology to personalize student learning and optimize class instructional time. Written entirely to the Common Core State Standards, ***digits*** integrates lesson planning, homework management, intervention, and assessment, all within a user-friendly design that encourages class collaboration via interactive whiteboards. In addition to providing a customized learning path for each student, these efficiencies result in twice as much instructional time for teachers when compared to traditional middle school math courses.

### ***Science***

Science is taught using a hands-on discovery and evaluation approach through classroom discussions and the conduction of experiments whenever possible. The RUSVM Prep School science program is grounded in the philosophy of learning described below:

1. Science is for all students.
  - All students should have the opportunity to attain high levels of scientific literacy.
  - All students can achieve an understanding of science.
  
2. Learning science is an active process.
  - Learning science is personal and social.
  - Hands-on activities are not enough – students also must have “minds-on” experiences to explore open-ended questions.
  - In learning science, students must describe objects and events, ask questions, acquire knowledge, construct explanations of natural phenomena, test those explanations, and communicate their ideas to others.
  
3. Less content is more.
  - The success of a science program is not determined by how much content can be covered by students in a given year or by the memorization of scientific terms or facts.
  - It is better that students experience a few concepts and principles and their applications in-depth with the goal of students internalizing and applying them throughout their lives.
  
4. The predominant objective of our science program is to present students with the wonder of science and joy of exploration through inquiry. To acquire knowledge in the different sciences, including health, students experience the following process skills:
  - Observing
  - Collecting, measuring, and classifying data
  - Experimenting and making models
  - Predicting, interpreting and inferring
  - Identifying and controlling variables
  - Recognizing space and time relationships
  - Communicating results

Finally, we particularly strive to foster students’ understanding and appreciation of the natural world by integrating science with other fields of study.



### ***Social Studies***

The goal of the social studies program at RUSVM Prep School is to prepare students to demonstrate responsibility and leadership as citizens of a global society. In addition to a study of history and geography, we endeavor to impart to our students knowledge of:

- Cultures
- Governments
- Social systems
- Political systems
- Economic systems
- Comparative religions

Whenever possible, we focus upon our host country and the West Indies region.

### ***Technology***

Mac computers are utilized at the RUSVM Prep School. Students work with computers throughout the school year in a program that includes use of the operating system, keyboarding, subject based software, word processing, and publishing software. Teachers utilize computers within their classrooms.

### ***Library Science***

During the library period, various books are discussed and checked out to the students. Students are presented with a story time featuring books from the library shelves. Students frequently work on special projects, which correlate with regular classroom units of study and learn how to use the library effectively, develop an appreciation of literature, and conduct research in conjunction with academic classes.

### ***Integrated Arts***

In Integrated Arts class, students sing, play percussion, and participate in a variety of activities to develop and strengthen musical skills. In addition, students are exposed to dance and drama. Students are given the opportunity to experience music of today and yesterday. Through this, they learn to appreciate different types of music, and to enjoy the music of other cultures.

### ***Art***

Students are encouraged to express themselves through their artwork as they use a variety of art media. Students are instructed in art appreciation and art history as part of the total art program. The art teacher designs the program to coincide with current activities in core subjects at each grade level.

### ***Health and Fitness***

The goal of the health and fitness program is to create healthy, physically educated individuals who are intrinsically motivated to be involved in health enhancing decisions and physical activity through their lifetime.

### ***Textbooks***

The RUSVM Prep School provides textbooks and workbooks to students. These books must be returned at the end of the school year. Students are responsible for keeping books in good condition; charges will be made for damaged and lost books, including shipping and customs cost.

# Parent Information and Procedures

## Profile of a RUSVM Prep School Parent

### RUSVM Prep School Parents:

- Understand and support the school's Mission and Beliefs.
- Are positive role models and lifelong learners.
- Seek to understand Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and how it applies to their child.
- Recognize the dignity of each individual and work with the school and their children to embrace cultural diversity.
- Send their child to school ready to learn, *on time*, and with attention to their physical/mental health including support of nutritious meals.
- Take an active interest in what is happening in their child's classroom.
- Are aware of their child's academic strengths and celebrate them.
- Are aware of their child's challenges and problem areas and help seek solutions to both.
- Read all written communication sent home.
- Are supportive of the school guidelines and rules.
- Schedule vacations and time off island during the regularly scheduled Ross breaks so that their children do not miss school.
- Provide a quiet space at home for reading and daily academic time
- Develop and maintain their children's first language if English is a second language.
- Are available at homework time for questions.
- Work to realize the balance between helping extend learning via homework and letting the child do the work independently.
- Are involved in the school and take time to share that interest by communicating with teachers, administration, PTA, and others via parent teacher conferences, etc.

## **School Hours**

### **Arrival**

School begins at 8:00 am. Students may arrive on campus at, but not before, 7:30 am. Students will go to the library with their teacher as a group for assembly a few minutes before 8:00 am. The door will be closed at that time and students arriving late will be asked to wait quietly in the hallway.

**Being punctual is an important ingredient to success in school and in life. The very beginning of the day sets the pace for the remainder of the day and parents are encouraged to have their children at school on time.**

### **Dismissal**

The school day at the RUSVM Prep School ends at 3:10 pm.

### **Eligibility for After School Events**

At Ross Prep School we offer a variety of extracurricular activities (athletic and non-athletic). While these activities are important and aid in the development of the whole child, the school believes the primary focus should be within the classroom. Students that are not succeeding in the classroom may be removed from extracurricular activities to improve in either academic or behavioral standards.

In addition, students are required to be in school on the day of all events unless excused by doctor, funeral or court dates. In any other instance express written consent of the Superintendent is required.

## **Calendar**

A school calendar is provided to parents at the start of each year. Parents are asked to put a copy of the calendar in a prominent place at home and refer to it frequently so no important events will be overlooked. At times all elements involved in carrying out plans cannot be controlled and things may come up that are not on the calendar or plans may change. Every effort will be made to contact parents and keep all individuals informed when this happens.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parents are welcome at the RUSVM Prep School. If a parent wishes to arrange a conference with teachers or a member of administration, they are requested to call in advance so a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

Regular parent-teacher conferences may be scheduled and will be listed in the school calendar. Parental involvement is important, and parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with their children's teacher any time they have questions or concerns.

## **After School Program**

The RUSVM Prep School offers an after school program designed specifically for the children of parents *who are in classes or labs in the afternoon, from 3:10 pm - 5:00 pm.*

Children in the After School Program must stay with the teacher(s) in charge. At no time may children remain at school after 5:00 pm. If students plan to leave campus with anyone other than a parent, the parents must give permission directly to the teacher in charge or to an administrator. Please do not ask your children to meet you anywhere other than at the prep school.

We will attempt to offer activities after school that students may sign up for including various sports, arts, and music lessons. In some instances, there may be a fee that goes directly to the person offering the activity.

If children in Daycare through Preschool will remain beyond 3:10 please ensure they are signed up on the monthly sign in sheet in the child's room. If someone other than the parent is picking up a child from this room, they should only do so as they are leaving campus. No one other than the child's parent may take Daycare though Pre-K children outside to play after school.

## **Early Dismissal**

If it is necessary for a student to leave early the parent must arrange this with school administration or the student must bring a written request from the parent or guardian to school.

The following information should be included with the request:

1. Student name
2. Time of dismissal
3. Time of return
4. Reason for request
5. Signature of parent/guardian

We ask that you make medical and dental appointments after school hours, on weekends, or on mid-semester break days whenever possible.

## **Snacks & Meals**

Children are encouraged to bring healthy foods for snack and lunch. Children are also required to bring napkins and appropriate utensils. The school is not responsible for providing forks, spoons, etc. Please ensure that your child has their lunch in a bag that is labeled with their name on it. Reusable bags should be used.

## **Snacks & Drinks**

Students will have a snack break in the morning. In addition, children staying for after school should bring an additional snack. During these times students are allowed snacks brought from home. Parents are encouraged to send healthy snacks (fruit, crackers, granola bars, etc.). Candy, soda and sugary snacks are not accepted.

## **Lunch**

Children have the option to bring a packed lunch from home OR purchase from our hot lunch program. There are different vendors for each day of the week. Lunch menus are sent home on a monthly basis and parents are encouraged to sign up in advance. Payment for lunch should be made in cash to the administrative assistant.

## **Water Bottles**

All children are required to bring a reusable water bottle to school daily that is labeled with their name on it.

## **Sunscreen**

Parents are asked to make sure students have sunscreen available and encourage their children to use it when they are in the sun. Spray sunscreen is preferred for ease of application.

## **Parent-Teacher Association**

The PTA is the official organization of school volunteers. The PTA provides volunteer opportunities to teachers and parents and serves as an advocate group to support students and staff. The PTA works closely with the superintendent of the prep school. For more information you can also visit the PTA Facebook page by searching for "Ross Prep PTA."

## **Library Use/ Book Borrowing**

Library classes are scheduled for students. Parents are encouraged to visit the library with their children. Children must be closely supervised in the library and should not be allowed to pull library books from the shelves. Books may be checked out for one week and must be returned on time. Charges will be made for books that are lost or damaged, including shipping and customs cost. The library is open from 7:30 – 8am and 3 – 3:30pm for book borrowing.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips offer an opportunity to enhance and reinforce what is being taught in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to allow their children to participate in field trips because of the added value they bring to the educational experience.

### ***Rules and Procedures***

The following rules and procedures will be followed with field trips.

- Parents will be notified of the proposed trip one week or more before the date of the proposed trip whenever possible.
- A permission form will be sent out with notification of the field trip that must be signed and returned to the school at least the day before the field trip.
- All trips will meet the safety and security regulations established by the school.

### ***Safety and Security Regulations for RUSVM Prep School Field Trips***

- A first aid kit will be taken on all field trips.
- At least two cell phones will be taken on every field trip and the superintendent and executive assistant will know the numbers of those phones.
- All vehicles used will be in good working order.
- All students riding in private cars will use seatbelts.
- A minimum of 2 adults is required for every field trip regardless of class, grade, or number of students.

## **Emergency Information**

In most situations, in the case of an emergency (hurricane or other natural disaster/threat/fire) the prep school will follow the RUSVM response in regard to continuing with classes or canceling school. There may be times, however, when it is determined that the children should stay at home even if the vet school remains open. Parents will be notified.

It is essential for the school to be able to contact a parent or guardian in case of emergency; therefore, it is imperative that we have both office and home phone numbers or the number of a designated neighbor or friend as well as a cell phone that can be used for texting. A map to your home should also be on file with us. Changes of address or phone numbers should be reported to the school immediately following the change.

If parents are going to be off island and someone else is to be responsible for the children, the school should be notified in advance even if it is only for a day or two.

If someone other than the parent is going to pick up a child at school, whether during a normal or emergency situation, the teacher in charge must be notified. It is preferred that, when possible, this is done in writing.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

### ***At school***

To ensure that all children have the same celebration on their birthday, thus making them all feel equally special, birthday's will be celebrated in our assembly which begins at 8am. Parents are welcome to attend. Children will be able to select an item from our birthday basket. Parents are asked not to bring in special snacks/refreshments. Please save those special treats for home. We will not hand out party bags or any other items sent in.

### ***At home***

We believe it is important that all children be welcomed, included and appreciated. Therefore, invitations to parties may not be distributed at school (before, during, or after) unless every child in that student's homeroom receives an invitation.

# Student Information and Procedures

## Profile of a RUSVM Prep School Student

**The RUSVM Prep School education program is designed to nurture students who:**

- Are competent in the application of the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English.
- Demonstrate competency in quantitative, scientific, and technological literacy.
- Are able to find and access information efficiently and effectively.
- Evaluate information critically and competently, and use information accurately, creatively, and responsibly.
- Exhibit and practice sensitivity to environmental preservation.
- Demonstrate the ability to solve problems and think critically.
- Demonstrate an understanding of history and its relationship to the world today.
- Understand and value the skills of participating in a democratic society.
- Understand wellness and its implication for a healthy lifestyle.
- Express themselves creatively and respond with sensitivity to the creative works of others.
- Understand the personal rewards of community service.
- Can live successfully in a multicultural, global society by exercising tolerance, understanding and open mindedness.
- Sustain and enhance self-esteem through integrity, responsibility, and self-knowledge.
- Demonstrate an active desire to learn and understand the world.



## Student Computer Network Use

Computer network use offers vast, diverse and unique resources to students. Access to email and the Internet enables users to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. The user and parent of a student user are advised that material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. The intent is to make RUSVM Prep School's computer network and Internet access available to further our educational goals and objectives.

## Technology Guidelines

Students will be taught appropriate use of the network and email. Access at our school is a privilege, not a right. Access entails responsibility. Individual users are responsible for their behavior and are expected to comply with school standards. Teachers will share these same guidelines and report misuse to the superintendent. Rules will be reviewed to maintain system integrity and ensure that the system is being used responsibly. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. Students are held responsible for seeking appropriate materials and avoiding those that are potentially offensive.

### ***Users will:***

- Display only messages and pictures that are not deemed offensive.
  - Avoid use of obscene or vulgar language.
  - Protect computers, computer systems, and computer network.
  - Avoid harassing, insulting or attacking others.
  - Keep information about peers confidential (not share addresses, phone numbers, etc.).
  - Respect copyright laws.
  - Use only their personal accounts, passwords, and folders.
  - Conserve resources (bandwidth, file space, paper, ink).
  - Use chat rooms only with specific permission from the teacher for that occasion.
  - Access only appropriate sites.
- 
- ***Users will not:***
  - Download software unless authorized by the technology teacher to do so.
  - Distribute any material in a manner that could cause congestion on the network.
  - Employ the network for commercial, political or profit-making purposes.

Violations may result in a loss of access to computers and network as well as other disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the superintendent. Students must treat the school computers with care and respect. Parents will be responsible for repair or replacement when misused.

## **Leaving Campus**

Students may not leave campus during school hours except on official school outings or with their parents or guardians unless written permission has been given to the school by the parent. If you take your child from school during school hours, the child must be picked up at the prep school and signed out properly.

## **Lost and Found**

Found articles should be given to the executive assistant.

## **Phones, iPods, and Electronic Games**

Students may bring handheld electronic devices to school only with permission from their homeroom teacher. They may not be used in any class without specific permission from the teacher of that particular class.

Students are discouraged from making phone calls at school. If it is necessary to do so, it must be during lunch break, recess, or after school and with permission from the teacher.

## **Drug and Alcohol Free**

Ross University of Veterinary Medicine is a drug free campus. This includes all forms of tobacco, alcohol, and non-prescription drugs in the building and/or anywhere on the grounds.

Prescribed medication will not be accepted in the prep school without complete written and signed instructions from the parent. Medication will be kept in a secure place, out of the reach of pupils. Unless otherwise indicated all medication to be administered in school will be kept in a locked medicine cabinet.

If parents send prescribed drugs to school, they must be given directly to the executive assistant or classroom teacher along with written instructions for use.

School staff will not dispose of medicines. Date expired medicines or those no longer required for treatment will be returned to the parent for safe disposal.

Students will not be given a non-prescribed medicine unless there is specific prior written permission from the parents.

All staff will be made aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

## **Lockers**

Students in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade are assigned lockers for storing their belongings. The name labels on the lockers are not to be written or drawn on or removed. Students in grades 5 – 8 must provide a lock. Valuables should not be left in lockers. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.