EDUCATE IN FAMILY SPIRIT

A. Create a favorable environment for education

More than simply a slogan, Marianist family spirit is a way of life with specific traits discernible in the educational communities it animates. By providing a climate of acceptance, discipline, and love, the school acts as a “second family,” fostering human growth and maturity. From the norms, beliefs, values, attitudes, and capabilities of all the people within a school the dynamic harmony that is a school’s culture emerges. All members of the school community share the responsibility to create and sustain an environment in which can flourish beauty, simplicity, harmony, discipline, and creativity. When this responsibility is faithfully fulfilled, the result benefits and educates all its participants.

B. Cultivate interpersonal relationships characterized by openness, respect, integrity, and dialogue.

In the Marianist pedagogical tradition, all members of the educational community, boards of directors, administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, and students communicate respectfully, recognizing others as individuals within the same community. We strive to create a gracious environment by providing time not only to teach and organize, but also frequently to praise, thank, and recognize members of the school community. Because we educate by “our every word, gesture, and look” we listen attentively and engage in dialogue with trust and empathy. By being available and open to others, we continue to make the gospel vibrant in the daily life of our schools.

C. Form an educational community with collaborative structures and processes.

The Marianist educational tradition has long been characterized by shared responsibility for decision making at all appropriate levels. Effective collaboration requires good communication, clear lines of authority, and respect for the principle of subsidiarity. Preeminent among the signs of Marianist collaboration is creating practical structures for teamwork among administrators, faculty and students. We also seek effective ways to work with families of our students for mutual support and to reinforce our common mission. Furthermore, we cooperate with other Marianist works, other educational systems, diocesan structures, ecumenical and inter-faith initiatives, and national or international organizations.
D. Express our authority as a loving and dedicated service

In Marianist educational communities, authority exists not for its own sake, but for the common good. Responsibly used, authority helps teachers to educate, students to learn, and administrators to lead with a collaborative style. We exercise authority to facilitate change and provide direction, but also to communicate with trust and honesty, to create in our schools a democratic and harmonious atmosphere. Our charism’s underlying spirit of love and nurturing encourages a “prudent tendency to leniency,” calling each student to personal and communal responsibility.

E. Influence others by exhibiting the Marian traits of openness, hospitality, graciousness, and faith.

Religious and lay Marianist communities associated with educational works should be a source of family spirit and a model of Marian virtues. In the daily life of a hospitable educational community, we give and receive freely and gratefully. Our friendliness and hospitality signify our trust in other people and our faith in God’s loving acceptance of us.

GENERAL PRACTICES FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MARIANIST EDUCATION

- Opportunities are provided for faculty, staff, and students to build community among and between themselves
- Discipline is ministered with a “prudent tendency towards leniency.”
- We strive to create a community that has members praise, thank, and recognize each other
- We create programs in a collaborative spirit which recognizes the diversity and special needs of members of the school community

MARIANIST QUOTES

- “The multiplication of Christians is brought about less by the use of certain pedagogic procedures than by the presence of a religious atmosphere in the school. Religion is not taught; it is communicated. Religion is instilled more deeply in the spirits and in the hearts of the students more through the atmosphere that permeates the school than through teaching.” (Blessed William Joseph Chaminade)
“The atmosphere of intimacy and of family spirit that characterizes all of our schools is born of tender devotion to Mary, whose image should adorn all of the classrooms.” (Paul Joseph Hoffer, S.M.)

“The most effective means of inculcating devotion to Mary is to radiate in our own lives Mary’s goodness and kindness, and to always manifest this devotion in our relationships with our students. By this means they will see how pleasant it is to live under the guidance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and they will feel themselves attracted to her service.” (Francis Wohleben, S.M.)

“Teachers will be able to exercise their moral authority with children only if they establish with them the same relationships that those children enjoy with their fathers and mothers within the family. . . . the school will never become an educational home, unless it succeeds in being a second family for the student. You can scatter the seeds at the intellect, but unless the child can hear a friendly and familiar voice, you will never reach the fertile ground of the heart.” (Jean-Philippe Lalanne, S.M.)

“Teachers who fail to develop the concern, gentleness, self-denial, patience and indulgence of a parent in their dealings with their students are not true sons (daughters) of the Society of Mary. Foster family spirit among your students, and to do so, make sure that it is paramount in your methods and procedures.” (Joseph Hiss, S.M.)

“When there is a conflict of wills, between the teacher and a child, there may be a temptation for the teacher to impose his (her) will on the weaker child, rather than finding a way to lead the child to see the value of his position. Such an imposition has nothing to do with formation of the will, given the fact that it is destroyed in the process.” (Francois Kieffer, S.M.)

“Each of the schools sponsored by the Society of Mary is meant to become an authentic community.” (Marianist Rule of Life)
Educate in Family Spirit

Descriptors

- Create a favorable environment for education
- Cultivate interpersonal relationships characterized by openness, respect, integrity, and dialogue
- Form an educational community with collaborative structures and processes
- Express our authority as a loving and dedicated service
- Influence others by exhibiting the Marian traits of openness, hospitality, graciousness, and faith

Practices

- Mary is seen as the role model for the family spirit of the school
- The Marian traits of openness, hospitality, and graciousness are evident behaviors by members of the school community
- Individual gifts and talents are developed in community
- Spiritual and academic growth are not developed in isolation but in a family setting of openness and honesty
- Students, faculty members, and staff of all faiths feel their beliefs enrich the Catholic and Marianist traditions of the school
- There is a blending of gifts of individuals and the growth and development of community
- Teachers model to students faith, love, concern and mutual respect
- The educational environment provides a climate for acceptance
- Politeness, hospitality, laughter are components of the family life of the school community
- Collaboration is the accepted mode of operation among members of the school community
- Teachers view staff and faculty members as a community of support
- Changes made at the school are intended to develop a deeper sense of community
- Teachers share experiences with each other for mutual support and growth
- The school’s environment signifies care and trust in other people and faith in God’s loving acceptance of all people
- The building of community is clearly stated in the school’s mission statement, departmental philosophies, departmental objectives and individual course syllabi and all school handbooks
- The Characteristics of Marianist Education are frequently interwoven and illustrated in the new student, faculty, and staff orientation programs
- The curriculum is multicultural in its delivery
- Teachers, administrators, and staff work to create a sense of community for each other and the students
- A respect for the dignity of the person as a daughter or son of God is evident by the behaviors demonstrated by members of the school community
Interpersonal relationships are characterized by respect, integrity, and dialogue
Disciplinary actions are used as opportunities to develop responsibility
The student disciplinary code is flexible enough for forgiveness
Open communication and collaboration are hallmarks of interaction between members of the school community
The school provides for students with varied learning styles and learning abilities
The school’s board annually renews its commitment to the Characteristics of Marianist Education
The school’s board actively works with school personnel to implement the Characteristics of Marianist Education
Teachers have opportunities to socialize with each other
Appropriate means for student, faculty, alum, parent recognition are part of the school’s program
Chaminade awards are presented to students, alums, etc. who work to develop community at the school and demonstrate social outreach
There are active parent groups, alum groups, etc
Teachers are available to students before school, during school, and after school
There is a mentoring program for faculty, staff, students, and board members new to the school
Students have formal opportunities to minister to each other with adults from the community, i.e. peer ministry, support groups, grief sharing, tutoring, etc.
Faculty members participate in TAM, LIFE, MEC Workshops, etc.
The school’s community life is evident to the broader community beyond the school
Vowed Marianists actively participate in the development of the community life of the school
AS A MARIANIST EDUCATOR

- I regularly challenge students to display behavior that reflects high standards
- I lead by example and words
- I work with others to accomplish our school’s mission
- I respect the feelings of others
- I am consistent, but flexible, in implementing school/class guidelines
- I listen well and gather all necessary facts in order to make informed decisions on discipline
- I witness to the community my faith commitment, and concern and respect for each student and other members of the community
- I emphasize the importance of the student being a positive participant in the class activities
- I witness to student a respect differences among people
- I regularly communicate with students and parents regarding academic progress
- I blend justice with mercy, yet work within the guidelines established by the school
- I discipline a student in a respectful and gentle manner
- I recognize the appropriate use of humor in the classroom to create a welcoming atmosphere
- I regularly interact with, communicate with, and listen to students outside of the classroom
- I reflect an enjoyment in teaching and helping students
- I attend various extra curricular activities
- I do not gossip about students and other members of the school community
- I facilitate tutoring opportunities for students
- I cooperate with colleagues when planning instructional activities
- I respond to all communications in a timely manner
- I volunteer to serve on school committees
- I am gracious in welcoming visitors
- I greet students by name
- I exhibit a positive attitude
- I model good sportsmanship and polite conduct
- I exhibit flexibility
- I respond to all correspondence in a timely manner