A Collaborative Effort Behind the Scenes:
Guiding Students and Families with Compassion and Grace

St. Martin’s Episcopal School
3110-A Ashford Dunwoody Road
Atlanta, GA 30319
(404) 237-4260
www.stmartinschool.org

NAES Biennial Conference, Nov. 2016

St. Martin’s Care Team

Division Principals-
Dr. Mary McPherson
Mr. Tony Shaffer
Mrs. Cindy Alexander

Chaplain- Mother Stefanie Taylor

Nurse– Mrs. Pam Pomar

Dean of Students– Ms. Patti Pitoscia

Counselors - Ms. Christina Johnson
Mrs. Elizabeth Barton
The St. Martin’s community is committed to developing the whole child: intellectually, spiritually, and physically.

We believe that social and emotional development is just as important as the academic development of our students.

Through weekly meetings of the SMES Care Team, we ensure that we are meeting the social and emotional needs of our students and leveraging group knowledge and conversations to provide the most holistic approach to supporting our families.

As an Episcopal school, we strongly believe in a restorative approach to developing children and the collective wisdom of the SMES Care Team allows us to honor the individual needs of our students and families while providing them the opportunity to grow and learn.

The SMES Care Team is very committed to brainstorming and offering varying solutions and options to address concerns expressed in the meetings.

Since the Care Team is offering potential solutions, Care Team members have to accept not knowing what actions were taken by the one discussing the concern with the group.

Establishing your school’s Care Team

When establishing your own Care Team, we suggest you consider the following:

- School’s mission
- School’s structure
- School members involved
- Care Team facilitator
- Meeting structure
- Confidentiality and legal considerations
- Student centered
We work hand-in-hand on almost everything!

The Purpose of SMES’ Care Team

The mission of the SMES Care Team is to evaluate each situation to support student learning and/or behavioral issues, monitor areas of students’ academic growth and achievement, foster social, emotional and spiritual development, further student academic achievement and discuss potential support options for students.

We work to:

- Support work of the faculty & staff and promote a collaborative environment
- Provide time for communication, conversation and reflection
- Build trust and respect between colleagues
- Develop a proactive approach
- Develop critical problem solving
- Reveal solutions to complex problems
- Take a proactive approach
- Offer encouragement
- Let others know when things are going well
- Support the mission of the school

St. Martin’s Episcopal School is dedicated to providing a quality education of the whole person in a loving, Christian atmosphere, which fosters lifelong learning.

As the Principals, Counselors, Chaplain, Dean of Students and School Nurse, we collaborate to purposely prepare students for the challenges which await them in life.

Guiding and caring for St. Martin’s students does not center around treating them as “fragile” and “fixing” every problem for them.

We strive to support students in a way that allows them to learn from their mistakes. Our intent is to help the students pause and think through how their daily attitude, choices and actions contribute to their school experiences.

Through these learning experiences in Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle School, students begin to develop their “own” values and skills sets which are skills that become stronger and continue to grow and serve them throughout their time here at St. Martin’s and beyond.

We strive to teach:

- Respect for oneself and others
- Self-knowledge and self-awareness
- Resisting impulsivity
- Better control of body and emotions
- Improve problem-solving & decision making
- Integrity
- Drive
- Focused attention
- Emotional awareness
- Self-regulation
- Organization
- Planning
- Success in school
Character Education Program: 3-H Club

The "H's" stand for: head, heart, and hands. Head is symbolic of our spiritual education which is taught by a religion teacher, Heart is symbolic of our guidance education which is taught by our guidance counselors, and Hands are symbolic of our leadership education which is taught by the Dean of Students. Our students take all three classes during the year and in these classes, their spirituality is nurtured, their social-emotional side is nurtured, and their leadership capabilities are furthered.

**Head:** The spiritual education part of our program provides roots for the character education program. This education spans more than 2,000 years and helps to ground the students in rich tradition, and connect them to something that is bigger than themselves ...and our program. Spiritual education is not about facts or works or being right but rather to teach them to long for the one who is love; the creator; the redeemer.

**Heart:** How can our children be kind if they are afraid of being rejected, of being treated un-kindly? If our children cannot connect to their own greatness, if they cannot be inspired by their own life, then it will be difficult for them to sum up the bravery that character requires.

**Hands:** We trust them with important pieces of our school community and we attempt to reduce their fear of failure by allowing them to fail. This is not a school where perfection is where the bar is set. We prefer to set the bar in a realistic place: being human.

Love, trust, security, wonder, confidence, strength, self-worth, and compassion are hard to plot on a graph. For this reason we have begun to design a character education program that can be assessed, understood, and seen.

As situations arise throughout the day, students may consider,

"Do I need to?"

- Stand up for what’s right
- Offer or ask for help
- Say NO or Say YES
- Admit I was wrong

And,

“How will I avoid a relationship that may be a source of trouble?”