

Saint
Mary's
SCHOOL

Curriculum Overview

2023-2024

10 Key Competencies



1. Collaboration

The ability to productively engage in a group setting, both face-to-face and virtually. An awareness of self and of others to move a team forward along common values and goals.



2. Communication

The balance of speaking and active listening, writing and reading. A strong grasp on the verbal and non-verbal aspects of expression.



3. Critical thinking

The utilization of novel and adaptive thinking, coupled with analytical skills, to form creative solutions that positively impact society.



4. Cross cultural intelligence

The ability to navigate and operate in, and adapt to, a globally connected world. The recognition that a diverse team drives innovation and productivity.



5. Growth mindset

The resiliency, dedication, hard work, and belief in self to accomplish any task. A commitment to being a lifelong learner.



6. New media literacy and computational thinking

The ability to critically assess, navigate, and create across diverse digital platforms. A strong grasp of this competency enhances effective communication and collaboration.



7. Self-expression

The ability to articulately share original thoughts and ideas in creative ways, while staying true to an authentic sense of self.



8. Self-directed learning

The demonstration of personal interests and the motivation to set goals and objectives to move those interests forward.



9. Servant Leadership

A commitment to putting the good of a community and others before self-interests.



10. Social-emotional intelligence

The ability to accurately assess social cues, as well as the spoken and unspoken language around you. Social-emotional intelligence is the foundation for effective collaboration and meaning-making.

Sources: *Institute for the Future: Future Work Skills 2020 and Partnership for 21st Century Learning*

Mission

Saint Mary's School, a community dedicated to academic excellence and personal achievement, prepares young women for college and life. To accomplish our mission, Saint Mary's School:

- Challenges each young woman to embrace the habits of an intellectual life, engages her with the past and the emerging future, and empowers her to serve and shape her world
- Fosters in each young woman a spirit of connection to others, guides her in developing her spiritual and ethical integrity, and prepares her to take responsibility for herself and her future

Overview

Saint Mary's School challenges young women to be bold, to be inspired, and to become extraordinary. We integrate what we know girls need, with what we know of the changing world girls will be facing, and we do so in an environment offering girls relevant, forward-looking, real-world opportunities to create a different kind of program – one expressly for girls, one that goes deep, not wide.



Advisory Program

The Saint Mary's School advisory program is a personalized, academic advising program designed to guide students as they navigate their high school experience. A student's advisor is a central connecting point for the student and provides an integrated understanding of the student's academic and personal growth and development. Each student is part of an advisory consisting of approximately six students. Advisory meets four times a week, including one weekly advisory lunch. Additionally, students meet on a one-to-one basis with their advisor.

Athletics Program

The Saint Mary's School athletics program provides a broad range of interscholastic activities for girls in all grades. In keeping with the school's values, personal traits including commitment, discipline, team cooperation, individual leadership, sportsmanship, and consideration of others, are emphasized and vital to the success of the Saint Mary's athletic program. Saint Mary's provides and encourages all students to participate in as many interscholastic athletic activities as possible. While some of Saint Mary's sports require a limited number of players, others are open to all. The primary goal of the school's athletic program is to accentuate the development of the whole student and to achieve a personal level of excellence in the areas of fitness, team commitment, and sportsmanship. We offer a full interscholastic athletic program, consisting of 18 teams in the following 12 sports:

- **Fall:** Cross-country, Field Hockey, Tennis, Volleyball, Golf
- **Winter:** Basketball, Swimming, Cheer
- **Spring:** Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Track and Field

Saint Mary's School competes as a member of the Triangle Independent Schools Athletic Conference (TISAC) and the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association (NCISAA, 4A Classification). Saint Mary's, in partnership with Raleigh Orthopedics, provides an athletic trainer for all on-campus practices and games.

Triangle Fitness: Designed to exercise the body, mind, and spirit, Triangle Fitness is a co-curricular program providing students with a broad range of interscholastic activities from which to choose. Learn more at www.sms.edu/athletics.

College Counseling Program

Students are at the center of Saint Mary's College Counseling program, which emphasizes finding an ideal fit where a student will thrive. Our College Counseling program is grounded in developing meaningful partnerships with our students to encourage personal reflection and self-awareness as they progress through high school and on to university. Although the search process formally begins in the 11th grade year, you and your family have the benefit of access to our college counselors beginning in as early as the ninth grade. Three full-time college counselors support our students every step of the way through intentional programming in Seminar classes and through individual meetings upon request (by students in ninth and tenth grades). Meetings continue monthly beginning in the winter of a student's junior year. As a student confidently moves through the college search process, we work closely as supporters and advocates through the application process and eventual matriculation. Students are encouraged to bring self-reflection and authenticity to the college search as we work together to identify strengths and talents, promote academic and personal growth, and help foster their independence. We invite parents to also participate on this journey, as partners, by attending meetings, information sessions, and being available for 100% of Saint Mary's seniors are accepted for admission at a wide array of selective colleges and universities.



Independent Study

Independent study is an application-based program that gives students the opportunity to engage in academic study beyond the formal academic courses offered. In collaboration with the faculty moderator of the program the student will develop a rigorous course of study that may include deep research, hands-on creation, experimentation and investigation, and/or collaboration with external organizations. Students must document and demonstrate how their work has impacted both themselves and others in their community. This type of learning is challenging and requires a high level of self-motivation, intellectual curiosity, and discipline. This program is open to 11th and first-semester 12th grade students.

Learning Lab / Flex Period / Tutorial

Saint Mary's students have opportunities throughout the week to work with faculty outside of class. All 9th and 10th graders are assigned a learning lab as one of their classes, while 11th and 12th grade students have the option of a flex period or a learning lab. During **learning lab** students complete work and prepare for assessments in a structured environment with learning coaches. Furthermore, students move through a study skills curriculum designed by Saint Mary's faculty, which includes topics such as time management, organization, goal setting, memory skills, and test taking strategies. **Flex period** affords students the opportunity to choose where they study and how they use this time, preparing them for college. For students who still need structure or prefer the structure they can attend a learning lab. Additionally, all students have access to their teachers at the end of the day in **tutorial**. During tutorial students can schedule an appointment or drop in for help on assignments, test preparation, or collaborate with their faculty.

Sample Four-Year Plan

As a college preparatory school our entire curriculum prepares girls for college-level work. The value and importance of school context in the college admissions process is our top priority. We differentiate in our classrooms so that each student can find her own success.

Subject	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English	World Literature	Western Literature or Narrative Studies	AP Language or Literature and Rhetoric Semester courses may be taken in addition	AP Literature, AP Language, or Two Electives: Creative Writing Non-Fiction, Creative Writing Fiction, Women's Detective Fiction, Gothic Literature, Speech and Communication
Humanities and Social Sciences	World History I	World History II or AP World History	U.S. History or AP U.S. History. US Government, Ethics, World Religions, Ethnic Studies and/or AP Psychology can be taken in addition to U.S. History	Ethics or World Religions; AP US Government, AP Comparative Government, US Government, Ethnic Studies, Economics, and/or AP Psychology
Mathematics	Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II; Introduction to Programming as additional elective	Geometry, Algebra II, or either Pre-Calculus or Math Analysis; Introduction to Programming as additional elective	Algebra II or either Pre-Calculus or Math Analysis. Or, depending on pre-requisites: AP Computer Science, Calculus Topics, Statistics Topics, AP Statistics, AP Calculus AB; Introduction to Programming as additional elective	Pre-Calculus or Math Analysis. Or, depending on pre-requisites: AP Computer Science, Calculus Topics, Statistics Topics, AP Statistics, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, Multivariable Calculus; Introduction to Programming as additional elective
Science	Physics	Biology or Chemistry	Biology or Chemistry, or depending on pre-requisites, AP Biology, AP Physics, AP Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, Principles of Biomedical Science, Human Body Systems, Medical Interventions, Engineering, Astronomy	Depending on pre-requisites, AP Biology, AP Physics, AP Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, Principles of Biomedical Science, Human Body Systems, Medical Interventions, Engineering, Astronomy
World Languages	French I or French II Spanish I or Spanish II	French II or French III Spanish II or Spanish III	French III or French IV or Spanish I; Spanish III or Spanish IV or French I	French IV, French V or AP French Language or Spanish II; Spanish IV, Spanish V or AP Spanish Language or French II
Visual and Performing Arts	Art I and Art II, Elementary Dance, Theatre Arts, Technical Theatre, Filmmaking, or Chorale Applied Music Lessons or Orchestras by recommendation	Art I and Art II or Art III, Graphic Design and Digital Photography, Elementary Dance or Intermediate Dance, Theatre Arts or Technical Theatre, Film Production, Chorale or Chamber Choir Applied Music Lessons or Orchestras by recommendation	Art I and Art II, Art III, Art IV or Art Portfolio, Graphic Design and Digital Photography, Elementary Dance, Intermediate Dance or Advanced Dance, Theatre Arts or Technical Theatre, Filmmaking, Chorale or Chamber Choir Applied Music Lessons or Orchestras by recommendation	Art I and Art II, Art III, Art IV, Art Portfolio, AP 2D Art and Design or AP Drawing, Graphic Design and Digital Photography, Elementary Dance, Intermediate Dance or Advanced Dance, Theatre Arts or Technical Theatre, Filmmaking, Chorale or Chamber Choir Applied Music Lessons or Orchestras by recommendation

In addition, students participate in Seminar as a class throughout each of their four years at Saint Mary's School. The Seminar course series is designed to develop the 10 Key Competencies and includes opportunities for students to partner with resources and organizations in the greater Raleigh area. Seminar is a graduation requirement. This course is Pass/Fail.



Science Department

Science plays such a major role in modern life, it is vital that students have an understanding of its workings. Science courses make students aware of the vast amount of information being discovered daily about our world. The science program offers courses in both the biological and the physical sciences. It aims to stimulate critical thinking, to teach students how to understand and interpret data, and how to apply the scientific method. Laboratory experiences form a major part of science study. Through them, students explore the world via the microscope, experimentation and observation, and field work, which helps them relate the more abstract concepts to their immediate experience. Opportunities for individual research programs are available for students who wish to go beyond the basic required courses.

- [Astronomy](#)
- [Biology](#)
- [Advanced Placement Biology](#)
- [Chemistry](#)
- [Accelerated Chemistry](#)
- [AP Chemistry](#)
- [Physics](#)
- [AP Physics I](#)
- [AP Environmental Science](#)
- [Principles of Biomedical Science](#)
- [Human Body Systems](#)
- [Medical Interventions](#)
- [Principles of Engineering*](#)

Mathematics Department

The main objective of the mathematics program is to support students as they become mathematically-literate citizens who know the appropriate mathematical and technological tools to use and when to use them in various problem-solving settings. Students work in independent, whole-class, and small-group settings to increase their mathematical confidence and their communication skills. The types of problems and the learning environment in the mathematics classrooms foster persistence, critical thinking, and reflection. All courses require students to communicate conceptual understanding (both verbally and in written form), justify and explain results, and apply mathematics to real-world situations.

- [Algebra I](#)
- [Geometry](#)
- [Accelerated Geometry](#)
- [Algebra II](#)
- [Accelerated Algebra II](#)
- [Pre-Calculus](#)
- [Math Analysis](#)
- [Calculus Topics](#)
- [AP Calculus AB](#)
- [AP Calculus BC](#)
- [Multivariable Calculus](#)
- [Statistics Topics](#)
- [AP Statistics](#)
- [Introduction to Programming](#)
- [AP Computer Science A](#)

Humanities and Social Sciences Department

The Humanities and Social Sciences Department encompasses a range of courses that include the study of history, cultures, government, religion, philosophy, economics, and psychology. Through these courses, students have the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their world. The courses in Humanities and Social Sciences take students from the general view of the world, presented in the World History sequence, to the more specific and specialized, as they move to United States history, then to government, religion, philosophy and electives. In all of their classes in this department, students build the skills they will need to succeed in college and are prepared to become informed and responsible citizens of the world.

- [Ancient World History](#)
- [Modern World History](#)
- [AP World History: Modern](#)
- [United States History](#)
- [AP United States History](#)
- [United States Government](#)
- [AP United States Government and Politics](#)
- [AP Comparative Government and Politics](#)
- [World Religions](#)
- [Ethics](#)
- [Ethnic Studies](#)
- [Economics](#)
- [AP Psychology](#)



World Languages Department

Learning a language opens doors to other worlds and creates links between students and the cultures studied. Students develop a deeper commitment to and interest in a language through active instruction that provides a current, global, interdisciplinary perspective. In all three World Language offerings, French, Latin, and Spanish, students strive for mastery in each and every aspect of language acquisition, integrating reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

- [English Language Learners \(ELL\): Comprehension and Critical Thinking](#)
- [French I](#)
- [French II](#)
- [French III: French Civilization and Composition](#)
- [Accelerated French III: French Grammar and Conversation](#)
- [French IV](#)
- [French V](#)
- [AP French Language and Culture](#)

- [Spanish I](#)
- [Spanish II](#)
- [Spanish III: Hispanic Cultures and Composition](#)
- [Accelerated Spanish III: Spanish Grammar and Conversation](#)
- [Spanish IV](#)
- [Spanish V](#)
- [AP Spanish Language and Culture](#)
- [AP Spanish Literature and Culture](#)

English Department

The goal of the English Department is to provide opportunities for students to build their literacy skills across multiple modalities—reading, writing, speaking, listening, analysis, and media. Courses provide students with literary works from a wide range of time periods and cultures beginning in the ninth grade with a focus on global literature and cultural awareness. In 10th grade students work on understanding aspects of successful narratives, and in 11th and 12th grades they may take semester-long electives that provide opportunities for in-depth looks at topics of interest in both classical and modern literature. Two different AP English offerings are available for qualified 11th and 12th graders. The English Department also sponsors independent studies, the annual essay contests, and occasional oratory competitions.

- [English I: World Literature](#)
- [English II: Narrative Studies](#)
- [English II: Western Literature](#)
- [English III: Literature and Rhetoric](#)
- [English III and IV+: Four electives of a student's choosing, such as:](#)
 - [Creative Writing: Fiction](#)
 - [Creative Writing: Non-fiction](#)
 - [Gothic Literature](#)
 - [Speech and Communication*](#)
 - [Women's Detective Fiction](#)
- [AP English Language and Composition](#)
- [AP English Literature and Composition](#)

Visual and Performing Arts Department

The Visual and Performing Arts Department offers an extensive range of coursework that offers opportunities for students to explore and build skills in visual art, dance, theatre, and music. The visual art program offers students the opportunity to exercise self-expression through a range of courses. In these studio classes, students are encouraged to increase their skill levels and maximize their artistic potential by exposure to a variety of techniques and mediums in an atmosphere that embraces a high expectation of creative decision making and a high quality of production. The dance program offers courses that provide solid technical training in ballet and modern, while offering opportunities for students to explore and incorporate jazz, hip hop, stretch/yoga, and conditioning. It also offers a resident student dance company, Orchesis Dance Theatre, that performs two concert programs each year. The drama program offers opportunities to study acting, explore dramatic literature, read and analyze scripts, and become familiar with the history of theatre. Students also work as production company members in stage management, acting, set, costume, lighting and sound design, and various technical and stage crews for the annual play and musical performed each year. In the music program, every level of interest and ability is supported with a rich variety of vocal and instrumental training both in performance ensembles and through individual lessons. Expert instruction in applied music is provided in voice and a wide range of instruments, which students can pursue at elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels.

- THEATRE
- [Theatre Arts](#)
- [Technical Theatre](#)
- [Film Production*](#)

- MUSIC
- [Chorale](#)
- [Chamber Choir](#)
- [Chamber Music Program \(Instrumental Ensembles\)](#)
- [Applied Music Instruction: Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Levels](#)
- [Applied Music - Honors Program in Music](#)

- VISUAL ARTS
- [Foundations in Art I](#)
- [Foundations in Art II](#)
- [Intermediate Art Survey I and II](#)
- [Advanced Art Survey I and II](#)
- [Art Portfolio](#)
- [AP 2D Art and Design](#)
- [AP Drawing](#)
- [Graphic Design and Digital Photography](#)

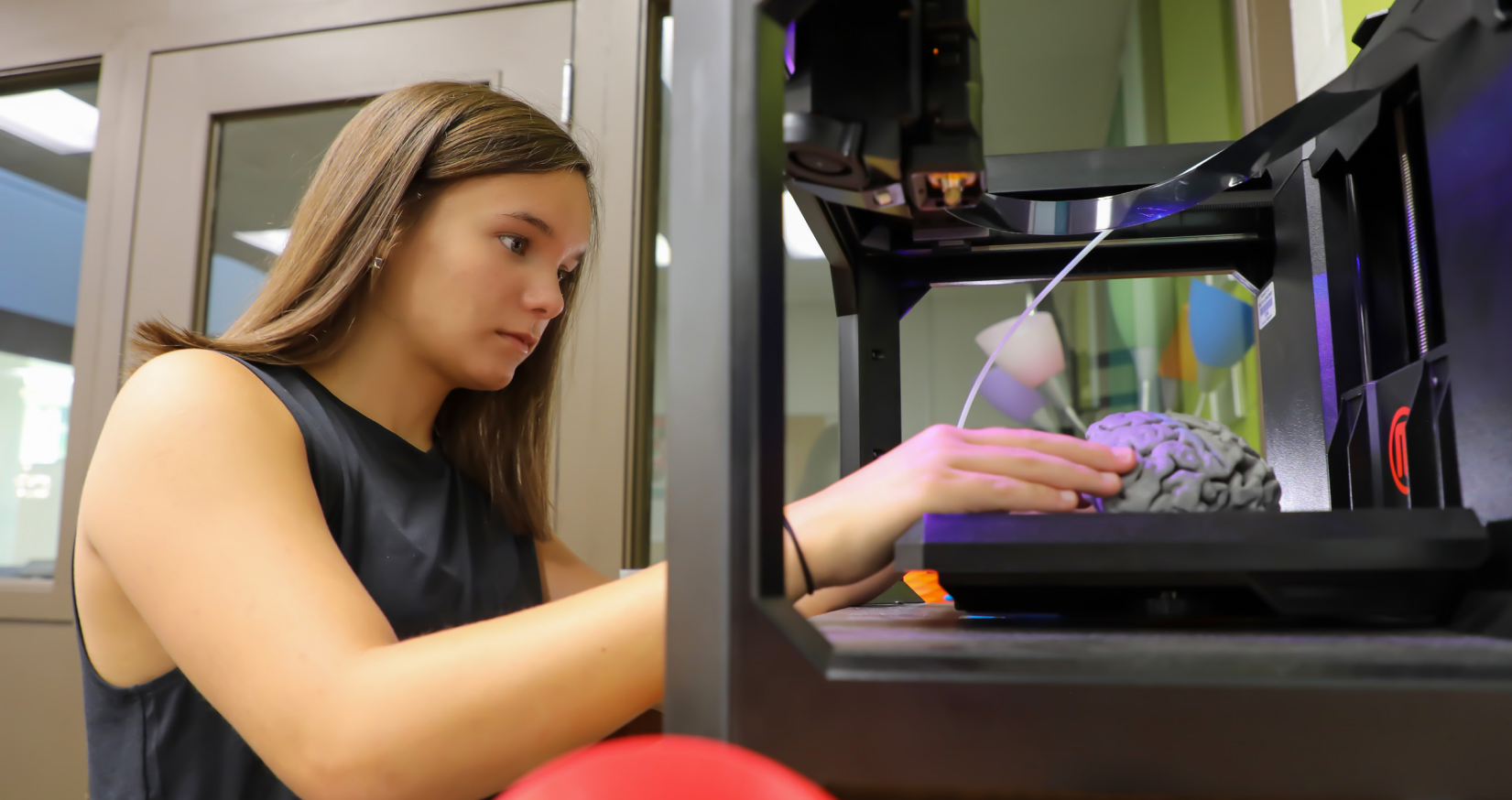
- DANCE
- [Foundations in Dance](#)
- [Intermediate Dance](#)
- [Advanced Dance](#)
- [Orchesis Dance Theatre](#)

*The course information contained in this publication is based on the 2023-24 course offerings in Saint Mary's current Curriculum Guide. This document is for reference only. For a complete list of courses, please see the SMS Curriculum Guide online. Note: an * indicates a new course.*



SAMPLE SCHEDULE

MONDAY A	TUESDAY B	WEDNESDAY A	THURSDAY B	FRIDAY A
Period 1: English	Period 5: Math	LATE START 9 a.m.	Period 5: Math	Period 1: English
Period 2: Seminar	Period 6: Study period	Period 1: English	Period 6: Study period	Period 2: Seminar
Community time	Community time	Period 2: Seminar	Community time	Community time
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Period 3: Humanities	Period 7: Science	Period 3: Humanities	Period 7: Science	Period 3: Humanities
Period 4: Elective	Period 8: World Language	Period 4: Elective	Period 8: World Language	Period 4: Elective
Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial	Tutorial



Portfolio for Life

All students create and maintain a digital "Portfolio for Life" that chronicles their experiences at Saint Mary's and their development in the 10 Key Competencies. The portfolio gives students a tool to reflect on their growth, assess their efforts, and celebrate their successes. Required for all students, students may also individualize their portfolio by incorporating additional sections specific to their unique interests and aspirations. Time is allotted each quarter for students to work on their portfolios, with students delivering a year-end portfolio defense to their advisor, during which they share their growth and work from the past school year. Students graduate with a Portfolio for Life that gives them a clear record of their learning and growth as well as a resource to confidently talk about themselves and their skills.

Community Partners & Resource Organizations



Seminar Program

The Saint Mary's School seminar program integrates what we know girls need, with what we know of the changing world girls will be facing, to provide relevant, forward-looking, real-world opportunities as we prepare girls for college and life. As part of the school's comprehensive and innovative curriculum, seminar classes are designed to help girls develop 10 key competencies through relevant, experiential learning experiences with experts, resources, and organizations in the greater Raleigh area. Students' quarterly seminars meet every other day, within the context of the regular school day. (See "Sample Schedule" opposite page). Each seminar includes opportunities for students to partner with resources and organizations in the greater Raleigh area. Students experience a quarter dedicated to each of the major themes of **communication, health and wellness, innovation, and social impact**.

The spirit of Seminar is to equip our Saints to skillfully grow as participants and designers of learning in their paths forward. During the 9th, 10th, and 11th-grade years, there are four quarters of Seminar. One quarter is spent at each grade level on one of the four tracks. For Senior Seminar, the first semester again is geared toward just in time learning and focuses on **College Counseling**, updating their LinkedIn profile, resume, and their **portfolio for life**. They also start to consider what their second semester **capstone project** or **internship** might look like. During the second semester, they capitalize on everything they've learned over the previous three years of seminar to create their own, self-actualized plan for something they want to research or do in the world. The student designs an essential question and either have a Capstone Project to explore that essential question or complete an internship to learn more about what it is they are wondering. At the end of the year, they participate in a "Defense" of their project for a panel of Saint Mary's community adults and their peers. This also inspires younger students as they move toward their senior years.

Embedded throughout Seminar are additional topics of: **College Counseling, Financial Literacy, Leadership, and Public Speaking**. Seminar classes are credited and required for graduation.

Seminar Timeline



Throughout all four years of the Seminar Program, students will have opportunities for College Counseling, public speaking, and leadership development.





Weekend Activities

With Saint Mary's exciting downtown location set in the beautiful state of North Carolina, there is no end to the possibilities for you to explore, discover, relax, and have fun! All week long, there are activities and events taking place in and around Raleigh – and the weekend is the perfect time for you to take full advantage of all Raleigh offers!

With "Around Town Permissions" (ATPs), students can check out renowned art, science, and history museums; visit the Duke Energy Center to hear the North Carolina Symphony, see a ballet, concert, or take in a Broadway show; maybe you prefer to go to a cultural festival or try a new cuisine at one of Raleigh's many world-class restaurants. There are sports events, concerts, lectures, shopping, food truck rodeos – all within a short walk from campus.

In addition to all the city offers every weekend, you can also choose from school-sponsored activities, on and off campus, open to boarding and day students. Much like the school week, the school-sponsored weekend activities have a rhythm all their own.

Friday nights feature on-campus fun, as student clubs and organizations plan and run activities like the Fourth Friday event that brings a neighborhood block-party feel to campus, the Black Curtain Coffeehouse featuring a "variety show" vibe with snacks and beverages, or the opening weekend Saints Soiree.

Saturday mornings are reserved for community service programming with local organizations like the Interfaith Food Shuttle, Habitat for Humanity, and others. Saturday afternoon offers you the chance to explore North Carolina with trips to destinations like downtown Raleigh's historic sites, the Civil Rights Museum in Greensboro, or Hanging Rock State Park; while Saturday night is reserved for favorites like Rave and Fall Ball, or off-campus dinners, college sports, and more. There are even overnight trips thrown in for good measure, like mixers hosted by schools in Asheville or Virginia, and the annual Woodberry Forest/Episcopal High School football game.

Sunday provides you with time to relax and prepare for your week ahead with a morning church-shuttle service and afternoon trips to grocery stores, international markets, Target, North Hills shopping mall, and other locations.



For most boarding students, the weekend includes a combination of school-sponsored activities, time spent relaxing on campus or catching up on homework, and forays into downtown Raleigh to independently explore all the area has to offer. In short, weekends at Saint Mary's give you all the things needed to balance your school life with your fun, social life!



SAINT MARY'S
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