

# The Miami Valley School



## College Counseling

## Junior Handbook

# Junior College Counseling Handbook

For all Junior Students and their Families

**Purpose:** To acquaint MVS students and parents with information that will lead to continued success in laying the foundation for a successful college selection process.

WELCOME MVS JUNIORS and FAMILIES!

The mission of The Miami Valley School is to challenge young people of promise to become self-sustaining learners and compassionate global citizens.

Five core values are integral to our success in achieving this mission:

- **Excellence:** MVS summons all students to their full potential of mind, body, and spirit, by inviting and encouraging them to seek distinction in their endeavors.
- **Caring Community:** MVS values a nurturing environment where each student is known and loved, and finds joy in belonging.
- **Experiential Learning:** MVS believes that students thrive from opportunities to experience life and to learn while broadening their knowledge of self and kindling intellectual passion and curiosity.
- **Celebration of Individual Gifts:** MVS believes that fostering appreciation for unique talents, capabilities, and differences nourishes individual growth and enriches the community.
- **Character:** MVS insists upon and fosters integrity, respect, personal responsibility, teamwork, and empathy for others – qualities of character that are inherent in leadership development.

The MVS College Counseling Team encourages our students to use these core values to lay the foundation for strong academics, to follow passions outside the classroom, and to develop good citizenship. A strong background in these areas will undoubtedly lead to not only a growing experience at MVS, but also contribute to a successful college selection process. As a junior, it is important to continue building on the foundation that you began your freshman year and continued during your sophomore year. It is never too late to bolster that foundation if the previous two years were not all that you wanted them to be. As always, do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns regarding how a class or outside activity may relate to your college process. The door to the College Loft is always open.

Most Sincerely,

Colin Dunnigan  
Director of College Counseling

## **JUNIOR YEAR**

### ***CONTINUED FROM FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORE YEARS:***

Realize that Junior year will most likely be your toughest year academically. Commit to excellence in the classroom, maintaining the strongest possible academic record by enrolling in challenging courses appropriate for your interests, abilities, and aspirations. Work hard on your academics and make good grades. **READ-READ-READ!** Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. Make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

### ***FALL TRIMESTER:***

- Continue to add to your folder in which you are placing a record of your activities, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing your activities resume and college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Begin the college selection process by researching colleges.
  - A) Start your research by attending local college nights including those at the University of Dayton (fall) and Centerville High School (spring).
  - B) Speak with college representatives who visit MVS throughout the fall. It is important to learn as much as you can about the college admission process.
- It is never too early to visit college campuses. Start with a broad range so that you can see a variety of different types of schools (small, medium, large, public, private, etc). Upon narrowing your wants and desires, you may then be able to begin concentrating on schools that best fit your parameters.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October. *(This is an important test, so put this date on your calendar, prepare in advance, and come to school rested and prepared to take this test.)* Prepare by spending time reviewing the PSAT Student Bulletin and taking the sample test. This is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Become proactive with your college search. Request information from colleges that have caught your initial interest and plan visits to college campuses. Use the internet to secure information from colleges.

### ***WINTER/SPRING TRIMESTERS:***

- In Early January the College Counseling Office will schedule a meeting in which you will receive your PSAT scores. Information covered will include the breakdown of your scores and what your score means in the grand scheme of the college process.
- Attend the 'Kickoff to the College Process' meeting in late January. This is the 'BIG' meeting during which you will receive your copy of the MVS College Counseling Handbook. This meeting formally kicks-off your college search process.

- Complete your Junior Personal Inventory (found on-line on Naviance Family Connection) and your College Selection Information Form (found on the MVS College Counseling website).
- Upon completing both the Junior Personal Inventory and the College Selection Information Form, schedule an individual appointment with your college counselor.
- Throughout the spring, make it your business to visit schools in which you may have an interest. Visiting campuses is one of the single most important parts of the college process. For information on how to set up a college visit and what you need to look for in a college visit, see the last few pages in this handbook.
- In the spring, select appropriate courses for 12<sup>th</sup> grade with the help of your family and Academic Advisor. Be sure to select courses that will meet your academic needs and the requirements for college admission.
- If you are an athlete, know the OHSAA (Ohio High School Athletic Association) requirements for high school eligibility (see athletic director) & and the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) requirements for college eligibility (<http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>).
- Prepare for and sit for the SAT and/or ACT.
  - A) Remember registration deadlines are typically about 4 weeks before the testing date. You must register on your own and you may pick up registration forms in the College Loft or register on-line at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for the SAT or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT. Test scores are important factors in helping your College Counselor assist you in identifying appropriate college choices for you.
  - B) Test preparation is up to the individual students. There are many different ways to prepare for these tests. Please speak with your college counselor to identify the most appropriate method for you.

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**-----THE MVS TEST CODE IS: 361-833-----**

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***CAREERS/POSSIBLE MAJORS:***

It is extremely important that you start considering areas of academic interest. As you start to look at colleges, one of the major factors in deciding 'FIT' is the major or course of study you would like to pursue. To begin narrowing your interests, start no further than your courses at MVS. Think about them – I mean really think about them. Which ones did you really enjoy? Which ones drove you to work hard and challenged your intellect? Which ones left you thirsty for more? The answers to these questions are a great beginning point. For more assistance, please speak to your advisor or your college counselor.

## ***INVOLVEMENT:***

This continues to be of utmost importance. The College Counseling Office encourages students to explore and follow their passions. Your involvement is an important aspect of college applications. However, colleges do not want to see a ‘grocery list’ of activities. Remember, Quality before Quantity. *Colleges would rather see a student become heavily involved in fewer activities, than only partially involved in many activities.*

Reasons to become *INVOLVED*:

- Current Enjoyment
- Balance of time and interest (Time Management)
- Ability to Commit & Follow Through
- Creates an Active Campus Community

What Stands Out:

- Duration of Involvement
- Depth of Involvement
- Awards and Distinctions

Ways to Become Involved:

- School Activities (clubs, organizations, athletics, etc.)
- Church Activities (Mosque, Temple, Synagogue, Parish, etc)
- Community
- Employment

## ***HELPFUL HINTS ON A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE VISIT***

- 1) Check the MVS Handbook for College Visit procedures.
- 2) Always plan ahead. Call each college ahead of time to inquire about their visit policy, schedule information sessions, campus tours, and interviews. Reservations may or may not be required.
- 3) Inquire about the opportunity to observe a class, if so desired. Class visits are a great way to learn about class size, accessibility of faculty, and classroom facilities.
- 4) Inquire about the opportunity to meet with a member of the faculty in your desired area of study. If you meet with a member of the faculty, make sure you are well prepared with questions to ask about their program and what it can offer you as a prospective student.
- 5) If you are an athlete, you may want to inquire about meeting with the coach of your chosen sport. Make sure you are well prepared with questions to ask about their program and what it can offer you as a prospective student/athlete.
- 6) Make sure you have adequate directions and arrive in plenty of time to find the admissions office. You should inquire about parking before arriving.
- 7) Once you have set up a tentative itinerary, call the school and ask for written confirmation of your appointment and for any current materials if you do not already have them.
- 8) If you will miss a day or more at MVS, complete a planned absence form.
- 9) Do not schedule more than two schools per day. Make sure to give yourself ample time to roam the campus after your scheduled events are complete.
- 10) Dress appropriately. If you have questions about what is appropriate, please see Mr. Wagner or Mr. Motto.

- 11) BE PUNCTUAL!!!! If you know you are going to arrive late, call the admissions office to let them know of your situation.
- 12) Because the campus visit is so important, and in some cases can play a role in the admission decision, make sure the school makes record of your visit.
- 13) Compile a list of questions in advance. This is particularly important if you have an interview scheduled or a meeting with the department in which you are interested. Make sure you ask the same questions at each school.
- 14) Take good notes. Schools can seem similar after the first few visits, so it is important that you write down your impressions of each.
- 15) While visiting, it is important to keep in mind that you are interviewing the school as much as it is interviewing you. Make sure you ask questions, but remember that the questions you ask describe you and your interests as well. Be thoughtful and articulate.
- 16) Pick up a school newspaper and read about the events that are going on campus at any kiosks you may pass. This will give you a good idea as to the hot topics on campus.
- 17) Make an allowance for free time. (1) During this free time make sure to talk to students on your own without admission professionals around. These students are more likely to be completely candid with you regarding the campus environment. (2) Also, you may want to have a meal to check out the food services (Remember, it is never going to be as good as mom's cooking.) (3) And finally, if you did not visit a dorm during the tour, make sure you see a few before you leave campus.
- 18) Take note as to whether or not you can see yourself there. How comfortable are you?
- 19) ALWAYS FOLLOW UP! Make sure you take note of any admissions professionals you speak with during your visit. You should send a handwritten thank you letter to whoever was your main contact during the visit.

### ***QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TOUR GUIDE***

- 1) How large are your classes? What has been the size of your largest class? Smallest class?
- 2) What is the percentage of professors teaching undergraduate courses? (as compared to teaching assistants or graduate students) Have you had any teaching assistants as teachers? If so, how often?
- 3) How adequate is the library?
- 4) How adequate are the computer facilities?
- 5) When do you have to declare a major?
- 6) Is each student assigned to an advisor to help lead them through the process of scheduling and eventually choosing a major?
- 7) How are the dorm rooms? Are the dorm rooms wired? Are there any parts of campus that are wireless? How many students live off campus?
- 8) How competitive are the classes? Are students competing with one another?
- 9) How available are the professors?
- 10) What are some of the hot issues on campus right now?
- 11) How politically active is the student body?
- 12) What kind of faith community exists on campus? Are there services available for students of different faiths? How accepting is the community of people who practice non-Christian faiths?
- 13) How popular is studying abroad? What kinds of programs are available for students?
- 14) Are there fraternities and sororities? If so, how large of a role do they play on campus?
- 15) Describe a typical weekend? Are there alternatives to the typical party scene?
- 16) How active is the student government? Does the administration seek and listen to student input?

- 17) What are the popular activities to become involved in?
- 18) What do you hear students complaining about?
- 19) If you could change something about the school, what would it be and why?
- 20) How are the performing fine arts? May I audition for band/orchestra/drama even though I may not be majoring in theatre or art?
- 21) What have you enjoyed most about your experience so far?
- 22) How diverse is the community? How accepting is the student body of diversity? Is your admissions office trying to increase diversity on campus?
- 23) If you had it to do over again, would you do it the same way? If not, what would you change?
- 24) What other schools did you apply to? And, what was the determining factor in you attending this school?

***WHAT COLLEGES WANT IN AN APPLICANT:***

- **STRONG ACADEMIC PREPARATION**  
(See the above recommended Academic Preparation list)
- **INVOLVEMENT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**  
*REMEMBER: QUALITY not QUANTITY*
  - Good Examples of Involvement are:
    - After-school/weekend job
    - Clubs and Activities at MVS (taking on leadership roles)
    - Playing multiple sports (taking a leadership role is important)
    - Acting/Dancing/Drawing (concentrating and developing in any area of Fine Arts)
    - Tutoring here at MVS or in other local schools
    - Community Service
    - Volunteering
    - Church Activities (Mosque, Temple, Synagogue, Parish, etc)
- **STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES**  
The best preparation for standardized testing is challenging yourself in the classroom. Also, you want to make sure you are reading, not only for school but for pleasure as well. This will help with vocabulary development.  
*REMEMBER: "Good" standardized test scores are relative.*
- **STRONG PERSONAL QUALITIES**  
Colleges are looking for students who have learned and displayed qualities such as:
  - Character
  - Integrity
  - Determination
  - Leadership ability
  - Honesty
  - Adaptability
  - Friendly/One who can interact and get along well with others
 These qualities can be developed through interaction and involvement on all levels. Make sure you are picking good role models to learn from and doing your best to always 'do-the-right-thing'.

**If you have any questions about this information, please see the Director of College Counseling. The door to the College Loft is ALWAYS open!**