

MSSM Parents' Association
Tips and Tricks (Updated June 2011)

– The first few months involve an enormous adjustment period for nearly every student (and his/her parents). Try not to stress too much about your child's infrequent calls home or apparent lack of sleep. (It's difficult to go from seeing your child every day, to not hearing from him/her for a week or two. If you don't hear anything, he/she is probably thriving! He/she is experiencing the rewards and challenges of living and studying among a group of true intellectual peers. It may take a while for him/her to settle in, but the MSSM student community becomes a vital, close-knit family. If you have concerns for lack of communication, you may e-mail the Dean of Residential Life, and ask how your child is adjusting. She/He will give you an honest perspective and will remind your child to call home if you so request.

- Prepare your child to take responsibility for:

- o Laundry
- o Time Management
- o Waking up on time every morning
- o Daily hygiene (this cannot be overemphasized)
- o Using an ATM/Debit Card
- o Managing over the counter medicines
- o Being respectful of study hours and being attentive to the noise level while others are working nearby
- o Organization. Of everything, including his/her room, work, and social life.
- o More difficult classes and more homework

– Establish a contact time once a week. This is a time for you or your student to call and connect; or “talk” by instant message. For some students, it takes a while to figure out when to schedule this as their extracurricular activities unfold – so you may have to reschedule it a few times. Also, **during study hours, students are prohibited from personal use of the phone or internet**, typically between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. ALSO NOTE: your child may not have access to the internet for the first 2 to 3 weeks of school while Mr. Long (head of the IT department) reviews each device for virus and security problems and gets the network up and going.

– You will receive a copy of your child's schedule upon registration on New Students' Day. Keep a copy handy. Also, remind your child to inform you of class, work & extracurricular schedule changes so you have a general sense of his/her daily schedule. However, realize that your child will need to learn to account for his/her time by himself/herself as well.

– Regularly check the MSSMPA web site www.mssmvoice.org. Note the weekly updates to student activities posted there. Please share similar information with others via the webmaster and the Yahoo Group “MSSMParents” ~ <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MSSMParents> (yahoo ID and request to subscribe required).

– Regularly check the school administration's “Daily Announcements” as a “Guest” on the MSSM Moodle site. <http://moodle.mssm.org/moodle>

- Join the parents’ Yahoo Group listserv (link above).
- Email your child’s teachers or the appropriate administrator if you have questions or concerns. The R.S.’s (Residential Staff) are also very helpful.
- Make sure the MSSM Administration has your current correct e-mail address. If MSSM Administration e-mails are going to your home e-mail address, consider placing a rule in your e-mail to forward messages to your work account.
- Send “care” packages by mail when you are able (Student’s Name, c/o MSSM, 95 High Street, Limestone, ME 04750). Expect a delivery delay of a few days if you are considering fresh baked goodies. (Food is always appreciated, however.)
- As difficult as it may be, let your child settle in during the first few weeks and let him/her contact you as he/she feels is warranted. After your child adjusts to living away from you, he/she will more easily find a balance with you as to how much and what type of contact all of you feel is appropriate. This is for the best – it lets them learn to rely on themselves and adjust to their new living conditions more easily.
- A debit card is accepted at most places the students go (e.g. Limestone Grocery, Albear's Place (a pizza/sub place formerly known as Paul's Sub Shop), Presque Isle Mall). If your local bank offers no-fee ATM usage, that would be a good choice for a bank account. Alternately, Katahdin Bank is just down the hill from the school. Paperwork to open an account may be completed by mail. However, ATM fees will apply at non-Katahdin ATM machines, but some banks offer free ATM use in-state and may refund the charge.
- A Corded or cordless phone/ answering machine can be accommodated in each room. These can be used to make calls between rooms in the building much more easily than other phones. Your child may need a phone card to call you.
- US Cellular cell phones have good reception on the school campus. TracFone also gets good reception. (Please check coverage with your carrier. Many phones pull a signal from Rogers Cellular, which is a Canadian tower. International rates apply, but it is sometimes possible to make prior arrangements with your carrier to avoid international charges.)
- Skype internet phone service is free (but unavailable for the first 1-4 weeks and only works when the internet does).
- Over-the-counter meds must be provided to the nurse. They are not allowed in the dorm rooms.
- For summer storage, Limestone has a storage facility near the school. Cost is currently \$35/month.
- It can (and often does) start snowing in October in Limestone, so bringing winter clothing early can be quite helpful – summer clothing and snow don't go well together.