








Learn. Grow. Belong.

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL

SINCE 1965

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL

welcome

Welcome to St. Michael Special School and thank you for your interest in our learning community. As you explore these pages, you will quickly discover what makes our school so unique - our incredible students! Located in the heart of New Orleans' Lower Garden District, our centrally located campus serves approximately 230 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. St. Michael is a faith-filled, joyful and nurturing environment where each student is known, valued and celebrated.

At St. Michael, we believe every student deserves a place to **Learn**, to **Grow**, and to **Belong**.

Learn- Each student follows an individualized program designed to foster academic success and meaningful progress. With small class sizes and a team of highly qualified educators and service providers, our comprehensive approach ensures that every learner receives the support and structure they need to thrive.

Grow- Our students are encouraged to discover and develop their unique strengths through a wide range of on campus opportunities, after school activities, and community involvement. These experiences help build confidence and self-esteem as our students grow into the individuals God created them to be.

Belong- Relationships are at the heart of the St. Michael experience. Deep friendships among students and strong connections among families create a warm and welcoming community. Here, your family will be embraced by a network of support, encouragement, and life long friendships.

We invite you to visit our campus, and experience for yourself the joy, love, and sense of purpose that fill the halls of St. Michael. We are proud to be recognized as a leader in the education of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and known as a place where everyone is appreciated, accepted, known and loved.

Gratefully,

Elizabeth C. LaForge, Ph.D.
Head of School

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL
Sacrifice Blessing
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

The Sacred Mission of St. Michael is to provide a Catholic environment where students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to grow in faith and reach their full potential – academically, socially, and physically.



OUR HISTORY

St. Michael Special School was established in 1965 by Sr. Lillian McCormack of the School Sisters of Notre Dame with support from the Archdiocese of New Orleans to serve children and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The location of the old St. Michael Parish was chosen because of its central accessibility. Just before the school opened, Hurricane Betsy made landfall. The rectory of St. Michael was destroyed, the beautiful church was badly damaged, properties all around battered, but the newly built St. Michael School stood untouched. God had his protective hand on us.

Since 1965, St. Michael School has been able to educate over 6,000 students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and minister to their families. This has only been possible with the support of the local community. There are many stories that will touch your heart. Our school has been blessed with dedicated teachers and staff who take care of our precious blue roses, so that they may blossom and become all God intended them to be.

"If there were such a thing as a Special Blue Rose, with what care it would be nurtured. Our children are that special."

-Sr. Lillian McCormack, SSND






CLEVELAND CAVALIERS



LOWER SCHOOL

The Lower School provides a strong foundation for personalized learning with a primary focus on English Language Arts and Mathematics. Students (ages 5 to 15) are placed in age and developmentally appropriate self-contained classrooms where their growth and success are the central focus.
In addition to building literacy and numeracy skills, science, social studies and religion round out the core curriculum. Students have the opportunity to participate in robust enrichment classes including art, music, adapted physical education, speech and technology. Applied Behavior Therapy and other therapies may be obtained by parents through select providers. Students also take part in inclusive social activities that foster meaningful peer interactions.

All instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of every learner with an emphasis on small-group teaching and hands-on engagement. As students progress academically, they also develop important life skills. Instruction in self-responsibility, daily living tasks, and appropriate social behavior equips them with the tools they need to grow in independence and prepare for the next stages of their education and personal development.









UPPER SCHOOL

The Upper School serves students ages 16 to 21 in a high school setting that emphasizes academic growth, skill development and increasing independence. Students are grouped by ability for core academic subjects and participate in a departmentalized class structure that mirrors a traditional high school environment. St. Michael offers three distinct programs of study tailored to meet individual student needs and goals:

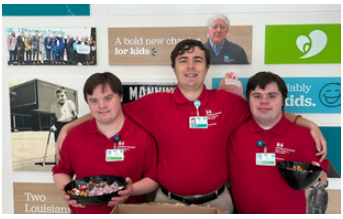
High School Equivalency Test Preparation Program- For students who demonstrate the academic readiness and motivation to pursue a high school equivalency credential.
Alternative Assessment Diploma- For students working toward a modified diploma focused on academic skills and workforce readiness.
Certificate of Completion- For students best served by a highly individualized curriculum centered on functional academics and independence.

In addition to core academic subjects, students engage in a variety of enrichment classes, including art, music, adaptive physical education, technology, cooking, theatre, sign language, film production, community based instruction and life skills. Each course is designed to strengthen students' confidence, self advocacy, and practical competencies for life beyond St. Michael. Outside of the classroom, Upper School students are offered meaningful opportunities for leadership, social development, and community engagement through extracurricular activities such as Student Ambassadors, cheerleading, performing arts, and intramural sports. Our goal is to educate and support the whole student as they prepare for their unique path to adult life.


ST. MICHAEL
EXPLORATION ACADEMY







EXPLORATION ACADEMY

Exploration Academy is a workforce training and transition program designed to assist students in moving from a school environment into meaningful employment or volunteer opportunities within the New Orleans community. The program is tailored for young adults ages 18 to 25 who have completed St. Michael's Upper School or a similar high school program of study and are ready to take the next step toward independence.

Exploration Academy offers a structured, scaffolded experience that helps students explore career interests, develop a set of essential workplace skills, and build the independent living skills necessary to succeed in community settings. Students participate in off-campus job training and community based instruction daily, gaining exposure to real-world expectations in a supportive, hands-on environment.

The ultimate goal of the program is to support students in achieving a sustainable job placement or volunteer engagement, enabling them to exit the program with confidence and purpose. Exploration Academy empowers students to live and work with increasing independence while discovering their unique gifts and contributions to the community.






Joy



JOY ACTIVITY CENTER

The Joy Activity Center serves St. Michael graduates who wish to remain engaged in a vibrant, supportive community focused on lifelong learning and meaningful activity. This program offers continued social connection, opportunities for personal growth, and cognitive stimulation, all within a safe, caring, faith filled Catholic environment.

Participants follow a structured daily schedule focused on community projects, including organizing sustainable Mardi Gras throws, Catholic community assignments, and tourism projects. They enjoy a wide variety of enrichment activities, including assisting in the school office, cooking, arts and crafts, technology, health and wellness, music, and sports. These activities are designed to foster independence, build confidence, and promote overall well-being.

Members of the Joy Center also serve as proud ambassadors of St. Michael School. They take part in both on-campus responsibilities and off campus community engagement, including campus support roles, community fundraiser projects, and cultural enrichment outings. The program offers a sense of purpose, connection and joy.



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Apply Online

STMICHAELSPECIALSCHOOL.COM

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