



# Writer's Guide

to SPS style and word usage

St. Paul's School

“*Proper words in proper  
places make the true  
definition of a style.*”

Jonathan Swift

Updated by the Communications Office, August 2017.

**See Preparing Documents for Publication on pages 34-40.**

Of course, Dr. Swift's 18th-century idea of proper English usage doesn't define the style we use today. Any kind of style, whether in words or fashion, evolves.

The style guidelines in this small book have evolved too, in several editions beginning with Alan Hall's 1990 memo on style. Mr. Hall told us then, "There is a right way, a wrong way, and the SPS way."

The "SPS way" as seen in these pages, is a series of guidelines for writing School documents for an external audience – from letters to brochures to web pages – in all of which a consistency of style reflects well on the institution. But of course audiences are all different, and these guidelines are subject to your sense that the tone you're using invites a different style – more informal, say – than the one you might find here. Your own style – such as whether or not to place a comma before the final item in a series – may overrule *these* "rules," as long as consistency prevails within a document.

We are not urging that we all adopt a common dictionary and other reference books. Many of those who write for the School have on hand the references they have come to depend on over the years – *Webster's*, *American Heritage*, *Chicago*, *MLA*, *Strunk and White*, and so on – and we feel that, if you consistently follow the style of your favorites, your documents won't deviate in any significant way from these guidelines.

We hope you find this small book useful. If you'd like to expand on anything in the book or to argue a point or two, we'd enjoy hearing from you at [communicationsoffice@sps.edu](mailto:communicationsoffice@sps.edu).

## A or An

In choosing *a* or *an*, consider the sound (not the spelling) of the following word. Use *a* before all consonant sounds, including sounded *h* (history, hand), long *u*, and *o* with the sound of *w* (one). (Use *an*, not *a*, before SPS in a sentence.)

A St. Paul's School victory at the Graves-Kelsey wrestling tournament was exciting news.

An SPS victory at the softball regionals will ensure another post-season game.

The first MLK day in New Hampshire was a historic event for the state.

**a.m./p.m.:** See **Time of Day**.

## Academic Courses

Lowercase areas of study unless a geographical or national word appears in the title: American history, European history, English, French, Spanish, history, mathematics. However, when the area of study is part of a specific course title and used as such, it should be capitalized. When referring to a specific academic department or program, use the upper case. (See also Departments.)

Students will take the appropriate humanities course each year.

Chris enjoys the readings in Humanities IV, especially *Civil Disobedience* and *The Great Gatsby*.

Alex is taking classes in history, English, and creative writing.

Sam signed up to take American History, Spanish 1 Honors, and Creative Writing (the specific name of the course).

The Arts Department offers courses in four areas: fine arts, dance, music, and theatre. (But: Jerry tried to take as many courses as possible in the Music Program.)

## Academic Degrees

Abbreviations of academic degrees require a period after each element in the abbreviation but no internal space.

Ph.D., M.A., J.D.

The term M.B.A. is now commonly written without periods when it is used to signify someone with a certain type of training rather than the degree itself.

We have hired two Princeton MBAs and one from Dartmouth. (Note no apostrophe with MBAs; see **Apostrophe**.)

After I earn my M.B.A., I plan to go to law school.

When academic degrees follow a person's name, do not use titles such as Dr., Mr., Ms., Miss, or Mrs. before the name.

Correct: Dr. Vanessa Jones

Correct: Vanessa Jones, Ph.D.

Incorrect: Dr. Vanessa Jones, Ph.D.

When academic degrees follow a person's name in the middle of a sentence, the degree is set off by commas before and after.

Vanessa Jones, Ph.D., was the guest speaker.

Do not capitalize academic degrees when they are spelled out. Note in the examples below that *bachelor* and *master* are singular when followed by the specific area of study but possessive when generic.

He has a bachelor of arts degree.

He received his bachelor's degree.

She has a master of science degree.

She's working toward a master's degree.

He earned his doctorate in psychology in 1988.

**Academic Terms:** The School preference is to use uppercase with Fall Term, Winter Term, and Spring Term.

**Admission:** See **Departments**.

### **Adjectives, compound**

Hyphenate them (except when the qualifying adverb ends in -ly).

We all applauded the first-time use of the new solar observatory.

The newly installed Foucault pendulum started swinging just today.

### **Advanced Studies Program**

This summer program is for New Hampshire rising high school seniors. The abbreviation ASP is written in capital letters with no periods and, not being a snake, is pronounced A-S-P, not *asp*. The ASP has classes instead of forms, and it has ASP Alumni Reunion instead of Anniversary. Capitalize *class* or *reunion* when referring to a specific year; e.g., the ASP Class of 1991 had its 10th Reunion this year.

**Adviser:** The School spelling preference.

### **Ages:** See also **Numbers**.

Always use figures. Use hyphens with ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun.

His 5-year-old son accompanied him to his 20th Anniversary.

His son, who is 5 years old, accompanied him to his 20th Anniversary.

The race is for 5-year-olds. (substitute for a noun)

### **Alumna, Alumnae, Alumnus, Alumni**

Alumni is the preferred collective noun for all alumni and alumnae of SPS. A letter addressed to all alumni should have the salutation *Dear Alumni*, not *Alumni/ae*.

Anyone who has ever completed one marking period at SPS as a student is considered a member of the alumni body, whose official name is the Alumni Association of St. Paul's School. The form year of students is determined by their expected or actual year of graduation. Students entering as Third Formers in September 2017 are considered members of the Form of 2021. (See also **Form Designations**.)

**Alumnus** one male member of the alumni body

**Alumna** one female member of the alumni body

**Alumnae** a group of alumni women

**Alumni** a group of alumni men

**Alumni** a mixed group of alumni women and men

## **Alumni Association and Its Activities**

The terms *Alumni Association* and *Alumni Fund* are always capitalized, as is *Parents Fund*. Note that there is no apostrophe in *Parents Fund* or *Trustees Weekend*. (See also **Apostrophe**.) Never abbreviate Association to Assn. or Assoc.

The title of the head of the Alumni Association at the School is executive director. There also is a president, who does not maintain an office at the School. (See **Titles** for capitalization recommendations.)

SPS uses the word *form* instead of *class*. *Form* is capitalized in reference to a specific form (the Form of 1936) or in connection with reunion or School activities. *Reunion* is capitalized in reference to a specific event, not when used as a general term. (See also **Anniversary Weekend and Graduation** and **Form Designations**.)

## **Anniversary Weekend and Graduation**

Graduation of the Sixth Form occurs on the same weekend as Anniversary, during which alumni reunions are celebrated every five years from the date of graduation. When referring to the specific event, both *Anniversary* and *Graduation* are capitalized when used in combination or separately. Do not use an ampersand, but a slash may be used if space is limited.

Correct: Anniversary Weekend and Graduation

Correct: Anniversary/Graduation

Incorrect: Anniversary & Graduation (but A&G is fine for informal use).

Baccalaureate, not Graduation, is usually the occasion for distinguished outside speakers.

The Flagpole Ceremony takes place on Anniversary Saturday.

Anniversary Weekend and Graduation is a good time to closely monitor the Weather Channel.

### **Apostrophe (or lack of)**

Use an apostrophe with *it's* only when you can substitute the words *it is* or *it has* in the sentence. There is no apostrophe in *its* when used as a possessive.

It's been a historic occasion.

It's looking like an HH kind of day.

The skunk raised its tail with a warning to all.

Use an apostrophe with

Rector's Office

Names ending in s or an s sound: "Davy Jones's Locker"

Do not use an apostrophe with modifiers that sound like possessives but are actually attributives:

Captains Room

Parents Fund

Trustees Weekend

girls hockey (or any other sport)

boys basketball (or any other sport)

Capital letters, abbreviations ending with a capital letter, and decades are made plural by adding *s* alone. Add an apostrophe only if confusion might result without it.

There were three MBAs in the group.

The six VIPs sat at the table in the front of the room.

The custom began in the 1920s.

He received 3 A's on his report card. (could be confused with As)



For the sake of clarity, uncapitalized letters and abbreviations are made plural by adding an apostrophe plus s.

He forgot his pj's on the ship and had to buy new ones.

Mind your p's and q's.

With joint ownership, use a possessive form with only the final name. Use the possessive with all names to indicate separate ownership.

I'll be heading to the Bahamas on Sylvia and Fred's sailboat.

Fred's and Sylvia's jobs frequently keep them out of the country.

Do not add a possessive immediately following *St. Paul's* or *St. Paul's School*, e.g., *St. Paul's campus's lawns* or *St. Paul's School's students'* successes.

(See also **Plurals and Possessives of Names.**)

## Athletics

Use the words *girls* and *boys* (not *men* and *women*).

Do not capitalize or use the possessive with girls and boys teams, (e.g., use *girls* or *boys ice hockey*, not *girls'* or *boys' ice hockey*).

Do not capitalize the words *coach*, *captain*, *team*, *squad*, *varsity*, or *junior varsity* (which may be abbreviated to JV). *Coach* may be capitalized when used directly preceding a person's last name as a second reference in an article; e.g., *Bill Belichick has just been named football coach at SPS. "I predict even more greatness," Coach Belichick said.*

The School athletic clubs (Isthmian, Delphian, Old Hundred) and boat clubs (Halcyon and Shattuck) are capitalized.

Do not use the word *team* when referring to a crew.

When referring to the Athletic Department, note that *athletic* has no s.

*Cross country* is not hyphenated: it may be abbreviated to *XC* on schedules if necessary due to lack of space, but not in a formal document.

(See also **Cross Country.**)

## **Autocorrect**

This tool (find *Word Options*, then *Customize*) allows you to automatically replace straight quotation marks and apostrophes with “curly,” or “smart” ones, the preferred choice (except when indicating feet and inches). It also replaces the double hyphen with the preferred “en” dash and offers a few other conveniences.

## **Big Brother/Big Sister**

These terms are used to describe returning students assigned to new students to help ease their transition into School life.

## **Bold Type**

Generally use italics instead of boldface for emphasis, but especially don't use italics and bold for that purpose in the same document.

## **Buildings: See also Geographical Locations.**

Official names of buildings, their commonly used nicknames, and their shortened forms are capitalized. Although it is common to refer to many buildings with a preceding *the*, when used with a building or room name *the* should not be capitalized in text. *The* may be capitalized on letterhead stationery, when it appears as the first word of a line in an invitation, or, of course, as the first word in a sentence. (Student houses are alphabetized separately on Page 14.)

**Alumni** – may also be referred to as Alumni House

**Astronomy Center** – includes the Chart Room and the Observatory

**Athletic & Fitness Center** (note the ampersand) – also known as the AFC; includes the Matthes Cage and the Stovell Indoor Tennis Courts.

**Blass Club House** – formerly the Club House

**Bookstore**

**Central Heating Plant**

**Chapel** – see **Buildings** – **Chapel** for additional information

**Clark House** – when writing for a non-SPS audience, clarify with “Clark House, the health center”

**Coit** – comprises four dining rooms and three dormitories, formerly called the Upper

**Crumpacker Boat House** – includes Halcyon and Shattuck Boat Houses

**Crumpacker Gallery** – formerly known as the Samuel Freeman Student Center

### **Dance Building**

**Fine Arts Building** – formerly known as Moore Building; includes the Penner Sculpture Terrace.

**Friedman Community Center** – formerly known as Hargate, includes Raffini Commons, Kwok Café, and Ronald J. Clark Terrace

**Gordon Rink** – in the Hockey Center

**Ingalls Rink** – in the Hockey Center

**Lenore and Walter Hawley Observatory** – also known as Hawley Observatory

**Lindsay Center for Mathematics and Science** – replaced Payson Science Center in 2011

**Matthes Cage** – in the AFC

**Matthews Hockey Center** – comprises Gordon Rink, Ingalls Rink, and the Captains Room

### **McLane Squash Courts**

**Memorial Hall** – casually referred to as Mem Hall (note no period with Mem)

### **Miller Cottage**

**Music Building** – the Recital Hall and the Concert Hall are here

### **New Space**

**Oates Performing Arts Center** – includes the Music Building, the Dance Building, and New Space

**Ohrstrom Library** – sometimes just Ohrstrom; *Library* alone is capitalized when it refers to Ohrstrom. Do not use *the* in front of Ohrstrom Library in text. The Library has three levels: the lower level, the main level, and the upper level)

**Penner Center for Innovative Teaching** – located on the lower level of Ohrstrom Library; also known as Penner CIT

**Post Office**

**Rectory**

**Red Barn** – home of the Mish Shop of the Missionary Society

**Schoolhouse** – The Reading Room is on the first floor; the Rector's Office is on the second floor.

**Scudder** – a guest house; includes Scudder Meeting Room

**Sheldon** – formerly Sheldon Library

**Stovell Indoor Tennis Courts** – in the AFC

**Tenney House**

**White Farm**

## **Buildings – Chapel**

There are two chapels at SPS: the Chapel of St. Paul (1858), often referred to as *the Old Chapel*, and the Chapel of St. Peter and St. Paul (1886), or, often, *the Chapel* or the *New Chapel*. The four-days-a-week gathering in the Chapel is, not surprisingly, *Chapel*. Do not capitalize *chapel* when it is used as a general noun.

Attendance at Chapel is required (Chapel as activity).

There are two chapels at SPS.

The class will meet on the Chapel lawn.

First Night Service is in the Old Chapel.

Certain special Chapel services are capitalized:

First Night Service

Last Night Service

Service of Lessons and Carols

(the) Service of Songs and Processions (also called the Pageant)

## **Buildings – Classrooms/Rooms**

Names of classrooms are capitalized with an Arabic number. Each house has a common room; *Common Room* is capitalized when used with the name of the house but not when standing alone. Rooms with particular names or numbers are capitalized.

Meet me in the common room at 4 p.m. to watch the Metropolitan Opera on TV.

Meet me in Coit Common Room at 4 p.m. to see who won the Heisman.

The Semisesquicentennial Committee meeting will be held in Room 210 of the Schoolhouse.

The reception for SPS alumni in the NHL will take place in the Captains Room.

Named rooms include:

**Captains Room** – formerly the Hockey Center Lounge

**Coit Lower Dining Room**

**Coit Middle Dining Room**

**Coit Upper Dining Room**

**Faculty Room** – on the third floor of the Schoolhouse

**Form of 1938 Reading Room** – a conference room on the upper level of the Library

**Gates Lounge** – in the AFC

**Language Center** – on the lower level of the Schoolhouse

**Reading Room** – on the first floor of the Schoolhouse

## **Buildings – Houses**

Student residences are referred to as houses, not dormitories or dorms. If used alone when referring to a residence, the word *house* is not capitalized, e.g., “Over in Warren, Fred’s mechanical python put the house in an uproar.” When *house* follows the name of the building, it should be capitalized; e.g., *Manville House*.

**Armour**

**Brewster**

**Coit Center** – often just Center

**Coit North** – often just North

**Coit Wing** – often just Wing

**Conover/Twenty** – may be abbreviated to Con/20

**Drury**

**Ford**

**Foster**

**Kehaya**

**Kittredge I** – always use Roman numerals; may be abbreviated to Kitt

**Kittredge II**

**Kittredge III**

**Manville**

**Middle**

**Nash**

**Simpson**

**Upper** – see **Coit**, above

**Warren**

**Capitalization (or not) of Particular School-Related Words:**  
See also **Departments**.

**Advanced Studies** – a course title in each of the academic departments

**Alumni Fund**

**Anniversary Weekend and Graduation** (do not use an ampersand)

**Big Brother/Big Sister**

**board** – of SPS Trustees

**board of trustees** – of the School

**Chapel** – see also **Buildings – Chapel**

**Cricket Holiday** – a traditional fall holiday called by the Rector

**Delphian** – one of the three athletic clubs to which students are assigned

**Evensong**

**First Night Service**

**form agent**

**form director**

**Halcyon** – with Shattuck, one of the two boat clubs to which each student is assigned

**head of house**

**Honor Code**

**MISH, Mishop, Mish** – abbreviation for Missionary Society and its thrift store

**Isthmian** – another of the three athletic clubs

**Last Night Service**

## **Mission Statement**

**Old Guard** – alumni returning to Anniversary after their 50th Reunion

**Old Hundred** – another of the three athletic clubs

**Opening Days**

**Parents Fund**

**prefect**

**Rector**

**Reports** – announcements are made during Reports at Chapel

**St. Paul's School Ballet Company** – may be abbreviated to SPSBC on second reference (and include the abbreviation in parentheses after the first reference)

**School** – when referring to SPS collectively or as an entity

The School will assemble in Memorial Hall at 8:30 a.m.

Birthdays of members of the School community are announced in Chapel.

The school year consists of three terms.

This school has a storied past.

When we returned to school after summer, every brick was still in place.

**Seated Meal**

**Shattuck** – with Halcyon, one of the two boat clubs

**Strategic Plan** – when referring to the School's Strategic Plan, but lowercase "the plan"

**student admission officer** – may be abbreviated to SAO on second reference



**Testimonial** – an award for scholastic achievement given to Third, Fourth, and Fifth Formers; a student may receive a Second Testimonial, a First Testimonial, or a First Testimonial with Honor

**Titles** – Except for Rector, which is always capitalized, titles are lower-case except when part of the name.

**trustee**

**vice rector**

**Catalog:** The School spelling preference.

## Clubs and Societies

The names of clubs and societies are capitalized; titles of their officers are not.

Gail has just been elected president of the Student Council.

Like his sister before him, Chris is a member of the Madrigal Singers.

Alex has served as secretary of the Winant Society for two years.

## Colons

Introduce a list with a colon only if the list does not follow the previous word as part of the sentence. Usually, the word *include* should not be followed by a colon.

Incorrect: The modern languages in the SPS curriculum include: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Correct: The SPS curriculum features five modern languages: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Use only one space after a colon. In fact, don't use two consecutive spaces at all in a text document. See Spacing between Sentences.

## Commas

When in doubt about whether or not to use a comma, consult your preferred reference manual. Following are examples of the School preference in instances where there may be alternatives.

### **The series comma: a, b, and c**

Place a comma before the conjunction in a series of three or more.

The Lower School Pond is home to ducks, beavers, and turtles.

If your preference is not to use this “serial” comma, be sure you’re consistent within a document or set of documents.

### **Jr. and Sr., along with II, III, etc., are no longer set off by commas, but titles and degrees still are.**

Paul Smith Jr. will not be present, but Allen Currier II will join the group.

Tom Currier, Ph.D., will address the committee on Wednesday.

Erik Swenson, Esq., was a committee member.

### **Commas with geographical names**

Commas separate names of states before and after. When space permits, write out the full name of a state. Otherwise, use the abbreviations noted in the *AP Stylebook*. Eight states – Alaska, Hawaii, and states with five letters or fewer – are never abbreviated. The official postal two-letter state abbreviation without periods should be used only with a Zip Code. Do not put a comma between the state and the Zip Code.

Students from Concord, New Hampshire, have a short trip home.

Linda is the School’s first student from Valdosta, Ga.

The plane arriving from Portland, Maine, was more than an hour late.

Her mailing address is 4 State Street, Concord, NH 03301.

## Commas in simple sentences with compound predicates (don't do it)

In some simple sentences, two verbs (predicates) may be far apart but will still share the same subject. *Don't* put a comma before the conjunction (usually *and*, *but*, or *nor*). In other words, if there's only one subject, don't separate the verbs with a comma. In a compound sentence, each verb will have its own subject. Do put a comma before that conjunction, unless the sentence is very short.

When *she* is omitted from the first example below, the sentence becomes a simple sentence with a compound predicate.

Alex just earned her master's from the Sorbonne, and she is now looking for a job in Algeria.

Alex just earned her master's from the Sorbonne and is now looking for a job in Algeria.

## Commas with essential and non-essential (restrictive and non-restrictive) clauses

If the clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, use commas before and after. In the first example below, the clause *who moved to New Hampshire last year* could be removed without changing the basic meaning of the sentence. In the second example the clause *who's wearing the "Live Free or Die" sweatshirt* is necessary to complete the meaning of the sentence.

My uncle, who moved to New Hampshire last year, has just encountered his first moose.

The man who's wearing the "Live Free or Die" sweatshirt is my uncle.

## Commas in direct address

Set off the person (persons, animals, etc.) being addressed.

Your address at Baccalaureate, Mr. Mueller, is sure to draw media attention.

Nice job, Veronica, but next time please use spell-check.

Exceptions include "Go Big Red" and as the salutation in an e-mail message: "Hi Clarence."

## Commas with titles

Note the difference between a title used as part of a name and not: “Food Services Director Kurt Ellison arranged for cage-free eggs in the Upper.” “The Food Services director, Kurt Ellison, believes in the humane treatment of animals.” (The word *the* sometimes makes the difference.)

## Committees

All names of committees are capitalized, along with their abbreviations. For example:

Executive Risk Committee

Discipline Committee (DC)

Faculty Liaison Committee (FLC)

Staff Liaison Committee (SLC)

**Common Room:** See **Buildings – Classroom/Rooms** listing.

**Courses:** See **Academic Courses**.

## Cross Country

Do not hyphenate the sport *cross country* when used as a noun. It may be abbreviated to XC in a schedule if necessary due to lack of space but not in a formal document (see also **Athletics**). When used as a general adjective, *cross country* is hyphenated; e.g., John’s cross-country bike trip brought in thousands of dollars.

## Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Summa Cum Laude

The School preference is always to italicize these words: *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *summa cum laude*.

## Dates

The School preference for writing dates is the conventional U.S. style:

February 29, 2016

Within text, a comma should follow the year:

Monday, April 1, 2010, will actually take place on a Sunday.

This style is analogous to the name of a state in certain sentences (see **Commas with geographical names**).

## **DC (Discipline Committee)**

The Discipline Committee is frequently abbreviated as DC. (See the *Student Handbook* for information on DCs.)

**Degrees:** See **Academic Degrees**.

## **Departments**

Official names of academic and non-academic departments are capitalized. There are five academic departments: Arts, Humanities, Languages, Mathematics, and Science. (See also **Program**.)

**Admission** – should be capitalized when it represents the office; it no longer ends in s

**Advanced Studies Program (ASP)** – located in the Schoolhouse

**Advancement** – formerly known as Alumni and Development; located in Alumni House

**Arts Department** – (comprises the Fine Arts Program, the Dance Program, the Theatre Program, and the Music Program)

**Athletic Department** – note no s when used with *Department*

**Business Office** – located in Alumni House

**College Advising** – located in the Schoolhouse

**Communications Office** – located in Sheldon

**Facilities Management** – located in the Central Heating Plant

**Department of Food Services**

**Human Resources** – located in Alumni House

**Humanities Department**

**Information Technology** – IT (not ITG) located in the Schoolhouse

**Languages Department** – note the s on *Languages*

**Mathematics Department** – do not abbreviate as *math* when used with *Department*

**Sciences Department**

**Security Services** – located in Alumni House

**Student Support Services** – located in Clark House

**E-mail:** Hyphenate and use lowercase *e*, unless at the beginning of a sentence: *e-mail*. The word *e-mail* can refer to a single message: “Please send me an e-mail when you get my check.”

**E.g.:** Means *for example* (short for *exempli gratia*; use commas before and after): “A few mammals, e.g., the duckbilled platypus, lay eggs.” (See **I.e.**)

## **Emerita, Emeritus, Emeriti**

These words are sometimes added to formal titles to denote that individuals who have retired retain their rank or title. This honor is granted to SPS faculty members by the trustees, and the title should not be used otherwise. *Emerita* refers to a woman, *emeritus* to a man, *emeriti* to a group of men or a mixed group, and *emeritae* to a group of women. Emeritus designations should follow the noun in a title and are capitalized following the rules of titles. (See **Titles**)

Alexander Adams, faculty emeritus, often attends Anniversary Weekend and Graduation.

Alexandra Adams, dean emerita, was the guest of honor.

The committee included four faculty emeriti.

## **Events**

Capitalize the name of annual events and special services held at the School such as the following:

**Alumni Volunteer Weekend**

**Anniversary and Graduation** – do not use an ampersand

**Anniversary Weekend and Graduation** – the preferred School terminology

**Cricket Holiday**

**Family Weekend**

**First Night Service**

**Flagpole Ceremony**

**Inside SPS Weekend**

**Last Night Service**

**Opening Days**

**Trustees Weekend**

**Faculty:** This term by itself refers only to that entire group. Individuals are not *faculty* but *faculty members*.

## **Foreign Words and Phrases**

Foreign words and phrases may be set in italics if they are likely to be unfamiliar to readers. Many foreign phrases such as “et cetera” and “bon voyage” have become an established part of the English language and as such are set in roman – unitalicized – type. The School’s preference is to italicize *ex officio* (by virtue of an office). (See also **Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude**.)

## **Form Designations**

SPS uses the word *form*, rather than *class* or *grade*. SPS has four forms – Third through Sixth. The forms begin with the Third Form (ninth grade) because there used to be a First Form and a Second Form (seventh and eighth grades).

Don’t use Roman or Arabic numerals in form designations (Form III, 4th Form), but instead an ordinal number spelled out before the word (Third Form).

Form should be capitalized only when referring to a specific form by its complete name (Third Form, Form of 1966).

Always write *formmate* as one word and lowercased. Additional information is found under Alumni Association and Its Activities.

When a form year could be unclear (e.g., whether 1904 or 2004), list all four digits of the graduating year for the earlier year only: Henry Adams 1904 and Henry Adams III '04.

To identify form years for students, alumni, and parents, type the year after the name with a forward-leaning apostrophe and with no comma:

Phineas T. Bluster Jr. '73 wrote a note to every other member of his form (note lowercase *form*).

For alumni parents of students in multiple years, a space goes after the person's form year but not between the parent years:

Elroy Barton '68, P'05,'08 spoke in Chapel about his adventures in Sri Lanka.

**Note:** Be sure that the apostrophe in front of the year is forward-leaning. With some software, it is necessary to type the apostrophe immediately after the last letter of the previous word and then go back and add the space. In Word on a PC, you can create a shortcut key: In the symbol menu (under "Insert") find character code 2019 and create a shortcut key for it, e.g., Ctrl ' (apostrophe).

**Format:** See appendixes for formatting guidelines for letters, adviser reports, and documents to be published.

**Fundraising, -er:** One word, unhyphenated

**Grounds:** This remains the preferred term for the School's setting, although *campus* has become acceptable in less-formal usage.

**Home Page:** The main page within a website; not capitalized (see Web).



## **Houses: See Buildings – Houses.**

**Note:** SPS uses the term *houses* for student residences, not *dormitories*.

**I.e.:** Means *that is* (short for *id est*; use commas before and after): “Two trustee committees, i.e., Audit and Investment, are chaired by SPS parents.” Don’t use *i.e.* to mean for example, as in “A number of trustee committees, i.e. [should be e.g.], Education and Student Life, were formed recently.”

**Internet:** Capitalize this proper noun; also capitalize the short form, *Net*.

**Intranet:** Do not capitalize this generic term; the SPS intranet, generally referred to as *Millville*, was established for the exclusive use of the School community.

## **Italics**

Use italics where in earlier days you might have underscored words – either titles of works or words of emphasis. For shorter works, e.g., short stories and non-epic poems, use quotation marks. Within an italicized selection, use roman (non-italicized) for emphasis or titles. (See also **Foreign Words and Phrases**.)

## **It’s, Its: See Apostrophe.**

“It’s (it is) not mine.” “This textbook dedicates half its pages to a bibliography.”

## **Intervisitation**

Intervisitation allows girls and boys to visit one another’s rooms during certain hours. The term is not capitalized within text. *Intervis* is fine for informal use. Information about intervisitation can be found in the *Student Handbook*.

**JV:** The preferred abbreviation for junior varsity is uppercase JV.

## **School Locations**

All locations recognized by a name should be capitalized, for example:

**Brinley Field**

**Bogle-Lechner Field** – also known as the turf field

**Drury Orchard**

**the Flagpole**

**Guzzo Field** – the football field

**Hargate Dam**

**Hitchcock Field**

**Hunt Field**

**Library Pond** – in front of Sheldon

**Lower School Pond** – in front of Ohrstrom

**the Meadow**

**Millville** – Sometimes referred to as the location of the School. When SPS was founded, this area of Concord was known as Millville, due to the numerous sawmills, shingle mills, and gristmills on the banks of the Turkey River. Millville is also the name of the SPS intranet.

**Pillsbury Field**

**the Quadrangle** – the Quad, comprises Brewster, Ford, Manville, and Simpson

**Stovell Indoor Tennis Courts**

**Tien Track**

**Tracy Memorial Theater** – located on the banks of Library Pond on the path between Sheldon and Rectory Road

**Names:** See also **Titles.**

*Coach*, capitalized, and a last name may be used in a second reference; e.g., the team was accompanied by Coach Torney.

Always use *the* (lowercase) with *Reverend* (uppercase) when preceding a full name. (It is not really a title; it is an adjective like *the Honorable*. A person is not a “reverend,” just as she is not an “honorable.”)

Never use *the Reverend* or *the Right Reverend* preceding a last name only. *Bishop* may be used preceding a last name only. Note: It is correct to use a last name only with *the Reverend* if *Mr.* precedes the last name. (Correct: Bishop Griswold or the Right Reverend Dr. Griswold; correct: the Reverend Richard Greenleaf; incorrect: the Reverend Greenleaf.)

**Numbers:** See also **Ages.**

The School preference for writing numbers in text follows the *AP Stylebook*:

Write as words the numbers one through nine.

Write as figures the numbers 10 and above.

Write as figures all numbers with dollar signs (unless it is the first word of a sentence); a decimal point and two zeros are not necessary with even amounts.

Write as figures and spell out the word *cents* for amounts of money less than a dollar.

Write percent amounts as figures; spell out the word *percent* in text, but % is preferable in tables and most other non-text appearances.

There were seven girls and 14 boys on the canoe trip. (If preferred, use the *New York Times* style of figures for both: . . . 7 girls and 14 boys. . . .)

About 75 percent of SPS faculty members hold advanced degrees.

We all thought that \$15 was a lot to pay for a hot dog.

When I was a kid, a hot dog cost only 35 cents.

## Office

Capitalize the word *office* when used as part of the official name of the work unit but not when referring to a room.

The Admission Office is located in Sheldon.

The Business Office is located in Alumni House.

The Rector left his office for a few minutes to greet visiting parents downstairs.

**Paulies:** Alumni or current SPS students are sometimes referred to as Paulies.

## Plurals and Possessives of Names: See also Apostrophe.

Names of people and other proper names form the plural in the usual way by adding *s* or *es*:

The Joneses declared that assigning their child to Halcyon was a breach of family tradition.

Not: We shared a magnificent brunch with the Wilson's.

Singular possessives, whether or not they end in an *s* sound, are formed by adding *apostrophe-s*:

Agnes's laptop was an abundant source of vintage rock 'n' roll.

Plural possessives are formed with only an apostrophe:

The Farraguts' claim of seven generations at the School was finally verified.

The Montroses' miniature golf course was the hit of the party.

**Prefect:** is not capitalized

Each spring several prefects are chosen to serve in each house for the following academic year.

**Possessives:** See **Apostrophe** and **Plurals and Possessives of Names**.

## Program

Capitalize *program* when used as part of an official name of a work unit or functioning group having a cohesive identity, but lowercase *program* when used alone on second reference, e.g., “The Service-Learning Program continues to be very popular. More than half of our students participated in the program this year.”

## Publications

Official names of publications should be printed in italics. If the word *the* is part of the official name, it should be capitalized as well; e.g., *The Pelican*.

*Alumni Horae* – Always use the full name, not to be confused with *Horae Scholasticae*. Do not use *the* with *Alumni Horae*.

*Admission Viewbook* – (the official name of the publication; do not capitalize *viewbook* when used alone.)

*Annual Report*

*ASP Catalog*

*St. Paul’s School Directory*

*SPS Today*

*The Pelican* – *The* is part of the official name and is capitalized

*Yearbook*

**Rector:** is always capitalized. See also **Capitalization of Particular School-Related Words** and **SPS-Specific Preferences**.

**Reports:** Capitalized when it refers to the time at the end of Chapel when announcements are made. See also **Capitalization of Particular School-Related Words**.

**the Reverend:** See **Titles for Ordained Episcopal Clergy**.

**School:** See **Capitalization of Particular School-Related Words**.

**Sports:** See **Athletics**.

## Spacing between Sentences

Word processing allows individual letters to be spaced according to their width, and so the double space after a period, as taught for decades in typing class, is no longer necessary – or desirable – to separate sentences. In fact there is no purpose in standard text documents to use two consecutive spaces (e.g., use tabs instead of spaces to align text in charts or tables, and one space after colons is now standard), so if there might be sentence-separation inconsistencies in your document, just use your word processor's search-and-replace-all tool to replace *space-space* with *space*.

## SPS

The School may be referred to as St. Paul's School or SPS.

Never use periods with SPS.

Use *an*, not *a*, before SPS in a sentence. (See also **A or An: use of before SPS, St. Paul's School, and historic.**)

Do not use *St. Paul's* alone as an adjective (fourth example below).

Do not use a double possessive with *St. Paul's School* (fifth example below).

Correct: Fifteen St. Paul's School students attended the symphony in Boston.

Correct: Fifteen SPS students attended the symphony in Boston.

Correct: Fifteen students from St. Paul's School attended the symphony in Boston.

Incorrect: Fifteen St. Paul's students attended the symphony in Boston.

Incorrect: Fifteen of St. Paul's School's students attended the symphony in Boston.

## States

When space permits, write out the full name of a state. Otherwise, use the abbreviations noted in the *AP Stylebook*. Eight states – Alaska, Hawaii, and states with five letters or fewer – are never abbreviated. The two-letter state abbreviation without periods should be used only with a Zip Code. (See also **Commas with geographical names** in the **Comma** section.)

**Time of Day:** (Styles may differ with formal invitations.)

The School preference is as follows:

Do not use a colon and double zeros for time on the hour, e.g., 9 a.m.

Always write a.m. and p.m. in lowercase with periods.

Use a space after the hour but no internal spaces with a.m. or p.m.

Numbers are aligned from right to left in a schedule.

9 a.m.

9:45 a.m.

As with dates, a *from* requires a *to*.

Correct: This week's faculty meeting will take place Tuesday from 3 to 4 p.m.

Correct: This week's faculty meeting will take place 3-4 p.m. on Tuesday.

Incorrect: Tomorrow's faculty meeting will take place from 3-4 p.m.

## Titles – People

Unless in a list in a publication, as part of a signature at the end of a letter, or when directly preceding a person's name, all professional titles (with the exception of Rector) are lowercased.

The president of the Student Council asked the Rector if he planned to pitch in the faculty softball game. He said he would defer to the vice rector for faculty for that position.

The meeting was called to order by Director of Safety George Pangakis.

The vice rector for faculty called the meeting to order.

Henry Augustus Coit was the First Rector of the School. (Note uppercase *First*.)

The department heads met to discuss the proposed field trip to Fenway Park.

Science Department Head Davies Cabot reported on the status of the new Engineering Honors Program.

## **Titles for Ordained Episcopal Clergy**

**Note:** See the *AP Stylebook* for a complete list of religious titles.

A priest in the Episcopal Church is always referred to as the Reverend (note that *the* is lowercase when it appears within text), followed by the person's full name (never just *Reverend* followed by the person's last name).

If the priest is also a bishop (*bishop* is not capitalized unless followed by a name), use the *Right Reverend* or *Bishop* with the name.

If the priest has a doctoral degree, use *the Reverend Dr.* In a list, *Ph.D.* may also follow the name (eliminating the *Dr.* preceding). When using these titles in a block address (when *the* is the first word at the left margin) or as part of the closing of a letter, capitalize *the* as well.

In text:

Today the Reverend Alice Courtright will deliver the sermon.

Formal salutation to a bishop in a letter:

Right Reverend Sir (or Madam):

Informal Salutation in a letter:

Dear Bishop Tutu,

Letters to a priest are addressed:

The Reverend (and Mrs.) Richard E. Greenleaf



Formal salutation to a priest in a letter:

Reverend Sir (or Madam): or Dear Sir (or Madam):

Informal salutation to a priest in a letter:

Dear Mr. (and Mrs.) Greenleaf,

Dear Fr. (Father) (and Mrs.) Greenleaf,

## **Titles – Works**

Use italics for the titles of novels, operas, epic poems, and most other long works. Use quotation marks for short stories, one-act plays, most poems, and other short works.

**Trustee:** As other titles except Rector, do not capitalize unless immediately before a name (e.g., *Trustee Cox*). *Board of trustees* is not capitalized, nor is the shorthand *board*. (See **Titles**.)

**Vice Rector:** Capitalize only before a name as any other title except Rector, but not after. (See **Titles**.)

**Web:** website, web page, web-based (lowercase)

When referring to web addresses (URLs) in text, it is generally not necessary to include the prefix `http://` or to underline them. (Some prefixes, often `https://`, are required for access to the site.) To create a link, use Word's hyperlink tool under the "Insert" tab.

## PREPARING DOCUMENTS FOR PUBLICATION

The following guidelines will help you create a text document for the Communications Office to turn into a publication. Using these guidelines consistently will ensure greater accuracy in the finished document.

New projects should be discussed early with the Communications Office.

Provide final copy as early as possible to give time for editing and design. The Communications Office needs to learn about a rush job as soon as you're aware of the project.

Final copy should be indeed *final* unless it requires further conversation with the Communications Office. The text should be spell-checked and in paragraph format using one space after periods. Do not use all CAPS.

Do not lay out or design the document, but talk with the designer first about the purpose of the publication.

If your document has columns, place them sequentially, not side by side, with a note (in a different color) about their placement.

In the first line of paragraphs, use the tab key for indentations, not the automatic indentation function.

**Accuracy of information, including student names and web links, is the responsibility of the originating office.**

## BUSINESS LETTER

March 22, 2012

Mr. Melvin C. Stubbs  
Acme Anvil Company  
277 Main Street  
Vermillion, MN 55085

Dear Mr. Stubbs:

This is a facsimile of the block letter, whose structural parts all begin at the left margin. We suggest that you use Times font (12 point) and left and right margins of 1.25 inches. (With Microsoft Word the preset margins for a new document are 1 inch top and bottom and 1.25 inches left and right.)

Type the date about 2 inches from the top edge of the stationery. If using Microsoft Word, press the Enter key six times from the top default margin of 1 inch. Leave at least a half inch (two or three blank lines) below any printing on letterhead stationery.

The preferred style for the date is month-day-year: July 25, 2013.

You may leave up to eight blank lines between the date and the inside (mailing) address, depending on the length of the letter, to make the letter appear vertically centered on the stationery. Always use the two-letter state abbreviation (no periods) with the Zip Code in the inside address.

Leave one blank line below the inside address and type the salutation, followed by a colon, unless you know the addressee well enough to use a first name. Leave one blank line below the salutation and start the body of the letter. Paragraphs are single spaced internally with double spacing (one blank line) between paragraphs.

Leave one blank line below the last line of the body of the letter and type the complimentary closing, capitalizing the first word only. Leave room for the writer's signature. It is not necessary to type the writer's title if it appears on the letterhead.

Mr. Melvin C. Stubbs

March 22, 2012

Page 2

If a letter requires more than one page, use a blank sheet of stationery of the same quality as the letterhead for the additional pages. Type the addressee's name at the left margin about one inch from the top edge of the paper. Type the date and the page number on the next two lines. Leave two blank lines and continue with the letter.

Always carry over at least two lines of the body of the letter to the last page. Never hyphenate the last word on a page.

If identification initials are used (the initials of the writer [uppercased] and typist [lowercased]), they are typed double spaced (leaving one blank line) below the last signature line (name or title).

Enclosure notations are typed on the line below the identification line.

If there are any copy notations, type them on the line directly below any previous notations. The writer does not usually sign a copy; however, a check mark usually is made on each copy next to the name of the intended recipient of the copy.

Sincerely,

Angelina Feldspar  
Director (if not on letterhead)

AF/mm  
Enclosures (2)  
cc: Mr. Tom Tailor

A postscript is typed two to four blank lines below the last notation. It is not necessary to head the postscript with the abbreviation P.S.; however, the writer should initial it.

## E-MAIL COMMUNICATIONS

While formal letters remain the primary method of official correspondence from the School, e-mail is often appropriate. Generally, it is considered courteous to respond to e-mail within 24 hours of receipt, or sooner, depending on the context.

Use good sense. Be professional and discreet about what you say and how you say it. **Don't say anything in e-mail that you would not say in person, on voicemail, or in a printed memo.** Remember that any number of people may have access to your e-mail message, and there is no guarantee of privacy for what you are writing. E-mail does not replace the formal Adviser's Report sent to parents during an academic term.

A few other items of e-mail protocol:

Try not to use e-mail in order to avoid telephone or face-to-face conversation when a difficult issue is involved.

Always use the subject line.

A salutation ("Dear Freddy") is not only courteous but also helps someone who's only copied on the message to quickly realize he or she is not the primary recipient.

Double-check to make sure you're sending your message to the right recipient. Think twice before hitting Reply to All.

Acceptable fonts are Arial or Calibri, 10-12 point size.

Multiple fonts and colors are often confusing. Use italics or bold for emphasis.

Limit emoticons to messages for recipients you know well.

In communicating with student families, be aware that you cannot know or control who has access to messages in a student's household. Do not send messages of a confidential or sensitive nature unless you have been expressly invited to do so by the recipient and unless you have been given explicit assurance that your message is secure.

In general, it is best not to initiate e-mail contact with a student's household.

Especially for formal messages, it is a good idea to create a custom signature with your name and contact information.

List only your SPS credentials in the signature block. Please don't add graphics. They use extra memory to send and receive, and not all browsers are set to open them automatically.

Name  
Title (SPS credentials only)  
Mail address  
Office phone  
Cell phone  
Fax number (if appropriate)  
[www.sps.edu](http://www.sps.edu)

Use the following as part of your signature at the bottom of e-mails:

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This e-mail message and any attachments are only for the use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, and prohibited from unauthorized disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message is strictly prohibited. If you received this message in error, please notify the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.

## ADVISER REPORTS

Reports for your advisees are now created electronically on Millville within SPSEA under the Advising tab. The easiest approach may be to write them in Word and paste them into the online system.

### Format

Use Times New Roman font, 12-point size, and single spacing and one-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides.

Date in the upper left-hand corner.

No indentations, no salutations, no address block.

Text should be flush left and not right or justified.

“Adviser Report for (student name),” flush left two lines under date.

Be sure to type your name at the bottom, and add an electronic signature if you like.

The registrar will print and mail the reports to parents, but be sure to keep a hard copy in the advisee’s file.

### Content

Avoid using template paragraphs (e.g., weather reports and commentary on the scenery) to introduce your report unless the information is interesting and relevant to the student’s experience.

The content of the report should address these four aspects of the student’s term: social, academic, extracurricular, and athletic.

The report should be a review of the term and a clear presentation of your perspective of the student’s total experience; it should not be a news flash, containing information or opinion that has not been communicated prior to the receipt of the report.

Negative comments and/or concerns should be communicated directly to parents well before the adviser report is sent. If this communication has occurred, feel free to refer to it again in the report.

Avoid presenting your own opinion on larger, School-wide issues. If necessary, inform the parents of the political climate of the School directly; then leave it up to them to draw their own conclusions.

**Style (consult the earlier part of this booklet for more detailed guidelines)**

Always check the spelling of a student's name: first, last, and nickname.

Spell *adviser* with *e*, not *o* and not capitalized.

Areas of study are lowercased (humanities), but courses are uppercased (Humanities IV).

Academic terms are capitalized (Fall Term, Winter Term, Spring Term).

Use Third Form, not III Form, Form III or 3<sup>rd</sup> Form; always capitalize form when referring to a specific form.

Capitalize *School* when referring to SPS (except in instances such as “this school” or “the school year”). The School may be referred to as St. Paul's School or SPS.

Don't use periods with SPS.

Use *an*, not *a*, before SPS in a sentence.

Never use *St. Paul's* alone as an adjective (incorrect: St. Paul's athletic teams).

Never use a double possessive with *St. Paul's School*; reword if necessary (incorrect: St. Paul's School's graduation requirements).

Capitalize *Chapel* when referring to the SPS Chapel or the activity that takes place in the Chapel. Use *the Old Chapel* (not the *Small Chapel* or *Little Chapel*); the actual name of the Old Chapel is the Chapel of St. Paul.

Capitalize names of buildings and location names, but use a lowercase *the* preceding a name (the Cage, the Language Center, the Chapel).

Names of offices are capitalized: the Office of the Vice Rector for Faculty, the Alumni Office.

Do not use an apostrophe with athletic teams (girls basketball, boys ice hockey).

Rector is always capitalized, but do not capitalize other professional titles unless they directly precede a name: Mike Ricard, director of the ASP or ASP Director Mike Ricard, Head of House Laura Hrasky or Laura Hrasky, head of house.

The School preference for writing dates is the conventional U.S. style: *February 29, 2016*. Within text, a comma should follow the year: *Monday, April 1, 2010, will actually take place on a Sunday*.

### **SPS-Specific Preferences**

form, rather than class

grounds is preferred to campus

house, rather than dormitory or dorm

Seated Meal

Sixth Former, Fifth Former, Fourth Former, Third Former, rather than senior, junior, sophomore, freshman







# ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

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