



SAVIO
COLLEGE

WELCOME TO

Savio College

MAKING THE CHANGE
FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY
SUCCESSFULLY

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been produced to help make the move of students from their primary school to their new secondary school, Savio College, as smooth and as successful as possible.

In this booklet parent and students will find basic school information and procedures on the main aspects of what makes Savio College.

STARTING THE TRANSITION

Savio College holds an annual open day, where prospective students and their parents visit the school for a few hours to get an idea of Savio College and the Salesian way of education.

Entry into Savio College is via a ballot organised and carried out by the Secretariat for Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Malta. Some students enter the College because their parents are employees of the College or because their older brothers are currently Savio students.

Once the students are selected, the Head of School visits their home to welcome the family into Savio College. The aim here is not only to get to know the students, their families in their home environment but also to help students and their parents know what to expect when they start the new school year. Students and parents can ask questions on any aspect of the new school, and get answers which make them better prepared for the transition.



On the last Saturday before the start of the new school year, the new students are invited to attend an Orientation Day where they will be shown around the school again so that they know exactly where they need to be the following Monday when school starts. They also get a chance to socialise and play so that they do not feel as fish out of the water on their first day of school. Last minute information and notices are also given out.

SAVIO COLLEGE – GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEW SCHOOL

- There are 2 classes per year group, a total of 10 classes in the school.
- Students will be helped to find classrooms and to get used to where they need to go.
- The school is most probably larger than the student's old primary school.

- The basement holds the Library, the Art room, the Kitchen Lab, the Resource Room, the VET Media literacy lab and a classroom.
- The ground floor holds the Year 7, 8 and 9 classrooms, the Secretary and Headmaster's office. There is also the School Main Hall, the sports grounds and the gymnasium. One can find also the kitchen and the dining room. Yes, because Savio College is a home that welcomes the students for several live ins throughout the year.
- On the first floor one finds the Staff room, the Computer, Robotics & IT labs, the Science labs (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and the Music room.
- On the second floor one can find the Assistant Head's office, the Year 10 and 11 classrooms and two classrooms.
- In the primary school students probably had their main class teacher and maybe a couple of other teachers for special subjects. Now students will have a separate teacher for each subject they will learn. They will also have a Year teacher who will take care of them as a class.
- The main rule each student has to remember when a student at Savio College is that of RESPECT. Students are to respect one another, their teachers and LSEs, the Salesian community and the non-academic staff (e.g. secretary and the domestic staff). In return students are to expect to be respected back. Besides this the main simple rules that Year 7 students are to learn are:

- When the teacher arrives for the lesson, pupils are to stand up and wait for the teacher to enter, in silence.
- During the lesson, no pupil is to speak out without permission.

ST JOHN BOSCO AND ST DOMINIC SAVIO

John Bosco was born on 16th August 1815, to a family of farmers in Turin. He lost his father when he was still 2 years old, but his mother Mamma Margerita filled both parent roles excellently and gave John and his brother innumerable lessons in upright living, Christian fortitude, and respect of God.

At the age of 9 John had a dream that he was later to understand was God calling him to work amongst the young. In the dream John found himself fighting a large crowd of rowdy lads who were cursing and behaving very badly. He tried to stop them, but they refused to listen to him. Suddenly, a Man appeared, who motioned to John and said, "Not with blows will you help these boys, but with goodness and kindness!" "Who are you?" gasped the astonished boy. Then a Woman appeared. Putting her arms around him, she said, "Watch what I do, John." John looked. The boys changed to a pack of snarling wild animals whose growls sent terror to his heart. Then the woman put out her hand. The beasts changed again, to a frolicking flock of lambs. "But what does it all mean? I'm just a farm boy. What can I

do?" He burst into tears. The Lady's answer came to him, ever to resound in his heart, to be repeated audibly several times in his life. This is the field of your work. Be humble, steadfast, and strong!"

Don Bosco became a priest and started his lifelong mission with the young when on December 8th 1841 he met Bartolomeo Garelli. Bartolomeo had sneaked into the church where Don Bosco was preparing to say Mass. The sacristan caught him and was about to kick the boy out, when Don Bosco intervened and with his wit and humour befriended the boy. He then invited Bartolomeo to meet again the following Sunday and with him Don Bosco told Bartolomeo to bring his friends. And so began his work amongst the young, where through **friendship** and **loving kindness, reason** and **religion** he educated so many young into becoming good Christians and honest citizens. His work continues today by the Salesians, an order of priests, nuns and lay people whom he founded on December 18th 1859 named after the kind and humble saint, St. Francis of Sales.

St. Dominic Savio, after whom Savio College is called, was a boy who attended Don Bosco's oratory. St. John Bosco wrote Dominic's biography and thus much is known of this young saint's life. Dominic was very bright and enjoyed school as well as play. He was well liked and respected by his friends. Dominic had remarkable control over his emotions, and while he could get angry like any of his companions, he was able to control himself in most situations. He was friendly and showed early his

leadership qualities and a strong sense of duty. He was a prayerful person and had an ever-maturing spirituality.

From a very young age, Dominic showed clear signs of sainthood. When he was just seven years old, a few days before his First Holy Communion, Dominic decided to live by the following rules:

- Receive Confession and the Holy Communion as frequently as possible;
- To sanctify Sundays and holy days in special ways;
- To have Jesus and Mary as his friends;
- To rather die than commit sin.

At the age of 12, Dominic started attending Don Bosco's school and oratory. When they first met Dominic told Don Bosco:

Take me with you, Father. You can be the tailor, and I'll be the cloth. Make me into a beautiful garment for Our Lord."

On another occasion, Dominic asked Don Bosco how he could become a saint. Don Bosco instructed him:

The way to be a saint, Dominic, is to be always

*cheerful, do your duties to the best of your ability,
and give your classmates good example.
Keep in mind that the Lord Jesus is always with you
and wants your happiness.”*

Dominic fell ill and died aged 15. He is a clear example of how young people can live normal lives and become saints.

SCHOOL ETHOS

Savio College is a Salesian school led by the Salesians of Don Bosco. This clearly identifies the ethos and spirit that makes Savio College.

Many people state that the moment one enters the school, one feels that s/he has entered a home and not a school. There is a clear sense of being welcomed, feeling at ease and part of a family. This is not a coincidence but is a direct result of the way things are done at the college.

The Salesian way of education is based on ensuring that everyone forming part of the school – students, parents and teachers – feel that they are respected and loved by one and all. There is a feeling of optimism and cheerfulness that underlie all that goes on in the school.

This is what Don Bosco meant by friendship and loving

kindness.

Decisions taken by the Senior Leadership Team are explained to students, parents and teachers. Similarly decisions taken by teachers are explained to students in class. When there is disagreement on some matter, all views are listened to, and final decisions are explained and reasoned with all parties involved. This is what Don Bosco referred to as the use of Reason.

The sacraments are an essential pillar of the college. Daily Mass and Form masses are just one aspect of the religious framework on which all the college activities takes place. This is what Don Bosco referred to as Religion.

Thus the ethos of the school can be summarised as one where family spirit, cheerfulness and respect can be clearly felt. It is an ethos formed around Loving kindness, Reason and Religion.





SUBJECTS

For a relatively small school, Savio College has a wide variety of subjects.

In Year 7 and 8 there are:

- Art
- English
- Environmental Studies (History, Geography, Social Studies)
- Foreign Languages: Italian, German & French*
- ICT (C3)
- Integrated Science
- Mathematics
- Maltese
- Music
- P.E. and Sports Fundamentals
- PSCD
- Religious Knowledge

*In Year 7, students will learn all foreign languages listed above. At the end of Year 7, students will choose one language which they will learn up till Year 11.



In Year 9, 10 and 11 students will learn:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Foreign Language (General)
- ICT (C3)
- Maltese
- Mathematics
- PSCD
- Physical Education (General)
- Physics
- Religious Knowledge

At the end of Year 8, students can choose one subject from each list:

List 1

- Accounting
- Art
- Chemistry
- Information Technology (VET)
- Physical Education

List 2

- Biology
- Computing
- Economics
- Graphical Communication
- Media-Literacy (VET)

List 3

- Applied Award in Archaeology
- Applied Award in Photography
- Applied Award in Music and Sound production
- Award in Applied Robotics and Single Board Computer
- Environmental Studies
- Prince's Trust International xl/Achieve

ASSESSMENT

Savio College uses various types of assessments in order to provide feedback to students and parents about the student's educational progress.

At present, all students are assessed continuously throughout the year through a series of formative and summative assessments done at school and at home. All these on-going assessments are called School Based Assessment.

Besides this there is also a formal examination assessment session at the end of the school year called the Annual Examination session.

Both assessments contribute to the final grade each student obtains at the end of the school year as follows:

- Continuous Assessment (30%)
- Annual Examination session (70%)

Educators are strongly encouraged to apply assessment that reflects different skills, incorporating different assessment tools such as HWs, CWs, tests, essays, lab reports, interviews, project, video, portfolios and presentations.

Savio College SLT and educators periodically evaluate and update the college's assessment policy so that it is as effective as possible in informing on student progress.

The aforementioned system aims to ensure that every assessment however big or small contributes to the final mark a student obtains and that everything (and not just the Annual examination) is important.

MY SCHOOL

My School is an internet school database system which facilitates communication of information from the Senior Leadership Team, teachers and LSEs to students and their parents. Since assessments are also posted in MySchool, students and parents can keep regular track of their academic progress. Announcements, daily attendance, assessment grades, and Annual reports are all communicated via MySchool.

The Achievement Points system aims at bringing to light all that is positive in our students. It is continually updated on the My School portal. Through this system students are awarded points for achievements, be it behavioural or academic. Points could be deducted too.

MySchool can be accessed from anywhere – the students' home, the parents' workplace etc., Students and at least one of the parents are required to register to MySchool by submitting a unique email address which they check on a regular basis.

Students are expected to have a computer and internet access at home since some material and information is passed on to them electronically on a regular basis.

SPORTS AND CULTURE

Sports and Culture are of the essence at Savio College. The daily one hour long break provides ample time for students to participate in both. Football, volleyball and basketball tournaments are held daily. Savio College also has its college teams in the various sport disciplines. The Savio Athletics' teams holds regular training sessions and events.

Savio College has a school orchestra and a school choir. These take part in the annual award giving ceremony. Students'



individual talents in the musical and choral field can also be seen in the annual Academy that is held in honour of Our Lady Help of Christians.

Drama is also given its due importance. Students are encouraged to participate in the drama presentations that are put up for the previously mentioned annual Award Giving Ceremony. During the break students can also join various clubs such as those of cooking, trekking, crafts & DIY, robotics and gardening.

SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AND PROFILE

At the end of Year 11, students are given a National Secondary School Certificate and Profile (SSC&P). The SSC&P is recognised by the Malta Qualifications Council and is awarded at three possible levels: Level 0, Level 1 and Level 2 (this on a National scale of 1 – 8, 1 being the lowest educational level and 8 being the highest).

In order to achieve a level 1 or 2 SSC&P students need to obtain minimum requirements in the following areas:

- **Formal education (deals with academic results)**
- **Non-formal education (deals with activities organised by the school and held during or after school hours)**
- **Informal education (deals with activities held outside school and not organised directly by the school)**
- **Personal qualities (qualities shown by the student)**
- **Attendance (school attendance)**

More detailed information about this certificate will be communicated at school.

STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Students' Council has been linked to the Eco-Schools group. Students in the council hold regular meetings and discuss how they can make college life better for students. They also offer a voice for students during regular communication they maintain with the Head of School.

This council serves as a model of democracy in education and how students can be socially and politically involved in the society they live in on their way to becoming responsible and honest citizens.

A TYPICAL SCHOOL DAY

Students can arrive at the college as early as 7:00. During this time, as they wait for the first school bell to ring for Assembly at 7:45, students can enter the games room and spend some time playing and socialising with each other.

After Assembly, students proceed to their home classroom. At 8:00 the bell goes for the first lesson. There are three forty minute lessons. The bell goes at 10:00 for a short lunch break.

Lessons resume at 10:20 and after another three lessons, the bell goes at 12:20 for the 1 hour long break.

The break finishes at 13:15 and students have 5 minutes walking time to return to their classroom. After the last two lessons of the day, the bell rings for the last time during the day at 14:40.

TIMETABLE AND HW DIARY

In primary school it is common practice for students to carry all their books and copybooks to and from school. In secondary school this is not possible and students are to look at their timetable every evening after they finish their HW and studies, to see which books files and copybooks they need for the following day.

Students also need a HW diary. They are to write their HW in the date when it is due. In secondary education HW is rarely given for the next day. Therefore students need to learn to listen carefully to the teacher when s/he tells them the day the HW is due and write it in their diary on the day it is due.

Then when they arrive home they can open their HW diary and see what HW they have for the following day. If there is no HW left for the next day they can turn the pages and have a look at HW which is due on the days to come. After doing this HW they can mark it as done.

After an hour or so of HW students are expected to do some daily studying. Students are encouraged to have a study timetable where they have a subject or two to revise on a daily basis. If they

do not know how to make a study timetable, students are to ask a teacher or the Assistant Head for help.

After finishing their HW and study, students are to look at the school timetable of the next day, remove any unneeded books from their school bag and put in all the needed books, copybooks and files. They are then to look at their HW diary to see what HW was due for the next day to make sure it is done and placed in their schoolbag. If such a system is used, missed HW is avoided or kept to an absolute minimum.





THE SCHOOL YEAR

The school year is divided into three terms. Term 1 starts on the Monday following Independence Day which falls on the 21st of September and ends a few days before Christmas. After around two weeks of Christmas holidays, the second term starts. This ends on the Friday just before Palm Sunday. After two weeks of Easter holidays, the third term starts and this ends towards the end of June.

Currently, formal examinations are held at the end of the school year and are called Annual Examinations.

During the month of June, school finishes at 12.20 instead of 14:40.



PARENTS' ROLE

Parents are the first educators and consequently essential in their children's education. At Savio parents are encouraged to have an active role in their son's education both at home and at school. At home parents can overview their son's progress and studies by looking at his HW diary and see that all HW is done and brought to school on time. This is mostly expected in the lower forms. In all forms, parents are encouraged to prepare a HW and study timetable and see to it that their son follows it. MySchool also helps parents keep track of their son's progress. In case of difficulties, parents are encouraged to contact the school leadership team or the teachers using emails and telephone calls.

Parents are also expected to be role models in their son's life by living sound values which are compatible with those the student gets from school. In this way, parents become co-educators with the educational staff of Savio College in giving the student a sound holistic education.

PARENTS' DAYS

Although communication with parents is ongoing at Savio, the need for formally meeting face to face to discuss students' progress is still felt. This is done in Parents' Days. Year 7 students have two Parents' Days – one in the first term to see how students are settling in in the new reality of Savio College and what teachers are expecting from them, and another one a few weeks after the publishing of the half - yearly report. This is held in the second term to evaluate the progress in the first half of the scholastic year. Parents are expected to be present for Parents' Days with their son, online or in person.

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

From time to time teachers organise educational tours for their classes. These tours aim to make the subject matter discussed in class more relevant and realistic. During these tours the students are accompanied by their teachers and LSEs and most of the time are asked to prepare some kind of write up after the experience.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks can be bought from any bookshop parents prefer. Nonetheless, the college enters into contracts with selected suppliers from time to time to ensure that parents get the best service possible. Parents receive the booklist and all the information to help them make the best choice of supplier.

STATIONERY

At Savio we realise that the first weeks of school can be very hectic with students coming home with lists of stationery to buy every day. We try to make this process more efficient and less time consuming by asking teachers to submit stationery lists before the end of the scholastic year.

UNIFORMS

The uniform that students wear throughout the year is practical, comfortable and smart.

It is made up of a grey shorts and green T-shirt which can be used for sports and when the weather gets warmer. Then, Savio College has its unique dark grey tracksuit kit with yellow zipper jacket and trousers. Students are expected to come from home wearing the tracksuit trousers and T-shirt or grey jacket according to cold or warm the weather is.

For the colder months, Savio College has designed a windproof and waterproof black jacket. All uniform items can be easily identified since the logo of the school has been set on all uniform pieces.

Other uniform pieces are available to buy, even though students are not obliged to have them. These are the school panel cap, the neck warmer and the slouch beanie with the school logo.

The items mentioned above can be purchased from Garmmo outlet at Attard.

Sports footwear has to be rigorously multi-studded, suitable both for the indoor pavilion and for the running track/turfed open grounds.

TRANSPORT

Savio College organises the school transport for all students. The service provider is responsible to contact new students during the month of September in order to establish a safe pick up and drop off point from all localities round Malta. School transport is provided free of charge as per National Government Scheme.

The School Leadership Team keeps contact with and holds frequent informal meetings with the service provider.

The School Leadership Team, although outside school hours, is interested in every student's wellbeing. For this reason, any form of mischief, bullying, arrogance, and unacceptable behaviour bears its consequence. Any form of serious complaints are to be directed to the School Management for an immediate action.

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT?

At Savio College we are aware that the transition from Primary to Secondary education can be a complex and daunting process at first. Although we try to make students and families at ease as much as possible, some might still have some minor difficulties during the first few weeks. There are several people who can help:

The School Leadership Team, consisting of the Headmaster and the Assistant Heads are always an email or phone call away for parents. Students on the other hand know that true to the Salesian way of doing things, both school leaders are approachable and have an open door policy, in that they are always available for help. The School Leadership Team should be the first point of reference for parents to seek advice and help.

The Year group teacher, which is a teacher that is tied to a particular class, is also a suitable person students can approach if they need advice or have some problem. The Year group teacher can then either help the student him/herself or direct the student elsewhere for help.

The School counsellor, is an excellent help for students (and sometimes even parents) who are dealing with emotional, psychological and social difficulties. Students are either referred by parents or teachers to the Senior Leadership Team and then the latter discusses each particular case with the school counsellor who then decides on a timetable of sessions.





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