

1839

Roanoke Female Seminary Rules

Edward W. Johnston

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RULES OF THE ROANOKE FEMALE SEMINARY.

1. There must be prompt and cheerful obedience to the written Rules, and to all injunctions of the Teachers and Governesses.
2. In school, at study hours, during Religious Duties, and after going to bed, there must be strict Silence.
3. Noise with the feet, with desks, or with Chairs; disorderly Running, in the House or School; and all Cries or clamorous Laughter, are forbidden.
4. The Roll will be called at Morning and Evening Prayers. No absence will be allowed. The Dress will be inspected, on both these occasions.
5. In the interval between Morning Prayers and Breakfast, young ladies must make their beds, and put their Rooms in order for Inspection.
6. One pupil, in each room, will be selected, as Inspectress. She will be answerable for all Irregularities, of which she does not report the authors; and will give out and receive back clothes from the Wash.
7. Each pupil will bring from home an exact list of her clothes. They shall, every week, be compared with it, by the Inspectress of her room.
8. A Monitress will be appointed in each Class; who will be answerable for all disorders, in study-hours, that she does not report.
9. Five minutes after the ringing of the bell, will be allowed, for Pupils to be in their places, at Table, or in School.
10. At Table, the quietest Good-Manners must be observed. No Greediness nor Daintiness must be discovered. Pupils must learn either to speak French, or to be silent.
11. There must be no familiarity with Servants; nor, on the other hand, must they ever be treated uncivilly.
12. Going out without a bonnet, or quitting your Seat, or the School-room without leave, will always incur a mark of Ill-conduct.
13. The careless Destruction of any part of the Property of the Establishment will subject to a Bad Mark, and must, besides, be paid for.
14. Nothing belonging to the House must be used, without leave.
15. Each class will have its Garden-ground, its tools and Seeds or Plants. These must not be entered nor touched, by one of another class, without leave.
16. The same respect for the property of others must be practised in every thing—books, stationary, clothes, &c. &c.
17. The Public Road, the Gardens of the Proprietor, the Cultivated Fields, the Fruit-trees, and the Creek are, without leave, strictly forbidden ground.
18. Pupils must, in general, do nothing which, known abroad, would injure the character of the School, or their own.
19. Tale-bearing, Rudeness of Speech, Quarrelling, Nick-names, attempts to frighten or to teaze each other, all sporting with the Truth, and all Refusing to speak to each other, will be punished.
20. There must be no Idleness. Pupils must endeavour to render their very Recreations useful. When not taking Exercise, they must read or work. No Plays will be suffered, in the House, unless with the Governess's permission.
21. Pupils will not be allowed to go home, except on Holidays—(2 days at Christmas, 1 at Easter, and 1 on the 4th July), or as a reward for unusual Diligence. But Parents, visiting them, will always be entertained with pleasure.
22. Saturday must be occupied in mending Clothes, attending to some house-hold Art. or something improving.
23. Sunday must be dedicated to Moral and Religious Studies and Duties; and must be profaned by no Noise or Play.
24. The Morning Bell will ring at Day-break. Prayers 20 Minutes after. Breakfast 1 hour after Prayers. School will open 30 minutes after the Breakfast bell, and continue 3 hours. There will then be a Recess 'till 1 P. M.—the Dinner hour. School will re-open at 2, and continue 'till 5. Supper at 6 in winter, and 7 in Summer. After Supper, Study resumed 'till 9—the hour of Evening Prayers. 30 minutes will then be allowed for going to bed. No light permitted, after that.
25. The ordinary Punishments and Rewards will consist of Marks of Good or Ill Conduct. Of these, a Register will be kept, and the Comparative Result reported, monthly, to the Parents. Idleness, Falsehood, Ill-temper, Disobedience, want of Cleanliness, any Immodesty, and slighter faults habitually committed, will be punished by, 1st. Loss of Recreation; 2nd. Restrictions in the quality of Food; 3rd. Confinement. Pupils committing gross Improperities, or who show themselves, after sufficient trial, incorrigible, will be expelled.

TERMS.

Board, including Washing, Lights and Fuel, \$100 for the Session of 10 Months. *Tuition*, in the Regular Course, (English and French, or Italian) \$50. *Music*, Piano, Guitar, or Harp, \$50, including the use of Instruments. Of these Fees, \$100 payable on entrance: the remainder, at the end of 5 Months. Bedding will be furnished, at 50 cents per month.

Dress. For Winter, Bottle-green Circassian or Merino, with Capes of the same. For those below 12 years, Pantalets like the dress. Two suits are sufficient. Pupils should bring each a Table Spoon, Tea Spoon, 6 common Towels, and as many of each article of Dress, except Frocks and under-frocks: 2 pair each good Leather, and neat Morocco Shoes: Bonnet of Cane or Straw, Nun's pattern, trimmed with Crimson Ribbon. Embroideries not permitted, unless worked, in the School, by the Pupil herself. Jewelry forbidden.

REMARKS.

The Principal feels it necessary, at no matter what hazard of offending, to point out certain prevailing faults, that strongly impede the course of all good Instruction.

An excellent spirit exists, of giving to children every advantage attainable through Schools. Expense is not spared. Of Money, and of solicitude to bestow whatever Money can procure, Parents are lavish. But of that Domestic Care and those Early Influences, which, to so great a degree, determine the value of all subsequent Education, they are generally any thing but liberal.

Around the child, every thing should be assembled, that can advantageously direct its first impressions. It must have learnt to respect and obey its Parents; or it never will its Teacher, until, with infinite pains, he forms it anew. It must have seen habits of Mental Cultivation at home, and breathed something of the atmosphere of Knowledge; or study will be hateful to it abroad. It must have known something of Restraint, have been corrected of every wrong wish, every false desire; or how should it love the labours and the restrictions inevitable in a well-conducted School? If nothing but injudicious Fondness has been practised at home; if, no habits but of Self-Will, of Idleness, of Indifference to Excellence, of disregard for every thing but Frivolity and Folly have been formed—(and such is now widely the fact)—the Teacher, no matter how solicitous to do all that should be done, *must* generally fail of any very high result.

That Schools, in a word, may be able to effect any thing of uniform, any thing of certain good, it is necessary that there be a Reform, in that which precedes them—the Domestic Education and Government. These are now defective, in the extreme. The general laxity of Parental Discipline has grown to be such, and such the Disorders which it has engendered, that people can neither endure the faults of their children, nor the measures necessary to correct them. Instead of that Patriarchal rule, which formerly held families in order, there reigns a Democratic Equality, in which the children—as forming the Majority—are sovereign. Insuperable in the household, they are sent to a Teacher. Of him, by a common call, Severity is demanded: and yet the very persons who—knowing how much their children need it, because they have never been used to it—are loudest in the demand, prove, almost always, the first to revolt at Severity, apply it as cautiously and temperately as you may.

Than indiscriminate Rigour, nothing is easier. It asks little beyond a rough temper and a narrow understanding. But that good Severity, which never tears up a Virtue, in eradicating a Fault, and which ever, in its very rigours, deals kindly with the young mind, is something less easy and trivial. It is of this sort that, in the present condition of things, there is need, to correct the manners and the minds of young people not really vicious, and in the main perhaps virtuously brought up, but spoiled by unbounded indulgence.

If the tree of Knowledge once grew in a Paradise, it grows there no longer. A school is, necessarily, a place of some privation, and of many restraints. It ought not to give, and cannot afford, gratifications, which were better denied at home. But when children have never known Constraint: when they are untried in any of those wholesome Hardships, amongst which Patience, Courage, Self-command, Perseverance, and all the robust virtues form themselves, a system of proper Discipline becomes impossible, because intolerable to its objects. You must then apply, not the best laws, but the best that they are capable of receiving. Time, especially, must be given them, to lay aside their faults, and to put on virtues, in their stead. For these things, the Teacher must wait with the child, the Parent with the Teacher: and woe to either that shall, by a hot precipitation, cut short, in its very beginnings, the delicate and precious work, that demands so much circumspection and so many efforts!

But Parents, neglecting what can never be so well done as at home, fling every thing upon the Teacher—as if his business were so easy or so unimportant, that gratuitous difficulties may be multiplied upon him, at pleasure. Now, to the mere mind, he may at once do good, by substituting a sound system for a vicious one.

Upon the blank of neglected understandings, it will be his own fault, if he does not presently write something. But the chief affair—the well-regulated Conduct and Sentiments—is not so easily set right, and will produce disorders, before you can correct it. If that has not been done at home; if they come to him as ungoverned as they are untaught; with tempers spoiled and minds exasperated by unacquaintance with Contradiction; animated with no generous wish, no elevated purpose—with what pains, through what difficulties, must he lead them up to any Excellence! and how inadequate to his responsibilities the narrow stipend, for which he is often conceived the debtor, or something still more dependant, of his Patrons!

The Principal is far less ambitious of a large, than of a well regulated and happy school; and wishes no pupil that cannot come with teachable dispositions—intent, not on Amusement or on empty gratifications, but on the great business of improving herself. For that, his school has always, he thinks, afforded scope, and will continue to do so.

On the score of Prices, objections have sometimes reached him. Such are ill-founded. An Education of the same grade can no where be obtained at a less cost. There is no multiplication of charges by indirect ways. Incidental expenses are very low. Dress (elsewhere a very heavy one) is here no more, and often less, than at home. The unusual advantages of the place as to Comfort, and the use of excellent Mineral Waters, have not entered into the Prices.

Edw. W. Johnston Principal

Potter Springs Sept. 27th 1839

My Dear Madam

Wishing to give these particulars a general circulation amongst those who are likely to be our friends either substantially, or indirectly I take the liberty of addressing one to you, as a personal friend, without wishing to be understood, in the slightest degree, as dictationing. This, it is difficult to avoid the appearance of, and when we are far from desiring to do so.

With the highest regards
Yours &c

E. W. Johnston

Dr. J. J. ...
No. 28

Dr. J. J. ...
No. 28

Mr. Emma D. ...
Newcastle
Northumb

