

How she did it . . .

Nadia Messina, Head of School 2001-2002, tells all

As the great Albert Camus once said, "You know what charm is? It's a way of getting the answer yes without having asked any clear questions."

With that in mind, I have decided to share with you 'Mama Messina's secret recipe for Head of Schoolship'.

1 Work hard, play hard, be smart. The great words of Mr Moore. These are the wise words I have based my whole school life on, encouraging me to want the best every time.

2 Smile, It's infectious. People can't help but smile back. Next time you walk down the middle corridor, just smile at someone. I guarantee that 9 times out of 10 they'll smile back.

3 Have fun! Use and abuse St Dunstan's College for everything it's got. Take advantage of the many fruits available. There are so many things to do, its almost begging you to strip it bare of everything it's got. I personally recommend taking part in the school plays. They're such a laugh.

4 Get with the people. Make lots friends. It's always nice to have different types of friends because it means that there is always stimulating conversations within the SDC walls. Don't be scared of approaching the new weird girl in the corner. You might find out you like her. That's how I found my best mate Tasha anyway.

5 Be positive. Even when parts of the SDC establishment get you down, or you have to do something you don't want to do, keep cheerful. Teachers love to torture us. By making us participate in something horrendous, let's say, cross country for example, the only way to deal with that anger inside is to laugh it off. Trust me, when the agonising five laps of all the fields are over, you can look back and laugh at coming a pathetic 58th in your year.

6 Speak your mind. Within reason though. I don't know about you, but I really respect honesty. If you haven't done your homework, just say so. Ok, so you'll probably

get in trouble for it, but at least you won't be labelled a liar.

7 Bend the rules. That's what they're there for. If you stuck to the SDC code of rules and regulations (found at the back of the school calendar in case you didn't know) you wouldn't be able to breath. You've gotta remember that everyone bends the rules sometimes. Even Mr Lea. That's not to say that you should just blatantly break a rule. It's just to say that you can take advantage of the grey areas.

8 Be cheeky. Have a sense of humour. Joke with your friends and your teachers. Mr G-T is great to have a laugh with as is, surprisingly, Mr Austin. But if you're looking to win an argument, I wouldn't argue with these two. They'd rather die than let you win.

9 Tit for tat. It's all politics. Bribery and flattery works a treat with your fellow students. With teachers, you gotta bargain with them. You could, for example, comply with their demands if they, let's say, let you sit next to your best friend in class. It's worth a try. And hey, if tucking your shirt in means that you don't have to go to a detention or it means that you can go to rugby or netball training, then it's worth it in the long run.



Mama Messina, with two of her little helpers

And finally, and most importantly in my opinion, is number ten. It's a strategy used by all people in any position of authority, and that my friends is delegation.

10 Delegation is the key to power. Into my first week as Head of School, I realised that I was not Superwoman, and that I had a whole team of prefects willing to help (grudgingly). To quote Mr Glavin, power is like mercury. It moves around like jelly and can never be pinpointed. Power is hidden under many layers of a system. At SDC, power has been delegated to so many different levels that I found it difficult to see where the decisions

were made. SDC is hierarchical and even if you find yourself at the bottom of the food chain, trust me, you won't be there for long.