



History of Sister Regina Primary School

Sister Regina was the first Prioress of the Sisters of the Dominican Order on St. Maarten and a true pioneer of Catholic education on the island. She arrived in St. Maarten in 1890, and in 1897, Sunday School began in the newly built church in Simpson Bay. That same year, a school was also established in the church.

In those early days, there was no bridge, so the Sisters would travel from Philipsburg to Cole Bay and then row across Simpson Bay to reach the church. A small jetty behind the church served as their landing point. The Sisters would stay overnight in the sacristy, preparing their meals over a small fire.

In 1946, the church school in Simpson Bay closed, and the children had to attend St. Joseph School in Philipsburg. Approximately twenty years later, with the island's population growing, there was once again a need for a Catholic school in Simpson Bay.

In 1967, the Mary Star of the Sea Church was dedicated, and the old church building became home to the Regina School. This was a temporary location while a new school was constructed along the main road to the airport, on recently reclaimed land near the lagoon—today known as Simpson Bay Road. Mr. Wim Scheerder became the first principal, joined by Miss Violet Halley and Miss Rose Vlaun, both of whom were from Simpson Bay.

As the school expanded, two classrooms were housed in the home of Edgar and Daisy Peterson. In 1970, the new Regina School officially opened its doors, featuring six classrooms and a gym. At that time, it was the most modern and best-equipped school on St. Maarten. A significant milestone in the school's history occurred on February 20, 1970, when Bishop Ellis Williams blessed the school—his first official act as Bishop on St. Maarten.

For the school's 20th anniversary, the Foundation Catholic Education St. Maarten renamed the school **Sister Regina Primary School** in honor of Sister Regina.

The Butterflies Kindergarten, which was originally located in the old guardhouse across from the large cistern, later moved into a new building. The two schools were separated by a fence. In August 2005, with the introduction of Foundation-Based Education (F.B.E.), both schools were merged under the name **Sister Regina Primary School**. The school adopted the principles of **Experiential Education** (Ervaringsgericht Onderwijs), emphasizing hands-on learning and engagement.

In 1994, Sister Regina Primary School became a Dutch-language school. Over time, Simpson Bay transformed from a quiet fishing village into a vibrant commercial center, and the school evolved alongside it. Today, the school comprises two buildings: the main **Sister Regina Primary School** building and the former **Butterflies Kindergarten**. The school's office is located in the main building.

In 2019, the school began a transformation from the F.B.E. model to a **Portfolio School** approach. While portfolio work was always a part of F.B.E., the goal was to go deeper—fostering autonomy, critical thinking, and creativity.

With the support of the PTA, parents, and volunteers, the school developed a variety of learning centers where students can work independently. These centers include:

- **Kitchen**
- **Arts Atelier**
- **Sewing Center**
- **Wood Workshop**
- **Science Lab**
- **MAD Room (Music, Arts, and Drama)**

Sister Regina Primary School is proud to have shaped the lives of many children and continues to do so today. We are committed to nurturing future leaders, as our school song proclaims. With God's blessing and the support of our parents and community, we will remain a pillar of strength and continue to achieve our goals.

principal	year
Mr. Wim Scheerder	1967-1974
Mr. Stanley Hodge	1974-1980
Mr. Huub Keulers	1980-1983
Mrs. Nancy Hodge-Peterson	1983-2007
Ms. Ria Uiterloo	2007-2013
Ms. Natasha Ambrose	2013-2014
Mrs. Samantha Beaton-Elson	2014-present

"We are called to....."

Micah 6:8