

# Mount Mercy Academy

## Student-Parent Handbook 2025-2026

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Buffalo, New York 14220  
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### MISSION STATEMENT

Rooted in Catholic identity and the charism of Catherine McAuley, Mount Mercy Academy advances cultural growth, fosters belonging, and respects the dignity of every individual. We empower young women to pursue their fullest potential, achieve academic excellence, serve with compassion, and lead with integrity in a global community.

### CRITICAL CONCERNS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY

**Earth:** We work toward the sustainability of all life by caring for Earth's ecosystems, addressing global climate change and advocating for the fundamental right to clean water.

**Immigration:** We act in solidarity with immigrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking, seeking with them a more just and inclusive world.

**Nonviolence:** We work to improve our personal practice of nonviolence and peacemaking, to collaborate with organizations that foster peace, and to change violent systems and structures.

**Racism:** We work to become an anti-racist multicultural community because we believe racism is an evil affecting us all.

**Women:** We give special attention to women's education, health, and spirituality through our legislative advocacy, our schools, healthcare institutions, and spirituality centers.

By aligning our curriculum to the Critical Concerns, our students develop the life skills to think

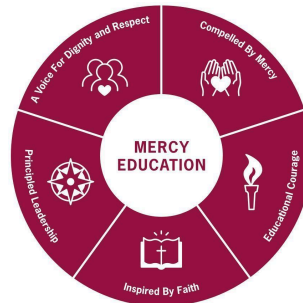


more critically. This approach to learning educates and empowers Mercy girls to use their unique gifts to make a positive impact on the world.

## THE MOUNT MERCY ACADEMY RING

The symbolism of the Mercy Ring:

- A circle representing the unity of all Mercy graduates;
- Gold, signifying loyalty to school, country, church, family and friends;
- Blue Band-- representing Our Lady's mantle - a reminder of her gentle, compassionate protection and care;
- Seven Pearls, reminding us of Mary's purity, which stand for Faith, Hope, Charity, Obedience, Humility, Joy and Patience.



## CORE VALUES

### Compelled By Mercy

Mercy students, in the spirit of our founder Catherine McAuley, are steadfastly determined to take Mercy into an interconnected world. Our shared sense of social consciousness is fortified by universal empathy and a conviction that all are worthy of God's mercy. This deep awareness and compassion move us to take principled action and serve the needs of others.

### Educational Courage

Mercy students welcome the challenge of pursuing their full potential in a culture of excellence, critical thinking and curiosity. Their multifaceted journey builds character while it builds essential skills. Our holistic program expects engagement, a thirst for knowledge and personal responsibility, while preparing students to thrive for a lifetime.

### Inspired By Faith

Mercy students become living models of faith and forceful advocates for Gospel values. Grounded in our Catholic identity in the Mercy tradition, we welcome all faiths and are strengthened and shaped by these relationships. As we pursue a personal relationship with God, we strenuously follow Jesus Christ's example of social justice, love and service.

### Principled Leadership






Mercy students are poised to lead with their unique gifts. Prepared with an ethical and moral compass, we put Mercy values into action and work assertively for what is right. We're equipped to make difficult choices, learn from our mistakes and develop high emotional intelligence. As an international community, we're confident in our ability to make a positive difference and push for systemic change.

### A Voice For Dignity and Respect

Mercy students honor the intrinsic value of the individual and recognize God's presence in each person. We embrace a global vision and value differences of opinion, and are unafraid to confront hostile or hurtful attitudes. By standing up for those who can't, we go beyond acceptance to help make sure everyone feels recognized and heard.

## PROFILE OF THE GRADUATE

Our Profile of the Graduate is how students come to manifest and embody our Core Values. It's the culmination of everything a Mercy Education hopes to achieve. Throughout the student's journey, this blueprint defines the attributes they're expected to acquire and the steps they'll take to gain them. With the Profile of the Graduate, every experience and academic opportunity is linked to and aligned with our Core Values.

CORE VALUE	STUDENT ATTRIBUTES
 <p><b>Compelled By Mercy</b></p>	<p><b>Compassion.</b> Having concern for the needs of all, including those outside our immediate circle.  <b>Empathy.</b> Putting yourself in someone else's shoes to understand their feelings and perspectives.  <b>Responsibility to Serve.</b> Fulfilling the duty to not just care about others, but to take action on their behalf.</p>
 <p><b>Educational Courage</b></p>	<p><b>Curiosity.</b> Being open to other ways of seeing the world and exploring new ideas.  <b>Personal Accountability.</b> Staying disciplined in decision-making, proactive in correcting mistakes and self-motivation in our studies.  <b>Critical Thinking.</b> Gathering and objectively evaluating and analyzing information through reflection and reason.</p>
 <p><b>Inspired by Faith</b></p>	<p><b>Spirituality.</b> Developing a personal relationship with a loving, merciful God, expressed in service and respecting other faiths.  <b>Modeling of Jesus Christ &amp; Catherine McAuley.</b> Living life with abundant love, compassion, generosity and hospitality, demonstrating the strength of infinite mercy.  <b>Ethical &amp; Moral.</b> Following a personal code based on Gospel values that guides action and choices.</p>
 <p><b>Principled Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>Integrity.</b> Standing up for or doing what's right, including when it's difficult or unpopular.  <b>Lifelong Learning.</b> Always learning something new, gaining skills and wanting to know more, in all walks of life.  <b>Emotional Intelligence.</b> Recognizing and welcoming emotions within ourselves and others to build resilience and healthy relationships.</p>
 <p><b>A Voice For Dignity and Respect</b></p>	<p><b>Grace.</b> Allowing others to be fully human without judgment, while honoring what is God-like within each person.  <b>Advocate.</b> Being a forceful defender, supporter and sometimes spokesperson for the values and people we hold dear.  <b>Inclusivity.</b> Going beyond tolerance to embrace diversity, while accepting and serving with open arms.</p>

## **THE SUSCIPE OF CATHERINE McAULEY**

My God, I am yours for time and eternity.  
Teach me to cast myself entirely  
into the arms of your loving Providence  
with a lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate, tender pity.  
Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,  
That whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me.  
Take from my heart all painful anxiety;  
let nothing sadden me but sin,  
nothing delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of You  
my God and my all, in your everlasting kingdom.  
Amen.

## **CATHERINE McAULEY'S MORNING CONSECRATION**

This morning we pray for all those inscribed in our Memorial Record Book, the intentions on our prayer boards and for all intentions we hold in the silence of our hearts.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
O compassionate Jesus, look on me today with tenderness and give me the grace to walk on the path of mercy marked out for those who follow you. May all I do today reflect your merciful love. Amen.  
Our Lady of Mercy, Pray for us.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Resources: Sisters of Mercy [www.sistersofmercy.org](http://www.sistersofmercy.org)

## **INFORMATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS**

<b>Absence Excuses</b>	Health Office, Room 104
<b>Early Dismissal</b>	Health Office, Room 104
<b>Late to School</b>	Assistant Head of School, Room 14
<b>Locker Trouble</b>	Main Office, Room 109
<b>Lost and Found</b>	Main Office, Room 109
<b>Photocopies</b>	Room 108
<b>Discipline</b>	Assistant Head of School, Room 14
<b>Physicals</b>	Health Office, Room 104
<b>Uniform</b>	Main Office, Room 109
<b>Sickness</b>	Health Office, Room 104
<b>Sports/Sign-ups</b>	Athletic Director, Room 306
<b>Tuition Payment</b>	Business Office, Room 302
<b>Tutoring</b>	Counseling Ctr, Room 201
<b>Working Papers</b>	Main Office, Room 109

# BELL SCHEDULES

<u>Regular Daily Schedule</u>		<u>30-Min. Late Assembly</u>		<u>30-Min. Early Assembly</u>	
<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>
Homeroom	7:50-7:59	Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00
1	8:02-9:00	1	8:03-8:58	Assembly	8:00-8:30
2	9:03-10:01	2	9:01-9:56	1	8:33-9:28
3	10:04-11:02	3	9:59-10:54	2	9:31-10:26
4-1	11:05-11:40	4-1	10:57-11:22	3	10:29-11:24
	11:40-12:03		11:22-11:52	4-1	11:27-11:52
4-2	12:03-12:38	4-2	11:52-12:17		11:52-12:22
5	12:41-1:39	5	12:20-1:15	4-2	12:22-12:47
6	1:42-2:40	6	1:18-2:13	5	12:50-1:45
ANN	2:40-2:45	Assembly	2:13-2:45	6	1:48-2:45

<u>45-Min. Late Assembly</u>		<u>60-Min. Late Assembly</u>		<u>60-Min. Early Assembly</u>	
<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>
Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00
1	8:03-8:55	1	8:03-8:53	Assembly	8:00-9:00
2	8:58-9:50	2	8:56-9:46	1	9:03-9:53
3	9:53-10:45	3	9:49-10:39	2	9:56-10:46
4-1	10:48-11:13	4-1	10:42-11:07	3	10:49-11:39
	11:13-11:40		11:07-11:32	4-1	11:42-12:07
4-2	11:40-12:05	4-2	11:32-11:57		12:07-12:32
5	12:08-1:00	5	12:00-12:50	4-2	12:32-12:57
6	1:03-1:55	6	12:53-1:43	5	1:00-1:50
Assembly	2:00-2:45	Assembly	1:43-2:45	6	1:53-2:45

<u>90-Min. Late Assembly</u>		<u>90-Min. Early Assembly</u>		<u>6 Block 1/2 Day Schedule</u>	
<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>
Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00
1	8:03-8:48	Assembly	8:00-9:30	1	8:03-8:43
2	8:51-9:36	1	9:33-10:18	2	8:46-9:26
3	9:39-10:24	2	10:21-11:06	3	9:29-10:09
4-1	10:27-10:52	3	11:09-11:54	4-1	10:12-10:37
	10:52-11:12	4-1	11:57-12:22		10:37-10:52
4-2	11:12-11:37		12:22-12:42	4-2	10:52-11:17
5	11:40-12:25	4-2	12:42-1:07	5	11:20-12:00
6	12:28-1:13	5	1:10-1:55	6	12:03-12:45
Assembly	1:13-2:45	6	1:58-2:45		

<u>60-Min. @ 9:00AM</u>		<u>90-Min. @ 9:00AM</u>		<u>30 &amp; 90-Min. Assemblies</u>	
<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Block</u>	<u>Time</u>
Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00	Homeroom	7:50-8:00
1	8:03-8:55	1	8:03-8:55	Assembly	8:00-8:30
Mass/Assem	9:00-10:00	Mass/Assem	9:00-10:30	1	8:33-9:13
2	10:05-10:53	2	10:30-11:13	2	9:16-9:56
3	10:56-11:44	4-1	11:16-11:41	3	9:59-10:39
4-1	11:47-12:12		11:41-11:59	4-1	10:42-11:07
	12:12-12:35	4-2	11:59-12:24		11:07-11:22
4-2	12:35-1:00	3	12:27-1:10	4-2	11:22-11:47
5	1:03-1:51	5	1:13-1:56	5	11:50-12:30
6	1:56-2:45	6	1:59-2:45	6	12:33-1:13
				Assembly	1:13-2:45

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# **MOUNT MERCY ACADEMY STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Mount Mercy Academy is a Catholic, private, college-preparatory high school for young women, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, New York, Pennsylvania, Pacific West Community, and dedicated to carrying out its educational mission in the spirit of Catherine McAuley. Rooted in Gospel values, Mount Mercy Academy is dedicated to educating young women of all cultural and economic backgrounds by providing an excellent academic curriculum and extra-curricular program.

The faculty and staff work in collaboration with the Sisters of Mercy, the Board of Trustees, parents, students, alumnae and friends to create a faith community which values the deepening of spirituality, hospitality, and the dignity of each person. Through dedication and professional competence, the Academy strives to impart the hallmarks of a Mercy education – academic excellence, dedication to Christian values, leadership, commitment to service and family in partnership. Education at Mount Mercy is seen within the context of the whole person. Emphasis is placed on creating challenging opportunities for growth in spirit, mind and body. As true bearers of mercy and members of the global community, Mount Mercy strives to educate young women to proclaim justice, to accept and respect the diversity of all people and to respond to the needs of others and to all creation with compassion.

## **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

Catherine McAuley encouraged her sisters to respond to the needs of their times wherever those calls might originate. The Sisters of Mercy have traveled to every continent, learning new languages, cultures and customs, serving needs as they arose. It is in that spirit that Mount Mercy Academy affirms its commitment to diversity by promoting a diverse student body and staff, modeling and inculcating the qualities necessary for participation in a multi-cultural world by training young women to carry out the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

Mount Mercy Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs and activities.

## **Code of Behavior for Families and Guests**

Mount Mercy Academy expects all individuals who attend Academy events to uphold the values of respect, inclusivity, and integrity. Any unwelcome or unacceptable behavior, including but not limited to racist conduct, will not be tolerated. These expectations align with the critical concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and the Academy's core values, serving as the

foundation for fostering a welcoming and respectful community. A formalized **Code of Behavior for Families and Guests** will be introduced prior to the end of the academic year.

### **Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policies**

Mount Mercy Academy is committed to reviewing and updating its Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policies regularly to ensure they reflect current best practices and uphold the dignity and respect of all individuals within the community.

### **Bystander Intervention**

From both an educational and social-cultural perspective, Mount Mercy Academy instills in its students a moral obligation to recognize unwelcoming behavior and take a stand for the values that the Academy and the Sisters of Mercy espouse. Students are encouraged to intervene as bystanders, promoting inclusivity and supporting those impacted by any form of discrimination or harassment.

This involves:

1. **Moral Responsibility:** Students are instilled with a sense of duty to address behaviors that go against the values of respect, inclusivity, and compassion.
2. **Recognizing Unwelcoming Behavior:** Students are trained to identify actions, words, or attitudes that may harm others or create an unwelcoming environment, such as bullying, discrimination, or harassment.
3. **Taking a Stand:** Acting as upstanders rather than passive bystanders, students are encouraged to:
  - Speak up against harmful behavior.
  - Support and assist individuals who are being mistreated.
  - Report incidents to trusted adults or authorities when needed.
4. **Promoting Inclusivity:** Students are expected to foster a sense of belonging by addressing behaviors that exclude or demean others and by advocating for fairness and kindness.
5. **Supporting Others:** Providing emotional or practical support to those affected by harmful actions, demonstrating empathy and solidarity.

The goal of this approach is to empower students to contribute to a safe, welcoming, and respectful community, both within the school and in the broader world, by actively embodying the values of the Sisters of Mercy.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The academic program aims to meet the needs, interests and aptitudes of every student. Mount Mercy is accredited by the Middle States Association for Secondary Schools. An annual Course Description Catalog sets forth course and unit requirements. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors are expected to complete at least seven and a half (7.5) credits per year. Physical Education is required yearly of all students.

## **GRADING AND PROMOTION**

Grades are available throughout the year online through your Family Portal, a mandatory online account you create used to view class work, attendance, and communicate with the school. Report cards are issued quarterly to parents. Failures are reported to parents through the Counseling Center. School Counselors will provide parents with information on course credit recovery plans. Promotion is based on an average of the four quarters and a final assessment. A student must have a promotion mark of at least 65% to receive credit for the course. Students receiving less than the required mark must repeat the course and earn a passing grade. Failure in one or more subjects in any quarter will result in a student being placed on academic intervention services (AIS). This will include periodic progress review and a parent conference may be requested. (See the Academic Eligibility Policy).

## STUDENT SERVICES

### **CAMPUS MINISTRY**

The primary role of the Campus Minister is to provide the opportunity for students to grow in an awareness of the faith, to develop a personal relationship with God, and to build a Christian community among faculty and students. The Campus Minister coordinates liturgical celebrations for the school community; arranges prayer services, retreats and service opportunities for students; encourages the development of our relationship with the Sisters of Mercy; and prepares materials for teachers based on the liturgical seasons.

### **COUNSELING CENTER**

At every grade level, the student is assigned a School Counselor, who is committed to each student's personal growth in the areas including, but not limited to, social-emotional, academic and career development. Academic advising helps students plan their academic program, working towards their future goals, by fostering informed decision making. Students are urged to utilize the resources available in the Counseling Center. Course requests are accepted at the beginning of the 2nd semester and the schedule is finalized by the end of the school year. Therefore, no schedule changes will be permitted after June 1st. Students are able to revise their course requests as often as they would like until this date. Students may not drop a class during the school year. The only schedule changes allowed will be at the discretion of Administration or if a student would like to choose an elective in place of a study hall, which is offered at the same time. Students will not be allowed to pick up additional electives after the 1st week of the semester.

### **HEALTH SERVICES**

A registered nurse regularly staffs the health office. Students who become ill during the school day are to report to the clinic or are sent there with a note from her teacher. A student is not allowed to call her parents from her cell phone telling him/her to come pick her up because she is sick. As necessary, parents will be notified and the student may be sent home. Students are not allowed to go home until parents are contacted by school personnel and permission by parents is granted. Parents picking students up due to illness must report to the Health Office and sign their daughter out. Students who report to and stay in the clinic for more than 20 minutes will not be able to participate in sports/activities/practices or serve lunches in school that day. The school is to be notified if a student is under doctor's care. It is sometimes necessary for medications to be given during the school day for treatment. Students are encouraged to take the medication before or immediately after school if possible. Students may not carry medications on their person during the school day. The medication must be given to the school nurse. NYS Education Guidelines state that medication may be administered by designated school personnel if a parent submits a written request to school authorities. The request must be accompanied by a written prescription from the family physician. **New medication orders are required each school year** and the medications must be given to the school nurse **in its original container and/or must contain a pharmacy label.**

## **LEARNING LAB**

The Learning Lab provides Mount Mercy students with opportunities which promote academic success, including structured study halls, assistance with study skills, tutoring in all subject areas, and accommodations for any student with an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan. The purpose of our Learning Lab is to provide academic support as we carry out our mission of educating young women for academic excellence. Students are able to access the services of the Learning Lab through referrals made by the School Counseling Office, a teacher, a parent, or by the request of the student herself.

## **WORK PERMITS**

Applications for working papers are available for students and can be obtained in the Main Office. Only students with good attendance may be issued a work permit. **“Should absences reach an unacceptable level, working permits may be revoked by the school.”**

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Discipline Approach at Mount Mercy Academy**

At Mount Mercy Academy, we are committed to nurturing the whole student—academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Rooted in the values of mercy, compassion, and Catholic social teaching, our discipline philosophy is guided by the principles of Positive Discipline.

We believe that students thrive when they feel a sense of belonging and significance, and that mistakes are valuable opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow. Our goal is to help students develop self-discipline, integrity, empathy, and responsibility—all while maintaining a safe, respectful learning environment for everyone.

Mount Mercy Academy holds high expectations for student behavior and responds to misconduct with accountability, reflection, and support. In serious cases—such as those involving drugs, alcohol, smoking/vaping, weapons, violence, pranks, bullying, and any form of threats, whether verbal, written, electronic, or physical. Students may face in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. These consequences are not applied automatically, but are considered thoughtfully and individually, with the goal of ensuring safety and offering opportunities for learning and restoration.

### **CORE BELIEFS**

- All students are capable of learning and growth.
- Discipline means “to teach”—not to punish.
- Connection must come before correction.
- Mutual respect is essential between students and adults.
- Students learn best when they are part of the solution.

### **DEMERITS**

At Mount Mercy Academy, a demerit is the form we use to record disciplinary concerns in our system. Issuing a demerit is followed by a reflective session called Growth-Oriented Justice, in which students are invited to examine the impact of their actions and identify ways to repair and grow.

Rather than focusing purely on punishment, demerits are intended to encourage personal growth, responsibility, and positive change. This system helps students develop compassion, emotional intelligence, and a strong ethical foundation.

Although demerits are recorded and tracked, their main purpose is to guide students toward personal accountability and character development. By learning from their mistakes, students strive to meet the high standards expected of a Mount Mercy graduate: to be caring, compassionate, respectful, responsible, ethical, and committed to excellence in all she does.

Any behavior or attitude that does not reflect the values of a Mercy student may result in a demerit. Demerits can be issued by administrators, counselors, staff members, or teachers.

Parents can monitor their daughter's discipline record through the Family Portal.

## **GROWTH-ORIENTED JUSTICE**

Growth-Oriented Justice is a restorative response used after a demerit is issued. It serves as an alternative to traditional punishment by focusing on learning, responsibility, and community repair.

### **How does it work?**

Instead of punitive measures, students engage in constructive, educational, or reflective activities tied to the nature of the infraction. These actions may include:

- Completing a task that benefits the school community,
- Participating in a restorative conversation,
- Writing a reflection or completing an educational assignment,
- Making amends through service or a project.

The goal is to help students understand the impact of their behavior, take ownership, and grow from the experience—academically, socially, and emotionally.

### **Why Growth-Oriented Justice?**

This approach reflects our belief that discipline should be educational, not punitive. It encourages:

- Positive behavior,
- Development of self-discipline,
- Strengthened relationships between students, staff, and peers.

Traditional punishments often create fear, resistance, or disconnection. Growth-Oriented Justice, on the other hand, supports meaningful accountability and helps students learn from their mistakes in a respectful, supportive environment that aligns with the values of mercy and compassion.

## TIER SYSTEM FOR INFRACTIONS

Behavioral infractions at Mount Mercy Academy are addressed through a **tiered system** based on the severity of the behavior: Minor, Middle, or Major. Each level includes both documentation (via demerits in the FACTS system) and appropriate consequences that prioritize reflection and personal development.

This system allows us to respond fairly and consistently, while still applying individualized, Positive Discipline strategies.

- Minor Infractions: Handled with 1 demerit and growth-oriented justice, email to parents.
- Middle Infractions: Immediate referral to the Assistant Head of School and 1 day of in School Suspension /Reflection and restorative day, email or phone conference with parents.
- Major Infractions: Could lead to 2 or more in-school or external suspension, or expulsion, based on administrative decisions. This approach ensures that discipline not only addresses infractions but also empowers students to grow and improve within a supportive environment.

If an infraction occurs depending on the severity we start at tier 1, 2 or 3:

<b>Minor infractions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of uniform</li> <li>• Unexcused tardy to class</li> <li>• Cell phone use</li> <li>• Class disruption</li> <li>• Excessive talking</li> <li>• Disrespect</li> <li>• Excessive tardiness to school (More than 5 times).</li> </ul>	<p>Start a tier 1</p> <p>Demerit and Growth Oriented Justice will be issued. Email parents</p>
<b>Middle infractions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated violation of minor infractions</li> <li>• Cheating</li> <li>• Microaggressions</li> <li>• Verbal fighting</li> <li>• Insubordination</li> <li>• Verbal Fighting</li> <li>• Failure to appear for detention</li> <li>• Skip class</li> <li>• Lying</li> <li>• Stealing</li> </ul>	<p>Start on Tier 2</p> <p>Demerit and 1 day of ISS will be issued. Phone call or meeting with parents</p>
<b>Major infractions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical fighting</li> <li>• Hate of speech</li> <li>• Bullying or harassment</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>	<p>Start on Tier 3</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alcohol</li> <li>● Drugs</li> <li>● Tobacco</li> <li>● Vaping</li> <li>● Possession or use of weapons</li> <li>● Destruction or misuse of school property</li> </ul>	Demerit and 2 or more days of ISS, Out of school suspension or expulsion will be issued. This will be determined by administration.
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We hold our students to high expectations because we believe deeply in their potential. With every challenge, we see an opportunity to teach grace, responsibility, and the values that define a Mercy graduate.

## INCIDENT REPORT

All formal and informal incidents involving staff performance or student conduct must be reported to ensure a safe, respectful, and accountable environment at Mount Mercy Academy. The reporting party is required to complete the designated incident report form in its entirety. Submission of this form initiates the process to track incidents, ensure thorough investigations, and support consistent follow-up and resolution by the administration,

## 2 Reporting Types

- **Formal Incident Reporting:** Incidents that significantly impact safety, behavior, or the school's environment, such as violence, bullying, substance abuse, or severe misconduct. Tier 2 and 3 Middle and Major infractions.
- **Informal Incident Reporting:** Minor incidents that may not immediately threaten safety but require monitoring, such as minor student conduct issues, group problems that might escalate or staff performance concerns.

## DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

Disciplinary probation may occur dependent upon the seriousness of the violation. Probation periods will be determined by Administration. Students on probation may be subject to suspension of all school activities. Further infractions while on probation may lead to internal or external suspension or expulsion.

## SUSPENSION

A student will be placed on suspension in the case of serious offense(s). It is a severe disciplinary measure and is not given lightly or repeatedly. Parents will be notified of a student's suspension. External suspension means that the student is denied the privilege of attending school or participating in any way in the life of the school. A student on internal suspension is excluded from classes and the normal events of the school day. She is isolated from her classmates and all her activities are monitored. The student is expected to

report directly to the suspension area in the morning. During the period of suspension, the student will not participate in any extracurricular activities.

1. For a serious violation of school policy or regulations, the administration may place a student on suspension.
2. A student who has been given disciplinary probationary status as a result of an Administrative decision and receives any additional demerits may serve an internal or external suspension.
3. If a student is suspended, her parents may be asked to meet with school authorities to evaluate her continued enrollment at Mercy.
4. A student placed on internal suspension is responsible for all class work assigned during this time and may contact teachers to make arrangements to make up missed work.
5. External suspension days will be counted as absences for attendance purposes, since, in such cases, the student is not on school premises. The Head of School will determine the time frame and conditions of an external suspension.

## **ALCOHOL / SMOKING / SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Mount Mercy Academy has a commitment to and a shared responsibility with parents:

1. To protect and foster student health and welfare.
2. To educate and assist students in becoming mature, responsible and healthy Christian women.
3. To help students learn to make life-affirming decisions in completely abstaining from the illegal use of alcohol and chemical substances.
4. To support and maintain a program of confidential and professional care for students experiencing problems because of alcohol or substance use and/or dependency. The purposes of these educational, assistance and disciplinary policies are two-fold:
  - a. To create an alcohol/drug free school and environment which is conducive to academic and personal health and growth consistent with the Mercy philosophy of education. Therefore, no alcohol will be served at any student-centered function.
  - b. To help Mercy students deal with all alcohol or drug related issues in the best way possible. School grounds are defined as the immediate property and areas within the vicinity of the school including both sides of Red Jacket Parkway from Abbott Road to McKinley Parkway to Choate Avenue.

The dealing or selling of drugs or drug related paraphernalia on school grounds, at school sponsored functions, traveling on school-supervised vehicles, or while on school trips will result in immediate expulsion. The possession of alcohol or any controlled substance anywhere by a Mount Mercy student will seriously jeopardize her right to attend Mount Mercy Academy. The possession or use of drugs or alcoholic beverages on school grounds, at school sponsored functions, traveling on school-supervised vehicles, while on school trips or in any way representing Mount Mercy Academy is against the law and violators will be subject to strict disciplinary action. Students under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance (mood altering chemical) or in the possession of alcohol or drugs while in school will be handled in the following manner:

1. Parents will be contacted immediately and asked to come to school or to the social

event to meet with the Head of School and to take their daughter home. They will also receive written notification.

2. Appropriate law enforcement notification will take place as determined by the Head of School.
3. The student will be required to appear before selected representatives of the Administration of Mount Mercy Academy.
4. The student's privilege to participate in any school activities will be revoked until further determination is made.
5. The student may be required to participate in a mandatory drug/alcohol rehabilitation program.
6. On-going written and oral communication between the school Administration and the student's parents is essential and will take place as deemed necessary.

Guests of Mount Mercy students who arrive at a Mercy sponsored function under the influence of drugs/alcohol or become intoxicated while there will be detained until his/her parents or police arrive to take him/her home. Parents are reminded that they are legally responsible and liable for accidents or injuries that result from alcohol being served to students less than twenty-one years of age. Any student who violates the school policy on alcohol or drug use is subject to expulsion.

In all cases, the school will consult with the student's parents and appropriate school professional staff. However, the school's recommendation is final for a student to continue her education at Mount Mercy.

Federal and NYS regulations specify that educational campuses are to be smoke free environments. **Smoking/vaping/ juuling is not permitted anywhere on or in the Mercy complex – in school, on school property, in any way representing Mount Mercy Academy or within the area defined by school policy.** Mount Mercy Academy students in uniform, whether at Mercy functions or representing the school are expected not to smoke. Smoking is a health hazard and an environmental pollutant and reflects negatively on the image of all the students and faculty. Failure to abide by this policy is considered to be a violation and may lead to suspension and other consequences determined by Mount Mercy Academy Administration.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The administration of Mount Mercy Academy is responsible for all policies regarding pupil attendance, standards, records of attendance, and regulations and is guided by New York State Education Law and the Commissioner of Education.

Regular school attendance is necessary for scholastic progress. A poor attendance record may jeopardize opportunities for employment and college entrance. Parents are asked not to permit absence from school for trivial reasons. Absence from school without parental consent constitutes truancy. The school day begins at 7:50 a.m. and runs through 2:45 p.m. Students should be in school no later than 7:45 a.m. to ensure timely arrival to homeroom. Attendance is recorded at the start of the school day. In addition, teachers are required to keep a record of attendance for each class throughout the school day since regular class attendance is crucial to academic success.

Credit for any course is contingent upon:

- Meeting the course requirements, including reporting for the final exam or submitting the final assessment and receiving a passing average of 65%.

- Meeting attendance requirements.

In order to receive course credit a student is expected to be in attendance for a minimum of 85% of all scheduled class meetings or equivalent time. They may have to make up missed time, especially if work has not been turned in.

Students who fail to meet the minimum attendance requirement for a course may receive an audit for that course. They may not be allowed to take any final examinations in that course. They may have to make up missed time, especially if work has not been turned in.

The classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and administration will notify students and parents when specified benchmarks in absences have been reached. Students who have excessive absences in class and have been scheduled to audit may be required to make up time equivalent to the number of classes absent beyond the maximum number in both full year and semester courses. Students who fail to make up time may have their attendance reviewed by Administration. Students will be notified in writing of the determination of the committee.

Students having excessive absenteeism or tardiness (determination to be made by Administration) may be denied the right to attend dances, proms, field study, class trips, other evening or weekend functions, and Mount Mercy Academy scholarships and financial aid. A parent conference may be scheduled as a result. An attendance review may be scheduled if there is a challenge to the process or extenuating circumstances.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AND RULES**

School doors open at 7:00 a.m. for student arrival.

Students should arrive no later than 7:45 a.m. in order to report to Homeroom on time.

Homeroom begins promptly at 7:50 a.m. Dismissal is at 2:45 p.m. Free breakfast is served in the dining hall for all students arriving before 7:35 a.m. At dismissal time, the bus lane in front of school must remain clear until the buses leave at 2:55 p.m. Parents/Guardians who drive their daughter are asked to wait until the buses have cleared before pulling in front of school for pick up.

**\*\*Please note that all attendance is reported on a student's report card and her transcript. Colleges review attendance as part of their admissions process.**

- 1) ALL ABSENCES, EARLY DISMISSALS, AND TARDINESS MUST BE REPORTED BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN!
  - a) Parents/Guardians must call the Attendance Hotline each day by 8:30 a.m. when their daughter will be absent, leave early or arrive later than 7:45 a.m.: (716) 825-8796 Ext.2.
  - b) Please do not call the Main Office to report attendance.
  - c) If the situation requires you to speak with someone regarding the absence, please call the Health Office: (716) 825-8796, Ext.104 or your daughter's school counselor.
  - d) A doctor's note is required any time a student misses class time for any kind of medical appointment between 7:50 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. If the doctor's office does not automatically give you a school excuse, please ask for one. Your daughter can bring it to the Health Office upon return to school or you can fax it: (716) 825-0976.

- 2) Automatic Demerits will be issued for “unexcused” tardiness. An unexcused tardy includes, but is not limited to the following reasons: a late ride, overslept, traffic, running late, missing a bus, no parking, no alarm,. If the student is late for any other reason a parent must call the Attendance Hotline with the details. Mount Mercy Academy staff will determine if the reason will be excused or not. Parents are to contact the Attendance Hotline with any extenuating or chronic circumstances.
- 3) If School District Transportation (yellow school bus) runs late due to health & safety procedures, inclement weather, etc., students will be issued an “excused” pass to class. Tardiness due to District Transportation is not counted against the student.
- 4) All students must sign in when arriving late and sign out for early dismissals.
- 5) Early dismissals must be pre-arranged by calling the Attendance Hotline by 8:30 a.m. with the details of the dismissal. Last-minute emergency dismissals should be reported to the school nurse: (716) 825-8796, Ext. 104. When picking up your daughter early from school, pull up to Door #4 at the arranged time and we will sign out your daughter and send her to your vehicle.
- 6) Students participating in any club/activity/sport must be on time and in class all day (7:50-2:45). The exceptions are Bereavement, School Business or a routine doctor’s appointment. A doctor’s excuse must be submitted for any medical appointments where class time is missed.
- 7) Absences that do not count against a student’s attendance record are as follows: School district closures (i.e., inclement weather), bereavement, school business, i.e, field trips)
- 8) If a student becomes ill during the school day, she is to report to the Health Office for assessment. **She is not to use her cell phone to call a parent/guardian to be picked up.**
  - a) The school nurse will assess the situation and contact a parent/guardian if necessary. A parent/guardian may contact the Health Office at [healthoffice@mtmercy.org](mailto:healthoffice@mtmercy.org) or (716) 825-8796 x104.
  - b) If a student goes home ill or spends more than 20 minutes in the health office, she becomes ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for that day, including sports.
- 9) **Field Trips:** Students must realize that they will be viewed as ambassadors of Mount Mercy Academy. Field trips have an academic purpose and are part of the curriculum of our project based learning model. Students are expected to conduct themselves with proper behavior. Written parental permission is required in advance and is only accepted on the Mercy standard permission slip form. A student lacking this will not participate in the activity. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of the proper form. Students may be denied the opportunity to participate in field trips because of conduct, attendance or academic standing at the discretion of faculty or administration. Unless a doctor's excuse is provided, students must arrive at school on time in order to attend a field trip.
- 10) **Participation in Sports, Student Activities, and Extracurricular Activities:** A student must be on time to school, meaning in Homeroom before the bell rings. An unexcused absence or an absence/early dismissal due to illness eliminates any student from participation. This includes all practices, games and competitions.
- 11) **Perfect Attendance:** Students achieving perfect attendance will have zero point value (0.00) of absences or unexcused tardies/departures from school, excepting field

study and school-sponsored activities (school business). **In addition a student must not accumulate more than five (5) excused late arrivals or departures.** “Excused” means proper documentation for the legal excuses accepted by New York State (see above).

- 12) **Classroom Attendance:** Regular attendance in all classes is required. Students must meet or exceed the New York State requirement of 85% presence in each class. Students may be required to make up seat time lost due to excessive absences.
- 13) **Tardy to Class:** A student who reports late for class disturbs the class, disrupting the learning process for her classmates. If a student is regularly late for class, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as determined by Mount Mercy Academy Administration.
- 14) **Truancy:** When a student skips school (truancy), her parents may be contacted by phone. The student will meet with Administration to determine sanctions. This matter may be referred to the district truancy officer.
- 15) **Warning Letters:** Warning letters will be sent when absences/tardies negatively affect academic progress.

## **BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING/HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

### **Intervention Policy**

At Mount Mercy Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for every student. Bullying—including cyberbullying—as well as all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, are taken very seriously and addressed through this intervention system. In alignment with our discipline approach, this Anti-Bullying intervention system is designed to address harmful behaviors while supporting accountability, reflection, and community safety.

A student report concerning bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or sexual harassment must be made directly to a **teacher, counselor, or the Assistant Head of School (AHoS)**. These staff members will complete an incident report form, and the appropriate follow-up steps will then be initiated.

### **Step 1: Reporting and Initial Response**

Once a report is received, the **Anti-Bullying Team**—consisting of the AHoS, counselor, and the CDBD Coordinator—will meet with each individual involved to gather information, assess the situation, and determine the appropriate response using the tiered system used for discipline.

### **Step 2: Response to Bullying and Harassment:**

**MICROAGGRESSIONS AND THREATS** will begin at Tier 1

These are first-time or lower-level behaviors, including harmful language or insensitive remarks that may not seem severe individually but contribute to a hostile environment over time.

Examples may include:

- Making fun of a student's accent, clothing, or physical appearance
- Repeatedly mispronouncing someone's name after being corrected
- Saying things like "That's so gay" or "You're so sensitive"
- Eye rolling, mockery, or sarcastic tone intended to belittle
- Subtle exclusion from group activities or lunch tables
- Sharing "jokes" that target race, religion, gender identity, or disability
- Commenting on someone's body or weight in a judgmental way
- Using coded language to insult (e.g., "She's not like *us*")
- Sending passive-aggressive messages, memes, or posts meant to embarrass or harass someone online (cyberbullying)
- Making inappropriate or unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, or gestures that may seem minor but contribute to an unsafe environment
- Sending passive-aggressive messages or memes meant to embarrass

Although these actions may appear minor or unintentional, when repeated or left unaddressed, they can significantly harm a student's sense of safety and belonging. We will apply our discipline tiered system to help students.

**If the student is accused and does *not* acknowledge the behavior will begin at Tier 1.**

- Parents/guardians will be contacted by email.
- The student will meet with the Assistant Head of School for a Growth-Oriented Justice session, focusing on understanding the incident, its impact, and completing a written reflection as part of the process. A Demerit and Growth Oriented Justice will be issued.

**If the student admits to the behavior, the response will begin at Tier 2.**

- Parents/guardians will be contacted.
- A demerit will be issued.
- The student will complete a written reflection focused on accountability and repair.
- A one-day in-school suspension will be assigned to allow time for restorative processing and reconnection planning.

### **BULLYING including cyberbullying and sexual harassment will begin at tier 3**

This includes repeated behaviors or confirmed instances of bullying, whether physical, verbal, relational, or digital (cyberbullying), backed by evidence or witnesses.

- A three-day school suspension will be assigned to provide time for restorative processing and reconnection planning, including a Growth-Oriented Justice session to support the student's needs.
- The student will complete a written reflection focused on accountability and repair.
- A restorative conference will be scheduled upon return to support reintegration and reparation of harm with the anti bullying team .
- Ongoing check-ins and support services may be put in place for both the harmed and responsible student with the counselors.

### **CHRONIC OR SEVERE BULLYING including cyberbullying and sexual harassment will follow tier 3**

This tier addresses ongoing, escalated, or dangerous behaviors, including threats to life (lethal threats), persistent harassment, or bullying that contributes to suicidal ideation in the victim.

In cases where there is continuous or severe evidence of harm:

- Consequences will be determined at the discretion of the school administration, which may include long-term suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the situation and the safety needs of the community.
- An in-person conference with the parents or guardians will be scheduled to discuss the incident, consequences, and next steps.
- Support services and resources will be offered to all affected students and families.

### **Definitions**

- **Microaggressions:** Everyday comments, actions, or behaviors—often unintentional—that send negative or hurtful messages to someone based on their identity (such as race, gender, religion, language, or ability). These can make someone feel unwelcome, judged, or excluded, even if the person who said it didn't mean to cause harm.

- **Bullying:** A repeated and intentional behavior—such as words, actions, or social exclusion—that is meant to hurt, intimidate, or control someone. It often involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, like strength, popularity, or social influence.
- **Harassment:** Ongoing or severe behavior—verbal, physical, or online—that targets someone in a way that is unwelcome or offensive. It often relates to aspects of a person’s identity, such as race, gender, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, and creates a hostile or unsafe environment.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual actions or requests for sexual favors—meaning behaviors that are not wanted or invited—as well as other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Anti-Bullying team:

Assistant Head of School  
 School Counselors  
 CDBD Coordinator

Sexual harassment cases may also involve additional trained staff or outside resources as necessary.

### **Our Approach**

This policy reflects our dedication to proactive intervention, growth-oriented justice, and a safe learning space. Reflection, repair, and accountability are key elements in healing and preventing harm.

## **CHEATING**

There is a clear expectation that all students will perform assignments with honor and integrity. As mentioned in the Integrity Statement: “Integrity is consistency between what we say and how we act; faithfulness to a pledge or responsibility; soundness of moral character. Mercy students demonstrate integrity when their independent work is their personal, original work, when homework is not copied nor given to others to copy, when research is properly done, when work authored by others is not plagiarized, when preparation for tests and quizzes supports truthfulness in all answers, when computer and lab work is honestly presented and when commitments to academic and extracurricular activities are undertaken with sincerity.”

There is "zero tolerance" for students caught cheating. Often, cheating involves more than one individual. Any student involved in a cheating incident risks receiving a failing grade or a zero for the assignment, test, quiz, project or any other submission of work that is to be assessed, and a mandatory demerit will be issued. Subsequent offenses may result in one or more of the following: additional demerits, suspension, removal from elected position(s) and/or honorary organization(s), inability to participate in co-curricular activities, and/or other consequences determined by an administrator.

## **HATE SPEECH POLICY**

Mount Mercy Academy strives to create an environment based on respect of the individual and celebrates diversity. To re-enforce this view, we will not tolerate any form of hate speech against any student or adult in this school or outside of school using any, but not limited to, form of written, spoken or electronic speech. All individuals who are part of the Mount Mercy Academy Community will be protected from individuals or groups who promote violence or hatred against groups based on race or ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Individuals or groups found to be using hate speech will meet with any necessary individual(s) including the Head of School and members of the Board of Trustees, Administration and Teachers to review the situation and determine appropriate next step actions for those found to be in violation of the policy.

## **PLAGIARISM**

**Definition:** Plagiarism is defined as the intentional or unintentional use of another author's words or ideas without proper citation, or credit being given to that original author. This, in its most egregious form, includes copying from a source verbatim or submitting an entire document of another's work as if it were one's own. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing without properly citing, or presenting another author's ideas without assigning credit to the author. To offer as a paraphrase an original passage only slightly altered also is plagiarism (Lannon 178).

Submission of AI generated work as your own also constitutes plagiarism. Using AI as your own original work will not be tolerated. AI within the classroom will be used as a brainstorming tool and editing feedback tool only - and only when the teacher decides. Any work submitted as your own that was created with AI is considered a Tier 2 infraction, and will result in an automatic grade of 0 and immediate referral to the Assistant Head of School, with possible in-school or external school suspension.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

A hallmark of a Mount Mercy education is our dedication to academic excellence. To foster that goal, the administration and faculty have made academic performance a priority that impacts upon student participation in extracurricular activities. Therefore, any student who fails one subject will be subject to Academic Intervention for the following quarter. During this time, her academic progress will be monitored by both the classroom teacher and the school counselor. The student's progress will continue to be monitored and determination of participation in extracurricular activities will be made on a case-by-case basis.

### **ACCESSIBILITY OF BUILDING AND FACILITIES**

In light of the Mission Statement and the effort to be inclusive and accommodating of all persons, Mount Mercy Academy will do all that is practical to meet the needs of faculty and students who are physically challenged, within the limits of the resources available.

### **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

Students and parents will be asked to read and electronically sign the "Acceptable Use Policy". Information regarding this procedure will be sent at the beginning of the school year.

### **CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY**

To protect the integrity of our learning environment and support student well-being, Mount Mercy Academy is adopting a Personal Devices Policy. This policy applies to all personal electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, and internet-enabled accessories.

This policy reflects our commitment to fostering a focused, human-centered environment where students can fully engage in their academics, relationships, and personal growth without digital distractions.

### **Policy Guidelines**

- **How it works:** Students may not use personal devices for any reason from the **start of the school day until dismissal** (first bell to last bell), unless explicitly directed by a teacher for academic purposes. The phone must remain turned off at all times.
- **Classroom Procedure:** Upon entering each classroom, students are required to place their cell phones in the designated phone holder. Devices must remain there for the duration of the class. Students may not take the devices to the bathroom. When the class ends students can take their device to the next class, study hall or dining hall.

- **School-Wide Expectations:** Personal use of phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods and Ipads is prohibited during passing periods, lunch, study halls, hallways, restrooms, or any other area during school hours. Phones, ipads, and watches must be turned off. Notice that the only internet connected device that students can use during the day is the school issued chromebook.
- **Headphones/Earbuds:** These devices are not to be used during instructional time unless explicitly authorized for educational purposes.
- **Exceptions:** Devices may be permitted for documented medical accommodations, translation needs, or specific instructional activities as directed by a teacher. These exceptions will be clearly communicated.

## Parent Communication During the School Day

We understand that communication between parents and students is important. In case of emergency or necessity during the school day:

- **Parents may call the Main Office at (716) 825-8796.**
- Our Office Manager (ext. 109) will assist in delivering messages to students.
- In urgent cases, we will locate the student and facilitate a **conference call** between parents and students.

## Accountability and Consequences

If a student is using any cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods and Ipads, it will result in a confiscation for the rest of day and a Tier 1 will start at this point.

- Tier 1: Demerit and Growth Oriented Justice

If the student refuses to turn the device in the Assistant Head of School office will be considered as insubordination which will fall on the Tier 2 in our Discipline policy

- Tier 2: In School Suspension starting at 1 day could lead to 2 or more in-school or external suspension, or expulsion, based on administrative decisions.

Please refer to our Tier system for more information.

Devices will be placed in the Assistant Head of School office for the remainder of the day in all instances.

Mount Mercy Academy emphasizes **growth-oriented discipline**. Our approach prioritizes accountability, reflection, and learning over punishment.

## **CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND THE CONTROL OF THE SCHOOL**

In times of events beyond the school's control, i.e. pandemics, flooding, fires, tornadoes, etc. where a school's normal operations are impeded, temporarily or fully stopped during the school year, the school will continue to provide an instructional program using alternative methods that may include online learning or alternative school settings. In such events it is understood that the school must continue to employ its faculty and staff to ensure instruction continues. Accordingly, tuition payments to the school must also continue to be paid throughout the year as per contractual agreement between the school and those who have made the financial commitment for those tuition payments.

## **CUSTODIAL & NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mount Mercy Academy abides by the provision of the Buckley Amendment (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974). When parents of a student are separated, involved in divorce proceedings, or are divorced, the administration will respect the rights of both the custodial and non-custodial parents. Court orders concerning special restriction will also be respected and followed by the school administration. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, Mount Mercy Academy will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the student; Mount Mercy Academy is not required to inform the custodial/legal guardian(s) if such information has been requested or given to a non-custodial parent/guardian. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

For the school's purposes, the parent with whom the child resides is known as the custodial parent. If both parents claim to be the custodial parent, enrollment records will be examined; the parents who enrolled the child are considered the custodial parent until a legal document naming the custodial parent can be provided to the school.

Parent rights include access to student records and school mailings, attendance at parent/teacher conferences, and authority to request that a student be released early or be absent from school for a legitimate reason. Only the custodial parent has the right to remove the student from school property.

It is the responsibility of the non-custodial parent to inform the school office of his/her name, address, and telephone number if he/she wishes to be consulted regarding his/her child or wishes to be placed on the school's mailing list.

## **DANCES**

Dances held at Mount Mercy Academy and dances sponsored by Mount Mercy Academy but held off-site are subject to the Mount Mercy Academy Dance Policy. This policy is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all who attend a Mount Mercy Academy dance. These dances are high school functions and as such guests invited by Mount Mercy students must currently be enrolled in a high school and/or may not be older than 21 years of age. Guests of Mount Mercy Academy students must complete the guest authorization release which must be turned in before or at the time of ticket purchase along with the Mount Mercy Academy dance permission slip for the Mount Mercy Academy student. School policies

regarding alcohol and drugs apply to those who attend a Mount Mercy Academy dance. Students and guests must stay for the duration of the dance. Any Mount Mercy Academy student or guest violating these policies will be subject to removal from the dance. Mount Mercy Academy students will be subject to further disciplinary action.

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Mount Mercy Academy strives to offer the highest quality educational experience to all of its students, whether in the traditional mode of classroom instruction or in alternative teaching methodologies, such as distance education. In an effort to reach students when classes are not able to be held in the school building, there may be times when instruction will be made available in the distance education format. Distance education may be defined as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance learning situation may employ correspondence study, or audio, or video, or computer technologies. Mount Mercy Academy will employ all of these technologies in course delivery.

Distance Learning will not be offered to students except in the following circumstances:

1. When the entire school is unable to hold in-person classes, ie., due to a county/statewide emergency, OR;
2. When a student has a medical situation which keeps her from attending in-person classes. This medically excused situation requires a doctor's script/letter stating the reason of the distance learning, along with the start and end dates, ie., surgery, accident, prolonged illness, OR;
3. When a student is placed in quarantine by the Erie County Department of Health. In this case a student must follow the guidelines issued by the Erie County Department of Health.

## **FAMILY PORTAL**

All parents who pay tuition and require access to their daughter's academic information, must have a portal account. Portal accounts for parents are created as part of the enrollment process. The FACTS software will not allow parents to **share an email address**. When necessary, parents may have to create his/her own unique email address in order to create a portal account. New students will create their portal accounts at student orientation using their school email address. Family Portal accounts for students and parents are located at: [factsmgt.com](http://factsmgt.com). Click the "Log In Here" button. Under "For Families", click the link to the Family Portal. Enter your Username/Password you used to create your account. Our District Code is **MMA-NY**.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

In the spirit of mercy and Christian justice, expressed in the philosophy and mission statement of the Academy the following tuition payment policy is enacted:

### ***I. Tuition Policy Statement***

Mount Mercy Academy's payment policies respect the wise use of the tuition dollars you pay to provide quality education for your daughter. In the spirit of Mercy and in Christian justice,

tuition rates are established to support our students in the many opportunities offered to them through our curriculum and unique programming which prepares them for a high degree of success in high school, college and career. Timely tuition payments are essential for us to maintain the quality of our programs.

## II. Policies and Procedures

Tuition information and payment option plans for the academic year will be made available to each parent of a student at the Academy in a **Tuition Acceptance/Payment Preference Form within the FACTS SIS enrollment packet.** All tuition is assessed by the Finance Office and collected by the FACTS Tuition Management Company. The Academy reserves the right, when necessary, to amend tuition and other charges associated with a student's education.

### Registration and Tuition Deposits – Incoming Freshmen ONLY

Students register once as incoming freshmen. A student will be considered registered and returning for all four years unless the Academy is notified by the parent or guardian in writing that the student is not returning. All incoming freshmen must pay a registration deposit of \$360. This deposit will be applied to the tuition bill of the student. The deposit is forfeited if the student fails to enter the high school or withdraws before the completion of the academic year. The deposit is due on or before the date a student comes in for Registration (scheduled in early February).

### Payment of Tuition

All Parents or legal guardians are billed for tuition by the FACTS Tuition Management Company in May or June. Financial responsibility begins with registration of the student at the Academy. Tuition is due on the **due date** printed on the bill. If a bill remains unpaid after the due date, a \$25 late charge will be added automatically for each month the bill remains unpaid. All money is credited on the day received, NOT the day mailed.

### Student Withdrawal

Students who will not be returning to Mount Mercy Academy for the following academic year must notify the Head of School to schedule an in-person exit interview before the first day of school in order to avoid further financial obligation to the school. Any student withdrawn **after the first day of school** will be obligated to pay 30% of the tuition for September and an additional 10% for each additional month the student is enrolled, as listed below:

<b>Withdrawal Notification:</b>	<b>Due:</b>	<b>Withdrawal Notification:</b>	<b>Due:</b>
Between opening of school and Sept. 30 70%	30%	Between January 1 and January 31	
Between October 1 and October 31 80%	40%	Between February 1 and February 28/29	
Between November 1 and November 30	50%	Between March 1 and March 31	90%
Between December 1 and December 31	60%	Between April 1 and April 30	100%

### **III. Tuition Payment Options**

Parents or legal guardians of students may choose one of the installment payment options below. **The payment plan selected will remain in effect for all four years unless the parent or guardian contacts the Finance Office and submits a new Tuition Acceptance/Payment Preference Form.** The Academy utilizes a payment management system called FACTS for all three payment options:

**1. Full payment:**

The FACTS Tuition Management Company electronically withdraws 100% of the tuition on July 1st.

**2. Two installments option:**

The FACTS Tuition Management Company electronically withdraws 50% of the academic year's full tuition payment in July and the remainder in November from a parent or guardian's checking or savings account. Withdrawal dates are either on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**3. Monthly installments option:**

The FACTS Tuition Management Company electronically withdraws 10 monthly tuition payments from a parent or legal guardian's checking or savings account. Monthly withdrawals begin in July and end with the April payment. Withdrawal dates are either on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

#### **Outstanding Financial Obligations**

Any outstanding financial obligation which a parent or legal guardian of a student owes to the Academy will prevent the student from returning for the next academic quarter. Also, no student will be allowed to register for the next school year until all outstanding financial obligations are paid in full. Other collection measures may be implemented by the Academy as deemed necessary.

Families who experience extenuating circumstances (such as loss or significant change in employment status, loss of a spouse, divorce or separation, etc.) must contact the Director of Operations and Management directly who will arrange a meeting to discuss alternate payment plans if applicable.

All tuition collection issues are subject to appropriate credit reporting and collection agency follow-up. All fees charged by the collection agency will be the financial responsibility of the parent or guardian.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Development activities and fundraising are essential to the financial stability of Mount Mercy Academy. All revenue-generating activities will be done in accordance with this policy so that:

1. Fundraising activities are consistent with the Mission Statement of the Academy,
2. Principles of good stewardship are practiced
3. Collaboration among the various constituencies is optimized, and
4. Coordination of activities results in reasonable expectation of parents, students, alumnae and all Mercy supporters.

A fundraising calendar for specific fundraising events will be prepared by May 1 for the subsequent academic year and approved by June 1. Requests for approval and/or revisions to this calendar will be submitted in writing.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is an important component in an overall educational program and contributes to life skills that we want our students to develop. The purpose of homework is to reinforce the skills taught in the classroom, as well as to uphold our commitment to excellence. Homework policies will be determined according to individual course expectations.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS AND PHYSICALS**

### Immunizations:

All students must meet requirements of New York State Public Health Law in regards to required immunizations for school entrance/attendance for the current school year. The "**Immunizations Requirements Form**" can be found on the Mount Mercy Academy website: <https://www.mtmercy.org>.

Please work with your child's health care provider and school nurse to determine what immunizations are needed to comply with the requirements.

### Health Examination:

New York State requires a health examination for all students entering **9th grade, 11th grade and transfer students**. The examination must be completed on the approved **Health Appraisal Form**, found under **Quick Links** on the homepage of the Mount Mercy Academy website: <https://www.mtmercy.org>. A health appraisal is valid for a 12 month period and must be received by **October 1<sup>st</sup>**.

\*Participation in fall sports requires a current physical in the Health Office prior to try-outs in August.

## **INCOMPLETES**

Incompletes should be given only in the event that illness prevents the student from completing course work within a given quarter. **Only the Head of School may authorize giving an incomplete**. It is recommended that a student make up an incomplete within two weeks of the end of the quarter for which the incomplete is given. An incomplete may not be given in the fourth quarter.

## **INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Integrity should be the watchword for every Mount Mercy Academy student. Integrity is consistency between what we say we believe and how we act; faithfulness to a pledge or responsibility; soundness of moral character. Integrity is needed more than ever in our contemporary society. As a Mercy community, we place a value on integrity and expect that our students work and interact valuing it. Mercy students demonstrate integrity when their independent work is their personal, original work, when homework is not copied nor given to others to copy, when research is properly done, when the work authored by others is not plagiarized (copied without appropriate acknowledgement of source), when preparation for tests and quizzes supports truthfulness in all answers, when computer and lab work is honestly presented and when commitments to academic and extracurricular activities are undertaken with sincerity.

## **MORALS AND ETHICS**

Mount Mercy Academy, consistent with its philosophy and mission statement, will not tolerate any physical, emotional or sexual misconduct. Mount Mercy Academy is identified with and

by its student body. Each student must accept the responsibility of publicly demonstrating the honorable conduct rightfully expected of her as stated throughout the Student Handbook. All events of the school including all sporting events, all field study, evening and weekend activities as well as daily attendance and any other event, trip or activity, where students represent Mount Mercy Academy, the following expectations will be in force:

Defiance, acts of bullying, harassment, inappropriate displays of affection, or poor language, toward other students, teachers, staff, guests, visiting team members, coaches, officials and others will be subject to immediate disciplinary action. This may include suspension or expulsion. It may be understood that any conduct or misbehavior that, in the opinion of the Administrators, is detrimental to the reputation of the school or the good name of the student body, will be grounds for serious disciplinary action. Incorporated by reference into this policy are the Buffalo Diocese's "Policy Relating to Sexual or Physical Misconduct" and "Code of Conduct" and the applicable sections of New York State Law.

## **ONLINE AND SUMMER COURSES**

All online courses and summer courses must have pre-approval from the Counseling Department and Administration before credit will be granted by Mount Mercy Academy. Mercy Online courses will have a registration deadline in the spring, and will only run if the predetermined number of students registers by the deadline.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Mount Mercy Institutional Advancement office is responsible for raising significant funds to subsidize tuition and provide funding for student programs which are not able to be financed through the operating budget. Active involvement in Mount Mercy's institutional advancement activities offers an opportunity to meet with other Mercy parents and to provide for the current and future needs of the school. Parental participation in some aspect of fund raising activities is expected each year that your daughter attends Mount Mercy Academy.

## **PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

Active participation by parents in Mount Mercy's Parent-Teacher Association both deepens your involvement in your daughter's school life and provides opportunities for you to meet new friends who share the same values and ideals. The spirit and purpose of this organization is to insure the best possible educational advantage for your daughter. Your views and insights are invaluable in shaping the school's response to student needs. Parent-Teacher Association meetings keep you in touch with school policy and events while offering spiritual and social activities and programs designed to help you guide your daughter in this challenging world.

## **POLICY ON PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE**

Mount Mercy Academy, consistent with its philosophy and mission statement, will not tolerate any physical, emotional or sexual abuse, by or against any member of the faculty, staff or student body. Included in this prohibition are all forms of corporal punishment, use or threatened use of physical force or violence, endangering the health or safety of persons, and improper sexual conduct or sexual harassment. (Sexual Harassment is defined as: Verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature which is unwelcome or offensive, which interferes with academic performance, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive academic environment.)

Incorporated by reference into this policy are the Buffalo Diocese's "Policy Relating to Sexual or Physical Misconduct" and the applicable sections of New York State Law. We provide annual education to students and employees through the Diocese of Buffalo. Any person aware of incidents such as described shall report the same to the Administration so that appropriate action may be taken.

All faculty and staff are legally obligated to report suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of students occurring outside the Academy environment. All reports will be made to the Administration who will follow the required procedures

## **PUBLIC RELATION/PUBLICITY POLICY**

Mount Mercy Academy produces and assists parties in the exchange of information through media releases, radio programs, television broadcasts, various brochures, flyers, special technical reports and photographic services. The distribution of any information directed toward the public must receive authorization. Mount Mercy Academy is responsible for the publicity and promotion of the Academy and its activities. All promotional advertising, publications, and contacts with the media must be cleared. The subject matter and content of all public relations/publicity should be contextual with the mission and statement of philosophy of Mount Mercy Academy.

### **Contact with the Media:**

Any employee who receives a request for Mount Mercy Academy-related information from the media shall forward the request immediately. Only spokespersons representing Mount Mercy Academy are authorized to provide school-related information to the media. Exceptions to this policy may be made only at the discretion of the Academy.

### **Official Seal/Logo/Name:**

Any use of the official Mount Mercy Academy seal or logo or the name "Mount Mercy" or "Mount Mercy Academy" must be approved.

### **Advertising:**

All advertising of Mount Mercy Academy programs and services through mass media (newspaper, magazines, radio, television, specialty/trade publications, billboards/outdoor promotion, internet, etc.) must be approved. All requests will be evaluated as to the purpose, content, presentation and cost of advertising.

### **Publications:**

Any printed material to be distributed off school grounds for the purpose of information and/or promotion must be approved. (This includes materials produced in any method: laser printers, central duplicating, in-house printing, production or commercial vendor printing.) For all requests, the purpose, content, presentation and cost of publications and printed materials will be evaluated.

### **Interviews:**

Media interviews are coordinated through Mount Mercy Academy upon request. The subject matter and content of the interview should be contextual with the mission and statement of philosophy of Mount Mercy Academy.

## **SERVICE REQUIREMENT**

A hallmark of a Mercy education is service. Therefore each student will be required to complete a minimum of 25 hours per year to fulfill the 100 hours of service which is a graduation requirement from Mount Mercy Academy. If students complete 125 hours of

Service by the end of their senior year, they will be acknowledged with a yellow rose (McAuley Rose) at graduation. Service may begin in the summer prior to the next school year (June, July and August) but must continue in some capacity during the school year. A folder will be started by the Theology teacher to retain documented service hour forms and reflection papers. The folders will be kept until the end of the third quarter of senior year. A more complete explanation of Service and Service Requirements will be given to the students in their Theology classes. Service Forms may be accessed from the Mount Mercy Academy webpage and/or common drive.

A hallmark of a Mercy education is service. Therefore, each student will be required to complete a minimum of 25 hours per year to fulfill the 100 hours of service which is a graduation requirement from Mount Mercy Academy. If students complete 125 hours of Service by the end of their senior year, they will be acknowledged with a yellow rose (McAuley Rose) at graduation. Service may begin in the summer prior to the next school year (June, July and August) but must continue in some capacity during the school year. Students are required to submit their service hours in a timely manner. The form to submit hours can be found in "Quicklinks" on the school's website. The Theology teacher may assign reflection papers on service at any time. A more complete explanation of Service and Service Requirements will be given to the students in their Theology classes. Submitted Service Hours can be checked through your Family Portal.

Our students at Mount Mercy Academy are required to complete at least 100 hours by the end of their Senior year. These hours should be fulfilled in several different ways to encourage students to expand their worldview. This way, students will have the ability to experience a variety of service work throughout our community and beyond.

Students are encouraged to have at least:

- 15 hours serving Family and Friends
- 20 hours serving Mount Mercy Academy
- 25 hours serving Organizations & Businesses
- 25 hours serving Churches, Ministries or Charities
- 15 hours serving toward their Internship Senior Year

## **STUDENT WITHDRAWALS**

A parent must make an appointment for an in-person exit interview with the Head of School if a student plans to withdraw from Mount Mercy Academy. Transcripts will not be released until the following have been met: the in-person exit interview has been conducted; all withdrawal paperwork has been returned; all property of Mount Mercy Academy (chrombooks, charger, etc.) has been returned in satisfactory condition. Information regarding finances can be found in the section above called "Financial Obligations of Parents/Guardians."

## **SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

### **APPOINTMENTS**

Parents who wish to see a particular teacher, school counselor or administrator are asked to telephone for an appointment (825-8796) or contact the person directly via email. Voice Mail messages may be left. Please feel free to utilize email whenever possible. Email addresses are available on our website and through the Family Portal.

### **CELL PHONES**

Cellular phones, smart watches and air pods or ear buds are not permitted for personal use during class. Disciplinary action will occur for noncompliance of this policy. Students will be required to place their cell phones in a designated phone holder upon entering the classroom. These devices must remain in the holder for the duration of the class. The use of headphones, AirPods, or smart watches during class time is strictly prohibited.

This policy is designed to ensure that our learning environment remains focused and free from distractions. We believe that this measure will support our students' academic success and encourage more meaningful and positive engagement during class. As outlined in the student handbook:

- Personal Use Prohibited: Cell phones, smart watches, AirPods, and earbuds are not permitted for personal use during the school day. Disciplinary action will be taken for noncompliance.

- Parent Communication: We kindly ask parents not to call or text their children during the school day. In case of emergencies, please contact the Main Office directly.

There may be instances where teachers allow the use of cell phones for academic purposes during class. However, this will be strictly at the teacher's discretion and will be clearly communicated to the students.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Any change of address, phone number, email address, parish or other vital information is to be updated online or reported to the Main Office as soon as the change becomes effective.

### **CLASS OFFICE**

Each class elects officers and homeroom representatives who assume leadership in their class. Students who choose to serve in these positions must have the time, dedication and willingness to develop necessary skills to carry out the responsibilities of their offices. Officers are representatives for their class to the Student Government. A student must meet academic and conduct requirements to submit her name for nomination.

### **COMMENCEMENT**

Commencement is a student's culminating academic activity. A senior must have met all of the standards set by Mount Mercy Academy and the State of New York to be a successful candidate and fully participate in Commencement. Valedictorian and salutatorian are identified senior year and must be students of Mount Mercy Academy for all four years.

### **COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN**

Our response plan is based on guidelines we have been given thus far from the State Office

of Religious and Independent Schools (SRIS). As additional information becomes available, we will update, modify and continue to evaluate per the recommendations and guidelines given from NYSED and the CDC. Please refer to our school website: <https://www.mtmercy.org/covid-19-response> for our guidelines. We will continue to monitor and assess the plan as necessary as we navigate through the future of education.

### **COURSE REQUESTS**

Course requests are accepted at the beginning of the 2nd semester and the schedule is finalized by the end of the school year. Therefore, no schedule changes will be permitted after June 1st. Students are able to revise their course requests as often as they would like until this date. Students may not drop a class during the school year. The only schedule changes allowed will be at the discretion of Administration or if a student would like to choose an elective in place of a study hall, which is offered at the same time. Students will not be allowed to pick up additional electives after the 1st week of the semester.

### **DELIVERIES AND MESSAGES**

Mount Mercy Academy is not able to accept deliveries at school, which may include flowers, candy, food products, etc. for students. It is a tedious and disrupting process that distracts from our educational mission.

### **DINING HALL**

Besides being a lunchroom, the dining hall is a place for socializing. Students are to observe rules of courteous behavior and maintain good order. Each student is responsible for leaving the dining area in good order. Food may not be eaten outside of the dining hall. Students are not to leave the dining hall without the permission of the proctors who will issue a pass. iPods, cell phones, etc. are not allowed in the Dining Hall during school hours. Students are expected to listen quietly to any announcements made in the dining hall.

### **DRESS REGULATIONS**

**The school uniform is worn everyday during regular school hours. The Mount Mercy Academy uniform components are sold through Land’s End Company. If a student is missing a uniform component, there are extras on hand in the main office. The uniform is considered an essential component of the daily school day. Students show their respect and pride in themselves and Mount Mercy Academy through proper wearing of their uniform.**

	<b>You may purchase skirts, shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, and slacks through Land’s End.</b>
Skirt	Grey or navy skirt
Shirt	Polo with Mercy logo; long or short sleeve; in colors of navy, white, light pink, yellow, or light blue

	Items from the Wizard Wear collection may be worn every day. <b>No sports attire Monday through Thursday (EX: Mercy Golf/Soccer/Cross-Country)</b>
Sweaters	<b>Navy</b> sweater with Mercy logo
Sweatshirts	<b>Navy</b> fleece with Mercy logo; full or half zip
Shoes	Must have a front and back, i.e., loafers or ballerina flats. Shoes must be a solid color - navy, black, tan, white, or gray only. No flip-flops, slides, boots, or slippers. No sneakers or trainers, unless medical documentation is provided
Socks	Navy, gray, or white knee socks, crew socks, or tights
Slacks	Grey or navy uniform pants
Wizard Wear	<b>Wizard Wear</b> purchased through the school may be worn on the top only - Crewnecks and quarter zips in mercy colors only. <b>No hoodies.</b> The uniform skirt/slacks must still be worn - no sweatpants or shorts.
Appearance	Moderate make-up, hair, and jewelry as deemed appropriate by MMA Administration
Dress Up Days	TBD by Administration. Must be professional and school appropriate. Dresses, skorts, skirts and rompers must be fingertip length
Dress Down Days	TBD by Administration. No ripped jeans, spaghetti strap tank tops, crocs, slippers or flip flops

**Appearance:**

- Uniforms should be clean, pressed, hemmed, and of an appropriate length
- Make-up, hair, jewelry must comply with stipulation in the handbook
- No head shaving, haircut, or hair coloring deemed unacceptable by the Administration
- No visible tattoos or piercings – only **spacers** will be allowed.

**The following are NOT allowed with the uniform:**

- Footwear deemed unsafe by the administration
- Individual sweatshirts of any kind

- T-shirts/sweatshirts or jeans with holes, rips or inappropriate messages/pictures
- Tank tops and halter tops
- Bare midriffs
- Shorts that are not beyond fingertip length
- Any clothing deemed unacceptable by the administration
- No head shaving, haircut, or hair coloring deemed unacceptable by the Administration (Religious head wear is acceptable)
- Excessive make-up and jewelry, visible tattoos, or facial piercings are not allowed

#### **Dress-Up Days:**

- Dress Pants
- Blouses, sweaters, dress tops and plain t-shirts
- Dresses, skirts (these must be of an appropriate length)
- Socks, tights, stockings

#### **Dress-Down Days:**

- Jeans, Shorts (of a modest length)
- T-shirts, sweatshirts
- Sneakers, sandals

### **ELEVATOR**

Students may use the elevator with a medical pass or script only. Otherwise, the elevator is off limits.

### **ENTRANCES**

Students are to use Door #4 on Red Jacket to enter the building and may exit the building by Door #3 or Door #4. Doors 5, 6, 7 should not be used by students. **Students are not allowed to let anyone into the building. All visitors must report to door #3 and ring the bell for access.**

### **FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Fire, evacuation, and lock-down drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. During a fire or evacuation drill, it is essential that the building be evacuated quickly and quietly. The route for evacuation is posted in every classroom and area of the building. Students are to remain outside the building in silence until the signal is given to return. During a lock-down drill, no one will be permitted to enter or leave the building until the conclusion of the drill.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

**The Main Office is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Deliveries and re-admittance into the building will not be allowed after 3:00 p.m.** It is important to know that students should not remain in the school after dismissal unless they have a supervised activity or sport practice/game in which they are participating. If students are waiting for a coach to arrive after school, they must wait in either the Dining Hall or the Library. **Students must make pre-arrangements with their coach to be readmitted to the building after dismissal; therefore, it is highly preferred that students remain in the building while**

**waiting for a coach.** A coach or adult activity leader is responsible for students until the student leaves the premises.

## **LOCKERS**

Every student is given a school lock for her assigned locker at the beginning of the school year. The locks are available in the main office. The school is not responsible for stolen items. The custody and safeguarding of her belongings is the special responsibility of each student. The student has the use, not the ownership, of her locker. As deemed necessary, school administration reserves the right to investigate student lockers at any time. Homeroom teachers supervise the cleaning of lockers at regularly scheduled intervals and at the close of the year. Students may not occupy lockers not assigned to them. Items found in unassigned lockers will be removed and disposed of.

## **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

The McAuley Chapter of the National Honor Society follows the directives of the national organization that recognizes outstanding students who are especially worthy of commendation. Consistent with the constitution of the National Honor Society, the purpose of the McAuley Chapter is to generate enthusiasm for scholarship, service and leadership and to develop character in student members. The honor of membership is not automatic, but based on a review of a student's cumulative average and consideration of personal and extracurricular activities throughout her high school career as presented in the activity form and supporting documentation. The Faculty Council may bestow membership to students in grades 11 and 12. Mount Mercy Academy students must have a cumulative average of 90% or higher and give evidence of direct service and demonstrated leadership as outlined on the activity form. Qualified students are selected by majority vote of the Council on the basis of scholarship, character, leadership and service.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

On days when school will be closed because of weather conditions or another emergency, you will be contacted by our Alert Notification System. Announcements will be made on the 3 local TV stations. Mount Mercy Academy will be closed only when our name is specifically announced as closed.

## **SPORTS, ACTIVITIES, AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION**

Fall: Cheerleading, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Swim, Tennis, Volleyball (All August)

Winter: Basketball (Nov), Bowling (Oct), Hockey

Spring: Cheerleading, Flag Football, Lacrosse, Softball, Track (All March)

A sports physical must be on file prior to tryouts. Activity fees must be paid in order to participate. Involvement in student activities is an integral part of school life. Extracurricular activities should be carefully chosen. Elected office, athletic teams and club membership require dedication and responsibility. Mount Mercy Academy offers a wide variety of clubs, grade level events, athletics and activities to meet student interests, needs and talents; all are encouraged to become actively involved in at least one of these. Activities include service organizations, fine arts, academic clubs, communications and publications, and sports. Any

student staying after school for any activity must be under the supervision of a teacher, coach, or moderator. Students are not allowed to stay after school without this supervision. If A student must participate in any assigned physical education class on the day of a scheduled practice, game or match. Students must travel with the team in order to play in games.

An unexcused absence or an absence/early dismissal due to illness eliminates any student from participating in after school sports or extracurricular activities. Exceptions can be determined by Administration on a case-by-case basis.

### **Academic Eligibility**

Any student whose grade drops to the failing level in one or more courses during the time they are participating in an athletic program will be put on academic probation. Once a student is put on academic probation, she will have 2 weeks to improve her grade and bring it back above the threshold of a passing mark. If this is not accomplished, the student will be suspended from participation in athletics until her grade has risen above the passing threshold, the Athletic Director and her teacher for the course in question determine that she is making conscientious progress in improving her grade and is on track to be in good academic standing by the time the quarter ends. If the student's grade drops again after probation has been lifted, she will be automatically suspended from her sport until the grade is improved or the Athletic Director and teacher deem otherwise. The probationary period is a one-time courtesy. This policy applies to each class in which a student has a failing grade. Students suspended from participation in athletics may still attend practices and games, but may not suit up or wear their uniforms.

### **Disciplinary Probation**

Any student who commits a Tier 2 infraction (see Student-Parent Handbook pg. 12) will be suspended from participation in athletics until their in-school suspension period has expired or they are otherwise deemed eligible by the Athletic Director or Assistant Head of School. Any student who commits a Tier 3 infraction (see Student-Parent Handbook pg. 12) is automatically suspended from athletics indefinitely. Their eligibility may be reviewed and restored if the Athletic Director and Assistant Head of School see fit.

## **STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

The Student Government is made up of elected officers and representatives. Students may also become members at large. These young women of exemplary character serve to express the opinions and needs of the Student Body to the Administration. SG members assume leadership by accepting responsibility for various school activities and functions. Another important means of fostering leadership and giving students a voice in developing school policy is the role of class officer. Elections are held in May for Grades 10-12 & in the fall for Grade 9.

## **STUDY HALL PROCEDURES**

Classroom instruction is only a part of the educational process. Study halls are quiet times for personal study or for the completion of assignments. Students are expected to arrive on time with their needed supplies for work. Students are issued passes to attend to tutoring or other business and must return before the end of the period.

## **SUMMER READING LIST**

All students will receive a list of mandatory summer readings for each grade level along with

the requirements set by the English Department. Students are responsible for completing the assessments on the reading in September, as well as completing any additional assignments, essays, or projects as assigned by the teacher. The mark for these will be averaged into the student's first quarter grade. A passing grade is required to advance to the next English level.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

All basic textbooks and some workbooks are loaned to students for their use. They are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Lost books must be reported to the Textbook Coordinator immediately and paid for before another book is issued. A charge will be levied against students who fail to return a textbook(s) at the completion of the school year. If the charge is unpaid, report cards and transcripts may be withheld.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Students who travel on school buses are expected to behave with maturity. Anyone whose conduct is unacceptable will meet with Administration and action may be taken by the individual school district.

Transportation for school is available from NFTA Metro buses in the City of Buffalo and from most suburban school districts. **Requests for transportation must be made to your school district before April 1.** Check with the district to find out their requirements. If a problem arises about transportation parents should call their school district. If any parent feels that a school district is not providing safe and sufficient transportation, please notify Mercy's school office.

## **VIDEO RECORDING & PHOTOGRAPHY**

Use of camera phones, digital photography, video cameras, etc. are not allowed without expressed approval of the MMA faculty and staff. Images of students, faculty, staff and the Mount Mercy name should only appear on social media with prior approval of MMA faculty and staff..

## **VISITORS**

All visitors must report to the Main Office. If a student wishes to invite a friend to Mercy for a day, she must make arrangements with the Director of Admissions two days in advance. Each of her teachers will be consulted and permission must be given.

## **ACADEMIES, CLUBS and ORGANIZATIONS**

A full range of activities is offered to complete the Mount Mercy Academy experience. It is hoped that you will be involved in at least one school activity.

**Art Club** promotes an interest in art to all students through field study and studio art activities; open to students in grades 9-12; meets weekly starting in September in the Art Room.

**Book Club** meets once a month to discuss a book chosen by students. Open to grades 9-12.

**Business and Finance Academy** gives Mount Mercy students the tools to make smart financial decisions and learn how to navigate the business world. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the students in the Business Academy showed their dedication and creativity with the official opening of a women-owned and student-run cafe called the Magic Market. Students in the Academy work at the on-campus market every morning during homeroom and during select sporting events. The goal of the Business and Finance Academy is to empower students to pursue entrepreneurship.

**Campus Ministry Team** gives students the opportunity to grow in their Catholic faith and carry out the charism of Catherine McAuley.

**Communications Academy** is dedicated to creating high quality media that showcases events at Mount Mercy and in our community. Members of this academy will have an opportunity to report on school and community events, create short videos for social media, write articles for the school newspaper and website, and to attend field trips and workshops. The Academy will explore many aspects of communication from podcasts to poster art, from marketing to memes.

**Connect Life Club** sponsors two bloodmobiles a year and educates the Mercy community about organ and tissue donation.

**Crew Club** is a women's rowing program. Mount Mercy Academy has partnered with the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association (BSRA). For more information go to [www.rowbuffalo.com](http://www.rowbuffalo.com)

**Critter Crew** Our club focuses on the daily tasks of cleaning, feeding and enrichment time with the chinchillas, fish and axolotl and educating the school and community on our beloved animals.

**Cultural Development, Belonging and Dignity** seeks to learn about issues of diversity and inclusion, via the lens of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. Open to all students 9-12. Plans and implements events throughout the school year that promote an environment of belonging.

**Drama Club** Exploring the world of theatre! Drama Club will put on a Fall Play and bi-weekly

club meetings for acting games, improv, and more. All aspects of theatre will be explored - acting, directing, designing, and writing.

**Environmental Awareness Club** was established so that students can get involved in improving the current conditions of the environment through projects such as recycling, informing their peers and helping the community. Members are expected to participate in activities and attend weekly meetings. The purpose of the Environmental Club is to increase awareness of the relationships between human actions and our environment, educate the school community of steps that can be taken to improve our environment, and to encourage responsible environmental behaviors.

**Gender and Sexuality Alliance Club (GSA)** focuses on creating a school community where all students feel welcome and supported. Open to all students 9-12.

**Healthcare Career Club** is an organization for freshman and sophomore students at Mount Mercy Academy who are interested in learning more about health and science careers in Western New York. Students will hear from guest speakers and attend at least four field study events to local hospitals, colleges, universities, research institutions, and private companies that specialize in providing healthcare-related services. Participation in this club is a requirement for acceptance into the Science and Healthcare Academy at Mount Mercy Academy.

**International Club** promotes cultural exchange and celebrates diversity within our community. Our mission is to educate Mount Mercy students about cultures around the globe in order to promote understanding and appreciation of not only our community members but the Buffalo area. Through a variety of events—such as cultural presentations, international food events with cooking classes, and discussions on global issues—students can explore and appreciate the richness of different cultures. We also plan to collaborate with community leaders and external speakers, providing opportunities for communication, networking, and leadership development. Open to all students, the club welcomes anyone with an interest in other cultures, heritages, and traditions including K-pop, international cartoons, and more. Our monthly meetings are fun and engaging for all students to learn, make new friends and develop a global perspective. Join us to learn about different cultures, make new friends, and contribute to a more inclusive school community!

**Leadership Academy** has achieved an impressive level of prestige based on its rigorous curriculum. Students from local 8th-grade middle schools compete for acceptance into the academy based on the recommendation of their middle school principal. Once accepted, students participate in experiential learning and service opportunities that will enable them to realize the many gifts that they have been given and understand their role in using these gifts to make the world a better place.

**McAuley Scholars** are Mount Mercy Academy students who are intellectually gifted and continue to distinguish themselves through their enrollment in Advanced Placement and Honors courses while maintaining an academic average of 95% or above. Students who are awarded with the honor of being named a McAuley Scholar exemplify a commitment to the Hallmarks of a Mercy Education, including a Dedication to Christian Values, Academic Excellence, Leadership, and a Commitment to Compassionate Service. McAuley Scholars

pledge to live a life of integrity according to the spirit of Mother Catherine McAuley and to imitate her gentleness, her compassionate service, and her respect for the dignity of all people. McAuley Scholars are recognized at our Baccalaureate Mass and receive a white rose at Graduation.

**Mental Health Awareness Club** is a group of students who are passionate about mental health and want to help break the stigma around mental health. The club's mission is to help people become more aware of those with mental health issues by making various projects and raising funds for mental health charities.

**Mercienne** publishes the Mount Mercy yearbook; open to students in grades 10-12; meets during the summer and throughout the school year.

**Merciette** publishes the school newspaper; open to grades 9-12; meets weekly starting in September.

**Mock Trial** educates students in trial procedure through role-playing and reenactment; open to students in grades 9-12; meets from October through March.

**National Honor Society** promotes scholarship and service; names of eligible 11-12 graders are placed in nomination and a selection process occurs; meets monthly beginning in September.

**Speech and Debate Team** provides student opportunities to develop skills in oratory and dramatic activities; open to students in grades 9-12; members meet for individual practice sessions with moderators; informational meetings begin the first full week of the school year.

**Science and Healthcare Academy** integrates academics and technology and includes a variety of course selections with work experience in the field of the student's choice. The program emphasizes the importance of project, service, and work-based learning experiences. The Academy of Science and Healthcare provides opportunities for students to learn skills necessary for a career path in Health and Sciences and research. Students will be given every opportunity available to learn and develop through Mount Mercy's curriculum and partnership with the Catholic Health System and the community.

**STEAM Club** promotes interest in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics through hands-on activities and experiments, presentations, and participation in local competitions; open to students in grades 9-12. Meets weekly starting in September.

**Student Government** serves the Student Body by expressing the opinions and needs of students to the Administration and accepts responsibility for various school activities and functions; officers and representatives are elected to office; students are also able to join as members-at-large; meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month beginning in September.

**Visual Arts Academy** provides students with a solid foundation in the arts through a sequence of academic courses, career exploration opportunities, and inspiring interactions with fellow students, faculty, and professional artists. Our comprehensive program is ideal for students on a career path in the visual arts.

**Women in Social Sciences Academy** is a rigorous program for students whose interests lie in the social sciences. Students complete challenging social sciences courses and also participate in various experiential learning opportunities. Based on their field experiences, students are able to earn one of several distinctions at graduation in law, history, social work, psychology, and criminal justice. The Social Sciences Program creates a cohort of students on similar career paths so that they can create meaningful contacts that will be an asset to them after they have graduated from Mount Mercy. Students earn one of several distinctions at graduation. These distinctions include Women in Law, Women in History, Women in Government, Women in Social Work, Women in Psychology, and Women in Criminal Justice.

## MOUNT MERCY ACADEMY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

COURSE	NUMBER OF CREDITS for MOUNT MERCY ACADEMY DIPLOMA
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	4
SOCIAL STUDIES	4
MATHEMATICS	4
SCIENCE	3*
WORLD LANGUAGES	3*
THEOLOGY	4
HEALTH	0.5
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	2
FINE ARTS	1
OTHER ELECTIVES	3.5
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED</b>	<b>29</b>

**\*Although not required, it is highly recommended that students continue with a fourth credit of science and foreign language as a senior.**

**\*\*All students are expected to complete a total of 29 credits by graduation.**

### Diploma Types:

- ★ **Mount Mercy Diploma** - Meets standard Mercy Requirements
- ★ **Mount Mercy Diploma with Advanced Distinction** - Meets standard Mercy Requirements and has taken 3 College Level Classes with an overall GPA of 85+
- ★ **Mount Mercy Diploma with Advanced Distinction and Honors** - Meets standard Mercy Requirements and has taken 5 college level classes with an overall GPA of 90+

New York State Regents exams have been eliminated as our final assessment tool, replaced by robust, creative assessments. Mount Mercy Academy follows New York State Curriculum in all coursework, but with a new emphasis on enhancing the depth and breadth of study through interdisciplinary efforts and comprehensive assessments. Our students demonstrate mastery by producing capstone projects, written reports, group presentations, research papers, and other assessments that synthesize learning. Student learning is also measured through traditional paper and pen exams, created by our faculty who seek to create meaningful and accurate assessment. National standardized tests, i.e. PSAT, SAT, ACT, and AP exams, will continue to serve as academic benchmarks.

## A FINAL WORD

Mount Mercy Academy makes every effort to guide your daughter's development to her fullest potential - spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically. This is a responsibility

we share with you. We look forward to your active involvement in school life and encourage you to share your thoughts, insights, ideas and concerns. Through your support and reinforcement of school policy and the Mercy Core Values, together we share in the education of young women in the tradition of Catherine McAuley.

The Administration of Mount Mercy Academy retains the right to amend the Student-Parent Handbook for just cause. Parents and students will be given notification if changes are made.

**Revised 7/2026**