



# MERCY HIGH SCHOOL

## 2021-2022 Student/Parent Handbook

1300 E. Northern Parkway  
Baltimore, MD 21239-1998

410.433.8880 (office)  
410.323.8816 (fax)

[www.mercyhighschool.com](http://www.mercyhighschool.com)

### **FOUNDED IN 1960 BY THE SISTERS OF MERCY**

*Mercy reserves the right to amend the Student/Parent Handbook at its sole discretion. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be notified of any changes made.*

*This Student/Parent Handbook is an informative booklet for parents and students setting forth the rules, expectations, and policies of the School, but is not an expressed or implied contract.*





# MERCY HIGH SCHOOL

2021-2022

## Student/Parent Handbook

***Please Note:*** Policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook may be modified as part of Mercy High School's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes shall be communicated to the community via Principal Notes, email or the school website.

## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Mary Beth Lennon '85  
*President*

Kathryn Adelsberger  
*Principal*

Mary Ella Franz Marion '76,  
P'09  
*Dean of Students*

Diana Rego  
*Director of Finance and  
Operations*

Amy Dean Kemp  
*Director of Advancement*

Bonnie Bevans Kottraba '98  
*Director of Enrollment  
Management*

Niakia Cheese  
*Director of Development and  
Director of Equity & Inclusion*

Samantha Pomplon  
*Assistant Principal*

Abby Schindler  
*Academic Dean and Director of  
Continuous Learning*

Karen Lippy Maimone '92, P'19  
*Director of Alumnae  
Engagement*

Kristy Cummings  
*Director of Student Services  
and College Counseling*

Lorraine Cuddeback-Gedeon  
*Director of Mission and  
Ministry*

Jessica Thomas  
*Director of Fine Arts*

Nick Gill  
*Director of Athletics*

F. Eugene Sung  
*Registrar*

David Barber  
*Facilities Coordinator*

## History of the Religious Sisters of Mercy

Catherine McAuley was born into a wealthy family in Ireland in 1778. After the death of both her parents and the couple who had become her benefactors, Catherine used her inheritance to build a house on Baggot Street in Dublin. The House of Mercy was officially opened on September 24, 1827, the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. There, other women joined her in providing education and health care to the city's poor, women, and children.

On December 12, 1831, Catherine and two other women professed their vows, thus founding the Sisters of Mercy. The charism of Catherine McAuley soon spread across Ireland and England. In 1843, two years after Catherine's death, Frances Warde led the Sisters of Mercy to the United States. Today, the circle of Mercy extends around the world.

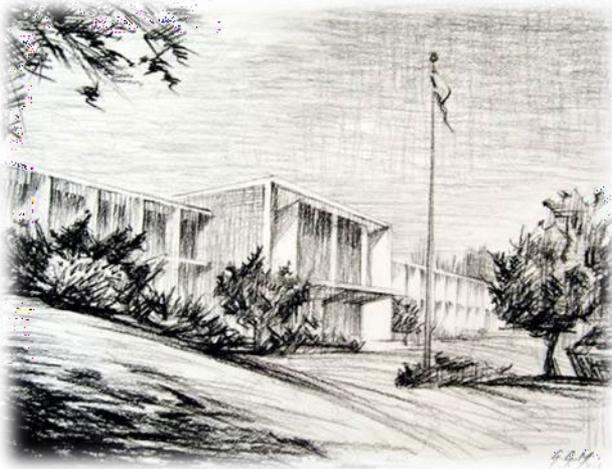


## Catherine McAuley's Suscipe

*Perhaps the best known prayer of Catherine McAuley  
is one she called her Suscipe.*



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



*Sketch by Gerardo Gómez, 2014*

## **Mercy High School Alma Mater**

*Lyrics by Sister Patricia Smith, RSM*

*Music by Patty Schreck*

Mercy High, our Alma Mater  
Guide us with your light of truth.  
We, your daughters, proudly follow  
Standards held aloft to youth.

Red for strength and courage  
Pure devotion shining white  
We will proudly wear your colors  
Living flames of service bright.

Alma Mater, hail all, hail ye  
Sing her glories, spread her fame,  
Mercy High we sound your praises  
Ever loyal to your name,  
Ever loyal to your name.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mercy High School, founded in 1960, is a private, Catholic, college preparatory school for girls, grades 9 through 12. It is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Mercy High School is an authorized International Baccalaureate World School offering the Middle Years Programme.

Mercy High School is accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools. Mercy High School has been named an Exemplary Private School by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for American Private Education.

Admission to Mercy High School is based on successful completion of the eighth grade, standardized testing at grade level or better, ability to complete a rigorous college preparatory program, correlation of academic performance with assessed ability, and satisfactory records in attendance and conduct.

Mercy High School is part of Mercy Education, a network of more than 40 Mercy secondary schools located in 20 states in the continental United States and 196 schools worldwide. These Mercy-sponsored schools are committed to educating young people with a focus on five core values:

- Compelled by Mercy
- Educational Courage
- Inspired by Faith
- Principled Leadership
- A Voice for Dignity and Respect

Mercy High School's academic program is college preparatory, including selected honors and Advanced Placement courses. The student/teacher ratio is 12:1. The academic program is complemented by an extensive student activities program, including numerous athletic teams, clubs, and organizations.

Mercy High School is distinguished by its Adviser Program. Each student has a personal adviser who oversees her academic program and assists in her social and emotional growth. The adviser serves as the point of contact with the student's family.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

### **OUR MISSION**

We, the community of Mercy High School, Baltimore, are a private, Catholic, college preparatory school for young women of diverse backgrounds from across central Maryland. Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, we provide a rigorous education marked by academic excellence and personal attention. Here, students learn to communicate ideas and express themselves confidently, both individually and in collaboration with others. Mercy creates an environment where young women form habits of lifelong inquiry, critical thinking and courageous action in a global society. In the tradition of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, our work reflects a commitment to hospitality, service, justice and compassion.

### **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

We believe

- That consistent with our Mercy tradition, every person is unique and valuable, made in the image of a loving God;
- That all of us grow and become our best selves through personal reflection, relationships and our generous response to the needs of others; and
- That a strong academic program is an excellent foundation for a woman's success.

### **WHAT WE WANT FOR OUR STUDENTS**

We want each student

- To graduate well-prepared, both academically and personally, to challenge and shape our world;
- To live a life of meaning, balance and joy;
- To adopt a global vision, recognizing her responsibility to promote justice, peace and care for our planet; and
- To deepen her understanding of her own faith and to embrace a spiritual dimension as central to her life.

*Approved by the Mercy High School Board of Trustees, October 22, 2015*

## **A Mercy Girl Is:**

- A Mercy Girl is generous, compassionate, and respectful.
- A Mercy Girl is smart, inquisitive, and hard-working.
- A Mercy Girl is open-minded, well-rounded, and thoughtful.
- A Mercy Girl is proud of herself, proud of her friends, and proud of her school.
- A Mercy Girl has integrity, is passionate, and appreciates all that she has.
- A Mercy Girl is committed to spiritual growth, service to others, and justice in the world.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF MERCY GIRLS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their daughters. Registration and acceptance at Mercy High School constitute an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the school and to support its mission. A cooperative relationship between Mercy High School and parent(s)/guardian(s) is essential for the overall education of a Mercy Girl. It is critical that a cooperative relationship be maintained through constructive dialogue. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) refuses to abide by the policies outlined in this handbook, or by word or deed is unsupportive of the school's goals, or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations under Mercy High School policies, the school may require the parent(s)/guardian(s) to withdraw his/her daughter(s). Additionally, the consequences of failure to timely pay tuition may include not being able to sit for exams, not being able to receive copies of transcripts, and not being permitted to re-enroll.

No student has the right to continue at Mercy beyond the then-applicable school year or to receive a diploma, which is awarded only upon successful completion of Mercy's entire academic program. Promotion to the next grade is contingent on not only academic success, but on the compliance of both the student and parent/guardian with the school's rules, policies, expectations, and standards. In all matters, all communication and interaction between members of the school community must be respectful.

## ***ACADEMIC POLICIES***

## HONOR CODE

*As a woman of honor, I pledge that this work is my own.*

Each Mercy student will sign her name to the honor code at the beginning of any collected work including quizzes, tests, papers, examinations, projects, and other work.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The core principles of integrity, which are honesty, truth, and honor, create a foundation for success in all of life's endeavors. Integrity in academic settings is a fundamental component of success and growth in the classroom. Practicing integrity prepares students for personal and professional challenges, as well as providing a foundation for future fulfillment and success. *(Adapted from the International Center for Academic Integrity.)*

As an International Baccalaureate World School authorized to offer the Middle Years Programme (MYP), Mercy expects our students to act with "integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere." *(From the IB Learner Profile.)*

Students are instructed in academic honesty throughout their four years at Mercy High School in academic courses, Seminar, and other school sponsored activities. The standard for proper citing of sources is MLA, unless otherwise noted by the teacher.

Legitimate collaboration is defined as "working together on a common aim with shared information, which is an open and cooperative behavior" *(From MYP: From principles into practice, p. 76)*. Collaboration is different from unacceptable collusion which occurs when a member of the group copies or submits the work of other members as her own work for assessment. Collaboration should result in an authentic piece of work that is in the student's own words.

Violations of the **Honor Code** include but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized giving or taking of test questions/answers
- Unauthorized use of notes or aids, including online material, on any test or quiz
- Asking for or giving assistance to another student during a test or quiz
- Copying another student's work
- Allowing another student to copy one's own work
- Falsifying information
- Presenting someone else's work as one's own

- Using the ideas, words, or analytical structure of someone else without crediting the source
- Using workbooks or other sources with answers provided
- Paraphrasing any source without giving proper credit
- Use of any material from Quizlet or Google Translator
- Copying and pasting any other material from the internet or other electronic media without a citation. *This includes images, music, or other material.*

## **VIOLATIONS OF HONOR CODE**

Every member of the school community holds a responsibility to uphold the Honor Code at all times.

Teachers, students, and others in the community must immediately report any violations encountered to the dean of students.

Within 24 hours of the violation being reported to the dean of students, the dean will speak with the student who is suspected of violation in advance of the convening the honor board. Then, the dean will assemble the honor board, who will question and listen to the identified student, will question and listen to the member of the community who reported the violation, and will recommend next step(s).

The Honor Board, which is comprised of eight students from the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades, is selected by school leadership from recommendations from the faculty and staff. The dean of students will serve as the adviser to the Honor Board.

The result of the Honor Board deliberations may include, but may not be limited to:

- A zero on the test or assignment
- Possible resubmission of the assignment for partial credit
- Research on the importance of integrity to academics and intellectual inquiry
- In-school or off-campus suspension
- Probation or expulsion, especially for repeated or the most serious instances of dishonesty.

When a student appears in front of the Honor Board, the dean of students will notify the parent/guardian within 48 hours.

This policy is annually reviewed by the leadership of Mercy High School.

*Adapted from ideas found in MYP: From Principles into Practice; Coordinators Support Materials; Academic Honesty in the IB educational context, International Center for Academic Integrity*

## UNIT OF CREDIT

Determination of a unit of credit is based upon the satisfactory completion of course work and the number of hours of instruction/study established by the school. A Mercy High School credit parallels a Maryland State Department of Education credit (120 clock hours, including class time and homework). Students should expect about 30 minutes of homework for each academic subject per meeting time. Students in AP classes will be assigned more academic work.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Religion.....	4 credits
Service Learning.....	0.5
English.....	4
Math.....	4
Science.....	3
Social Studies.....	3
(includes 1 U.S. History + 0.5 American Government)	
Fine Arts.....	1*
Physical Education.....	1**
Electives.....	5***
Total.....	25.50

Transfer students to Mercy High School after 9th grade who did not have religion courses in their previous schools are not required to make up those credits in Religion.

*Students in Advanced Placement courses are required to take the AP exam. Should the exam not be taken, the AP designation will be removed from the transcript and there will be no AP weighting in the GPA.*

*\*Students may apply 0.5 credit from participation in Dance Troupe toward either Fine Arts or Physical Education. The credit cannot be used for both in the same year, but can be used in different years.*

*\*Students may apply 0.25 credit from participation in Apprentice Dance Company toward satisfying 0.5 fine arts requirement.*

*\*\*For students in special programs, 0.5 physical education credit graduation requirement can be met by applying credits from sports with the permission of the physical and health education department chair and the principal.*

*\*\*\*The elective requirement cannot be met by credits earned through sports or co-curricular activities.*

## ONLINE ACCESS FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER/CAMPUS CLOSURE

When Mercy High School is closed for inclement weather or for other situations, the following online school plan will be put into place.

### **Program Guidelines:**

*The plan will be activated via the Mercy High School website and/or PlusPortals. Two school days can be used for inclement weather or other emergency. Thereafter, all students should expect to continue academic progress via **virtual** learning.*

### **Student Responsibilities:**

Seamless and continuous educational experiences, from in- person to virtual, is a touchstone of Mercy educational experience.

- All students and teachers will pivot to a fully virtual model of instruction.
- The schedule of virtual learning will correspond with the class day that would have occurred on that day of instruction.
- Students will log into PlusPortals by 7:55 a.m.
- *If a student is ill and cannot complete the online work at home, the parent(s)/guardian(s) needs to call the school attendance line, just as on a regular day. That student will be recorded as absent for the day and she will need to work with her teachers to make up all work, just as she would for a regular absence.*
- Students will be expected to follow all guidelines regarding virtual learning laid out in the Student/Parent Handbook, pages 61-63.
- *If a student's power or internet connection is down, the student will report this to the principal on the day she returns to school, accompanied by a note from the parent or guardian. Mercy High School will handle this on a case-by-case basis.*

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

Mercy High School regards teaching, learning, and assessment as fundamentally interdependent, and so student evaluation is an essential part of the school program. In a curriculum that is designed to realize Mercy High School's mission statement, assessment must be rich and varied to facilitate the attainment of all its aims.

Assessment is on-going and consciously designed to measure and improve student learning. We believe that assessment should foster a growth mindset by enabling students, teachers, and parent(s)/guardian(s) to monitor and reflect on the learning undertaken by each student. Assessment helps students to know what they really understand and encourages reflective, critical thinking.

Yet assessment is not only used to monitor progress, but it should guide learning. Formative assessment is focused on feedback for continued development, while summative assessment measures mastery of knowledge and skills. Formative assessment is used in daily practice and aims to promote learning by giving feedback throughout the learning process. Feedback helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, as well as engage in thoughtful reflection. Summative assessment comes at the end of a unit of learning and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned. Assessment should inform curriculum planning, but it is not the sole purpose of the teaching and learning process.

*Adapted from MYP: From Principles into Practice, Coordinator Support Material*

### **Student Evaluation/Standard Marking System**

Student evaluation is an essential part of the school program. It provides the student and her parent(s)/guardian(s) an understanding of her academic progress. Total points are used by each department and a percentage is then calculated and reported. The final grade of the course will be converted to a letter grade.

<b>A</b> (100-93)	<b>C+</b> (79-77)
<b>A-</b> (92-90)	<b>C</b> (76-73)
<b>B+</b> (89-87)	<b>C-</b> (72-70)
<b>B</b> (86-83)	<b>D+</b> (69-67)
<b>B-</b> (82-80)	<b>D</b> (66-65)
	<b>F</b> (below 65)

**At the beginning of each course, the teacher will distribute his or her grading system and will post this on PlusPortals.**

## GPA

A student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated at the end of each academic year, based on the final grade in each course taken. All courses are included in the calculation of the GPA except those which receive grades of S/U or P/F.

A student's GPA is calculated using a 4-point scale. Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses are computed with a weighted scale. Honors courses are awarded an additional 0.5 quality points. AP courses are awarded an additional 1.0 quality points.

Letter Grade	Standard GPA Value	Honors Weighted Value	AP Weighted Value
A	4.0	4.5	5.0
A-	3.8	4.3	4.8
B+	3.5	4.0	4.5
B	3.0	3.5	4.0
B-	2.8	3.3	3.8
C+	2.5	3.0	3.5
C	2.0	2.5	3.0
C-	1.8	2.3	2.8
D+	1.5	2.0	2.5
D	1.0	1.5	2.0
F	0.0	0.0	0.0

### **Grade F: Failure** (no credit if F is final grade)

Does not fulfill the minimum requirements for successful completion of the course.

### **Grade I: Incomplete**

Indicates there is work remaining to be completed. After two weeks, the incomplete work will earn a grade of F or zero. The grade for the marking period will then be computed.

### **Grades S/U or P/F**

Used in some departments to indicate satisfactory/unsatisfactory work or pass/fail.

## **Recording and Reporting of Middle Years Programme Assessments**

Methods of assessment will be varied in design and cover a broad range of learning and communication styles. In accordance with International Baccalaureate guidelines, all Middle Years Programme (MYP) summative assessments are assessed with criterion-related rubrics and are based upon predetermined task-specific standards. The criterion-related rubrics are on a 0-8 scale. Each student's success will be measured in terms of levels of achievement across the four objectives of each academic subject and reported using the 0-8 scale. For quarter grades, teachers use the following grade scale to convert the 0-8 MYP scale to a percentage that is incorporated in the student's quarter grade and reported to students and parents/guardians on PlusPortals.

8 (100%)	4 (78%)
7 (93%)	3 (73%)
6 (88%)	2 (68%)
5 (83%)	1 (65%)
	0 (60%)

Not handed in (0%)

The final level of achievement for each of the four subject-specific objectives will be determined based on the student's MYP summative assessment scores throughout the course and reported in the 0-8 scale.

*Adapted from MYP: From Principles into Practice, Coordinator Support Material*

### **Academic Communication with Students and Families**

PlusPortals, the Learning Management System of the school, is the primary source of communication among teachers, students, and their families. To be successful in school, students must be active in their use of PlusPortals. Parents/guardians also use this learning management system to follow the academic progress of their Mercy Girl.

Teachers are required to have a syllabus for each class, including contact information for the teacher, description of the course and objectives, an account or listing of topics or units to be covered throughout the course, textbook and other materials used for instruction, and policies related to homework, testing, absences, and late work.

Major homework assignments, unit tests, and projects will be posted on PlusPortals at least one week in advance, with teacher modification on a regular basis.

Teachers are expected to post grades every other week and a narrative comment about the student's work once each quarter.

Most teachers will also have web resources and other files posted on PlusPortals.

## **Report Cards and Progress Reports**

Each Mercy Girl and her parent/guardian are expected to meet with her adviser to review and discuss the first quarter report card. This meeting is an important component of the relationship between home and school.

Students and parents/guardians have the ability to keep track of a student's progress through the use of PlusPortals. Midway through the quarter, students and their parents/guardians receive progress reports via PlusPortals. Students and parents/guardians may expect teachers to write at least one substantial narrative comment each quarter through PlusPortals. Report cards are issued quarterly and are available online. Paper copies of the final report card can be requested from the registrar.

## **Academic Recognition and the Principal's List**

Students who earn a quarter grade of 83 or above in every subject have earned Academic Recognition if they have no incomplete or unsatisfactory grades in service, seminar, or other areas. Those who earn a quarter grade of 90 or above in every subject have earned a place on the Principal's List if they have no incomplete or unsatisfactory grades in service, seminar, or other areas. In the fourth quarter of the sophomore year, a student is eligible for the Principal's List when she earns a 90 and above in all her classes and at least a 5 on the MYP Personal Project. A sophomore can earn Academic Recognition in the fourth quarter if she earns 83 in all her classes and at least a 4 on the MYP Personal Project.

## **Contracts for Success**

Freshmen and sophomores who are not doing as well as expected in school may be placed on a Contract for Success. To create this contract, a student will meet with the learning differences specialist, the student's adviser, her counselor, and her parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine its requirements. When a student does not meet her contract, she may be placed on Academic Probation. It may also be determined that Mercy High School is not the right school for her.

## **Structured Study**

Juniors and seniors who earn a grade of 72 or below in any quarter will be placed on structured study until she is removed, after grades are published the following quarter. Structured study is scheduled when a student is free during the last period of the day.

## **Academic Probation**

When a student's academic progress is in jeopardy, she will be placed on Academic Probation. She may be asked to leave the school if her grades do not improve.

## **COURSE FAILURES/SUMMER SCHOOL**

### **Grade 9 or 10**

1. If any student in grade 9 or 10 fails religion, English\*, mathematics, social studies, science, French, or Spanish, she must attend summer school and earn at least a C in this course or its equivalent in order to return to Mercy High School.
2. If a student earns a grade of 70 or lower in French I or Spanish I, it is imperative that she attend summer school so that she is not at a disadvantage in French II or Spanish II.
3. If three major courses are failed in one year, the student cannot be promoted by means of summer school courses. Repeating the grade at Mercy High School may not be in the best interest of the student. Any return to the school under these conditions must be discussed with the principal.

### **Grade 11**

1. Any student in grade 11 who fails religion, English\*, history or mathematics must attend summer school and successfully complete this course or its equivalent.
2. The necessity of summer school for any other failure depends upon the student's credit count and what she needs to have as she enters senior year.

**Note:** *All summer school arrangements must be approved in advance and are expected to be completed during the week after closing activities.*

*\*A student may not earn English credit in summer school more than twice.*

## **ORIGINAL CREDIT SUMMER SCHOOL COURSES**

Anyone wishing to take courses for original credit outside of Mercy Online needs to fill out the appropriate application form and secure all required signatures before the end of school in June. Typically, the department chair would approve a course.

## ***PROGRAMS***

## **THE ADVISER PROGRAM**

Mercy High School's Adviser Program assures that each student has consistent contact with an adult in a manner differing from other teacher-student relationships. Each student is assigned an adviser when she enters as a ninth grader. Most advisee groups combine students from all four grade levels, thus modeling the community environment that Mercy High School fosters. Advisee groups are typically no larger than 16 students, but some may be considerably smaller; groups usually range from 12-15 advisees.

The adviser's primary responsibility is overseeing the student's progress and participation in Mercy High School. This is facilitated by daily contact; students check in with the adviser each morning. There are opportunities for monthly advisee meetings and luncheon opportunities as well. The adviser is the main point of contact between the school and home. The adviser aids the parent(s)/guardian(s) with questions and concerns.

Most students remain with the same adviser for four years. The ongoing relationship allows for better knowledge of the student, her academic habits, and her home environment, which aids in college counseling and in helping students with academic or behavioral challenges. The adviser is also the primary point of contact if concerns or difficulties arise regarding a student. When more serious concerns are involved, assistance from the director of student services may be necessary. There is a process to change one's adviser, if necessary. This is coordinated by the Student Services Team.

## **MISSION AND MINISTRY**

Mission and Ministry has its roots and is grounded in the following excerpt from the Mission Statement of Mercy High School:

*We want each student to deepen her understanding of her own faith and to embrace a spiritual dimension as central to her life.*

Mission and Ministry includes three major components: (1) education in religious understanding, (2) response to ministerial needs of students and their families, and (3) promotion of liturgical awareness, prayer and worship, and service learning.

- Educational aspects of Mission and Ministry are addressed primarily through a carefully sequenced curriculum of religion courses aimed at broadening students' knowledge and deepening their understanding of the religious dimension of their lives. Students of religious traditions who are not Catholic are welcome at Mercy High School and encouraged to deepen their own religious understanding and practice. Mission and Ministry is the center of the school's response to the needs of students and their families in times of particular difficulty or crisis. The director of mission and ministry is a member of the community support team, and works closely with the director of student services, the dean of students and the principal. Students and parents/

guardians are encouraged to communicate with advisers and/or with the director of mission and ministry about circumstances of this kind so that appropriate communication and support may take place.

- The director of mission and ministry promotes liturgical awareness in the school and integrates prayer and worship into the daily life of the school. Mission and Ministry is specifically responsible for providing an annual one-day retreat experience for each year level, the senior retreat, and various designated prayer services.
- The coordinator of the Frances Warde Service Learning Program directs and coordinates service learning for the entire school community and collaborates with other groups in the school in their service endeavors.

## **THE FRANCES WARDE SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM**

### **Philosophy and Expectations**

At Mercy High School, compassion and service are among our core values. As our belief statement indicates, “We believe that all of us grow to become our best selves through personal reflection, relationship and our generous response to the needs of others.” Thus, personal reflection, relationships, and a generous response to the needs of others are the foundation of Service Learning at Mercy.

Inspired by the Works of Mercy, students are called to perform actions that extend God’s compassion and mercy to those in need. God has great love for the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. Jesus revealed this merciful and compassionate love during his life on earth. Jesus highlights the goodness achieved through deeds of mercy, and in the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus says, “...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me...what you did not do for one of the least ones, you did not do for me.” (Matthew 25:40, 45).

In the spirit of the Sisters of Mercy and in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our students are given the opportunity to experience service learning by sharing their time, talent, and treasure with our neighbors in need. Throughout her years at Mercy, each student will complete at least 50 hours of service (not including school-wide service events and drives). Students are required to engage in direct service for a majority, or if they choose, all of their service hours.

This call to engage in direct service is about being with people whose lives are likely very different from one’s own life. Direct service requires building face-to-face relationships and breaking down the barrier between the giver and the receiver. While direct service will likely also include some element of doing something for another, this type of service is typically focused on conversation and building companionship. While this may seem intimidating to some, this direct, relational service often breaks

down stereotypes and widens circles of compassion. These experiences will likely stretch students out of their comfort zones and help form them as courageous leaders in our society.

Students are asked to complete a **minimum of 50 hours of service**, and they may choose to complete these hours in one of two ways:

- All 50 hours of direct service at one agency
- At least 30 hours of direct service at one agency plus 20 hours of indirect service at multiple agencies/locations.

When choosing where to serve, the following are some conditions to keep in mind:

- All service is given to others freely. Any activity that receives monetary compensation or has other strings attached will not be awarded hours.
- Service hours performed to fulfill Mercy's community service requirement must be performed for this purpose exclusively and not be used to fulfill another organization's requirement.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may not sign as supervisors of the service of their own children.
- Service sites must be official agencies or organizations. Babysitting free of charge or helping with a friend's good-willed endeavors will not be acceptable options.

Prior to beginning their service work, students must submit a proposal explaining how their service will be direct and submit it to the Service Learning Committee for approval by the assigned date. A sample proposal is provided on the Mercy website for reference.

Once students begin their service, they are expected to meet the posted deadlines regarding completion of a specified number of hours within a certain time period. If deadlines are not met, consequences will ensue, as Service Learning is an integral part of the academic curriculum at Mercy. These consequences include, but are not limited to, being ineligible to receive academic recognition. Please see the Service Learning Timelines for more information on the required deadlines. Students should log their hours on the Mercy High School time sheet, or an equivalent time sheet provided by the agency. A representative from the agency must sign the student's time sheet, indicating that the student has completed these hours.

In addition to serving for at least 50 hours, students are required to complete a **culminating project**. Students may choose one of the following culminating projects to be presented at a **Service Fair** in the spring semester of their junior year:

- A PowerPoint presentation (15-20 slides) or a tri-fold poster that displays her service work, including photos and information about the agency,

- A three to five page reflection paper that contains thoughtful insight regarding the student's service,
- Another project which the student proposes, and which the Service Learning Committee approves, that displays the student's service learning experience.

\*A student must submit a proposal and receive clearance prior to beginning her service. Please note, the proposal should outline the student's plans for direct service. The timelines for the Classes of 2023 and 2024 are similar in structure.

**A total of 50 hours must be completed and all paperwork must be submitted by the end of the first semester of a student's junior year.**

**Any student who does not meet the deadlines of her service project during the sophomore year will be required to complete the entire service project and submit all paperwork documenting it prior to beginning classes in her junior year.**

## **THE CATHERINE MCAULEY HONORS PROGRAM**

The Catherine McAuley Honors Program provides the opportunity for students to meet rigorous academic challenges, building confidence as scholars and thinkers. McAuley Scholars are required to develop their leadership skills by participating in at least one extracurricular activity each year and achieve an overall average of B or better for final grades in all courses each year. McAuley Scholars complete the program with a service project, which is initiated second semester of the junior year.

## **LAW AND SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM**

The Law and Social Action Program provides students with opportunities to evaluate how interdependence, as well as political, legal, social and economic change, affect all communities, with a focus on both globalization and sustainable development. A study of social change through governance, social and legal policy, and justice provides students with an understanding of both individual and systemic power; she will be encouraged to engage in innovative, responsible action.

## **THE MENTOR PROGRAM**

A signature program of Mercy High School, the Mentor Program allows selected juniors to work with a "wise adviser," who accepts the student as a protégé, so she can explore an individually chosen field of interest beyond the traditional academic setting. Those in the Mentor Program can conduct an independent study for one or two semesters, with a minimum of 30 hours each quarter to be devoted to it. Research on the outlook for the profession, its current challenges, and the pathway to achieve mastery in it are part of the student's investigation. A final

reflective paper marks the culmination of the course. A proposal outlining the goals of the rising junior and specific plans for her study are required.

## **PROJECT LEAD THE WAY BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE PROGRAM**

The Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Science Program comprises a sequence of classes that allows each student to investigate the roles of biomedical professionals as she studies human medicine, physiology, genetics, microbiology, and public health in the context of real-world cases. Students work with one another to understand and design solutions to some of the pressing health challenges facing the world. The project-based aspects of the curriculum give students a chance to identify a problem, apply what they know, and find unique solutions as they lead their own learning. PLTW courses complement the regular sequence of math and science courses required in the curriculum. Students in PLTW are exempt from technology requirements of ninth and tenth grade students. They need to fulfill physical education and fine arts requirements before graduation. The physical education requirement can be exempt, with permission, when a student participates in athletics. Summer online courses in health and predetermined arts courses can also fulfill the requirements.

***NOTE:** Any student who wants to survey all or a portion of the student body as part of her Capstone Project must present her complete plan to the school's Institutional Review Board, which is made up of the principal, dean of students, director of student services, and science department chair.*

## **THE SISTER AGNESE NEUMANN SCHOLARS PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEDSTAR GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL**

MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital is recognized for its excellence in the Center for Successful Aging, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Nursing, and Community Health. This three-year program honors Sister Agnese Neumann, founding chair of Mercy's science department who later became a nurse practitioner. Students are encouraged to embrace Sister Agnese's high professional standards and dedication to serve others. In the first year of the program, the Neumann Scholars will be able to experience each of these specialties, and in addition, participate in training for infection prevention and patient safety through monthly visitations to the hospital or virtual meetings. In the second year, Neumann Scholars will receive vital signs and CPR training, and will be able to participate in the Dine and Discover Series, if health guidelines allow; this series is designed to serve clinicians at the hospital. In the third year, Neumann Scholars will be assigned a mentor who, through bi-monthly meetings, will help them develop an internship practicum project for the following summer.

## **VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM**

Mercy's four-year Visual Arts Program is for students with a serious interest in and talent for developing their artistic skills. Many graduates of the Visual Arts Program pursue the visual arts in college or find a career path in the visual arts.

Art students explore the elements and principles of art and design, history of art, develop their skills, and learn to work in a variety of media. The sequence of classes assists artists in the creation of a portfolio to be submitted for Advanced Placement Studio Art credit in the senior year.

## **WOMEN IN MEDICINE PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MERCY MEDICAL CENTER**

The partnership between Mercy High School and Mercy Medical Center is a unique one and offers Mercy High School students an unparalleled opportunity to work closely with medical professionals. During the ninth grade, Women in Medicine (WIM) students travel to the medical center to explore multiple domains of hospital life, when health guidelines allow. During the sophomore year, when health guidelines allow, Mercy High School students travel to the hospital to participate in an on-campus speaker series to become acquainted with topics such as bioethics, the spiritual dimensions of healing, and biomedical engineering, for example. Juniors work on case studies to enable them to apply what they have learned in actual health cases.

Seniors present their work on case studies to the community during a school-wide event in the spring.

## **WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**

This four-year program introduces participants to the possibilities of a career in technology. Experience is provided in programming, networking, operating systems, graphics, databases and information retrieval, security, emerging technologies, and design of software, hardware, and web sites. The social issues involving internet security, privacy, copyright, and the impact of technology are also explored. Students edit both audio and video material and have vast opportunities to provide service to the Mercy High School community using their expertise. Students are also able to explore career paths in technology via networking with women in technology careers and through field trips.

**NOTE:** *Any student who wants to survey all or a portion of the student body as part of any academic project must present her complete plan to the school's Institutional Review Board, which is made up of the principal, dean of students, director of student services, and science department chair.*

## **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY SELECTION PROCESS**

The selection process for membership in the Mother Catherine McAuley Chapter of the National Honor Society at Mercy High School, Baltimore, Maryland is as follows:

At the close of the second semester, grades of current juniors and sophomores are reviewed. Students who have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or above are selected for further consideration, in which all faculty and staff members can comment on each student regarding the other three criteria for membership in the National Honor Society: leadership, service and character. The following September, eligible students are asked to complete a student activity information form, outlining their accomplishments in the areas of service and leadership.

### **Leadership**

- Is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles and making suggestions
- Demonstrates initiative in promoting school activities
- Exercises positive influence on peers in upholding school ideals
- Contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school
- Is able to delegate responsibilities
- Exemplifies positive attitudes
- Demonstrates academic initiative
- Successfully holds school offices or positions of responsibility, conducts business effectively and efficiently, demonstrates reliability and dependability
- Is a leader in the classroom, at work, and in other school or community activities
- Is thoroughly dependable in any responsibility accepted
- Is willing to uphold scholarship and maintain a loyal school attitude
- Inspires positive behavior in others

### **Service**

- Volunteers and provides dependable and well-organized assistance, is gladly available, and is willing to sacrifice to offer assistance
- Works well with others and is willing to take on difficult or

inconspicuous responsibilities

- Cheerfully and enthusiastically renders any requested service to the school
- Is willing to represent the class or school in interclass and interscholastic competition
- Does committee and staff work without complaint
- Participates in some activity outside of school, for example, Girl Scouts, church groups, volunteer services for the elderly, poor, or disadvantaged
- Mentors persons in the community or students at other schools
- Shows courtesy by assisting visitors, teachers, and students

### **Character**

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously
- Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior (cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability)
- Upholds principles of morality and ethics
- Cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, offices, hallways, etc.
- Demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability
- Regularly shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others
- Observes instructions and rules, is punctual, and is faithful both inside and outside the classroom
- Has powers of concentration, self-discipline, and sustained attention as shown by perseverance and application to studies
- Manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others
- Actively helps rid the school of bad influences or environment.

The faculty council of the National Honor Society, appointed by the principal, reviews the collected information regarding eligible students during a series of meetings. Students who meet the rigors of the selection process are then invited to membership in the National Honor Society. Induction occurs in the fall of each year.

All decisions made by the faculty council concerning National Honor Society membership are final.

**Note:** *The bulleted information above is taken directly from the National Honor Society Handbook.*

As stated in the National Honor Society Handbook, “Members should understand fully that they are subject to dismissal if they do not maintain the standards of scholarship, leadership, service, and character that were used as a basis for their selection.”

## ***PROCEDURES AND POLICIES***

## CODE OF CONDUCT

In order for everyone to work together successfully during the school year, students are expected to:

- Behave in an appropriate manner in and out of the classroom.
- Be respectful of each other and of all faculty and staff.
- Be honest and truthful in all academic work and behavior with every member of the school community.
- Maintain excellent digital citizenship.
- Be respectful of school property and the property of others.
- Use appropriate and respectful language at all times.
- Come forward to report problems and issues that do not represent Mercy values.
- Be on time to classes, advisee meetings, and assemblies.
- Be in correct uniform at all times.
- Refrain from changing clothes in public areas.
- Refrain from inappropriate displays of affection.
- Refrain from chewing gum while on campus.
- Respect Mercy High School's designation as a smoke-free campus.
- Assist in keeping the campus neat and clean, including disposing of trash properly in the dining hall, hallways, classrooms, or outside, and keeping one's possessions in the appropriate place.
- Be responsible for one's personal property, ensuring that it is locked away securely. We strongly urge all students to leave any unnecessary personal property at home, as the school is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property.
- Eat only in the dining hall, including for class or club parties. Lunchtime meetings and special events that serve food require the permission of the dean of students. Lunches may be brought from home or purchased from Mercy High School's dining service.
- There is no ordering or delivery of take-out food during the school day.

- Refrain from vaping, as well as the illegal use, possession, sale, distribution, or solicitation of alcohol or other drugs on the school's property or at any off-campus school function. Students may not arrive at school or at any off-campus school function under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted to remove any student who is under the influence of illegal substances and for such violations, the school will take appropriate disciplinary action (up to and including expulsion). Disciplinary action may also be the result of inappropriate off-campus behavior that is brought to the school's attention. Any illegal activity will be immediately reported to the authorities.

Language matters; words of all kinds matter. All those in the community must refrain from using any language that is disrespectful, hateful, or vulgar. Any music that is played on campus must be completely respectful and not contain any references to illegal or immoral behavior. There is no place at school for a musical piece that has been edited or redacted, as those who know the original version often fall into the original version. Any person who violates these standards will be disciplined.

Student conduct off campus can detrimentally impact the school's reputation or the good of the school community. Therefore, the school reserves the right to discipline students for serious and inappropriate conduct occurring off campus of which the school becomes aware.

All Mercy Girls are expected to support the school community and one another. A discipline case and many of the details of a disciplinary situation are confidential.

### **Demerits and Detention**

Students receive demerits for minor infractions of the rules. When a student accumulates five demerits, is late to school five times, or displays unacceptable behavior, she serves a detention. A student may be required to serve detention for unacceptable or disruptive behavior.

Students receive the notice of a scheduled detention one day in advance. Requests for changes must be made in person to the dean of students no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the scheduled detention.

Students should report promptly to the designated area with work to occupy their time. Whenever possible, students in detention will be asked to perform some minor service to the school.

### **Behavioral Probation**

When a student's behavior has not met community expectations, she may be placed on behavioral probation, designed so that she will focus on successfully managing her behavior. Should a student on probation not be successful in managing her behavior, she may be asked to leave the school.

**Behavioral probation is for one year; after one year, probation is**

**re-evaluated to determine whether or not it has been successful.**

## **Suspension**

A student is usually suspended when she violates an important rule of the community or if she has not lived up to a number of expectations. An offense may also lead to required counseling or even expulsion. Some suspensions are out-of-school and others are in-school.

- In-school suspension is recorded as a school activity. Any academic work missed during an in-school suspension will be accepted. Teachers are notified that a student is serving an in-school suspension and they can send work to the office.
- Out-of-school suspension is recorded as an absence. The student misses all work completed in class, including participation, graded material, and quizzes. The student will refer to PlusPortals to determine her assigned work. She needs to be in touch with her teachers to make up any tests and must do so immediately upon return to school.

## **Loss of Privileges**

A student may lose certain privileges as a result of significant misconduct including, but not limited to, participation in co-curricular activities, field trips, holding office, or representing the school publicly.

## **Search and Seizure**

The School reserves the right to search school property (e.g., lockers, desks), a student's belongings, and areas under the student's control in order to enforce school policies, rules and regulations, or otherwise to preserve a safe and orderly learning environment.

## **Dismissal**

Ordinarily a student would be dismissed if, after a period of probation, she has not been able to meet expectations. However, the school may dismiss a student for a serious reason at any time, even if that incident is the student's first violation of the Mercy's rules or standards. What constitutes sufficient cause for dismissal rests in the sole discretion of Mercy High School and need not be specifically set forth in this code of conduct.

A student may be required to withdraw from Mercy High School because of disregard for major rules and regulations, honor violations, violations of the law, personal maladjustments, prolonged academic deficiencies, or lack of cooperation on the part of parent(s)/guardian(s).

Dismissal or required withdrawal decisions rest in the discretion of the school's principal and president.

## Social Action by Students

As a Catholic school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy High School, Baltimore, encourages creative and critical thinking, the development of voice in its students, civic engagement, and the cultivation of social action to create a more just and merciful world. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has vigorously repeated its call for politics that focus on moral principles, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. The USCCB reminds us that “In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. ‘People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens’ (Evangeliium Gaudium, no. 220).” (USCCB/Issues and Action/Faithful Citizenship).

To the end of cultivating faithful and responsible citizenship, Mercy High School allows for and encourages social action on the part of students. If students are interested in sponsoring or initiating any action or activity that would impact the school day, certain principles will guide the leadership of the school in making its decisions. Some of these are:

- Maintaining an environment in the school that is conducive to teaching and learning;
- The safety and security of each of our students;
- The opportunity for Mercy Girls to develop their voices and engage as citizens;
- The creation of a forum for conversation and critical thinking; and
- The possibility of a range of constructive actions.

The leadership of the school will consider proposals for student-led action when

- Its ideals align with the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and the teaching of the Catholic Church; and
- The momentum is associated with a clearly stated movement or agenda.

Students who want to raise awareness about an issue will need to be mindful of the following:

- The importance of planning at least one month in advance of any event, or as soon as any movement is announced and promulgated;
- Working with the dean of students and the principal to coordinate activity within the framework of the school schedule;
- Seeking intellectual, academic, and social support from identified faculty and staff from the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, the Student Services Team, and academic departments.

When there is an authorized school activity that meets the guidelines above, there may be a pause in teaching for the possibility of learning

outside the walls of the traditional classroom. Any spontaneous or unplanned civic action will have natural consequences.

The principal and dean of students reserve the right to ensure that teaching and learning in the school has minimal disruption and that the safety and security of each Mercy Girl is assured.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

We expect that attendance at school be the student's *first priority* and that students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) request exceptions only in cases of necessity.

### Official School Hours/School Doors

Mercy High School operates on a five-day cycle, denoted by the colors green, red, gold, white, and purple. The regular school day is from 7:55 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and most Fridays, and from 7:55 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. on most Wednesdays. Each student checks in with her adviser in complete uniform between 7:55 a.m. and 8 a.m. The **Regular Daily Schedule** provides a 30-minute lunch period for all students and seven 50-minute class periods.

On red and white Days, Magic Time allows for class meetings, advisee meetings, assemblies, liturgies, and other community-related events.

Mercy High School is officially open on school days beginning at 7:30 a.m. The school doors open to students at 7:00 a.m. each day and are closed at 5:00 p.m. unless there is an official school activity. There is no supervision provided between 7:00 a.m. and 7:55 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. If not supervised, students must wait in the reception area or dining hall after 4:00 p.m.

***The parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who is on campus after 5:00 p.m. and not in an official school activity must communicate with the dean of students to make appropriate arrangements.***

If given permission to remain on campus after 5:00 p.m., students must remain in the reception area or the dining hall. Students who violate this safety protocol will be disciplined.

### ***Note for Student Safety:***

- For late openings due to inclement weather, there should be no expectation that the parking lots or sidewalks will be cleared by 7:00 a.m.
- While on campus, students are expected to observe all the rules and regulations of the school.
- On the following special event days, the Office of Academic and Student Affairs will close one hour after conclusion of the last event: Mercy Day/Ring Day, Field Events Day, Field Day, and

Awards Assembly Day.

- School doors are locked during the school day for the safety of all. No student may ever put anything in a door to keep it open for her own convenience or that of someone else.
- Students enter and exit the campus using the doors by the reception area or front lobby doors. To enter using the lobby door, students need to ring in so that the receptionist can allow entrance. ***Students may not enter or exit campus using the doors in the Mercy Center.***

## Absence

- When on-campus, if an absence is known in advance, the parent(s)/guardian(s) is requested to send a note to the school through the student's adviser stating the date(s) and reason for the absence.
- When on-line or in-person, there must be documented, verifiable communication between the parent/guardian and attendance officer prior to 9 a.m. on the day a student has an unforeseen absence. This can be a phone call or an email. The reason for the absence must be included. If a phone call, the parent or guardian must follow up with a note or an email to verify the absence when the student returns to school. Without this documentation, the student will be demerited.
- A student will be marked a half-day absent if she arrives after 11 a.m. or leaves before 12 p.m. Any student leaving school before 11 a.m. will be marked absent for a full day.
- Any student achieving perfect attendance cannot be tardy more than five times and must not have any half-days of absence.
- The maximum overall absence allowed is 15 days per semester and 30 days for the academic year. If a student exceeds the semester or yearly absence maximum, she forfeits credit for the semester or for the entire year. Further, a student who exceeds the semester or yearly absence maximum will ordinarily be considered habitually truant.
- Consistent with Maryland law, the school is required to report to the county superintendent the name of any student enrolled in the school who has been habitually truant without lawful excuse.
- The maximum number of absences allowed for a **one-semester course** is 8 class periods; the maximum number of absences allowed for a **full-year course** is 16 class periods. If a student exceeds the semester or yearly allowed absence, she forfeits credit for that course. If a student misses more than half of a class period, it is counted as a class absence.
- When on campus, any student who is absent from school or arrives at school after 10:00 a.m. may not participate in any

school activity that occurs after hours on that day. **Requests for an exception should be made to the dean of students through the faculty member supervising the activity.**

- Juniors and seniors are encouraged to schedule college visits on days when school is closed. Juniors are allowed one official college visit day, provided that required documentation is submitted in advance. Seniors are allowed two official college visit days, provided that required documentation is submitted in advance. Any additional school time missed due to college visits will be counted as an absence.

## **Tardiness**

- When on campus, students should leave home in time to arrive at school during check-in. When she arrives at school, she needs to check her uniform and ensure it is complete. Then she will check in with her adviser in complete uniform between 7:55 a.m. and 8 a.m.
- When on campus, if a student arrives after 8 a.m., she should report to the attendance office to receive a late pass.
- Any student arriving to school midway through first period (or later) must bring a note from a parent/guardian stating date and reason for lateness. Failure to bring a note results in a demerit each day until a note is presented. The student will be considered absent for her first period class.
- A student who arrives late to school five times in a semester will receive a detention. If a student is late to school ten or more times in a semester, she will meet with her year-level counselor and the dean of students to ascertain possible paths to improvement.
- Students who are late to school 15 or more times in a semester will lose their free time at school and may be put on probation.
- A senior who is late ten times in a semester will lose her early dismissal privilege and be assigned to structured study for the remainder of the semester or for a period of time deemed appropriate.
- Late arrivals due to a doctor's appointment will not be counted toward detention if the student presents a note from the doctor's office confirming the appointment/visit. A note from a parent/guardian will not suffice.

## **Request for Early Dismissal, when On-Campus**

- Early dismissal from school should be requested for serious reasons only. ***A written note from a parent/guardian, stating the reasons and time, must be presented to the adviser at check-in no later than the day of the early***

### ***dismissal.***

- Please check the school calendar prior to making appointments or requesting early dismissal.
- Any time a student has permission to leave school during the school day, she must sign out in the reception area. When a student is returning to school, she must check in at the reception area to verify the time of return.
- **Planning in advance is crucial to the effective functioning of an academic institution. *For the safety and protection of everyone, requests by phone for early dismissal cannot be honored except in the case of an emergency. In such a situation, the person picking up the student must check in at reception to sign the student out; proof of identity will be required.***

### **Early Dismissal Privilege, when On-Campus**

The early dismissal privilege provides a special opportunity for seniors to learn to manage their unscheduled time and to use community resources. This privilege is awarded to seniors who earn it, and who have the written permission of their parents/guardians and adviser. Since the privilege is earned, it can be revoked if the student does not meet academic or social expectations.

- **After the first quarter**, seniors who have early dismissal privileges may leave the campus at 1:20 p.m. at the beginning of period six on days when they have no additionally scheduled activities that begin before 3:20 p.m.
- Seniors may never exercise their early dismissal privilege earlier than 1:20 p.m.
- Seniors must sign out at the reception area. Once a senior signs out, she is expected to leave campus.
- Any senior who receives ten or more demerits, or two or more detentions in a semester will lose her early dismissal privilege for the remainder of the semester or for a period of time deemed appropriate.
- Any senior who is late to school ten times will lose early dismissal privilege for the remainder of the semester or for a period of time deemed appropriate.
- Any senior who fails a class or earns more than one grade of 72 or lower for the quarter will not have early dismissal privilege until grades are published and verified. She will also be assigned to structured study.
- During the week before Field Day, there is no early dismissal privilege.

## **Special Days**

**Special days, such as Mercy Day/Ring Day, Foundation Day, Career Day, Emmaus Day, Field Days, and the Assembly for Awards and Honors are an integral part of the school program and are required for all students.**

## **Open House**

Open House is an important recruiting tool for Mercy High School. As such, it is mandatory that all students are present at Open House, whether in-person or virtual.

## **Class Cancellation**

When on campus, a student should never assume that a class has been cancelled. If the teacher is not present within the first five minutes, one student in the class should notify the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.

## **School Delays and Closings**

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, an announcement will be made on WBAL TV/radio (1090 AM). School delays and closings are also posted on the school web site and are communicated via emails and/or text message. If there is a delay because of inclement weather, the campus will not open until 9 a.m. so that the Facilities Team can prepare for arrival.

Because we have families from multiple zip codes, each family has a different weather challenge in the morning or evening. It is important to remember that the safety of each Mercy Girl and her family is of the highest importance. Each family's weather conditions should be considered as they make their way to school; the school understands that weather varies dramatically from city to each county.

## **Assemblies**

Student behavior during assemblies must be exemplary. Students must be attentive and respectful to the presentation and any guests of the school.

Respect and reverence during liturgies are expected of all students.

When on campus, unless otherwise announced, blazers are required for assemblies and liturgies. Any student not wearing a blazer to an assembly or liturgy will be disciplined. Multiple instances of not wearing a blazer to an assembly or liturgy will have more serious consequences.

Most school assemblies are not open to the public unless otherwise noted.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are privileges accorded to students. Therefore, students must have demonstrated responsibility in their behavior in the Mercy High School community in order to participate. Students can be denied the privilege if they fail to meet academic or behavioral expectations.

Students on a school sponsored trip must adhere to the regulations for that trip. Students are expected to give full cooperation to requests and directives of chaperones. No student will be permitted to go on a field trip unless a permission slip signed by her parent/guardian is on file.

Because foreign travel involves a greater level of responsibility, Mercy High School reserves the right not to accept students for foreign trips if the school has any concerns about the student's behavior. All financial obligations must be up-to-date before a student can participate in a school-sponsored trip.

## EXAMS

Students are expected to take their exams when they are scheduled during the exam period. **Only very serious exceptions would necessitate a change in the timing of an exam.** Students who are absent or ill during more than one exam period will need to present medical documentation if they experience illness during the next exam period. **Any student who travels during the exam period, for extraordinary circumstances, must take her exams in advance of the trip.**

Any request to change the date or time for a scheduled exam will be for serious reasons, not for convenience. If a student must request a change to her exam schedule, she must submit the request in writing to the exam coordinator at least one week prior to the first exam day. If approved by the principal, the coordinator will reschedule the time of the exam.

### Exam Procedures, when On-Campus:

- It is each student's responsibility to know her exam schedule and to be on time for exams.
- Students must be in complete uniform for all exams.
- Any student arriving after exams begin must report to the attendance office to get a late slip. If a student arrives late to an exam, she will be allowed in to take the exam but will not be afforded any extra time on the exam.
- If a student is ill and unable to come to school for her scheduled exam, a parent/guardian must contact the school before the start of the exam. Students must provide documentation of their illness upon their return and plan to take the missed exam during scheduled exam conflict time.
- Students must remain in the exam room for a minimum of one and one-half (1.5) hours and must remain silent in the hallway

upon leaving.

- When students have two exams in one day, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are expected to remain on campus between exams.
- When students have one exam in a day, they only need to come in for that exam; they may arrive and leave accordingly.
- Cell phones may be kept in backpacks but must be turned off until the end of the exam period.
- Smartwatches, or any watches that are not analog, cannot be worn at any time.
- When students have finished their exams for the day, to keep an environment of quiet and respect for those still taking exams, cell phones may only be used in the gym.

**Available Areas for Student Use during Exams:**

- Dining hall counters, when exams are not being given in dining hall
- Gym
- Library
- Dining hall when not used for an exam
- Supervised classrooms, offices, and computer labs

**Policy on Final Exam Exemption for Seniors**

(full-year courses only)

- Seniors who receive 90 or above for the first semester and 90 or above for the third quarter may be exempt from that course's exam in the second semester. Work for fourth quarter must continue to be 90 or above.
- It is the responsibility of the student to notify her teacher of her eligibility for the exemption in writing during the week after third quarter report cards have been distributed.
- Teachers will inform the students of their exemptions before their final day of class. Students who meet the requirements for exemption from an exam have the option to take the exam if they wish.

## COMMUNICATION

### **Partnering Between Home and School**

Mercy High School values the partnership between home and school and works hard to support it. The adviser is the first point of contact on general matters regarding a student. The classroom teacher should be contacted about anything related to a particular course or classroom. The next point of reference after the teacher is the department chair.

**When a parent or guardian wishes to speak with a member of the faculty or staff, the best way to schedule an appointment is via email or calling the receptionist.**

### **Bulletin Boards/Flyers**

Any announcement or flyer to be posted on campus needs prior approval from the dean of students.

### **Social Media**

No social media can be used on campus between 7:55 a.m. and 3:10 p.m. unless under the direct supervision of a teacher. Should a student be discovered using social media, her device will be confiscated and will be given to the dean of students, from whom the girl can retrieve it at the end of the day. The parent(s)/guardian(s) who need to contact their daughter(s) because of an emergency situation can call the receptionist or attendance officer and messages will be relayed between classes or at the end of the school day.

## **INCLUSION/LEARNING DIFFERENCES POLICY**

As an authorized International Baccalaureate World School, Mercy High School recognizes and respects that our students come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and life experiences, as well as learning needs. The diversity of student backgrounds contributes to the school community and helps to develop a caring and open-minded community of learners.

Mercy High School believes that students should have access to learning, opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education. To that end, all ninth and tenth graders will participate in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme.

In order to ensure equitable access, Mercy High School provides learning differences services to students with documented needs. Mercy High School believes that students with learning differences thrive when they are supported by caring professionals as well as challenged by the classes they take. Reasonable accommodations and arrangements for learning differences are made based on supporting documentation and educational evidence submitted to the learning differences specialist. Mercy cannot accommodate students to the degree a public school can, and all accommodations will be made keeping in mind the resources available.

The learning differences specialist is responsible for communicating access arrangements to those students, parents/guardians, and faculty members who must be made aware of such adjustments. The learning differences specialist may support students in small group or one-on-one settings, as needed.

For students who excel academically, techniques may be used to challenge students such as supplementing courses with additional content, offering different texts, or using a greater proportion of higher order thinking questions. In classes, multiple teaching strategies are employed to differentiate instruction. As each student's needs are different, the support she receives will vary.

This policy is annually reviewed by the leadership of Mercy High School.

Adapted from *MYP: From Principles into Practice, Coordinator Support Material*.

## **LANGUAGE POLICY**

Part of Mercy High School's Mission Statement is to ensure that "students learn to communicate ideas and express themselves confidently, both individually and in collaboration with others." Through school-wide instruction, students develop the fluency and literacy skills necessary to ensure their ability to communicate effectively. As language is an essential tool for teaching, all teachers at Mercy High School are language teachers. All students are expected to learn through and about language. Communication skills will be developed both inside and outside of the classroom.

As a school, Mercy High School wants its students to develop a global vision. The ability to communicate in a variety of modes and in more than one language fosters international mindedness and promotes intercultural understanding. To this end, students are expected to learn at least one language other than English. At Mercy High School, students are required to take two consecutive years of the same language, either French or Spanish. Students are encouraged, but not required to take a world language each year thereafter. As Mercy High School moves to implement the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, the school understands that this requirement must change. Students can also enroll in online original credit courses in Arabic or Chinese through Educere. Any registration for a course in Arabic or Chinese must be approved in advance by the chair of the World Languages Department.

If a student's mother tongue is one other than English, and she has attended at least one year at an academic institution in which instruction in the language other than English has occurred, the student is exempt from the world language requirement. This is because that student is already learning English as a second language and for these students, each academic course is also a language course. For students whose mother tongue is not English, additional accommodations will be made as needed. Although the language of instruction is English, we encourage our parents/guardians and students to speak and develop their mother tongue at home as this strengthens the student's language skills while instilling a sense of importance about her culture.

This policy is annually reviewed by the leadership of Mercy High School.

Adapted from *MYP: From Principles into Practice, Coordinator Support Material, Language and Learning in the IB Programmes*.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ATHLETES AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Mercy High School athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will bring credit to themselves, their team, the athletic department, and the school. All behavior on and off the field, track, or court must reflect honesty, integrity, and respect. It is only through such conduct that athletics at Mercy can earn and maintain the positive image that reflects the mission of the school.

### **Expectations of All Players, Parents/Guardians, and Guests**

- Sportsmanship and fair play are essential to athletics and must be taught and developed at home and on the field both during practices and games. Permitting, encouraging, or condoning performance or behavior that is dangerous or demeaning to a player, coach, official, spectator, or anyone connected with the function of the game is unacceptable. Attempts to manipulate rules in an effort to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate conduct that is not sportsmanlike will not be tolerated.
- *The emphasis on winning should never be placed above the value of good sportsmanship, the concepts of fair play, or the skills of the game.*
- Derogatory comments are unacceptable. Positive reinforcement should always be used with players and adults, as criticism, once made, can never be retracted.
- All players, parents/guardians, and guests must adhere to the essential elements of this Code of Conduct.

### **Expectations of Players**

- All players must show respect for all others involved in the program (e.g., team members, coaches, Mercy High School staff, parents/guardians, officials, opponents). Conduct that is not sportsmanlike will not be tolerated and could result in expulsion from the team.
- All players are responsible for their own actions both on and off of the field, track, or court. It is expected that all players will conduct themselves appropriately and their actions will reflect honesty, integrity, and respect.

- All players are expected to practice Mercy values by dedicating themselves to improvement, working hard, maintaining a positive attitude, showing up on time, and encouraging their teammates.
- All players are expected to attend practices and any games in which they are scheduled to play and give their best efforts at all times. If a player is absent without approval from her coach, her place on the team may be in jeopardy, and she could be subject to dismissal.
- All players are expected to meet the following criteria for academic success.
  - If an athlete earns a quarter grade below 70, she may no longer play or practice, so that she has time to improve her academic standing.
  - If an athlete has earned an unsatisfactory grade in service, Seminar, or the personal project, she cannot play or practice.
  - If an athlete earns a quarter grade below 70 the quarter before a tryout, including the last of the prior year, she may not try out, so that she has time to improve her academic standing.
  - An appeal for waiver to this policy may be made to the principal and the athletic director in writing. Any exception will be based on overall academic improvement in the student's record.
- All players are expected to be respectful and appropriate in their use of social media, whether in communication about another team, other players, or any other member of the school community or that of other schools. Violations could result in disciplinary action, which may result in removal from the team.

### **Expectations of Parents/Guardians**

- All parents/guardians should adhere to Mercy values by encouraging good sportsmanship and respect for all players, coaches, Mercy High School staff, opponents, and officials. Unsportsmanlike conduct by parents/guardians or guests cannot be tolerated and may result in expulsion of the player from the team and/or family members being not allowed to attend Mercy events.
- Parents/guardians should familiarize themselves with the rules of their daughter's sports and encourage their daughters in play, but should leave coaching to the coaches.
- Parents/guardians should refrain from criticizing players, coaches, Mercy High School staff, and opponents while watching practices or attending games.

- Parents/guardians should follow a “24-Hour Rule” if they have complaints. If there is a concern resulting from a game or practice situation, please raise those concerns the following day with the coach. Grievances or misunderstandings with coaches, officials, or other parties involved with the sport should be communicated through the proper channels and procedures, never on or about the field of play in view of spectators or participants.
- Any serious problems or concerns should go directly to the athletic director immediately.

### **Concussion Management Protocol**

In the event a student sustains a concussion, Mercy’s certified athletic trainer will implement Mercy’s concussion management protocol and the State of Maryland’s return to play policy.

### **Channel of Communication to Resolve Problems**

- Should there be any problems or concerns, the player should bring them to the attention of the captain(s) of the team and the coach. If there is no resolution, the player and her parent(s)/guardian(s) should speak with the coach.
- If, after the player or the player and her parent(s)/guardian(s) have spoken with the coach, there is still something to be resolved, the athletic director should be brought into the conversation. If the athletic director is unable to find a resolution to any concern, the player and her parent(s)/guardian(s) should not hesitate to contact the principal.
- **By accepting a position on a team, each player and her parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees to abide by this Code.**

## **SCHOOL CAMPUS AND FACILITIES**

### **Available Areas during the School Day**

When a student does not have a scheduled class or activity, she may decide where and how she will spend her time. The following are available areas:

- Dining Hall
- Sister Marie Foley College Counseling Center
- Knott Computer Lab
- Library
- Lobby

*All other areas may be used only if supervised by a faculty or staff member.*

*Students may not leave the building during the school day.*

*Any student who needs to go to her car during the school day may only do so if accompanied by the principal or dean of students.*

### **Parking Areas**

All those who park regularly on campus must have a parking sticker. This can be obtained from the campus safety coordinator.

### **Library**

The library is a service to be shared by all members of the school. Care of and prompt return of books and considerate conduct in the library indicate an awareness of the needs of others.

There is no eating at any time in the library.

### **Dining Hall**

Food and drink are restricted to the dining hall. Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their tables and the surrounding area, and for disposing of trash in the proper containers.

Only the dean of students can give permission for food to be elsewhere for special occasions and educational purposes.

### **Lockers**

Each student will be assigned one locker for her use. She is responsible for its maintenance. Lockers must be kept *locked at all times with a lock issued by the school*. It is not wise to share the combination for a lock.

Lockers may be decorated for special occasions using masking tape (no Scotch tape). All decorations are expected to be appropriate to the season and in good taste. When decorations become torn, they should be removed. The adviser will monitor decorations.

The principal or the dean of students has the right to inspect a student's locker when it is considered necessary for the integrity of the school environment or the protection of the student body.

## **Health Room**

The health room will be staffed by a full-time registered nurse. The health room is provided for the immediate care of students who become ill while at school. Students who become ill must go directly to the health room. If necessary, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the nurse and the student sent home. An ill student may not leave campus without checking out with the nurse and should not contact her parent/guardian until she has reported to the health room.

## **The Learning Center**

The Learning Center is a dedicated space established to support students with learning differences and help them reach their academic potential. Within this program, each student receives an individualized academic plan that addresses her specific needs and helps her understand her strengths. Students work with a learning specialist to develop skills and strategies that lead to success and allow them to grow as learners.

Students also have access to a testing room that is designed to provide a quiet, alternative location for testing with reduced distractions. As part of this program, students are expected to adhere to all Mercy policies in addition to the rules of the Learning Center.

Each student is expected to:

- Treat her support periods as a class and arrive on time;
- Come prepared to work on future assignments;
- Communicate with the learning specialist if absent;
- Make-up a missed exam the day she returns to school unless arranged with her teacher prior to her return;
- Plan to allocate part of her lunch/free period or time after school to complete an assessment the same day it is scheduled;
- Be responsible for coordinating her schedule to accommodate extra time needs.

## **The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Auditorium**

Unless supervised, students do not have access to any space in or around The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Auditorium.

## **Administrative Offices**

Due to the professional nature of administrative offices, students typically do not have access to these spaces unless directed by the administrator.

## MEDICATION

If a student needs to take medication during the school day, **school policy requires the necessary form be completed and on file.** This form may be obtained from the health room or downloaded from the parent portal of the school website. No other medication should be taken by students during the school day.

## APPEARANCE

The student's uniform is held to a high standard because she represents Mercy High School, and her appearance reflects her self-esteem. Uniform pieces that are torn or worn must be replaced as soon as possible. *For security reasons, the nametag must be worn at all times.*

### **Mercy High School Uniform – purchased from Flynn O'Hara Uniforms**

- White uniform blouse with school logo
- All-white, plain undergarments that do not show below the sleeves or above the neckline may be worn under the blouse.  
***Note:** No underwear should be visible through the uniform blouse.*
- For the Class of 2022, plaid kilt worn just above the knee, not to exceed three inches.
- For the Classes of 2023, 2024, and 2025, plaid four kick-pleated skirt, worn just above the knee, not to exceed three inches.
- Red blazer in good condition that *buttons completely* and fits well; only Mercy-related pins should be displayed on the lapel. *Blazers are required for assemblies and liturgies. There are consequences for not wearing a blazer at these times.*
- Red or black uniform sweater with school logo
- Black fleece jacket with school logo
- Senior sweater in good repair
- Solid white or black knee socks
- Solid plain white or black crew socks with at least five inches of ribbing above the ankle (**no decorations, no borders, no stripes**).
- Plain white or black tights (sheer nylons, black stockings or leggings are not permitted)
- Black buck oxfords with standard soles, no contrasting stitching or contrasting grommets; purchased from Van Dyke & Bacon.

- No blankets or scarves are permitted.
- Mercy spiritwear is not acceptable as part of the school uniform.

### **Personal Appearance**

- The only headwear allowed will be solid white, black, red, and grey headbands measuring up to one and half inches (1.5”) wide.
- Until health guidelines are revised, students must wear masks at all times within the school buildings and outdoors when social distancing cannot be maintained. Masks can only be black, white, red, or gray and may not have any symbols, pictures, or lettering beyond a Mercy logo.
- Earrings should be no longer than one and a half inches (1.5”); bracelets and necklaces must be few, thin, and simple.
- *Only analog watches may be worn in school. No smartwatches are allowed.*
- Except for ear piercings, no visible piercings and tattoos are allowed.
- Hair may not be dyed or highlighted an unnatural hair color. Because unity and simplicity are our touchstones for appearance, radical hairstyles are not appropriate. Any student who comes to school or a school event with inappropriately colored or styled hair will be sent home.

### **Dress Regulations**

- Students are expected to come to school in full, correct uniform. Flip flops, slippers, clogs, or beach shoes may never be worn in school.
- For warmth, plain black, red or gray sweatpants may be worn **to and from school**. *The pajama bottoms sold in the school store may not be worn to and from school.* No girl should come to school in slippers.
- At check-in each morning, **students should be in full, correct uniform, including shoes.**
- An out-of-uniform permission slip is issued **only** by the dean of students.
- On out-of-uniform days, dress may be casual but should always be neat, attractive, and appropriate for Mercy High School.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Sweatpants, jeans\*, cut-offs or pants with tattered edges are deemed inappropriate for school and for trips sponsored by the school. In addition, flip flops, shorts, halters, tube tops and tank tops are never acceptable dress for school.*

- An excessively short, tight, or revealing garment and bare midriffs are deemed inappropriate. Any student inappropriately attired will be sent home to change to appropriate dress.
- A student may request permission to come to school out-of-uniform from the dean of students.

*\*Jeans may be worn by special permission on some occasions such as selected out-of-uniform days, retreats or outdoor field trips where jeans would be deemed appropriate by the sponsoring group. Torn, cut off, or distressed jeans are inappropriate and not allowed.*

## DANCE GUIDELINES

### Attendance

- Dances on school grounds are held from 8 p.m.-11 p.m., except Homecoming, which is from 8 p.m.-11:30 p.m.
- No one will be admitted to dances after 9 p.m.
- Students are expected to remain until 10:30 p.m. except for Homecoming. Students are expected to remain at Homecoming until 11 p.m.
- A dance agreement form must be signed by the student and her parent/guardian and turned in when a ticket is purchased for a dance.
- During dances, all bags are checked in and monitored and will remain in the balcony.
- Water bottles or containers will remain in monitored bags.
- The only food and drink that are allowed at a dance are those provided by the sponsoring organization.
- Should an emergency arise requiring a student to leave before 10:30 p.m., the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the moderator. If for some reason a student is not admitted to the dance or is asked to leave before 10:30 p.m., the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the moderator and will be required to pick up their daughter and her guest.
- Once students leave the building during the dance, they may not be readmitted.
- No notes for permission to leave early will be accepted at the dance. Any permission to leave early must be given in advance by the faculty moderator of the dance.

- Dance tickets are transferable but not refundable.
- If a student decides not to attend the dance after purchasing a ticket, the student needs to inform the dance moderator by 3:10 p.m. on the Friday of the dance.
- Dances held on campus are open to Mercy High School students and one guest per student. Mercy High School students should feel welcome to attend any Mercy High School dance without a guest.

***Note: Any student who is absent from school or arrives at school after 10:00 a.m. may not participate in any school activity that occurs after hours on that day. This includes dances. If there are any questions, please see the dean of students.***

***To attend the junior-senior prom, students must be in school the entire day on the Friday before.***

### **Behavior**

- Students are expected to behave in a manner befitting students who attend a Catholic girls' school. No form of public affection will be allowed.
- Students are reminded that they are responsible for the behavior of their guests. If a student has difficulty in this regard, she should ask for the assistance of a chaperone.
- Any student asked to leave the dance for misbehavior will not be allowed to attend any other Mercy High School dances for the remainder of the school year, which may include prom.

### **Appearance**

#### **1. Attire**

- The level of dress expected at a Mercy High School dance is semiformal, which means “dressy,” neat, and attractive. This applies to all school dances unless a dance theme is approved by the Activities Council which specifies a different type of attire. Students are reminded that they are responsible for the appearance of their guests.
- Any student or guest who is inappropriately dressed will not be admitted to the dance and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted.
- The following are examples to clarify what is and what is **not** appropriate dress:

#### **Appropriate Women’s Attire**

- Dresses, dressy pants or skirt with a dressy top.  
***Note: The length of all dresses and skirts must meet the fingertip test (standing straight with arms at sides, the longest finger should not be longer than the length of the***

*dress or skirt*).

- Shoes may be heels, flats, or dressy sandals. (Students may **not** enter a dance wearing crocs, slippers, beach flip flops, or have bare feet.)
- Undergarments appropriate for the style of dress should be worn.

### **Women's Attire NOT appropriate**

- Short, tight or excessively revealing garments
- Slits that do not meet the fingertip test. (*See note above.*)
- Garments with bare midriff or revealing cutouts
- Jeans, skorts, khaki pants or skirts, corduroy pants or skirts
- Leggings (unless worn under a dress or skirt of appropriate length)
- Beach flip flops, *Birkenstock* style clogs, combat boots, *UGG* style footwear, crocks, slippers, or any recreational shoes

### **Appropriate Men's Attire**

- Dress slacks with dress shirt and tie; sport coat is optional
  - Dress shoes or Sperrys (no combat boots, flip flops, or recreational shoes)
2. Mercy High School students may not have visible tattoos and body piercings (except for ears).
  3. Outerwear and knapsacks must be checked at the door.

### **Prom**

The junior-senior prom is a formal dance that is held off campus. If a Mercy student or her guest does not follow the prom guidelines, the student and her guest will not be admitted to the prom, and a parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student and her guest. The guidelines are as follows:

- The prom is held from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. A Mercy student and her guest are expected to arrive no later than 9 p.m. If they arrive after 9 p.m., they will not be admitted to the prom and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified. Everyone is expected to remain at the prom until 11 p.m. Once a Mercy student and/or her guest leave the prom, they may not be readmitted.

NOTE: If a Mercy student has a conflict with another function in which she will either need to leave early or arrive late to prom, a letter from her parent/guardian must be given to the dean of students two weeks before the prom.

- As stated in the enrollment agreement, "Mercy High School reserves the right to restrict participation in . . . social events

if an account is delinquent.” If one’s tuition is not in good standing when the final payment is due, Mercy reserves the right to not accept prom payment until financial obligations are met.

- The guest of the Mercy student must be under 21 years of age.
- A Mercy student must be in school the entire day on the Friday before the prom.
- Mercy students must arrive at the same time as their guests. If someone’s guest is arriving separately, a letter from the Mercy student’s parent/guardian must be sent ahead of time to the moderator of the prom. The letter must state the guest’s name, the approximate time the guest will be arriving, and the reason the guest will be arriving separately.
- No alcohol or drugs of any type will be allowed on the premises. Anyone suspected of being under the influence of these substances will be detained and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified to arrange transportation from the prom.
- Anyone demonstrating behavior that does not comply with Mercy High School’s Code of Conduct will be asked to leave the prom, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Inappropriate dancing and public displays of affection will be addressed in the same manner as at all other Mercy High School dances.
- Dress for the prom is **formal attire**. Because Mercy High School is a Catholic school, all those attending prom should be modest and prudent in their attire. **It is the responsibility of the Mercy student to tell her guest about the appropriate attire for the prom.** No recreational shoes or baseball caps may be worn. The moderator of the prom and the dean of students will decide any questions concerning the appropriateness of apparel.
- Dresses must be appropriate for high school. A dress that is too casual, too revealing, too short in length or in two pieces will not be allowed at the prom. Rompers are not allowed. If it is clear that there are no undergarments worn under a prom dress, steps will be taken to create more modesty. Anyone who wears an inappropriate dress will not be admitted and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to take that person home.
- Tuxedos or appropriate suits and ties are required. Guests will **not** be admitted wearing a sport coat and slacks.
- Please be reminded that Mercy students are prohibited from having visible body piercings (except earrings) and visible tattoos.

- Shoes must be worn at all times. A student may bring other shoes to change into at the prom.
- Tickets may be transferred to another Mercy student. There will be no refunds for payments already made.

## **POLICY FOR HOLDING POSITIONS OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP**

A student may hold only **one** key leadership position during one school year. A student who holds one of these key positions may hold only one office in another school-sponsored activity or club. The following positions have been designated as KEY LEADERSHIP positions:

- The five officers of the student council
- The four officers of each class
- The president of the National Honor Society
- The president of the International Club
- The president of the Environmental Awareness Club
- The president of the Social Justice Society
- The president of the Black Awareness Club

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **ID Cards**

Each student is issued an ID card. Students should report lost cards immediately to the dean of students. There is a fee for replacing the ID card.

### **Lost and Found**

Items found on campus should be turned in at the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, where they can be claimed by the proper owners.

### **Major School Fundraiser**

The school sponsors one major student fundraising activity per year. Each student is expected to fully participate in this fundraising activity. In the event that a student does not sell all or part of her obligation, she will participate in extra service to the community.

All other fundraising activities must be approved by the principal and dean of students. Student fundraisers must align with the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and the mission of Mercy High School.

## **The Mercy High School Ring**

The official Mercy High School ring is a symbol of a special relationship between an individual and the Mercy High School community. All graduates of Mercy High School are entitled to wear the ring.

## **Student Visitors**

Student visitors are permitted to attend classes at Mercy High School primarily to become acquainted with the kind of education available at the school and to encourage potential students. If a student wishes to bring a visitor to school, she must obtain the permission of the dean of students in advance.

Students who withdraw from Mercy before the end of the academic year may not return to campus during the school day or for school activities without the permission of the dean of students.

**Note: No children under age 10 may be brought to school as visitors. This includes special days and the last day of school.**

# ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

## Introduction

Mercy High School uses technology as a tool to enhance the curriculum and improve classroom instruction. To that end, it is the user's responsibility to employ technology as an educational resource. The term "technology" refers to electronic communications and information devices, and includes, but is not limited to, computing equipment, devices, smartphones and other mobile devices, watches, phones, photocopiers, calculators, televisions, and other media players. Use of personal computing devices on school property is subject to the guidelines and expectations as set forth in this policy.

Use of technology at Mercy High School is a privilege and implies agreement with the principles outlined in this policy and, in accordance with the school's philosophy, with the broader concepts of ethical, moral and responsible use.

## Telecommunications/Internet Guidelines

Every student receives a Mercy High School email account. Mercy High School email is an academic communication tool and students are obligated to use this tool in a responsible, effective, and ethical manner. Students may not use email accounts to communicate with an entire class or group. Student email accounts are subject to monitoring and inspection. Student email accounts should be used for school-related purposes only, and students should have no expectation of privacy related to their school email account.

Student computer and electronic device use is also subject to monitoring and inspection, and students should have no expectation of privacy related to the use of computer or electronic devices or the information stored on this equipment or the school's network and servers. It is the student's responsibility to use the internet for specific curriculum-driven objectives and goals. Students may not use electronic devices to access social media, exchange text or instant messages, or make video calls during school hours. While on school premises, students may not access chat rooms or use the internet to buy or sell items. All notifications must be turned off on personal devices. This includes badges, pop-ups, banners, sounds, and vibrations. Although content filtering software is in place in an effort to prevent access to sites that are obscene or harmful to minors, the school cannot guarantee that all inappropriate material will be blocked. Students must not attempt to bypass filtering software through the use of proxy servers, 3G/4G/5G networks or other methods. Students must not access school resources, including email, using an anonymous IP address.

It is the student's responsibility to use technology resources in accordance with the school's mission and philosophy. Each student in the school community is responsible for her own actions. It is expected that students will model good digital citizenship and use technology in ways that show consideration and respect for others. Students will not use technology, including digital recording devices such as video cameras, audio devices, phones, and other such devices, to slander, bully or denigrate others.

Using offensive or harassing language, or language that otherwise violates any provision of the Student/Parent Handbook or a school rule, is never permitted.

It is important to note that these expectations extend to technology use beyond the school walls. Students who are reported using email, social networking postings, or text messaging in disparaging or offensive ways or that otherwise violate a school rule, whether occurring at school or off-campus, will be subject to disciplinary action.

Harassment/cyberbullying of others online, whether against a student, non-student, or employee, is serious, is prohibited, and is contrary to the school's policy and values. Harassment/cyberbullying, whether it is initiated on-campus or off-campus, online or in-person, should be reported immediately to a faculty member and/or the dean of students, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution under Maryland's law prohibiting the Misuse of Interactive Computer Service ("Grace's Law"). It is the student's responsibility to report violations of the Acceptable Use Policy to a faculty member or directly to the dean of students.

### **Social Media Expectations**

Students may only use social media outside of school hours. Social media must never be used to communicate with teachers or other adults affiliated with Mercy High School.

Social media is considered a public platform, even if an account is private. Students should assume that everything they post, comment or like will be visible to the public and subject to scrutiny. Any such actions on social media must reflect Mercy values.

### **General Hardware/Software Guidelines**

It is the student's responsibility to make sure no hardware or software is destroyed, modified, or abused in any way. Computer equipment should not be moved, unplugged, or altered without the permission of a faculty member.

A student must not alter or attempt to alter a computer setup or system configuration. Students should print responsibly and only essential, school-related material. Students should use private internet browsers on shared computers in order to prevent the system from saving usernames and passwords. Students should understand that even in a private internet browser, the student's internet usage may be monitored and reviewed by the school's administrative staff.

### **Intellectual Property Rights**

It is the student's responsibility to abide by copyright laws and software licensing agreements. Software may only be installed with permission and under the supervision of the Technology Department.

Students are not permitted to copy or use school-owned material, including graphics, without permission.

### **Student-Owned Devices**

Use of student-owned devices must always be in accordance with the

Mercy High School Acceptable Use Policy and other school policies.

Student-owned laptops, devices, and other mobile computing devices (excluding watches, cell phones and smartphones) may be used in any available area in the school. Use of a student-owned device during a class is always at the discretion of the classroom teacher. **Between 7:55 a.m. and 3:20 p.m., the only content accessed by a student should be educational.** Students are not permitted to stream or view video content between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. This includes music videos. Educational video content is allowed with permission and supervision of a teacher.

When on-campus, the dining hall is a technology-free area during lunch periods. Students may not use electronic devices during lunch. Students who need to use a device or laptop during a lunch period must go to another available area in the school.

Devices and other mobile devices may not be used in the hallways between classes. AirPods or other earbuds may be not used in the classroom or in the hallways. **For communication and safety reasons, earbuds can only be used in one ear when a student has free time.**

Images, music, video, and other material stored on a student-owned mobile device must always be school appropriate and in conformity with the Acceptable Use Policy. Mercy High School reserves the right to examine a student's device and its contents.

Students must not use someone else's personal mobile device without specific permission from that person.

Each student is responsible for the proper care, maintenance, and security of her personal mobile devices. Mercy High School is not responsible for any damage or loss of student-owned devices and their contents.

## Using Electronic Devices in School

- A student is required to bring her device to school each day with a fully charged battery. A limited number of recharging stations will be provided throughout the school.
- If a student leaves her device at home, or if it is confiscated by a teacher, she will be required to complete assignments using alternate means (as determined by her teacher).
- Device use in class is at the direction of the teacher.
- A device must not be used for non-classroom related activities (including checking email and texting) when in class. Use of iMessage and FaceTime is prohibited during school hours, even during free periods.

Classroom projectors and mirroring tools such as Apple AirPlay™ may only be used with the explicit permission of the classroom teacher.

- A student must not record conversations or take video and pictures of people or class activities without permission from the teacher and the person(s) involved. If permission to record is

granted, the student must not post the recording on the internet without permission from a teacher.

- Device sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes. Push notifications should be turned off during school hours. Earbuds must be used when listening to audio.
- Mercy High School's Wi-Fi network must be used to connect to the internet. Students may not use any other network (including a 3G/4G/5G connection) to access the internet at school.
- Devices are subject to random monitoring and inspection by teachers and school personnel. All content, including images and music, must be school appropriate. **No social media may be accessed during school hours.**
- A student whose actions are in violation of these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the principal and dean of students.

### **When Engaged in Online Learning**

- In all online communications with peers and teachers, students must follow Mercy High School's Acceptable Use Policy. This includes all applications and tools used as a part of the course curriculum.
- It is a student's responsibility to familiarize herself with the platforms, Teams or Google Classroom, that will be used in each of her classes. Teachers are expected to support students in the use of the platform used and provide instruction about how it will be used specifically in the course. It is an expectation of every Mercy student that she is proficient in both platforms, or that she seeks support from teachers and the technological support team to become proficient.
- Students must check PlusPortals each morning before classes start and are encouraged to check PlusPortals periodically throughout the day. All instructions regarding where students will find content for her classes will be communicated through PlusPortals.
- Students must carefully follow the instructions given by a teacher regarding access to video calls, classwork, homework, and other important applications and materials used in class. Each class will use a variety of tools to create a meaningful, collaborative, and rigorous learning environment. Students must be prepared to engage with all tools and approaches used by their teachers.

- Teachers are available each day from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. They will answer emails and messages at their discretion before and after this time period. All teachers will be expected to answer emails and messages within 24 hours.

\*The above policies apply to any student that is accessing a class online, whether Mercy High School is in an online or hybrid model for instruction.

### **Policy for Student Behavior in Video Conferences**

***At Mercy High School presence, relationships, and respect are vital in building community. Staying engaged and respecting all members of the class through appropriate behavior, participation, and consistent attendance builds a healthy and thriving classroom environment.***

- During periods of online learning, students will be required to regularly participate in video conferencing with their classes, advisee meetings, class meetings, seminar, and other school organizations of which they are a part. Students must enter the video call on time and stay present and engaged throughout the meeting.
- **Students will be required to turn on their video and show their faces during video calls.** Repeated internet issues are detrimental to the student's learning. Further steps will be taken by the school and families in order to remedy the connectivity challenges. Students will be expected to conduct video calls in an area of the home in which they are able to sit upright. It is unacceptable to participate in video calls in a lounging position.
- Students will be expected to conduct video calls in areas of the home that are free from significant noise or distraction. Siblings, friends, or other members of the household should not participate or consistently interrupt meetings. Students should be sure that anything in the background of their video calls is appropriate for a school setting.
- Students will be expected to wear the school uniform.
- Students should not eat or engage in activities unrelated to the class lesson during a video call. Students should not use devices to engage in activities unrelated to the class they are attending.

- Students are strongly encouraged to use headphones and stay on mute unless speaking.
- Students may not record, screenshot, or otherwise save images or video from a video call.
- One-on-one video calls should not occur between a teacher and student unless appropriate procedures have been followed.
- Multiple or egregious violations of the above policies will result in disciplinary action.

## Security

Students must respect the integrity of computing systems. Use of anything designed to disrupt or alter the performance and/or integrity of the network or to breach network security is prohibited.

Students agree to maintain adequate security for their accounts. Passwords are not to be shared. Students are responsible for the activity on their own school accounts.

An unauthorized user may not enter anyone else's private account. Wireless internet access is available throughout the school. For an added level of security, wireless network access is restricted by a password, which may not be shared with anyone who is not a member of the Mercy High School Community.

Students understand that they are responsible for protecting the privacy of their personal and private information on the Internet and electronically, including using care with the information they share and disclose. Students are counseled to share private information only with trusted websites.

## Use of Cell Phones

A student may receive approval to bring a cell phone to school only if she and her parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to abide by the following regulations:

- The student must register her cell phone using the form available in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Any changes throughout the year must be reported to the dean of students.
- The phone must be **completely turned off** from 7:55 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. **Please note exception:** cell phones may be used near exit doors only if the student is waiting there to be picked up.
- A cell phone must be kept in a student's locker. A student may not carry a cell phone on her person, in her purse, or in her backpack.

A student may use her cell phone during the regular school day **ONLY under the direction or supervision of a staff member.**

A student found using a cell phone improperly will have the phone confiscated. The student will also be subject to disciplinary action and loss of cell phone privileges.

Mercy High School accepts no responsibility for individual cell phones brought to school.

***NOTE:** If a phone is confiscated, it will be kept with the dean of students. The student whose phone is confiscated must speak with the dean to discuss the violation.*

## **Watches**

Only analog watches can be worn on campus. Any smartwatch or watch other than an analog will be confiscated and taken to the dean of students.

## **Consequences of Inappropriate Behavior Regarding Technology**

Students whose actions are in violation of this policy may:

- Have her device confiscated;
- Lose the privilege of using technology resources at school for a period of time;
- Be subject to other disciplinary action;
- Be required to make full financial restitution, if applicable.

## **Web-based Services**

The school may use Google Apps for Education as well as other web-based education tools, sites, and services (“web-based services”) to provide students with important web-based educational experiences and enhanced opportunities to communicate and share collaboratively with one another. As part of students’ use of web-based services, certain educational records may be created, collected, or stored. Directory information, such as a student’s name, email address, grade/age, and enrollment status, may also be shared with web-based services. The school may access, monitor, and review a student’s use of web-based services and internet use. Students shall not have any expectation of privacy with respect to any communications or activities through such services. Use of web-based services is for educational purposes only and subject to the conduct and Acceptable Use Policy set forth in this Handbook. A list of the Mercy High School’s web-based services and corresponding privacy policies are available upon request. By enrolling a student in the School, the parent/guardian consents to the child’s participation in the school’s academic activities and programs, including the student’s use of and access to web-based services as described in this

paragraph. In order to withhold or withdraw consent for the use of web-based services, parents must contact the principal in writing.

### **Parent responsibility**

Parents are responsible for:

- Reviewing and discussing this policy with their child as well as supporting the school in its enforcement;
- Partnering with the school in monitoring their child's technology use;
- Modeling appropriate internet behaviors for their child;
- Reporting any concerns regarding this policy or their child's use of the internet or technology tools to the dean of students.

## ***GENERAL POLICIES***

## **AVAILABILITY OF THE ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Asbestos Management Plan is available for review. This plan contains information on our inspections, reinspection, response actions, and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance and reinspection activities that are planned or are in progress. This plan is on file at The Catholic Center and here at the school. If you should wish to review it or if you have any questions, please contact the facilities coordinator.

## **MARYLAND SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

A student may not enter school unless she has submitted an official immunization record or other appropriate documentation of immunization status. The immunization record must have the month, day and year of each vaccination and be signed by a physician or health department official. In the case of religious objection or medical contraindication, form DHMH 89 must be submitted, kept on file, and approved by the school. Exempted students are to be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of the disease for which they are not immunized.

## **CUSTODY**

Divorced or separated parents/guardians who have special requirements and/or arrangements regarding custody need to let the school know what those requirements and/or arrangements are. The school cannot be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known.

Mercy High School abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents/guardians, at their request, will be given access to the academic records and to information regarding the academic progress of their child(ren), unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent/guardian is denied access to such information. Mercy does not allow a non-custodial parent physical access to his/her child during school hours or on school premises unless the custodial parent has consented in writing, or the school has a court order permitting access.

## **EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SITUATIONS**

Mercy High School is committed to maintaining and promoting a healthy and safe environment for all students, faculty/staff, and visitors. The active participation of faculty/staff and students is required in order to achieve the highest standards of health and safety in accordance with all legal requirements and with Mercy High School's philosophy and mission statements.

## **Expectations for Faculty/Staff**

All faculty/staff are familiar with, follow and enforce policies and procedures, rules and regulations regarding health and safety, emergency and crisis situations – as listed in the *Employee Handbook*, *Faculty Handbook*, the *Student/Parent Handbook*, the *Crisis Response Plan*, and any other documents issued for such purpose. In the event of an emergency, it is the responsibility of faculty/staff supervising classrooms or other areas to supervise the students in their respective classes or areas. All other faculty/staff not in such areas, unless charged with another responsibility, are responsible to seek out students who are not in classes or supervised areas (e.g., hallways, stairways, bathrooms, dining hall, etc.) and assume appropriate supervision of these students.

## **Expectations for Students**

Students are expected to be familiar with and follow policies and procedures, rules and regulations regarding health and safety, emergency and crisis situations – as listed in the *Student/Parent Handbook* – and as may be additionally distributed for such purpose. These items are periodically reviewed with students by the faculty and administration. Still further, students are expected to report immediately any suspicious persons, situations, incidents, or objects anywhere on campus to a member of the faculty/staff in order to facilitate early intervention regarding a possible problem.

## **Response to Crisis Situations**

Standard procedures for health and safety and for emergency situations have been in place for many years. However, since our national security was challenged by terrorist activity, the climate has changed, requiring heightened awareness and more specific planning for response to crisis situations. In such situations, the safety and welfare of students is the first and foremost responsibility of administrators, faculty, and staff.

In light of national warnings about potential terrorist threats, Mercy High School is constantly attuned during the school day to information from the public media. In the event of a terrorist attack and/or crisis situation of some kind, Mercy High School will act at the direction of civil authorities. Appropriate procedures are in place and will be implemented, as directed, for the duration of the emergency. A copy of these procedures is available in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs for any parent/guardian who wishes to review the types of responses identified in the school's *Crisis Response Plan*.

## **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

- Parents/guardians are asked to attend to information provided by civil authorities through the public media in order to understand the nature of the crisis situation and to be aware of specific directives being issued.

- Listen to WBAL radio or TV for a Mercy High School-specific announcement. This will also be posted on the school web site.
- Communication is also promulgated by text and email.
- If you find it necessary to contact the school, call the main school phone number: 410-433-8880. Depending on the nature of the crisis situation, we will set up, through the phone system, a method for you to access information about what is happening at school or to make personal contact.

## **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

Mercy High School complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. In general, FERPA gives parents/guardians certain rights with respect to education records. (The rights granted to parents/guardians under FERPA automatically pass to the student when the student turns 18 or enrolls in college.) These rights and related procedures are as follows:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should submit to the principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school will arrange for access and notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to request that the school correct records they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. Parent(s)/guardian(s) who wish to request an amendment of the student's records should write to the principal and clearly identify the part of the record they believe is inaccurate or misleading and indicate the information they believe should be included in a corrected record. If Mercy High School decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) has the right to request a hearing.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent(s)/guardian(s) in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties under the following conditions:
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest. A school official is a person employed by the school as an

administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff).

- A person or company with whom the school has contracted to provide a service (e.g., attorney)
- A parent/guardian or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing her/his tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibilities or duties to the school.
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in case of health and safety emergencies

Schools may also disclose certain designated “directory” information without written consent unless a parent/guardian objects in writing. The primary purpose of designating certain “directory” information is to allow the school to include this type of information in certain publications. Examples of such publications include a playbill, showing the student’s role in a drama production; programs for school productions and concerts; sports activity sheets; honor roll or other recognition lists; school newsletters and similar publications; promotional literature; the annual yearbook; graduation programs.

Mercy High School has identified the following as designated “directory” information:

- Student’s name
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Honors and awards received
- Photograph

Parent(s)/guardian(s) who do not want the school to disclose some or all of the above “specific information” without their prior written consent must notify the principal in writing no later than within the first two weeks after the student begins enrollment at Mercy High School.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Mercy High School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202-8520

**Note of Clarification:** *Mercy High School publishes a student directory each year which includes the name of the student, the name of the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s), home address, phone number, parish affiliation. At the opening of the school year, parents/guardians are asked to submit this information. At that time, they are also given the opportunity to say they do not wish some or all of the information to be included in the directory available for student and parent/guardian use. However, all the information is included in the faculty copy of the student directory.*

## LEGAL STATUS OF STUDENTS

Mercy High School students may not be married. The principal may make an exception to this policy in the case of adult women who were formerly unable to complete their high school education.

Because the education of Mercy High School students is a joint venture shared by the school staff, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the students, a student is expected to live with her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The request for any exception to this should be made directly in writing to the principal by the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s).

In cases of student pregnancy, each situation is handled individually. The decision regarding the student’s continuance at school and her participation in school activities rests with the principal, who is guided by her concern for the individual and her responsibility to the school community.

## **POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Mercy High School is committed to providing a safe environment for all our students. Mercy High School joins with the Archdiocese of Baltimore in this commitment regarding the protection of children and youth, including protection from child sexual abuse, and follows the policies of the Archdiocese in this regard.

Each new member of the faculty/staff receives a copy of *A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children & Youth* of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Each new employee is asked to read this statement carefully and is required to sign a document which is retained in each person's personnel file stating:

*This is to acknowledge that I have received, reviewed and retained a copy of "A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children & Youth" of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. I hereby certify that I understand and will abide by the policies as stated.*

Should any allegation of child sexual abuse occur regarding a representative of Mercy High School in any capacity, the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese will be followed as well as the requirements of civil and criminal law.

A copy of the complete Archdiocesan *A Statement of Policy for the Protection of Children & Youth* is available in the Office of Academic and Student Affairs of Mercy High School, should a parent/guardian wish to review it.

For additional information regarding Mercy High School's handling of the reporting of child abuse and neglect, please refer to the section of the Student/Parent Handbook entitled "Reporting of Child Abuse."

If you suspect that an incident of child sexual abuse has occurred, please report it immediately to the president, principal, or dean of students. As always, we thank you for working with us on behalf of the safety and well-being of all our students.

## **POLICY REGARDING BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION**

Bullying, harassment or intimidation of any student is prohibited at Mercy High School. Retaliation against anyone who has reported these behaviors is also prohibited. Students engaging in these behaviors are subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.

As used in this policy, "bullying, harassment or intimidation" means intentional conduct, including verbal, physical, or written conduct, or an intentional electronic communication, that is threatening or seriously intimidating, and that:

- (i) Creates a hostile educational environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with a student's physical or psychological well-being and is:
  - 1. Motivated by an actual or a perceived personal characteristic including race, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, familial status, or physical or mental ability or disability; or
  - 2. Sexual in nature, including descriptions or depictions of a student with the student's intimate parts exposed or while engaged in an act of sexual contact; or
- (ii) Occurs on school property, at a school activity or event, or on a school bus; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the School.

Consequences and remedial actions will be consistently and fairly applied to persons committing acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, to persons engaged in retaliation and to persons found to have made false accusations. The seriousness of the behavior and prior conduct of the involved students will be considered when determining appropriate consequences. A student who violates this policy may be required to participate in appropriate counseling/intervention that is designed to increase the student's understanding of the offense and its impact on others. A student who repeatedly commits acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation may be expelled or asked to withdraw from Mercy High School.

When a student reports to a staff member that she is or has been the target/victim of bullying, harassment or intimidation, the staff member will report the incident to the school administration. Students' reports will be documented in writing in a timely fashion. A parent/guardian of the alleged victim will be notified of the bullying, harassment, or intimidation within three business days after the date the act(s) is/are reported to administration and the parent or guardian of the alleged perpetrator will be notified within five business days after the act(s) is/are reported to administration.

The principal or her/his designee will promptly and appropriately investigate reports. She/he will take steps to verify who committed the act of bullying, harassment or intimidation and whether others played a role. She/he will promptly and appropriately notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of the victim and the offender. After the investigation is complete, the principal or her/his designee will apply consequences and/or remedial actions consistent with the school's disciplinary policies. The offender will be informed that retaliation against a victim or bystander is prohibited and will result in additional consequences.

Information about the appropriate types of support services available to the student bully or victim and any bystanders will be discussed with the parents or guardians of those involved.

## **POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Mercy High School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation in the administration of its educational policies, programs or activities, its admissions policies, financial aid or scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

## **POLICY ON HARASSMENT**

It is also the policy of Mercy High School to prohibit harassment on the basis of religion, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or handicap, or protected activity (i.e., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in the complaint process) in its education programs and activities.

### **I. Scope**

Mercy neither condones nor tolerates harassment of students at school, at school-related activities or functions, or in any school-related setting. Harassment of students, whether engaged in by other students, teachers, administrators, or others, is prohibited. Violation of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or suspension or expulsion from school, depending on the nature and severity of the offense and the individual's disciplinary record.

### **II. Prohibited Conduct**

- A. For purposes of this policy, "harassment" means verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability or handicap, or protected activity, that:
  - (i) Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment;
  - (ii) Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance; or
  - (iii) Otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- B. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, handicap or disability. "Sexual" harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for educational decisions or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

### **III. Procedure**

- A. Any person who believes that a student is being subjected to harassment should immediately report the harassment to any one or more of the following individuals: the student's teacher, adviser, the principal, or the president.
- B. Individuals are encouraged to report harassment early, before it becomes severe or pervasive, so that preventive action can be taken. All complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and impartially, and will remain confidential to the extent possible.
- C. Any retaliation, reprisals, or intimidation, whether by the alleged harasser or from another source, directed toward the complaining party or anyone else as a result of the filing or investigation of a harassment complaint is considered a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately.
- D. Once the investigation is complete, the school will take immediate and appropriate corrective action when it determines that this Policy has been violated. The complaining party and the complained-of party will be advised of the investigation's findings and conclusions.

### **REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

Mercy High School is committed to providing the best possible and most appropriate learning experiences for all our students. Occasionally, there are factors in a student's appearance or behavior that lead to suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Maryland law requires that all educators and other school personnel, including volunteers, report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper authorities in order that children may be protected from harm and the family may be helped.

Mercy High School policy supports Maryland law in this regard and requires that all school staff report suspected abuse and neglect. At all times, the intent is to protect the student from harm by providing services to maintain and strengthen the family.

Should you have any questions regarding the information in this handbook, please feel free to discuss them with your daughter's adviser or with a member of the school administration. You can be assured of our continued interest and concern for the education and welfare of the students in our school.