



**MERCYMOUNT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL HANDBOOK**

Revised July, 2023

## **POLICY**

*When completing the online forms, please indicate that you have read and agree to the rules and regulations of Mercymount Country Day School. Full compliance is necessary for attendance at Mercymount.*

Office:                    401-333-5919                    (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

Fax:                        401-333-5150

Web Site:                [www.mercymount.org](http://www.mercymount.org)

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Faithful to Catholic educational tradition, Mercymount Country Day School, sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, ensures the development of strong academic skills, nurtures creative abilities, creates a sense of community, and promotes social responsibility. In the spirit of Catherine McAuley, we affirm that each child is a unique gift of a loving God, open to God's presence in others and in all creation.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Mercymount Country Day School, a private Catholic elementary school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, is dedicated to the total education of the child on all levels: spiritual, intellectual, physical and psycho-social. To this end, the administration, faculty and staff assist the parents and guardians who are the primary educators of their children.

## **CORE VALUES**

Our Core Values are the hallmarks of a Mercy Education. These are the ideals we stand up for and strive to live up to. We hold ourselves to these standards as an institution, as a community and as individuals. Each value is interconnected and necessary as we take Mercy into the world.



### **Compelled by Mercy**

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



### **Educational Courage**

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



### **Inspired by Faith**

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



### Principled Leadership

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



### A Voice for Dignity and Respect

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

### **“PIE”**

Mercymount's acronym, *Partners in Education*, has been since its beginning in 1948, a consistent reminder of the special parent and school relationship. This partnership is necessary to nurture our positive school environment. If for any reason, the administration determines the relationship is broken, the school administration reserves the right to require withdrawal of the student(s).

### **ACCREDITATION**

Mercymount Country Day School is a member of Mercy Education System of the Americas and accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

## **ACADEMICS**

Our curriculum provides a one-of-a-kind learning experience for students in preschool through 8th grade, surpassing national standards while being guided by the Sisters of Mercy and their values. We're shaped by our Catholic heritage as we look to prepare students for the future through STEAM learning and a project-based approach to education.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty (i.e. plagiarism, cheating, AI, etc.) is against Mercymount's values and the Mercymount Mission. This behavior will not be tolerated and appropriate action (detentions) will be taken in the unlikely event that it occurs. Students will also receive a zero (0) on said assignment.

### **ACADEMIC PROBATION**

Students will be placed on academic probation after a grading period if they are failing any of their core subjects due to lack of effort. The student will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities including all sports, field trips, and social events until grades improve during the next trimester. This is at the discretion of the principal.

## **ADMISSIONS**

A student entering Pre-Kindergarten must be potty trained and 3 years of age before September 1 of that year. A student entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age on or before September 1 of that year. In-house screening is required for students entering Kindergarten. Students registering for grades 1 – 8 will spend a shadow day at Mercymount and will be screened prior to acceptance.

Proof of academic ability and promotion is required for students entering grades 1-8. Certificates of Birth, Sacraments and a non-refundable fee are requested at the time of registration.

Mercymount admits students of any race, creed, gender, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

After school hours, students are not allowed to stay in the school building unless engaged in a pre-arranged activity. Adults, such as coaches and club moderators, are responsible for student supervision during the time designated after school. Students may not be in or on school property without adult supervision. If parents do not pick up a student at the appointed time, the child must go to the After-Care Program. The parent is responsible for the fee of the After-Care service.

## **ALLERGIES**

One or more individuals in school have an allergy to peanuts/tree nuts. The sale of peanut and/or tree nut products is prohibited in the cafeteria. Lactose-free milk and gluten-free pizza (on Friday only) are available in the cafeteria to those students with food allergies. All foods eaten in the classroom are to be peanut/tree nut free.

## **ARRIVAL**

Upon arrival (between 8:15 and 8:30), children in grades 4-8 report to the Gym and K-3 report to the Cafeteria. All doors are closed when the bell rings at 8:30 a.m. Students arriving after 8:30 are to report to the Office to be checked in.

## **ASBESTOS**

Mercymount Country Day School has removed all exposed and friable asbestos in accordance with Diocesan and State recommendations. A management plan is on file in the school Office. Documentation of inspections is available for review.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Many families underestimate the importance of regular school attendance for young children but even missing just 5% of Kindergarten (that's just 9 days) can be an indicator that a child will fall behind by the fifth grade. Missing school for any reason removes the student from the primary learning environment and thus has a negative effect on student achievement. Therefore, students should be present and on time whenever school is in session. Parents of students with high unexcused absences will be contacted by the administration regarding the impact of the attendance record upon academic standing.

Students who are absent, dismissed or tardy from school must present a note with a parent signature by the next school day. This note must state the date of the absence, dismissal or tardy; and an explanation of why it occurred. After 10 unexcused absences, dismissals and/or tardies, a letter will be sent and/or a conference will be scheduled with parents, the student and administration.

Excused absences include a student's participation in an approved school-sponsored activity, suspension days, religious holidays, family emergencies (to be approved by an administrator), doctor or medical professional appointments, excused illness or injury, or funerals. A note from a doctor or medical professional must be submitted for 3 days of absence for illness or injury. For chronic illnesses, a note from a doctor or medical professional must be given to the school. Once documented in this way, subsequent absences due to the nature of the care for the chronic illness will be considered excused.

Students absent due to illness or suspension on the day of a school-related activity (e.g., athletic event, drama, dances, etc.) may not attend that activity. Extenuating circumstances may be presented to an administrator for consideration.

Every absence is considered “unexcused” unless a phone call by the parent/guardian has been received stating the specific reason for the absence. Student absence from class for purposes of family travel or vacation is a loss of valuable class time and is strongly discouraged. The number of days missed will be counted as unexcused absences. Please note: Parental/guardian permission in and of itself is not recognized as legitimate reason for absence.

## **BOOKS**

**All hardcover textbooks**, borrowed or owned, **must be cared for at all times**. Contact paper is not acceptable for this purpose. Students who return a borrowed textbook that is marked or torn will be charged a percentage of the full value of the book. If a textbook or library book is marked, torn, ruined or lost, the student will be charged for the damage or loss.

For textbooks not being provided by Mercymount, Massachusetts residents are required to purchase textbooks and Rhode Island residents must acquire textbooks from their town’s school department. Questions about textbooks may be directed to the assistant principal.

## **BULLYING/CYBER-BULLYING**

Mercymount does not tolerate bullying of any kind (i.e. repeated acts of intimidation, harassment, destruction of property, etc.) A link to the *Rhode Island Statewide Bullying Policy* and a report form for parents is available on the homepage of the Mercymount website. Appropriate disciplinary action will occur in the event of bullying.

The administration reserves the right to hold students accountable for any material posted on their devices, equipment or sites that is contrary to the Mission of Mercymount. The administration may review social networking sites and other internet activity at any time.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Any difficulties that may arise regarding bus transportation for the Cumberland residents should be directed to Durham Bus Company at (401) 334-3745, and North Smithfield and Woonsocket residents to RI Department of Education Statewide Busing at (401) 222-5024. In the interest of safety, Mercymount requires all who ride the bus to behave properly. Anyone who jeopardizes the safety of another due to misconduct will be asked to find other means of transportation. A student who receives more than three discipline reports during the year will be suspended from riding the bus at the discretion of the principal.

## **CAFETERIA**

Following rules of appropriate behavior in the cafeteria is expected. Students may not leave the cafeteria without the permission of the teacher on duty. Payment for lunch is cashless; each person is responsible to keep payments current via the Finance Office. All

students with documented food allergies will sit at allergy-designated table unless a note is received by a physician stating otherwise. Only students with food allergies may sit at the allergy-designated tables, for the safety of all.

## **COMMUNICATION**

It is important in relating well to all parties at Mercymount that a good communication system be available and its use encouraged. PIE Memo, newsletters, teacher notices, phone calls, parent notes, *FACTS*, e-mails, conferences and the website are essential means of keeping open the channels of communication. Teachers are not required to respond to school emails after 5:00 p.m., during weekends, vacation weeks and over the summer; parents should contact the Office instead. Please note, it is the school's policy to not provide contact information other than what is provided by parents for the parent directory, which typically is sent out in the fall.

## **COMPUTERS**

Upon entrance to Mercymount, students and their parents/guardians are required to sign the "Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement and Policy." (See Addendum I). Students whose home computers or printers are not functioning, or who do not have access, must have a note from parent/guardian stating such. Students are to arrange with the computer teacher in a timely manner for the use of the school's equipment to complete assignments.

For the 2023-2024 school year, students may be permitted, and encouraged, to bring their own laptop or tablet device from home in order to engage in Google Classroom assignments in and out of school, as well as Computer class. Students are responsible for following teacher guidelines for acceptable times and locations for use of a device, and non-adherence to those classroom guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

## **CONDUCT**

Order and discipline must be maintained within the school so that effective learning in a safe environment can take place. This handbook contains the general rules and regulations which exist for all student behavior and their code of conduct. When infractions occur, the penalties may range from a reprimand to expulsion.

For safety purposes and in the interest of the health of our whole MCDS community, any actions that put community members at risk are regarded as major infractions.

## **CRISIS**

In the event of an emergency or crisis, standard procedures are in place for lockdowns or evacuations. Plans are on file in the Office and with the Cumberland Police Department. Students are evacuated off site and transported by bus to a central location for parent pick up.

## **CUSTODY**

Divorced or separated parents are required to file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the principal's office. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known.

## **DETENTION**

Detentions are made out in triplicate by the teacher and are signed by the teacher, administrator and parent. Detention is conducted after school until 4:00 p.m. Students not picked up by 4:00 are sent to After Care. Offenses for which detention is given are those failures to adhere to the discipline and academic code of the school. More than three detentions per trimester will result in an out of school suspension. A detention takes precedence over all other non-academic activities, except for medical appointments.

## **DISMISSAL**

No student may leave school early without permission. When an early dismissal is necessary, a note of request is given to the homeroom teacher by the parent/guardian with the reason stated and approved by the principal. A sign-out book in the Office is filled in by the adult picking up the child. For the safety of all, children may not use the playground at dismissal time. Students who are dismissed during the school day due to illness or injury, are not allowed to attend after- school activities (i.e. sports, dances, concerts, etc.), unless a waiver is granted by the administration.

## **DRESS CODE**

The regulation uniform must be worn at all times unless a written explanation by the parent is given to the homeroom teacher. Uniforms are purchased through the Donnelly School Apparel Company of Cranston. A listing from Donnelly's is available through the Mercymount website.

Blue or white headbands, earrings, rings, etc., that are simple and complement the school uniform may be worn. Body piercing, distracting hairstyles or unnatural coloring, jewelry or wrist bands (other than a watch), buttons, scarves, dangle/hoop earrings etc. are not allowed under the school dress code. Caps or hats are not to be worn in the school building at any time, except on designated "spirit days." Uniform shorts may be worn prior to November 1 or after April 1.

All shirts are to be tucked in and belts required with pants or dress shorts. Girls' jumpers, skirts and shorts may be no shorter than 3" above the knee. Designated Mercymount "spirit wear" sweatshirts and Mercymount championship sweatshirts are allowed to be worn with the gym uniform except during Mercy Ministries. Middle School students are required to wear the gym pants/shorts and jacket on their assigned Mercy Ministry day.

For more detailed information regarding Mercymount’s dress code please see below:

- All clothing that is part of our uniform must be purchased through Donnelly’s Apparel Company in Cranston. All approved Spirit Wear must be purchased from the link occasionally provided by our front office or from our MercyMart.
- All clothing should be marked with the student or family name.
- Properly sized and approved Mercymount SpiritWear may be worn over the gym uniform.
- SpiritWear may be worn ONLY on PE Days when a formal uniform is not required.
  - Approved SpiritWear includes:
    - Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies
    - Mercymount Championship Sweatshirts (Middle School)
    - Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt

Please note that all other Mercymount sweatshirts may be worn to and from school only and not during school hours.

Grade	Uniforms	Footwear
PS/PK Boys	*Navy Mercymount t-shirt or fleece crewneck sweatshirt *Navy micromesh shorts or fleece sweatpants (Size XXXS is not available through Donnelly’s. Therefore, any brand will be allowed for that size)  *Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	*Ankle or crew socks in blue, black or white *All black sneakers
PS/PK Girls	*Navy Mercymount t-shirt or crewneck fleece sweatshirt *Navy micromesh shorts or fleece sweatpants (Size XXXS is not available through Donnelly’s. Therefore, any brand will be allowed for that size) *Mercymount knit jumper -optional  *Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	*Ankle or crew socks in blue, black or white *All white sneakers
Grades K-5 Boys	<u>Formal uniform</u> *White Mercymount polo shirt *Navy Mercymount fleece crewneck sweatshirt *Navy slacks or dress shorts with a belt (black or brown) <u>PE uniform</u> *Navy Mercymount t-shirt *Navy sweatpants hem bottom or micromesh shorts * Navy Mercymount fleece crewneck sweatshirt (optional)  *Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	<u>Formal uniform:</u> *Ankle or crew socks in blue, black or white *All black dress shoes *Sperry Topsiders – tan or brown <u>PE uniform</u> * Black ankle or crew socks *All black sneakers

<p>Grades K-5 Girls</p>	<p><u>Formal Uniform</u>          *Mercymount jumper with white Peter Pan blouse          *White Mercymount polo shirt          *Navy slacks or shorts – belt is optional          *Navy Mercymount cardigan sweater</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          *Navy Mercymount t-shirt          *Navy sweatpants hem bottom or micromesh shorts          * Navy Mercymount fleece crewneck sweatshirt (optional)</p> <p>*Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	<p><u>Formal uniform:</u>          *Ankle socks, knee socks or tights in blue or white          *Black or blue dress shoes          *Sperry Topsiders in tan or brown</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          * White crew socks          *All white sneakers</p>
<p>Grades 6-8 Boys</p>	<p><u>Formal Uniform</u>          * White Mercymount polo          *Khaki Mercymount dress slacks or dress shorts with belt (brown or black)          *Navy Mercymount V-neck sweater          *Navy Blue Heathered Fleece - ¼ Zip</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          *Navy Mercymount t-shirt          *Navy Mercymount warm up pants or micromesh shorts          *Navy Mercymount warm up zip jacket (optional)</p> <p>*Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Mercymount Championship Sweatshirts</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	<p><u>Formal uniform:</u>          *Crew socks in Khaki, black or white          *Black or brown dress shoes          *Sperry Topsiders – tan or brown</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          * Black crew socks          *All black sneakers</p>
<p>Grades 6-8 Girls</p>	<p><u>Formal Uniform</u>          *White Mercymount polo          *Plaid Mercymount skirt          *Khaki Mercymount dress slacks or shorts with belt - brown or black          *Navy Mercymount V-neck sweater          *Navy Blue Heathered Fleece - ¼ Zip</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          *Navy Mercymount t-shirt          *Navy Mercymount warm up pants or micromesh shorts          *Navy Mercymount warm up zip jacket (optional)</p> <p>*Optional SpiritWear to be worn in place of gym uniform sweatshirt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gray or Blue Faceoff 2-lace Hoodies</li> <li>• Mercymount Championship Sweatshirts</li> <li>• Blue Full Zip Sweatshirt</li> </ul>	<p><u>Formal Uniform</u>          *Knee socks or tights in navy or white          *Black or blue dress shoes          *Sperry Topsiders – tan or brown</p> <p><u>PE uniform</u>          *White crew socks          *All white sneakers</p>

Please note that shorts can only be worn before November 1<sup>st</sup> and after March 31<sup>st</sup> (from April 1<sup>st</sup> on).

## *“SPIRIT”, “NO UNIFORM” & OTHER HOME-CLOTHES DAYS*

When home-clothes are allowed for “spirit days”, “no uniform days”, middle school dances or other school sponsored activities, students are expected to be dressed modestly, neatly and appropriately befitting a Catholic elementary school.

Some important guidelines for “appropriate” apparel are:

- Clothing must be modest and cover a student’s torso, hips, back and mid-thigh (no short shorts, spaghetti straps, or tank tops please).
- Form-fitting pants need to be covered with a tunic, long top, or dress that covers the student’s bottom.
- Jeans may be worn provided they are clean, hemmed, and free of holes and tears.
- No flip-flops, crocs, slides or slippers are to be worn.
- No violent, offensive or controversial sayings on apparel are allowed.

The interpretation of these rules is at the sole discretion of the school administration. Parents will be contacted to arrange for appropriate clothing if the administration determines a child is dressed inappropriately.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of any device which is capable of making connections using a cellular network is not allowed by students on the Mercymount campus or at any school-sponsored event. This would include all cell phones, Apple watches, as well as some electronic tablets, music/media devices, etc. Those unapproved devices need to be powered off and properly stored. They may only be used with the explicit permission of and under the direct supervision of a member of the Mercymount faculty or an authorized supervisor (for example, to make a phone call to a parent or guardian). Students are not allowed to access personal accounts not issued by Mercymount.

All other electronic devices (which are not capable of making those connections) must be approved by designated members of faculty during specific times in the school day. Students in grades 6-8 may have their devices authorized during non-academic times.

**No photos or videos** of any kind are allowed to be taken by students while on the Mercymount campus or at any school-sponsored events unless with the express permission and under the direct supervision of a member of the Mercymount faculty or an authorized supervisor.

***First Offense*** - Any student found using his/her approved device in any manner that is prohibited as stated in this policy will have that device confiscated by the administration and returned at their discretion. A detention will also be assigned.

***Second and subsequent Offense(s)*** - Any student found using his/her device in any manner that is prohibited as stated in this policy will have that device confiscated by the administration and returned at their discretion as well as the privilege of using this device at Mercymount immediately revoked. An in-house suspension will be assigned.

- Mercymount Country Day School is not responsible for any theft, damage or loss of any student-owned device.
- Users of these devices are bound to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) that was signed by the student at the beginning of the year.
- Students are not allowed to carry cell phones on their person. They must be turned off and kept in their lockers or book bags.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

In the event of a delayed opening or school closing, Mercymount communicates the change via FACTS, email and/or the local media including RI Broadcasters Association [www.ribroadcasters.com](http://www.ribroadcasters.com). All before or after school activities are cancelled when school is cancelled. While in school, students who need to contact parents will be allowed to do so to the best of the school's ability.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion from school is invoked for the most serious infraction of school policy and shall be within the jurisdiction of the principal, in consultation with the diocesan superintendent. A student leaving under the terms of expulsion will not have his/her tuition payment refunded.

## **EXTENDED CARE**

Mercymount will be offering before care for the coming school year for children in PS-8 starting at 7:15 a.m. There is no need to register ahead of time for before care. Drop off for before care is at the cafeteria door by the sidewalk. The pricing is as follows:

- Drop off between 7:15 and 7:30 - \$10
- Drop off between 7:30 and 7:45 - \$7.50
- Drop off between 7:45 and 8:15 - \$5

The fees are to be paid by either cash or check payable to Mercymount.

Mercymount's faculty and staff provide after care for children in grades Preschool through grade 8 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The pricing is as follows:

- \$12/hour per child
- \$10/hour per child for families with two or more children

The fees are to be paid through the ProCare app. Please contact the office about setting up an account. Once the account is set-up, no pre-registration is needed.

## **FACTS**

In accordance with our communication policy, parents of students in Grades 4 - 8 should monitor their child's academic performance on a regular basis via *FACTS*.

## **FAMILY VACATIONS**

The school calendar provides family vacation time at Christmas, February, and in April. Parents should consider this, as well as the disruption to instruction before taking extra time away from school. In cases of absolute necessity, parents should contact the principal at least one week in advance of the requested absence. Teachers are not required to prepare work for students or remain after school for extra help in cases of absence due to unscheduled vacation time. Class assignments, tests or quizzes are to be made up in a timely manner of a student's return at the convenience of the teacher.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are planned by the teacher for specific educational or cultural goals. The school requires the written consent of the parents or guardian before a child is permitted to go with his/her class on a trip. Permission by telephone is not acceptable. Students may be denied participation in field trips if they fail to meet educational or behavioral requirements.

Chaperones are not allowed to bring siblings or other children on class field trips, nor may non-chaperones shadow a field trip. The School Nurse does not attend field trips. Teachers do not dispense medication other than an Epi-pen as necessary in an emergency.

## **FINAL GRADES**

Academic failures in the core subjects will require that students attend an accredited summer school program or be tutored by a certified teacher for an agreed-upon number of hours.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Financial aid is available to families based on need after one full year enrollment at Mercymount. A financial aid application in FACTS along with a written request to the principal are required for consideration of financial aid. Local parishes may provide financial assistance; however, parents would need to personally request such from their pastor.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Mercymount provides various fundraising activities each year in order to meet the budgeted expenses. Each family is expected to participate in fundraising activities according to its financial ability. The major three are the Fall Fundraiser, the Auction (spring) and the Annual Fund drive. Others, such as a Book Fair for library books, Pot-of-Gold Tournament supporting the sports program, or the Golf Tournament for technology needs, are optional.

## **GENERAL CONDUCT**

Students of Mercymount School represent Mercymount at all times. A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, may be disciplined at the discretion of the principal.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

It is integral to the school's philosophy that union and charity exist among parents, teachers and students. Therefore, the following steps can serve as a useful tool in solving problems that may arise in the course of the year:

1. Student discusses the situation with the teacher involved or vice versa;
2. Student and parent meet with the teacher for clarification;
3. Student and parent meet with the principal or assistant principal and the teacher.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

### **1. General Student Health Guidelines**

- a) If a child is sick, he or she should be kept home from school to protect the health of other students and staff.
- b) If a child vomits at school or spikes a fever, he or she will be sent home from school.
- c) An ill child must remain home from school until he or she is fever free without fever reducers for 24 hours. If a child has been vomiting, he or she should be kept home for 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting.
- d) If a child has been diagnosed with strep throat or any other contagious illness requiring antibiotics, he or she should be kept home for at least 24 hours following the first dose of antibiotics. Please notify the nurse if your child has been diagnosed with any contagious illnesses including but not limited to influenza, strep throat, pink eye, etc. Students absent for 5 days or more due to illness or injury require a doctor's note to return to school.
- e) If a child has an injury that will keep them from PE and or recess for more than 1 class or day, a doctor's note is required either excluding them, or listing limitations during class or recess. A doctor's note must be received to clear them to return to PE or recess. The nurse creates and updates the gym list, and this is shared with the PE teacher so they are aware.
- f) Head lice can be a common problem among school age children. Please note that Mercymount Country Day School follows the Cumberland School Department policy (see Addendum II). Please note that if there is an outbreak, two or more cases, then the whole classroom will be notified with follow up instructions.

## **2. Physical Exam and Immunization Requirements**

All students entering Pre-School, Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 7 must have a valid physical examination form on file by the start of the school year. This physical must be dated within one year from the first day of school. Students who previously attended school out of state must have a new physical examination completed prior to entering Mercymount. Acceptable evidence of immunization is required for all students prior to school entry. As your child receives subsequent vaccinations throughout their childhood, updated immunization records should be provided to the school nurse. State immunization requirements can be found on the school website. Medical, temporary, or religious exemption forms are available from the nurse upon request.

## **3. Medication**

- a) All medication is administered by the school nurse and kept in a secured cabinet.
- b) Any medication being given at school must be in the original pharmacy packaging. This includes over the counter medication.
- c) Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school nurse of all medications that their child is taking in or out of school. This disclosure is for the safety of the student and will be kept confidential.
- d) Medications will not be administered if they are out of date or expired. Medications are not to be carried by students during the school day. This includes cough drops for all grade levels. Students in grades 1-8 may request a cough drop as needed. Cough drops from home may be stored with the nurse in a labeled bag.
- e) Standing physician orders are in place for commonly used over the counter medications stocked in the health office (Tylenol, Motrin, Benadryl and antacid tablets). A parent permission form must be completed for any of these medications to be given to a child. These medications cannot be administered without parental consent. Forms can be found on the school website and requested from the nurse.
- f) A long-term medication form must be filled out for any medication being given for longer than a two (2) week period. This includes both daily and as needed medications. All students who require inhalers must have this form completed. Medication cannot be administered without this form which includes both parental permission and a physician's order. A separate form should be completed for all medication. Forms can be found on the school website or requested from the nurse.

## **4. Inhaler Policy**

- a) Students may be prescribed a metered dose inhaler to be used on an as needed basis for the treatment of asthma, allergies or other respiratory issues. The following guidelines are in place to provide a consistent plan for assisting students who may require use of an inhaler while at school.

- b) It is preferred that prescription metered dose inhalers be kept in the health office and administered under the supervision of the school nurse.
- c) An “Asthma Action Plan” must be completed for all students requiring an inhaler at school which includes parental permission and a physician order. This form can be found on the school website.
- d) Inhalers may be carried by a student and self-administered with parental and physician permission. The student is still responsible to telling the nurse if they administered a dose during the school day so it can be documented.
- e) It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to replace any medication that expires during the school year. Parents will be notified when inhalers are low or due to expire. Inhalers kept in the health office should have the original prescription label affixed to the outside of inhaler or box.

## **5. Epi-Pen Policy**

- a) Certain students who have allergies or other health conditions may be prescribed an Epi-Pen to be administered in the case of a severe reaction. The following guidelines help create a consistent and school-wide health care plan for assisting students who may require the use of an Epi-Pen at school.
- b) Parents of students who have been prescribed an Epi-Pen must notify the school nurse and must return an “Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan”, and provide all necessary pens. It’s preferable to have two, unexpired pens per student.
- c) All staff are trained at orientation to identify anyone with signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis, and how to correctly administer a pen. Extra Epi-Pens are located in the lunchroom and nurse’s emergency bag.
- d) Storage of Epi-Pens in the school Health Office- Epi-Pens will be stored individually in student specific bins that clearly identify the intended user. The bins will be kept in a visible location where access can be granted in a timely manner.
- e) An Epi-Pen may be self-carried by students in grades 6-8 with written permission from both the MD and parent. An Epi-Pen must also be stored in the nurse’s office for this student, too.
- f) Preschool Epi-Pen Storage- due to these students eating lunch in their classrooms, a teacher will keep any students with allergies Epi-Pen in their desk to have easy access. One pen will also be kept in the nurse’s office.

## **6. Food Allergy Policy**

The following are policies to help protect the safety and health of our students who have food allergies.

### *a) Peanuts/Tree Nuts*

- i. Peanuts, tree nuts or any products containing peanuts or tree nuts may not be consumed in any area of the school other than the lunch room. Tables are wiped down between lunches. Peanut/tree nut snacks may not be consumed in the classroom during snack time.
- ii. There are peanut/tree nut free tables in the lunchroom where students can appropriately and safely eat food. Parents/guardians must notify the teacher and nurse if they would like their child to eat at this table.
- iii. No products sold in the cafeteria contain peanuts and or tree nuts.

### *b) Other Food Allergies*

- i. If a class/homeroom has a student with a different severe food allergy which produces an anaphylactic reaction, the other students in the homeroom may be asked to refrain from eating products containing this food in the classroom. This will be determined on a case by case basis by the school administration and nurse.
  - ii. Gluten Free options are available most lunch days and will be listed on the monthly menu.
- c) Parties and Celebrations: On occasion classrooms may have food as part of a lesson or holiday event. The teacher is responsible for notifying the principal, nurse and families of what will be served. These foods are checked for any allergens.
- d) Outside food for birthdays is not allowed. Exceptions are very rare, and must be approved by the principal.
- e) A spreadsheet is maintained and updated yearly and as needed with any student who has food allergies. This is shared with the lunchroom staff and teachers.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a necessary extension of the school day and is given for reinforcement of a concept, for drill, for enrichment, but never for punishment. Additionally, all students should read or be read to for at least twenty minutes per night.

## **HONOR ROLL**

Each trimester the Honor Roll recognizes students' academic successes. Students in grades 6-8 may obtain High Honors or Honors based upon the average of their core subjects.

High Honors	93 – 100
Honors	85 – 92

## **HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) recognizes outstanding students in grades 7 and 8. The Mercymount Chapter of the NJHS identifies students who have excelled in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Character and Citizenship. Students must meet scholastic requirements to be considered further. The requirement is a ninety-two percent (92%) or better cumulative average in the six major subject areas: religion, science, math, social studies, and ELA. A student must also receive a passing grade in all subject areas including Spanish, computer, music, art, and physical education. Members must maintain a cumulative average of 92%, adhere to all the policies in the school handbooks, be courteous, to lead by example, and be good citizens by participating in out-of-school service projects. New members are considered at the end of the first trimester of seventh grade.

## **HUMAN SEXUALITY/ FAMILY LIFE/CIRCLE OF GRACE**

The Diocese of Providence requires that a course in Human Sexuality or Family Life be implemented throughout all grades as part of the religion curriculum. In addition, the administration requests that students receive educational content and skill development regarding safety and boundaries through a diocesan curriculum known as "Circle of Grace." Mercymount teaches human sexuality via approved age appropriate texts and audio-visual aids. Communicable diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are also taught within this curriculum.

## **LOCKER**

Lockers are provided as a convenience to students in the Middle School. Students may go to their lockers between classes, but they may not be late for class. Students who are frequently late to class will receive detention. Locker cleanliness is the student's responsibility. It should be kept neat and orderly. While students are permitted to decorate the inside of their lockers, nothing permanent (e.g. stickers, decals, etc.) should be used. Items may be attached using magnets or painters' tape.

Lockers are to be used to store school supplies and personal items necessary for use at school. They are not to be considered secure areas; therefore, students should not bring valuable items to school to store in their lockers. Locks may not be attached to school lockers.

Lockers are the property of the school. The school retains the right to inspect lockers at any time to ensure they are being properly maintained and that they do not contain items that may be unsafe and illegal.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

The best assurance against loss of personal belongings is to mark clothing and books with the student's name, especially younger students. Found clothing and articles are kept in our lost and found area; they are periodically given away if not claimed.

## **MERCY MINISTRIES**

All seventh and eighth graders participate in Mercy Ministries. Every Tuesday each month, students leave Mercymount to help those in the larger community where the Sisters of Mercy serve the poor, sick and uneducated. Mercymount feels that the student's experience is invaluable to the nurturing of the values that we espouse.

## **MID-YEAR AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

It is an important part of the Middle School experience to prepare students for success at the various high schools they will be attending after Mercymount. Accordingly, students in grades 7 and 8 are required to take mid-year and final exams in all academic subjects. Grade 6 students will take unit exams during this time.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent Conferences are scheduled in late fall and are arranged at other times when necessary. Teachers are available by appointment only before or after school hours. Parents may not use school time for parent conferences unless arranged by the teacher.

## **PARKING**

Please observe the Handicapped parking areas at all times and any other restricted parking area at Mercymount Country Day School. For the safety of our students, drivers are asked to back into parking spaces in the lot. In addition, drivers are asked to adhere to our one-way signs and drive at low speeds. Due to the limited amount of parking spaces, we ask that you refrain from socializing in the parking lot after dismissal.

## **PARTIES**

Classroom teachers may plan parties for special occasions during the school year. Children's birthday parties, however, are not allowed during school hours. Food treats of any kind, flowers, balloon-grams, etc. are not allowed. Birthday parties given by the children for teachers are inappropriate and are also not allowed. To avoid excluding or embarrassing certain children in a class, invitations to parties may not be distributed in or on school property unless the entire class is invited. Any exceptions to the above must be obtained from the principal.

## **PETS**

Personal or family pets, especially dogs, are not allowed on school property except in a vehicle. Service dogs are welcome.

## **PHOTOS/VIDEOS**

Mercymount reserves the right to use pictures or videos of students in school publications, curriculum projects, news releases, promotional materials, on the school website and school-run social media. Any parent/guardian who does **not** wish his or her child's picture or video or name posted will indicate so on the online form prior to the start of school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Students are not excused from gym class without a written note from a physician. The school gym uniform and sneakers are required for PE class.

## **PRIVACY RIGHT**

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Section 99.4) states that both parents, whether custodial or non-custodial, or an eligible student have the right to inspect and review the student's education records. The following procedure applies:

- Call Mercymount Country Day School to request an appointment with the principal;
- State the purpose of the meeting (i.e. to review educational records);
- A response to the request will be made within twenty-four (24) hours.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS (Gr. 1-8)**

Progress Reports are sent home to indicate students' current academic status. Although the distribution of these reports varies from grade to grade, students will receive a progress report in the event of poor performance, a sudden change in effort and/or academic progression.

## **REGISTRATION**

Families attending Mercymount Country Day School must re-register before January 31<sup>st</sup>. The registration fee guarantees a place, provides the Parent Association with monies for its treasury and is used for enrichment purposes. This fee is non-refundable.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

All students take part in Catholic religious education at Mercymount and attend Mass or any para-liturgical services when they occur during the school day. No teacher will seek to influence the religious beliefs of children of other faith traditions.

## **RESPECT FOR MEMBERS OF THE MERCYMOUNT COMMUNITY**

All members of the Mercymount community are expected to demonstrate respect for themselves and for all others including faculty, staff, fellow students, fellow families, visitors (including visiting teams, fans, prospective students and groups) and members of the greater community. Parents/guardians, as essential partners in the education of their children, are expected to be respectful to faculty, staff, students, visitors, and members of the greater Mercymount community. The implied partnership between teachers and parents/guardians is important for the development of all students. If the partnership breaks down, parents/guardians may be required to withdraw the child from school.

## **REPUTATION OF THE SCHOOL/UNAUTHORIZED USE OF SCHOOL NAME/EMPLOYEES**

Mercymount does not sanction the use of its name or the name of any group associated with Mercymount on any website without the expressed written consent of the Principal. Any student or parent inappropriately using or referring to the name of Mercymount or names of its employees on any website including any social networking sites may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

According to State and Diocesan regulations, anyone interacting with students is required to have a complete background check and participate in Safe Environment Training with the Assistant Principal. All faculty members and volunteers must participate every 3 years in a seminar on child abuse, neglect and their duty to report such behavior. Rhode Island State law states “any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been neglected or abused shall, within 24 hours, transfer information to DCYF (1-800-RI-CHILD) who shall cause the report to be investigated immediately.”

## **SEARCH**

It is the right of the administration at any time to conduct a search of a student’s desk, locker, or personal belongings.

## **SOLICITATIONS**

Solicitations of any kind are not allowed without the express permission or approval of the principal including requests for donations to a cause or for classroom or faculty gifts.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Drugs consist of anything considered illegal by the State of Rhode Island (alcohol and tobacco are included) and therefore are not permitted at Mercymount. Any student in possession of or under the influence of any drug will have the drug confiscated and his/her parents and the proper authorities will be notified immediately. Suspension from school will occur followed by counseling and/or possible expulsion.

## **SUSPENSION**

Suspension is invoked for serious infractions of school policy and shall be within the jurisdiction of the principal. Parents are notified and must sign a suspension form. Students serving an at-home suspension must make up missed school work within a day of their return. Four or more detentions within a trimester warrant an at-home suspension.

## **TARDINESS**

Students are to be in school by 8:30 a.m. We strongly recommend that students arrive between 8:15 a.m. and 8:25 a.m. Tardy students disrupt the classroom flow and require teachers to repeat instructions already given. All arrival doors close at 8:30 a.m. Children who arrive later than 8:30 a.m. must report directly to the Office. An excessive number of tardies (more than 7 per trimester) will require a meeting with the student, parent and principal.

## **TELEPHONE USE**

Students may not use the business phones in school without permission of a teacher. In the event of an emergency, the secretary will notify the parent/guardian or those listed on the emergency form. If a school event is cancelled within the same day, students will be allowed to use the school phones to secure transportation. If no one is available to transport the student, they will be allowed to go to after-care at no charge.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

According to the Privacy Rights Act of 1976, parents have the right of access to their child's records (see PRIVACY). In the event that a student's transcripts are not released to a new school, Mercymount will forward them to the public-school district in which the child resides.

## **TUTORING**

Extra help is always available for students from their current teachers. For a fee, teachers may tutor those students whom they do not teach on a daily basis.

## **TUITION**

As a private school, Mercymount Country Day School's operating budget depends solely upon tuition and fundraising. It is imperative that parents/guardians take this responsibility seriously. Tuition payments are completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>. Payments may be made in full by July 1<sup>st</sup> or in 10 or 12 monthly installments through the FACTS Tuition Management Program. Full payment before the start of school (by July 1<sup>st</sup>) may reduce the tuition.

Tuition and any other outstanding accounts which are delinquent after June 1<sup>st</sup> will result in students not taking final exams, graduating or receiving final grades.

Students who are withdrawn or dismissed from Mercymount Country Day School for any reason will be responsible for the tuition per the following schedule:

July 1 through August 31	10% of Tuition
September 1 through September 30	30% of Tuition
October 1 through October 31	40% of Tuition
November 1 through November 30	50% of Tuition
December 1 through December 31	60% of Tuition
January 1 through January 31	70% of Tuition
February 1 through February 28	80% of Tuition
March 1 through March 31	90% of Tuition
April 1 and After	100% of Tuition

## **VIOLENCE**

Any action that disrupts the peace of the school is unacceptable. Harassment, threats of violence, and actual violence of any kind including use of electronic media, subject an individual to sanctions by the school including but not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any and all regulations for just cause.

## **VISITORS**

All visitors (including volunteers) entering the building must report directly to the Office, and wear Mercymount identification. In order to provide maximum uninterrupted learning time, classrooms may not be visited without prior permission from the principal and/or teacher.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The Parent Association secures volunteers for all school-related activities. Each family is asked to complete the volunteer form that goes home with the PIE Memo and to volunteer as often during the year as time and circumstances allow. Parents/guardians of students in Gr. 4 – 8 who play basketball are required to assist with the weekend games at Mercymount Country Day School. (See SAFE ENVIRONMENT). Volunteers are asked to refrain from cell phone use while supervising students.

## **WEAPONS**

Any student found in possession of any weapon will have the weapon confiscated and the parent and the proper authorities will be notified immediately.

## **WEATHER ALERT**

Children will go outside for recess and After Care if the temperature is above 20° and below 90°. This includes the “feel like”, incorporating wind chill/heat index variations. We count on parent cooperation to dress students appropriately for being outdoors.

## **ADDENDUM I**

### **COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT and POLICY**

Mercymount issues Google Education accounts to students. The programs available through these accounts must be used for educational purposes only, both in and out of school. Rules and policies of Mercymount's COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT and POLICY and Student Handbook apply to the use of Google Apps as well. The violation of these rules may result in the Google account privileges being terminated as well as other disciplinary measures. Students may not share their passwords and all accounts will be disabled and terminated when the student is no longer enrolled.

Mercymount and/or its employees do not guarantee the security or privacy of electronic files located on Google system and are not responsible for materials acquired through the Google account or for damages incurred through the use of its services. The accounts are the property of Mercymount. Mercymount administration and faculty have the right to access these accounts at any time at their discretion.

Any storage device used on the computers at Mercymount Country Day could be infected with a virus that could infect and potentially damage or destroy any computer system on which it is used. Mercymount assumes no responsibility or liability for any damages a user may suffer as a result of using the storage device.

Internet access is available to students, faculty and staff at Mercymount Country Day School. The Internet connects millions of computers all over the world and millions of individual users. On a global network a user may discover controversial information, either by accident or deliberately. Families should be warned that some material obtained via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. We have provided for some Internet content filtering to limit access to inappropriate material. It is important to note that no filtering solution is perfect and students are expected to follow established rules for computer and Internet use. We firmly believe, however, that the benefits to students from online access far outweigh the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with our educational goals.

The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that the use of Internet resources and the school's computers and network is consistent with our mission, goals, and objectives. The smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the students who must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided here so that users are aware of the responsibilities they are about to assume. If a user violates any of these provisions, his or her access and privileges may be terminated and future access and privileges could be denied. The Mercymount handbook signature(s) is (are) legally binding and indicate(s) the party (parties) who signed has (have) read the terms and conditions carefully and understand(s) their significance including without limitations the disclaimer of liability by Mercymount Country Day School.

## **Computer and Internet - Terms and Conditions**

- 1) Students are responsible for good behavior on the school computer networks, just as they are in a classroom and school hallway. All school rules for behavior and communication apply.
- 2) The network is provided for students to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege - not a right. That access entails responsibility. Inappropriate use will result in a suspension or cancellation of Internet and/or computer privileges. The administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. The administration, faculty, and staff may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific users. At no time can a cell phone be used to establish a "hot spot" to connect to the network.
- 3) Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette and conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner while online.
- 4) Users are not permitted to use the computing resources for commercial purposes, product advertising, political lobbying, or political campaigning unless given written permission by the principal.
- 5) Users are not permitted to transmit, receive, submit, or publish any material that is libelous, defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, offensive, illegal or contrary to the mission of Mercymount Country Day School.
- 6) Physical or electronic tampering with computer resources is not permitted. Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks intentionally will result in cancellation of privileges and the costs incurred for repair.
- 7) Users must respect all copyright and other laws that protect software owners, artists and writers. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken. Further, use of AI platforms such as ChatGPT to complete assignments is considered plagiarism and, as such, is prohibited.
- 8) Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If the user feels he/she can identify a security problem in the school's computers, network, or Internet connection, they must notify a system administrator. Do not demonstrate the problem to others. Using someone else's password or trespassing in another's folders, work, or files without written permission is prohibited. Attempts to gain unauthorized access, including so called "hacking" and other unlawful activities, may result in cancellation of user privileges.
- 9) Mercymount Country Day School makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. We assume no responsibility or liability for any damages a user may suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own

negligence or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. **WE SPECIFICALLY DENY ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY OR QUALITY OF INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH ITS SERVICES.**

10) Use of Mercymount Country Day School computers, systems, and networks is subject to monitoring by administrators, staff, and technology service providers. Users should have no expectation of privacy while using school computers or networks. Those who operate the system may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be referred to the appropriate authorities. Administration and faculty may review and share student files, identification information, and messages as they deem appropriate.

11) Students are not allowed to go on social media, watch movies, game apps, go to chat rooms, blogs, bulletin boards or newsgroups; students are not allowed to access any personal online accounts not issued by Mercymount; to engage in instant messaging; to communicate with anything but their first name; or download files from the Internet without specific instructions from the teacher to do so for educational purposes.

12) Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of anyone's personal identification information is prohibited. Authorization must be written.

13) In the event that students inadvertently access a questionable site, they are required to immediately report to the supervising teacher and not demonstrate to others any site that is in anyway offensive or disturbing by Mercymount standards or that contains inappropriate material for minors.

14) Students are not allowed to set up or go to a meeting with someone they have met on the Internet and must report any attempt to set-up a meeting to the supervising teacher.

15) Any violations may result in a loss of computer access, as well as other disciplinary or legal action. Users are subject to all local, state, and federal laws.

#### **STUDENT SECTION (grades 4-8)**

In signing the school handbook (via online form), I agree that I have read and I understand Mercymount's Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement and Policy. I agree to follow the rules contained in this Agreement/Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules, my computer privileges can be terminated and I may face other disciplinary measures.

#### **PARENT OR GUARDIAN SECTION**

In signing the school handbook (via online form), as the parent or legal guardian of Mercymount student/s, I have read and I understand the Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement and Policy. I understand that if my child(ren) or ward(s) violate the rules, their privileges can be terminated and they may face other disciplinary measures. I consent and authorize my son(s), daughter(s) and ward(s) access to the

Internet. I understand that the school's computing resources are to be used for educational purposes. I will not hold Mercymount Country Day School or its employees responsible for materials acquired on the Internet or network or for damages incurred through the use of its computers or services.

## ADDENDUM II



### Cumberland School Department Policy Manual

STUDENTS

J

Head Lice

J-9

#### Head Lice

Head lice are a common problem among school age children. Head lice are not a medical or public health hazard as they are not known to spread disease. The greatest concerns relative to head lice are social stigma, loss of school time and toxicity due to over-treatment with pediculicide shampoos.

Head Lice do not jump, fly or swim and can only crawl short distances. The usual mode of transmission is through direct head to head contact. Transmission via clothing, hats, furniture and other objects can occur but the likelihood is low because head lice can only live off the host for 1 to 2 days.

The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages head lice screenings, which have not been proven to have a significant effect over time on the incidence of head lice in the school setting. Children should be checked only when demonstrating symptoms of head lice or as determined by the School Nurse Teacher.

1. Egg cases farther from the scalp are easier to discover, but these tend to be empty (hatched) or nonviable and, thus, are of no consequence.
2. Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
3. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
4. Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by non-medical personnel.

#### General case management of head lice:

A child with an active head lice infestation should remain in class but be discouraged from close direct head contact with others. As a child with an active head lice infestation has likely had the infestation for 1 month or more by the time it is discovered and poses little risk to others from the infestation.

The School Nurse Teacher will notify the parent/guardian by telephone or by having a note sent home with the child at the end of the school day stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and his or her classmates.

#### Criteria for return to school:

Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice.

When repeated infestations occur for a child, at the discretion of the School Nurse Teacher a note from the child's physician may be required to assure the child's safety.

Upon return to school the School Nurse Teacher will recheck a child's head and communicate with parent/guardian if needed.

Supporting documents:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/protocols/HeadLice.pdf>

<http://www.health.ri.gov/for/schools/#lice>

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS  
CLINICAL REPORT: Guidance for the Clinician in Rendering Pediatric Care

*Adopted by Cumberland School Committee: 5/14/1998*

*Revised by Cumberland School Committee: 1/10/2008*

*Amendments Reviewed and Approved by Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee: 8/11/2015*

*Amendments Approved by Cumberland School Committee: 8/13/2015*