



MERCYMOUNT COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
HANDBOOK

Revised September, 2020

POLICY

Please sign the parental agreement indicating 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.)

Extended Care: 401-333-5919 ext. 17 (3:00 – 6:00 p.m.)

Fax: 401-333-5150

Web Site: 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.

"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) through 2020.

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, 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 any 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, field trips, and social events until grades improve during the next trimester.

ADMISSIONS

A student entering Pre-Kindergarten must be 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 may be screened for entrance in other grades as needed. Students entering Pre-K and Kindergarten are required to have an Early Elementary Screening (Child Outreach) through Cumberland School Department. Students registering for grades 1 - 8 will spend a shadow day at Mercymount 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. Several Open House and Registration times are held each year for prospective students and their families.

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 on the day 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. Due to Covid-19 protocols, all students will be eating in the classroom until further notice. All food eaten in the classroom are to be peanut/tree nut free.

ARRIVAL

Prior to arrival, students and families must do a symptom check for any and all Covid-19 symptoms. Parents must daily attest that their child(ren) is/are symptom free using the attestation tool provided. Normally, 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. Currently, due to Covid-19 protocols, all students will go directly to their classrooms (beginning at 8:15 a.m.). Doors will be closed at 8:35 a.m. and students arriving after 8:35 a.m. 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. Remote students will receive specific instructions and on-line session times from their teacher(s), and are expected to work on assigned classwork during regular school hours. Parents of students with high unexcused absences will be contacted by the administration regarding the impact of the attendance record upon academic standing. Excused absences include doctor appointment, dentist appointment and death in family.

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 as needed.

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 excused illness or injury (a note from a doctor or medical professional must be submitted within 3 days of the absence) or funerals, and acute or chronic illness. Acute Illness: When a student has a medical need that does not require on-going/long term care, (i.e.: knee surgery, etc.). A note from a doctor or medical professional must be given to the school. Subsequent absences due to the nature of the care will be considered excused. Families must give the reason for absence(s) due to the nature of the illness or follow-up care. Chronic Illness: A student that requires continued medical care with a doctor or medical professional, (i.e.: type II diabetes), must provide documentation at the onset of treatment. Subsequent absence(s) due to the nature of the illness or follow-up care will be considered excused. Families must give the reason for the absence(s) due to the nature of the illness or follow-up care. All students are expected to attend school. Appointments with doctors, dentists, etc. should be made at times other than during school hours. 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 by the attendance office. For an absence that is one or more days in length to be considered excused, a note from a doctor or medical professional must be received within 3 days of 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.

In adherence to state and local guidelines for Covid 19, students and families must monitor symptoms and report any travel to restricted areas for the 2020-2021 school year. Students who are at home in quarantine should still attend school virtually if they are not sick. Full access to curriculum and class activities is offered through the remote learning portal for all students, so no instructional time need be lost to Covid 19 precautions.

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.

Although the cafeteria is not currently in use due to pandemic precautions, all behavioral expectations for lunch remain the same. Once again, no nut products are acceptable in the classroom setting.

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, *plusportals.com*, 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. Parents who wish or need to send a general message or solicit other parents through school must first seek approval from the principal.

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 2020-2021 school year, students are 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, conduct such as purposeful disregard of pandemic precautions, or 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 available through the Office.

Blue or white headbands, earrings, rings, etc., that are simple and compliment the girls' school uniform may be worn. Make-up, body piercing, faddish hairstyles or 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. Middle School sweaters are to be worn during winter months. Middle School students are also required to wear the gym pants and jacket on their assigned Mercy Ministry day. 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 2" above the knee. A general rule of thumb is when students place their arms at their side with their shoulders relaxed shorts should extend past their fingertips by 2" or more.

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

<https://resources.finalseite.net/images/v1592939614/mercymountorg/pzpqwjc8y5bqcdzy0ggg/MercymountUniforms2020-2021.pdf>.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of any device which is capable of making connections using a cellular network (including 3G and higher) 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 should not be on their person and 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.

Due to Covid-19, use of devices in the academic setting has been changed to meet the needs of our students and teachers. Please see the “computers” section of this handbook.

All other electronics 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 will have their devices authorized during non-academic times. Once authorized, students will be given a certification card which should be attached to and visible on the device at all 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 its 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 its 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 Plan (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 the school’s plusportals.com, email and/or the local media including RI Broadcasters Association 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

AlphaBEST provides extended day care before school from 7:00 to 8:15 a.m. for children in grades K-8 and from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. For additional details and pricing see: www.alphabest.org/mercymountri. For information regarding Pre-K students, please contact the school office. There is no extended day care service on half days.

FAMILY VACATIONS

The school calendar provides family vacation time at Christmas, February, and in April. Parents should consider this, as well as a child's academic standing 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 and 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. FACTS forms, obtained from the Office, are required for financial aid along with a written request to the principal. 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 REGULATIONS – see Addendum II

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.

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-three percent (92%) or better cumulative average in the six major subject areas: religion, science, math, social studies, language arts, and literature. In addition, students must maintain a minimum of an 85% cumulative average in Spanish. A student must also receive a passing grade in all subject areas including 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, 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.

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. Mercymount teaches human sexuality via approved texts and audio-visual aids. Communicable diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) are also taught within this curriculum.

IMMUNIZATIONS – see Addendum II

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 insure 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 and 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 Christian 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.

NON-CATHOLICS

All students take part in the 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 a non-Catholic child.

NON-UNIFORM DAYS

The freedom to wear clothes other than school uniforms brings responsibilities to appear at school in appropriate dress. Therefore, students may not wear any clothing deemed offensive, immodest, hazardous or inappropriate (no short shorts, tank tops or spaghetti strap tops, tops that expose the belly or back, flip-flops, crocs, slides or slippers, cropped tops, torn clothing, etc.) Leggings may be worn under a skirt or long top that comes to mid-thigh. Skirts and Shorts must be of equal length to uniform skirts and/or jumpers. No "short" shorts are allowed. A general rule of thumb is when students place their arms at their side with their shoulders relaxed shorts should extend past their fingertips by 2" or more.

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. Drivers are asked to back into parking spaces in the lot.

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. Any exceptions to the above must be obtained from the principal.

PETS

Any pet, but 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 with the student's name 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.

REDIKER PLUS PORTAL

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 www.plusportals.com/Mercymount.

REGISTRATION

Families attending Mercymount Country Day School must re-register before March 31st. 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.

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."

SCHOOL SHOES

The School Shoe Policy and pictures are available on the Mercymount website under "Dress Code"

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. (8:35 a.m. while following Covid-19 protocols). A tardy or late student arriving at school following the 8:30 a.m. bell (or 8:35 a.m.) must report directly to the Office for a late pass which he/she must give to his/her homeroom teacher.

TELEPHONE USE

Students may not use the business phones in school without permission of the 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, students will be allowed to use the school phones to secure transportation. If no one is available to transport the student at the usual time, they will be allowed to go to the After-Care Program 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). It is no longer necessary to obtain written consent to release records between schools. The Buckley Amendment states that school officials may receive a student's record without a written consent for such release. 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 30th. Payments may be made in full by August 15th or in 10 or 12 monthly installments through the FACTS Tuition Management Program. Full payment before the start of school (by August 15th) may reduce the tuition.

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

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 Saturday 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” temperature and will incorporate wind chill/heat index variations. The Weather Channel will serve as our official guide. 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, or a school hallway. General school rules for behavior and communications 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.
- 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.
- 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) 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 for educational purposes.

11) Students are not allowed to 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

HEALTH REGULATIONS

Mercymount Country Day School follows all Rhode Island Health Regulations. Health examinations, including updated immunizations, must be submitted at these points during the school experience: new or transfer students to the school, Kindergarten, seventh grade. According to State of Rhode Island regulations, parents/guardians shall furnish evidence to the school nurse that the student has been immunized. (See IMMUNIZATIONS below)

In the event that it is necessary to administer prescribed medication, it must be in a properly marked container from the pharmacy, accompanied by a note from the parent and a signed doctor's order. This includes epi-pens for food or bee allergies, which must be brought to the nurse by the first day of school. Required forms are available on the school website. Students may not be in possession of any medications, including OTC medications (i.e. Motrin). OVER-THE-COUNTER COUGH SYRUP AND COLD MEDICATION ARE NOT DISPENSED DURING SCHOOL HOURS. Mercymount has a school physician who updates standing orders yearly to administer OTC medications such as; ibuprofen, acetaminophen, diphenhydramine, and Tums. A permission form to administer these is available online. The school nurse will obtain permission from families prior to any medication administration, if there is not a signed permission slip on file.

In accordance with health regulations, children will be sent home due to

- Temperature exceeding 100°F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Students must be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Students absent for 5 or more days require a doctor's note to return to school. Students returning to school without a note will be excluded from school. Any student with an injury must bring in a doctor's note with specific dates in order to be excluded from gym class. (No gym includes no recess and aftercare, if applicable.) Parents must also notify the nurses' office of such injuries.

Due to health regulations, no food is allowed in the school for celebrations. Exceptions may be made by the Principal. All students with food allergies will sit at separate allergen-aware tables unless documentation is received from the doctor stating the student can sit elsewhere.

Emergency contact information is required for each student and shall include valid phone numbers of parents as well as alternate contact information. Students must be picked up within a reasonable amount of time.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Rhode Island Department of Health immunization requirements are posted on our website at <http://www.mercymount.org/students/school-services/health-services/>. Failure to comply with state regulations (unless exempt) will result in exclusion from attending school until requirements are met. Students entering Preschool and PreK must also provide evidence of lead poisoning screening. Documentation of up-to-date immunizations and annual physical exams are due to the Nurse prior to the beginning of school.

N.B. Statements in this Handbook are subject to amendment. Mercymount School will keep parents/guardians informed of all changes as soon as possible.