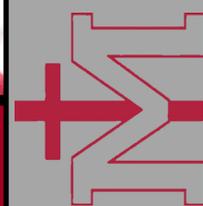


Student Handbook 2020-2021



Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School

In order to ensure that students and their families are familiar with the philosophy, rules, regulations and policies of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School, we ask that students and parents or guardians please read and review the Our Lady of Mercy Student/Parent Handbook. This form states that you as parents/guardians of students and students, agree as a condition of admission, to abide by the guidelines of this and all governing administrative policies or regulations of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School in effect at the time of admission, or as amended, for the duration of enrollment of the student. This form also states that you understand PowerSchool is the database in which official academic and discipline records are stored at Our Lady of Mercy.

All students will participate in the Archdiocesan required safe environment training for students – VIRTUS. Families who do not want to have their students participate in this training must send an email to rmiller@mercycatholic.org by Friday, **August 7, 2020** to opt out of the training.

IMPORTANT NEW UPDATES

ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY ON THE CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

In the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent of Schools, makes it infeasible, unsafe or otherwise imprudent to continue campus-based education, all Archdiocesan schools shall resume as soon as practical via distance learning and/or other methods adopted and/or developed by the school administration and faculty and approved by the Office of Catholic Schools. Due to continuing financial obligations relating to operational costs, including administrative, faculty and staff salaries, there shall be no suspension, reduction or refund of tuition or applicable fees.

Special Considerations:

- Adjustments to school and classroom settings and procedures
- Consideration for adjusted schedules and student groupings
- Planning for various learning environments (in school, hybrid, online)
- Accommodations to protect our vulnerable students and employees
- Social/emotional support for staff, students and families
- Cleaning and disinfecting supplies and equipment
- Facility use (co-curricular and extra-curricular activities)
- Transportation
- Plan for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19:
 - o Social distancing
 - o Face coverings/masks
 - o Any individual seeking entrance to the school/building

INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

The primary responsibility for the prevention and control of infectious diseases lies with individuals, families and public health authorities. Schools are not responsible for providing expert infectious disease advice or treating students; this is the role of medical practitioners and health authorities.

Attendance at any school may be denied to any student reasonably suspected of or diagnosed with a contagious or infectious disease that could make the child's attendance harmful to the welfare of all other students, faculty and staff.

Schools reserve the right to require a statement from the student's primary care physician authorizing the student's return to school. Schools will respect the privacy of all its community members. Parents of children attending the school will be notified that their child has been exposed to a communicable or infectious disease in a manner that avoids identifying any community member who has been identified with the disease, to the maximum extent appropriate in each particular circumstance.

Local school procedures will include:

- Prevention techniques – Hand washing education, coughing and sneezing education; hand sanitizers in classrooms; sanitizing wipes in classrooms for computers, desks, common areas, etc.; tissues in all rooms; sanitation procedures; and if appropriate, the mandated use of facial masks along with social distancing.
- Preparedness – Schools will comply with CDC, Georgia Department of Health guidelines and directives from the Office of Catholic Schools.
- Response – Schools will follow the Office of Catholic Schools policy for school closures (Policy 5285) and directives from state and local (county and municipal) jurisdictions. The Office of Catholic Schools will provide a written Reopening of Schools Plan specific to the infectious or communicable disease present.
- Recovery – Schools will publish a return to school procedure in accordance with directives from the Office of Catholic Schools which aligns to the Reopening of Schools Plan approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

Students who travel to Level 3 Nonessential Travel Zones or any location identified as a current Hot Spot for an infectious disease by the CDC may be required to quarantine for a period of 14-days. In the case of an identified pandemic or epidemic, the Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to require parents who have travelled to a Level 3 Nonessential Travel Zone (as identified by the CDC) to self-quarantine at home for 14-days before entering school property. This period of quarantine may also be required of students residing in the home.

ASSUMPTION OF THE RISK RELATING TO COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected individual coughs, sneezes or speaks. As a result, government agencies at all levels and federal, state and local health agencies recommend social distancing and have placed limits on the congregation of groups of individuals.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School has put preventative measures in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the school cannot guarantee that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, attending activities on the campus of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School could increase your risk and that of your children for contracting COVID-19.

While Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School will make all reasonable efforts to lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread at school, the school is unable to provide any guarantee that students or their families will not be exposed to or infected by COVID-19. By enrolling your child(ren) in and attending school, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that you, your child(ren) and or other family members may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19.

It is expected that students and other school family members will follow the preventative measures and guidelines implemented Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School including not coming to the school premises if demonstrating any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

ON-DEMAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES POLICY

On-demand transportation services (e.g., Uber, Lyft) are prohibited from transporting Archdiocesan students to and/or from Archdiocesan property unless a parent, grandparent, or guardian accompanies the student in the vehicle.

ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

This policy establishes the Archdiocese of Atlanta's position on the use or abuse of alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances by its high school students. It is a part of our commitment to safeguard the health of our students and to provide a safe environment for students to learn and to grow. Because substance abuse, either while at school or away from school, can seriously endanger the health and safety of students and render it impossible to create an environment conducive for learning, the Archdiocese of Atlanta has established this Drug-Free School Program to detect users, provide appropriate counseling and resources to support students and families and ultimately remove students who continue to abuse alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances. The Archdiocese of Atlanta is committed to preventing the use and/or presence of these substances in its school or on its property and to encouraging its students to say "no" to drugs and alcohol.

The elements of this policy are as follows:

1. **Anti-drug Policy.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, presence, or use of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances on school property or during any school sponsored activities. Students violating this prohibition will be referred to rehabilitation, counseling and/or disciplined up to and including expulsion.
2. **Notice.** Notice of this policy will be posted in appropriate handbooks and policy manuals and copies of the policy will be available to students and/or their parents during regular business hours in the administrative offices.
3. **Acknowledgment/Copy to Students.** All students and parents will acknowledge notice and consent of this substance abuse policy by annually signing the *Student/Parent Acknowledgment Form*.
4. **Education Program/Student & Parent Orientation Sessions.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta will present several Substance Abuse Orientation/Education Programs for all students on a periodic basis. In addition, the Archdiocese of Atlanta will conduct Parent Orientation Sessions designed to explain the school's Substance Abuse Program and general education concerning the dangers of drug and alcohol use.
5. **Application of Policy.** This policy applies to all high school students grades 9-12.
6. **Policy Implementation Dates.** The mandatory drug and alcohol testing provisions of this policy will become effective with the 2020-2021 school year. Parents or legal guardians of all students enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year are required, as a condition of enrollment of their son or daughter at any archdiocesan high school, to acknowledge and consent to the Student Substance Abuse Policy, including the drug and alcohol testing procedures.

7. **Mandatory Drug Testing.** Archdiocesan high schools will utilize drug and alcohol testing to help administer this policy, beginning on the first day of classes for the 2020-2021 school year and each school year thereafter. Archdiocesan high schools reserve the right to drug and/or alcohol test students at any time, for any reason. Any refusal to take a drug and/or alcohol test will result in referral to rehabilitation and/or disciplinary action up to and including expulsion, depending on the circumstances. All parents/legal guardians of students and students will be required to sign the *Chemical Screening Consent and Release Form* prior to drug or alcohol testing as a condition of enrollment. Such consent is deemed valid for the entire school year. In general, the following types of testing will be used:
- a. **Random Testing.** All students in grades 9 through 12 will be subject to random testing throughout the school year.
 - b. **Reasonable Suspicion Testing.** Students will be tested when reasonable suspicion exists such that their behavior or performance indicates possible alcohol or other drug use, in violation of this policy. The decision to test a student under reasonable suspicion rests with the high school principal.
 - c. **Post Accident Testing.** Students will be tested following serious accidents, which cause injuries requiring medical attention. Students will not be tested under this provision following accidents which only cause minor injuries, requiring only minor first aid treatment.
 - d. **Follow-up Testing.** Students will be tested when there has been an admission of alcohol/drug use, detection of alcohol/drug use, or when returning from counseling/rehabilitation, which was the result of a positive test and the involuntary referral of the student to rehabilitation. Follow-up testing shall be conducted at least three times a year for a two-year period due to the above conditions and without advance notice to the student and at the discretion of the High School Principal.
8. **Cost of Drug Testing.** Archdiocesan high schools will pay the cost of all mandatory drug and/or alcohol tests, initial and confirmation. A student and/or his/her parents shall pay the cost of any contested test, follow-up testing and any additional tests not subject to the student substance abuse policy programs.
9. **Positive Drug Test.**
- a. **Medical Review Officer (MRO)** - All positive drug test results will be reviewed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO). The MRO may contact the student and his/her parents in order to investigate the reasons behind a positive drug test. Failure to cooperate with the MRO will result in immediate suspension pending disciplinary review. If the MRO is unable to contact the student and his/her parents, the MRO will communicate that fact to the appropriate high school principal. Once the MRO has finalized the investigation s/he will communicate the results to the high school principal.

- b. Confirmation/Notification/Retesting - All positive drug tests will be confirmed using gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) or an equivalent method. Within five (5) school days after receipt of a positive confirmed test result from the MRO, a student and his/her parents will receive written notification from the school of such positive confirmed test result (*Notification Form*), the consequences of such results, and the options available, whereupon the student and his/her parents will have five (5) school days to contest or explain the positive test result. If the student's or parent's explanation or challenge is unsatisfactory to the MRO, the MRO shall report a positive test result back to the high school principal.
- c. Students - If a student tests positive (confirmed drug test), his or her parents shall be notified, and he or she will be referred to evaluation, assessment, counseling and/or rehabilitation at his/her or his/her parent's own expense. Students must enter and successfully complete an approved substance abuse counseling/rehabilitation program at their own expense to remain enrolled at an archdiocesan high school. Each school will maintain a resource file which contains information on rehabilitation resources. Refusal to agree to be referred to rehabilitation will result in immediate expulsion.

- 10. **Drug Testing Procedures.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta will utilize any type of drug and/or alcohol testing procedure that it believes is appropriate, in conformity with the law, including urinalysis, blood tests, breathalyzers, or any other method. All parents/legal guardians of students and their students, and/or students over the age of majority will be required to sign the *Chemical Screening Consent and Release Form* at the time reenrollment occurs as each school, and such consent is deemed valid for the entire school year.
- 11. **Drugs.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta will determine the controlled substances (including alcohol) for which testing will be performed.
- 12. **Drug & Alcohol Arrests/Convictions.** Any student who is involved with, arrested or convicted, including a plea of nolo contendere or other pleas with respect to any alcohol or drug incident must report the details of the incident(s) immediately and in no case later than five (5) days to the Principal. Any such incidents that are not reported by the student or his/her parents or legal guardians will be treated as a serious violation of this policy and subject the student to immediate suspension pending a disciplinary committee review. Should a student be convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI), disciplinary action shall result in accordance with the parent/student handbook and the Policy Manual for the Office of Catholic Schools.
- 13. **Resource File/Student Assistance.** Each high school will maintain a Resource File in the administrative offices containing information on substance abuse assistance programs and rehabilitation resources, where students and their parents may obtain information and/or counseling or treatment for rehabilitation from substance abuse, at parent/guardian expense.
- 14. **Disciplinary Action.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to use disciplinary action up to and including expulsion for any violation of this policy, any positive drug or alcohol test, tampered/adulterated test, refusal to take a test, or any refusal by a student to cooperate with any aspect of this policy. If a student tests positive a second time for a drug or alcohol test, it will be grounds for possible immediate expulsion.
- 15. **Confidentiality.** All information, test results, or other materials received by any of the high schools in the operation of this substance abuse program are confidential communications, which

will only be utilized on a need-to-know basis. These confidential communications and information will not be released unless required by law or with parental consent.

16. **Designated Substance Abuse Program Official:** The high school principal is the designated Substance Abuse Program Official. All communications and the coordination of the program will be conducted through the designated substance abuse program official.
17. **Searches.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to search any person, personal article, locker, vehicle or other items brought onto archdiocesan property. Refusal by a student to consent to a search will be grounds for immediate suspension pending a referral to the disciplinary review committee.
18. **Policy Changes.** The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to change, alter, or amend this policy at any time at its discretion.
19. **Definitions.** When used in this policy, the term:
 - a. **"Alcohol"** means ethyl alcohol, hydrated oxide of ethyl, or spirits of wine, from whatever source or by whatever process produced.
 - b. **"Drug"** means amphetamines, cannabinoids, cocaine, phencyclidine (PCP), methadone, methaqualene, opiates, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, propoxyphene, ecstasy or a metabolite of any such substances. The Archdiocese of Atlanta may test a student for any or all of these.
 - c. **"Student"** means any person enrolled at any archdiocesan high school.
 - d. **"Nonprescription medication"** means a drug or medication authorized pursuant to federal or state law for general distribution and use without a prescription in the treatment of human disease, ailments, or injuries.
 - e. **"Prescription medication"** means a drug or medication lawfully prescribed by a physician for an individual and taken in accordance with such prescription.
 - f. **"Reasonable suspicion testing"** means substance abuse testing based on a belief that an student is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of this policy drawn from specific objective and articulable facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts in light of experience.
 - g. **"Substance"** means drugs or alcohol.
 - h. **"Substance abuse test" or "test"** means any chemical, biological, or physical instrumental analysis administered for the purpose of determining the presence or absence of a drug or its metabolites or of alcohol.
 - i. **"Age of Majority"** means the legally defined age at which a person is considered as an adult as defined by the state of Georgia. Although a student may reach the age of majority, all students enrolled in archdiocesan schools are considered to be under parental control; the Archdiocese of Atlanta honors relationships with parents/guardians and does not enter into a formal relationship with emancipated and/or married students.

j. **“Administration Designee”** will be the High School Principal.

DRUG POLICY

DRUG POLICY

The student who is honest when responding to the two preliminary questions prior to a sample being collected will be placed on the Health Track. S/he will be placed on a drug and alcohol contract and will be required to provide signed documentation of treatment and clearance to participate from a qualified professional counselor before resuming Athletic, Fine Arts, or other extracurricular activities.

Any student who tests positive without admitting drug or alcohol use will be placed on the Discipline Track. S/he will be suspended from school, placed on a Drug and Alcohol Contract, and will be required to provide signed documentation of treatment and clearance from a qualified professional counselor to participate in Athletics, Fine Arts or other extracurricular activities. Colleges may be notified of any school suspensions.

Additionally, a student who has been placed on the Discipline Track and who participates in the Athletic, Fine Arts, or other competitive, school-sponsored programs will be suspended for 20% of the total number of regular season games, performances, or competitions. In the case of limited games, performances, or competitions, the suspension will be for at least one event or the 20% penalty, whichever is greater. The suspension will be served at the first available opportunity which includes post season play or performances during a current school year.

This policy also applies to those students who provide support roles in Athletics, Fine Arts or other extracurricular activities.

WELCOME

On behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. When enrolled, you became part of the Our Lady of Mercy community. We hope you enjoy your time here and take advantage of every opportunity for growth that Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School (OLM) has to offer.

The school administration reserves the right to make additions and/or corrections in the student/parent handbook at any time when deemed necessary. Final authority rests with the school administration on all matters. Enrollment in the school constitutes agreement with the policies contained herein.

Mission Statement for the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Atlanta

The Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta serve a vital role in the educational ministry of the Church. Our schools are committed to providing quality education in an environment of spiritual, intellectual, and moral formation in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

COMPLIANCE

OLM is operated by the Archdiocese of Atlanta under the authority of Office of Catholic Schools and is in full compliance with all Archdiocesan policies as highlighted in the Policy Manual for Catholic Schools. This manual is available for family review upon request.

The student/parent handbook includes the following:

GENERAL INFORMATION

Athletic Policies and Procedures
School Calendar
Bell Schedule
Explanation of School Crest and Brief History
Vision, Mission, Motto, and Core Virtues
Accreditation
Faculty and Staff
Extra-curricular offerings

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

Background checks
Non-discrimination policy
Re-enrollment policy
Transfer policy
Tuition
Financial Aid
Athletic fees
Student publication policies
Religious and civic responsibilities
Inclement Weather conditions
Visitor policy
Family custodial situations

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Admissions
Graduation Requirements
Christian service
Credits for promotion
Student course failures
Curriculum
Grading policy
Semester Grades
Report cards
Honor Roll
Valedictorian and Salutatorian
Honor Code and Honor Council

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Arrival and departure guidelines
Early dismissal
Absences
Tardiness

STUDENT REGULATIONS

General Behavior
Personal safety and health: drugs, alcohol and tobacco products
Respect
Harassment
Sexual harassment and sexual violence
Gangs

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Discipline Policy
Denial of privileges
Discipline contract
Detention
Saturday School
In-school suspension and Day of Reflection
Out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and dismissal
Expulsion
Discipline review committee
Georgia Law and school discipline

OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

Asbestos-free building
Audio/video recording policy
Book bags
Child abuse laws
Communicating with the school
Conduct outside of school
Dress Code

- Dances sponsored by any school group
- Formal/semi-formal dance dress
- Dress code for special events and out-of-uniform days
- Dress code for school
- Mass uniform/Summer/Spring uniform/Winter uniform
- General uniform guidelines
- Hair styles/Jewelry

Driving on campus
Electronic devices
Emergency drills
Mass behavior
Medication policy
School name, logo, and motto
Searches
Sexuality issues
Sickness
Student Health
Student participation
Student records
Title IX
Use of facilities

GUIDELINES FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Purpose
Definition
Electronic network use
Personal safety
Privacy
Student responsibilities
Prohibited network activities
Consequences of unacceptable student use
Liability

ATHLETIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Privilege to play- All students are encouraged to be involved in athletics and or extra-curricular activities, however; being part of a Mercy athletic team is a privilege, not a right.

School Attendance – The most important thing at OLM is Academics. Student athletes must attend at least 4 full periods in order to participate in any sports or extra-curricular activities that same day. Only students who have a doctor’s note, an approved and documented college visit, or the principal’s approval of the absence may be excused.

Practices and games- It is an expectation that student athletes who commit to play a sport at OLM maintain that commitment and attend ALL practices and games. Failure to keep this commitment may result in suspension and or even dismissal from the team.

Late to school - It is imperative that all athletes maintain good attendance records, particularly the day after an athletic event. Athletes should not be tardy to school the day after a game or event or absent without acceptable documentation. It is the responsibility of the student athlete to manage both academics and athletics/extra-curricular activities. Failure to maintain attendance may result in disciplinary action within the student athlete’s sport (i.e.: sit out a quarter or half etc... of the next game).

Locker Rooms – Student athletes are expected to maintain appropriate behavior in the locker rooms. Student athletes are also expected to help maintain the cleanliness of the locker rooms they are using. Misbehavior in a locker room may result in school disciplinary action as well as disciplinary action in their sport.

Uniforms – Uniforms are distributed at the beginning of each season. All uniform items MUST be returned to the team coach by the assigned date. Failure to return any uniform items will result in the student athlete’s parents being billed for the original cost of the uniform (regardless of age of uniform) and the student athletes grades may be withheld until the uniform is returned.

Academic requirements – The athletic director and head coaches are responsible for tracking and counseling athletes about their academic progress and eligibility for play. Each student’s situation is considered individually. **Students in academic difficulty will be excused from athletic practices/events until they have addressed their academic needs.**

Use of facilities – Students may only utilize OLM facilities on campus when supervised by a faculty or staff member. At no time are students allowed in the gym, on the fields or in/on any athletic facility on campus without OLM staff supervision. Students who ignore this policy may face disciplinary action. **Parents must compensate the school for any damage to school property caused by their student.**

Playing Time – Playing time is an issue that will only be handled through the coach involved. Neither the athletic director nor the principal will entertain any conversations regarding playing time. It is our duty to allow our coaches to determine who gives them the best opportunity for the team’s success.

Golf Carts – Mercy students are forbidden to drive any Mercy vehicles or golf carts/gators/lawn mowers. The only exception will be the student trainer program. Student trainers, through the athletic trainer, with a driver’s license who have fill out the proper documentation and have been cleared by the principal, are permitted to drive the golf cart and the gator on specific routes on campus that relate directly to their job as a student trainer.

DAILY BELL SCHEDULES

Regular Day

1st period 7:45-8:35	includes 5 minutes for prayer/announcements
2nd period 8:40-9:25	10 minute break between 2nd and 3rd
3rd period 9:35-10:20	
4th period 10:25-11:15	1st Lunch
5th period 11:20-12:10	2nd Lunch
6th period 12:15-1:05	3rd Lunch
7th period 1:10 – 1:55	
8th period 2:00 – 2:45	

Monday / Late Start

1st period 8:45 – 9:25	includes 5 minutes for prayer/announcements
2nd period 9:30 – 10:10	10-minute break between 2nd and 3rd
3rd period 10:20 – 11:00	
4th period 11:05-11:45	1st Lunch
5th period 11:50-12:30	2nd Lunch
6th period 12:35-1:15	3rd Lunch
7th period 1:20 – 2:00	
8th period 2:05 – 2:45	

Mass Schedule

1st Period 7:45-8:25	
2nd Period 8:30-9:10	
3rd Period 9:15-9:55	
Mass 10:00-11:00	
Break 11:00-11:10	
4th Period 11:15-11:55	1 st Lunch
5th Period 12:00-12:40	2 nd Lunch
6th Period 12:45-1:25	3 rd Lunch
7th Period 1:30-2:05	
8th Period 2:10-2:45	

9 Period Schedule

	House/ Family Time	Pep Rally
1st period 7:45-8:40	includes 5 minutes for prayer/announcements	1st period
2nd period 8:45 – 9:25		2nd period
3rd period 9:30 – 10:10		3rd period
10-minute break between 3rd and House/Family Time		
House/ Family Time 10:20 – 11:00		4th period/1st lunch
4th period 11:05-11:4	1st Lunch	5th period/2nd lunch
5th period 11:50-12:3	2nd Lunch	6th period/3rd lunch
6th period 12:35-1:15	3rd Lunch	7th period
7th period 1:20 – 2:00		8th period
8th period 2:05 – 2:45		Pep Rally

School Crest

In the upper part of the school crest, there are two hearts. The heart on the left hand side represents the heart of Christ, surrounded with a crown of thorns. The heart is on fire, representing the fire of God's love and mercy. The heart on the right hand side represents the heart of Mary, burning with love for Christ and reminds us of her suffering, foretold by Simeon, "a sword shall pierce your very soul."

The *M* over the cross is a variation of the Coat of Arms of Pope John Paul II – Mary is fully at one with the sufferings of her Son. Her response to God from the very beginning was fiat – "Let it be done unto me according to your word."

The color red represents the blood of Jesus, and the white represents His purity. Both colors are a fitting reminder of our Christian baptism, by which "we are washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb."

Finally, the Latin inscription comes from an ancient prayer to Mary in the Catholic Church:

Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae (Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy).

A Brief History

From the very beginning of our nation, the Catholic Church has been recognized and admired for contributions to the moral fiber of American society. In every age and in every place, the presence of Catholic schools is continuing evidence of the Catholic Church's dedication to making a society rooted in the values of charity and mercy, of integrity and truth, and of peace and justice.

Recognizing the need to continue this great mission of love, Archbishop John Francis Donoghue, in March 1997, launched the "Building the Church of Tomorrow" capital campaign. The campaign, carried out throughout the Archdiocese of Atlanta, raised funds not only to build new churches, but also to build much needed Catholic schools in the northern and southern areas of the Archdiocese.

One of the sites chosen for a new Catholic high school was Fairburn, Georgia. Completed in the summer of 2000, at a cost of \$20 million, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School opened its doors to the first students on August 14, 2000. Speaking at the dedication of Our Lady of Mercy, on December 5, 2000, Archbishop Donoghue said that the establishment of the school was "a sure planting of the truth of Christ and of His Gospel." There is no doubt

that our high school is "heaven sent" and will continue to raise up men and women who will make our nation proud, leaders who, in the words of the late Mother Teresa, will make America a "sign of sure hope."

John Cobis 2000-2004

JoAnn McPherson 2005-2006 (interim)

Brian Newhall 2012-2017

Dr. George Paul 2004-2004

Danny Dorsel 2006-2012

Bill Dooley 2017-2020

JoAnn McPherson 2020-Present (interim)

Our Lady of Mercy Pray for us!

VISION STATEMENT

As an archdiocesan high school, Our Lady of Mercy will be a national model of excellence in Catholic, college-preparatory, diverse education, challenging students to reach their full potential in mind, body and soul.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady of Mercy, a college preparatory school rooted in the Tradition of the Catholic Church, transforms students by providing opportunities to excel as Christian leaders through rigorous academics, inclusive extracurricular programs, and Christ-centered activities.

MOTTO

Enlighten the mind, Inspire the soul, and Strengthen the body.

CORE VIRTUES

CHARITY: Our Lady of Mercy inspires its students to love God for His own sake and their neighbor as themselves; to give willingly in service to others; and to labor and not seek reward, save that of doing God's will.

INTEGRITY: Our Lady of Mercy instills in its students the desire to be persons of honor by exhorting them to lead lives of honesty and respect while extending to others the dignity that is inherently theirs.

DILIGENCE: Our Lady of Mercy develops in its students the perseverance necessary to achieve excellence in all their endeavors.

COURAGE: Our Lady of Mercy strives to encourage in our students the strength to stand firm in the teachings of the Gospel and show mercy and kindness to everyone.

RESPONSIBILITY: Our Lady of Mercy cultivates in our students accountability in their actions, acceptance of the consequences of these actions and the wisdom to grow from both their successes and failures.

As an academic community, Our Lady of Mercy maintains excellence in teaching and high expectations for learning in an environment that values scholarship and achievement. Our Lady of Mercy offers a curriculum that cultivates in students extensive knowledge and academic skills, intellectual acumen, formation of character, aesthetic appreciation, and physical well-being in order to prepare them for college studies, civic leadership, and the life-long pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

As a Catholic school, the educational mission and doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church guide Our Lady of Mercy. Through formal instruction, common worship, and religious activities and service projects, Our Lady of Mercy assists students in forming their consciences by emphasizing the dignity and integrity of the individual, the primacy of transcendent values and Christian morals, and Christ's call to love and serve others, especially the poor. Our Lady of Mercy strives to assist students in developing a healthy prayer life that incorporates both private and communal prayer, and an appreciation for the vitality of Catholic spirituality.

As a Christian community, Our Lady of Mercy strives to develop a community of care and concern; to befriend and show confidence in our students; to create a spirit of hospitality and kindness to members of our community and visitors to our school; and, inspire our students to heed the call by Christ to lead lives of leadership and service to their fellow men and women.

All of the programs offered at Our Lady of Mercy are guided by these principles and are extensions of the mission of the school.

ACCREDITATION

Accreditations and Affiliations: OLM is fully accredited through District-Wide Accreditation of The Office of Catholic Schools. Each school maintains full accreditation through AdvancED (the parent company of SACS – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). Our Lady of Mercy is also a member of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), and the College Board.

FACULTY

JoAnn McPherson, *Principal (interim), English*

B.A., History, Clemson University

M.A., English, Clemson University

M.T.S., Theology, Spring Hill College

Cynthia Launay-Fallasse, *Assistant Principal*

B.A., English, Spring Hill College

B.A., Theology, Spring Hill College

M.Ed., Educational Leadership, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Educational Leadership, University of West Georgia

Rhonda Anderson, *Social Studies*

B.S., History/Sec. Ed, Jacksonville State

M.S., History/Sec. Ed, Jacksonville State

Ed.S, History/Sec. Ed, Jacksonville State

Sarah Athearn, *College Guidance Counselor*

B.A., Liberal Studies/English, Clayton State University

Mark J. Beno, *Director of Finance*

B.A., Business Administration, Wittenberg Univ., CPA

Alexander Brown, *Technology, Spanish*

B.S., Mathematics and Nutrition, University of Georgia

M.A.T., Secondary Math, Georgia State University

Ana De Mello, *Mathematics, Student Services*

B.S., Mathematics, Garcilazo de la Vega University

M.Ed., Spec. Ed, University of West Georgia

Ed.S., Special Education, University of West Georgia

Daniel Deveault, *French*

B.A., Education, Universite Quebec a Trois-Rivieres

Fr. Desmond Drummer, *Chaplain*

B.A., Economics/Public Health, Morehouse College

S.T.B., Theology, University of Saint Mary of the Lake - Illinois

M. Div., Theology & Ministry, University of Saint Mary of the Lake

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), Summer 2012, Grady Hospital

Amy Gilchrist, Dance

B.F.A., Communication, Valdosta State University

M.P.A., Administration, Valdosta State University

Michelle Kalbeitzer, *School Counselor*

B.A. Psychology, University of Iowa

Dr. Adam Kellam, Mathematics

B.S., Mathematics, Wingate University

M.S., Mathematics, Georgia State University

Ph.D., Mathematics, Georgia State University

Molly Kellam, Art

B.A., Studio Art and Computer Science, Converse College

Franck Launay-Fallasse, Theology

B.A., Philosophy, University of Paris-IV-Sorbonne

M.A., Philosophy, University of Paris

Robert Grgetic, Science

B.S., Physics, University of West Georgia

Shawn McNamara, Social Studies

B.S., Education, Penn State University

Mark Miller, Health

B.S., Liberal Studies, Georgia Southern University

Rebecca Miller, English/Drama

B.S., Criminal Justice, Andrew Jackson University

Andrew McGovern, Theology

B.A., Theology, Ave Maria University

M.T.S., Theology, Holy Spirit College

Molly McGraw, English

B.A., Program of Liberal Studies, University of Notre Dame

Steven Oldenburg, Science

B.S., Chemistry, St. Joseph's University - Philadelphia

Justin Palmer, Social Studies

B.A., Integrated Studies, Jacksonville State University

Jae Parker, Mathematics

B.B.A., Finance, Austin Peay State University

M.A., Mathematics, Clayton State University

Tam C. Pham, Athletic Trainer

B.S., Exercise Science, Georgia State University

M.A.T., Athletic Training, Life University

Ryan Schilling, Science

B.S., Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, Georgia Tech

William Schmitz, Athletic Director

B.A., Sports Management, Belmont Abbey College

Megan Trocquet, Theology

B.A., Theology, Ave Maria University

M.A. Theology (Sacred Scripture, Holy Apostles College and Seminary)

Brian Williams, English

B.A., English Literature, Oberlin College
M.A., English Literature, Georgia State University

Lorian Wright, Spanish

B.A., Education, University of Puerto Rico
M.A., Spanish Literature, Georgia State University

SUPPORT STAFF

Julie Gagnier, Professional Assistant to the Principal and the Athletic Director

B.A., History and Political Science, University of St. Thomas

Judy Godwin, Receptionist/Attendance

B.B.A., Business Administration, University of Georgia

Paola Londono, Professional Assistant to Business Office and to the Assistant Principal

A.A.A., Academia Antioquena de Aviacion

Jorge Londono, Plant Manager

A.A.A., Academia Antioquena de Aviacion

Kiesha Porter, Director of Admissions

B.A., English / Specialization in Business Admin., University of California – Los Angeles
M.S., Broadcast Journalism, Syracuse University

Ignae Thomas, Receptionist/Attendance

B.A., Sociology, Clark Atlanta University

School Advisory Council

The mission of the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School Advisory Council is to further the advancement of a quality Catholic education for the students attending Mercy by providing leadership, advice, assistance and support to the principal. Its authority is derived from the Archbishop of Atlanta, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Archdiocesan School Advisory Council.

Extra- Curricular

Our Lady of Mercy offers a wide variety of extracurricular activities. If a student is interested in these, he/she should contact the sponsor/coach to get more details.

AMA Choir	Franck Launay-Fallasse
Athletic Trainers	Tam C. Pham
Baseball	Mark Miller
Basketball (boys)	Bill Schmitz
Basketball (girls)	Bill Schmitz
Campus Ministry	Fr. Desmond Drummer
Cheerleading	Rhonda Anderson, Jae Parker, Julie Gagnier
Cross Country	Kiesha Porter
Dance	Amy Gilchrist
Debate	
Drama	Rebecca Miller
Drum Line	Dianna Sanders
FLAME Team	Megan Trocquet & Alex Brown
Football	Mark Miller
Golf	Shawn McNamara
Literary Club	Brian Williams
Model UN	Rhonda Anderson
National Honor Society	Ana De Mello & Lori Wright
Prom	Ana DeMello
Science Olympiad	Ryan Schilling
Soccer (boys)	John Bush
Soccer (girls)	Brian Williams
Softball	Andrew McGovern
Student Ambassadors	Cynthia Launay-Fallasse
Student Government	Lorian Wright
Swimming	Robert Grgetic & Sarah Athearn
Tennis	Alex Brown
Track	Ryan Schilling
Volleyball	Bill Schmitz
Wrestling	Justin Palmer
Yearbook	Rebecca Miller & Molly Kellam

GENERAL POLICIES

BACKGROUND CHECKS

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students and other members of our community, all adults who work with and around students at Our Lady of Mercy are required to submit to a personal background check and complete safe environment training. This check includes both paid and volunteer workers.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Our Lady of Mercy admits students of any race, color, gender, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at school. Our Lady of Mercy does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies, admissions, scholarship and loan programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

RE-ENROLLMENT POLICY

Enrollment of the student is subject to the student observing all school rules as set out in the school handbook including, but not limited to, general behavior, academic performance and attendance.

Continued enrollment during any given school year, and re-enrollment in any subsequent years, is subject to the parents/guardians continued support of the mission of the school as documented in the school handbook and the maintenance of a demonstrably effective and supportive relationship between the school and the parents/guardians. Re-enrollment in any subsequent year is subject to mutual agreement. The student, the parents or the school administration may withhold the agreement with or without cause. Enrollment during a school year is subject to termination at the discretion of the Principal.

TRANSFER POLICY

Local transfer of students from any public, private, or Archdiocesan School into grade twelve (12) is not considered. Students whose families have relocated to the Atlanta area and who have been attending a Catholic high school may apply for admission into grade twelve (12) in an Archdiocesan School.

TUITION

Tuition is established annually as part of the budget process. All families, regardless of faith, pay the same rate. Our Lady of Mercy uses FACTS Tuition Management to help collect tuition. All families must participate in the FACTS Program.

Late Tuition Policy

Tuition is considered late if not paid on the due date. Should circumstances arise that may cause a delay in payment, the Business Office must be notified immediately so consideration for an alternate plan can be discussed. The Director of Finance will try to work with the family to come up with a mutually agreeable arrangement. Any tuition payment made other than via FACTS must be by cashier's check or money order. No personal or corporate checks will be accepted.

Grades and transcripts will not be released for any student whose account is not current. This policy is inclusive of students who are applying to colleges and universities and it may affect their application(s).

Students whose accounts are one payment behind may lose access to PowerSchool and may be held out of class until the account is made current. Students will be withheld from taking final exams for balances due to the school.

Students who have an outstanding balance at the end of the school year will not be able to enroll for a new school year until the balance due is paid.

REFUNDS

Incoming students make a non-refundable \$500 deposit of which \$200 is applied toward tuition. Incoming students whose families move more than 50 miles from Our Lady of Mercy before the first day of school will receive a refund of the \$200 tuition deposit.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is provided by the Archdiocese of Atlanta and is available to Catholic families only. Limited school funded financial aid is available for non-Catholic families. All aid is determined on the basis of need. Applications are available in the school office.

GRACE Scholarship Program

GRACE provides scholarships to children from families with financial need. To be eligible for a GRACE award, a student must be a resident of the state of Georgia and demonstrate financial need. A student must be entering a Catholic school for the first time at the 9th grade or above from a Georgia public school to be eligible for GRACE. For more information visit www.gracescholars.org.

PAYMENT OF NON-TUITION RELATED FEES

If a payment is received at the school via personal or corporate check for which the check is subsequently returned "NSF", a \$30 fee shall be assessed, and the family will be precluded from paying via personal or corporate check for the remainder of the school year.

ATHLETIC FEES

All student athletes that participate in a sport at OLM are required to pay the player fees associated with that sport. Parents have two weeks from the time that rosters are set to pay the full amount of the player fees via FACTS. If the fees are not paid by that time, the student athlete may be suspended from the team until the fee is paid. No student athlete with an unpaid sports fee will be permitted to start a new sport in the next season until the unpaid fee is paid.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS POLICY

The following list of guidelines should be adhered to when an administrator gives permission for the production of a publication.

- The Principal is ultimately responsible for decisions regarding the suitability of subject presentation.
- The Principal reserves the right to edit all publications.
- Each student group involved in the production should be assigned a faculty/staff member who is responsible for monitoring and guiding the students.
- The tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church should be respected.
- Neither written text nor illustration should be implicitly or explicitly sexual in nature (including references to body parts and/or function).
- Standard English and correct grammatical structure should be used consistently.
- No publications may go to print or be distributed without the expressed approval of the Principal.

RELIGIOUS AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Each day will begin and end with prayer over the public announcement system. Following the Morning Prayer, students will be led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Students will stand and be respectful during prayer which will begin each class. School-wide liturgical celebrations will take place approximately once each month. Because Our Lady of Mercy emphasizes the spiritual and civic growth of its students, faculty, and staff, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to participate fully in all civic, spiritual and religious activities conducted by the school. Each class attends a class retreat once a year. Participation in this retreat is obligatory. Failure to attend this retreat without administrative permission may result in academic or disciplinary consequences.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

In case of inclement weather, Our Lady of Mercy will follow the instructions for the Fayette County schools. Television stations WSB-ABC Channel 2 and WXIA-NBC Channel 11 will carry officially authorized Our Lady of Mercy closings. Students, parents, and faculty will be responsible for listening to /watching these stations. Cancellations are also posted on the school web site, the school Learning Management System (LMS), Facebook and Twitter (@mercyatholic).

VISITOR POLICY

Visitors are required to sign in and wear a nametag at all times. School age visitors are not allowed on campus.

FAMILY CUSTODIAL SITUATIONS

Our Lady of Mercy is finding an increasing number of families experiencing transitions in parental custodial relationships. In addition, laws governing divorce settlements and custody have been recently changed. For this reason we find it necessary to clarify the procedures the administration and faculty will follow in communicating with parents in such situations.

In two parent families it is assumed that both parents are living at the same address unless we have been notified otherwise. Our Lady of Mercy personnel will, therefore, send home notices, communication, etc. to the address given on the application/registration form. It is assumed that both parents are communicating regarding their child and that all information is shared by and between the parents. This information includes but is not limited to conference appointments, report cards, interims, and discussions with school personnel.

In families experiencing separation of parents or pending divorce, the above information will be sent to the home of whichever parent currently has primary physical custody of the child. Again, it is assumed that this information is shared by the parents and between the parents. Since these situations may impact a student's achievement and interactions at school, parents are asked to inform both the principal and teacher of this fact so that appropriate support can be given to the child. Our Lady of Mercy can only proceed with the appropriate documentation detailed below.

In cases of an actual divorce decree involving clear custody by one parent, the principal is to be informed by the custodial parent of this fact. A copy of the first page of the decree bearing the case number, the pages referring to custody and the relationship with the school, and the final page bearing the judge's signature are to be submitted to the principal. Unless the decree indicates otherwise, school communications will be sent home to the parent that has primary physical designation or primary physical custody. Custodial parents should understand, however, that unless the divorce decree specifically limits the non-custodial or non-primary physical custodial parent's right to access the records, the non-custodial parent has a right to the same access as the custodial parent. Our Lady of Mercy will, unless otherwise restricted by a Court Order, release school-related records upon request to the non-custodial parent. "Records" include official transcripts, report cards, health record, referrals for special services, and communications regarding major disciplinary actions. This does not include daily class work and papers, or routine communications sent to the home of residence. In these cases the custodial parent is asked to cooperate with the school and share this information directly with the non-custodial parent. This avoids time-consuming duplication of services.

Further, unless restricted by an order of the court, any non-custodial parent has the right to attend any school activity of his or her child, which includes sports activities and class programs. Parents should keep each other informed as to these activities to avoid duplication of communications and to allow the school to better attend to the duty of teaching your children.

In cases of "joint custody" (shared parenting agreements) entitling other parents access to school personnel and activities, it is assumed that one copy of communication and information sent to the home will be shared by and between the parents.

When arranging parent conferences, it is preferred and will be the general procedure that one conference appointment be scheduled "jointly" if both parents wish to be present. It is assumed that parents are able to set aside differences and to come together on behalf of their child. A joint conference further insures that both parents are given the same information at the same time, thereby avoiding misunderstanding or misinterpretations.

In cases where joint conferences are clearly neither possible nor desirable by all parties involved, alternate arrangements may be discussed with the principal, subject to the approval of both parents, and further reviewed by Our Lady of Mercy. Every effort will be made to keep communications open with both parents while at the same time avoiding duplication of services and excessive demands on the teacher's time.

Court-ordered visitation should generally begin at the home of one of the parents and not at school. It is hoped that visitation arrangements would reflect the sensitivity of both parents to the consistency and routines that foster security in a child and allow for school responsibilities and homework to be taken care of during the school week.

If there are questions concerning this statement of procedures, or circumstances you feel necessitate other arrangements, please contact the principal personally.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

ADMISSIONS

In order to be considered for **priority** admission, a completed application must be returned by the first Friday in February.

Applications will still be accepted after this date on a rolling basis; however, limited spots are available for the freshman class.

Our Lady of Mercy uses several criteria in the admissions process, including, but not limited to:

- Timely submission of a completed application
- Current teacher and principal recommendations
- Academic records
- Proficiency/standardized test results
- Placement exam results
- Disciplinary records
- Immunization Record Form 3231
- Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental and Nutrition Screening is Form 3300
- Involvement within the school and community
- Leadership potential

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Our Lady of Mercy is a college preparatory school. Minimum requirements for graduation are in line with local and state requirements. Students may earn up to 28 units. Theology is required each year of attendance.*

<u>Course</u>	<u>Our Lady of Mercy Requirements</u>	<u>College Recommended</u>
English	4	4
Theology*	4	N/A
Mathematics	4	4
Science	4	3
Social Studies	3.5	3
Foreign Language	2	2
Technology/ Business	.5	.5
Health	.5	.5
P.E.	.5	.5
(Students with exceptional academic priorities may apply to the administration for a review of this requirement.)		
Fine Arts	1	1

College-preparatory curriculum must include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and an advanced course (Advanced Algebra, Pre-Calculus, etc.). The courses listed above for graduation are considered minimum requirements. Our Lady of Mercy requires students to take a minimum of two (2) years of the same foreign language. The typical graduate from Our Lady of Mercy will have earned up to 28 credits toward graduation. Advanced Placement courses are offered in American History, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, World History, Calculus (AB & BC), Chemistry, Physics, Economics, Government, French Language & Culture, Spanish Language & Culture, Biology, Psychology, Computer Science, and Statistics. AP test fees of **\$97.00** will be collected in January. Students who register for AP courses are required to take the AP test. Failure to take the AP test will result in a failing grade for the course.

AP students who have more than five absences or who earn grades of 73 or lower in an AP class at the end of the first semester, except for AP Science classes, must change from the AP class to a regular class for second semester unless they receive the written permission of the AP teacher to remain in the class. Students who drop or are removed from an AP class after first semester will be required to pay the AP test fee and the AP test cancellation fee.

Honors and AP courses are weighted. For Honors courses, the grade appearing on the report card and transcript has four (4) additional points added to the actual grade. For AP courses, the report card and transcript have an eight (8) point addition. Therefore, the maximum grade that a student can earn is 100 in a Standard level course, 104 in an Honors course, and 108 in an Advanced Placement course. However, no weight is added to a grade less than 70. That is, weight cannot change a failing grade to passing.

Seniors will be allowed to exempt their second semester final exam(s) with an unrounded average of 93 and permission by the instructor. **Only seniors who have 5 or fewer unexcused (see pages 30/31 for an explanation of excused/unexcused events) attendance events (includes absences and tardies) in second semester, will be allowed to exempt. Exceptions to this rule will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal.** Seniors must be present in class through the day before the exam in order to qualify for exam exemption.

Service Hour Instructions School Year 2020 – 2021

General Requirements: Students are required to complete ten hours of Christian Service* for each semester (for a total of twenty hours for the year) to be submitted by the due dates listed below. In order to receive credit for service, students are to download the form from the OLM website, fill it out using drop-down menus, have it signed by their supervisors, and submit it directly to the Campus Ministry office which will record hours centrally. Incomplete forms will not be processed. As in the past, failure to complete the prescribed requirement will result in a deduction to the theology grade of one point for each hour (or part of an hour) left uncompleted.

Carryover from Summer and First Semester: Any hours completed since **June 1, 2020** will count for the **2020-21** school year. Therefore, if students complete 20 hours over the summer, their requirement is satisfied for both semesters. However, they may only receive extra credit for hours once. Hours completed in previous school years (before **June 1, 2020**) are ineligible for satisfying the requirements for **2020 – 2021**. For example:

If a student completes....	then the student will receive...
10 summer hours	Full credit for the fall semester; must complete 10 more hours for the spring semester.
20 summer hours	Full credit for both semesters and three extra credit points for the fall semester.
26 summer hours	Full credit for both semesters and three extra credit points both semesters.

10 summer hours + 6 hours during the fall + 6 hours during the spring Full credit for both semesters, three extra credit points in the fall, and one extra credit point in the spring (because the 22 total hours exceed the requirement by 2 hours = 1 point).

*Christian Service: Acceptable service hours will meet the following requirements:

- No compensation may be received for service performed. This includes both monetary and non-monetary compensation (i.e. free food, merit badges, etc.) The service must be “out of the goodness of your heart.”
- Liturgical duties (i.e. serving at the altar, as a lector, music ministry, etc.) are unacceptable because Catholics have an obligation to participate fully, consciously, and actively in the Liturgy.
- Household and neighborhood chores are unacceptable: Examples of such unacceptable service include mowing the lawn, babysitting, etc.
- Service required at OLM is unacceptable: For example, fulfilling team or club responsibilities or helping at OLM during the school day are not acceptable.
- Acceptable service hours will be works of mercy and foster Gospel values.

While preapproval is not required, students should ask ahead of time if they have questions as to whether a project is acceptable.

CREDITS FOR PROMOTION

Promotion to the next grade level will be determined in the following manner:

- Freshman to Sophomore – six (6) credits
- Sophomore to Junior – twelve (12) credits
- Junior to Senior – eighteen (18) credits
- Senior to Graduation– twenty-four (24) + credits

STUDENT COURSE FAILURES

Teachers are available to assist students after school until 3:30 pm and by appointment. Students are encouraged to first seek assistance from their teachers if they are experiencing difficulties in courses and may be asked by the teacher to stay after school for extra assistance. At OLM, students will also be supported in academic achievement by the Student Success Team which consists of the school counselor and members of the faculty and administration. Students are expected to make up failures in summer school before moving to the next grade level. Summer School information is provided with the final grade report. Once admitted to OLM, students who fail semester courses at

OLM may not repeat the failed courses at OLM. In addition, students who fail courses at OLM may make up no more than 2.0 credit hours for credit transfer from local summer schools or other administration approved schools. All credit sources must meet OLM standards and receive prior approval from the Studies Office. Appeals for exception to this requirement must be in writing to the Studies Office and the Principal, who will make the final decision.

CURRICULUM

Please see OLM Website under “Academics” for an updated listing. (www.mercycatholic.org)

GRADING POLICY

The professional staff, under the supervision of the Principal, is responsible for reporting a student’s academic progress to parents. This reporting includes a mid-term report and semester report. The most current grade information is available online via the Power School portal which can be found on the school webpage.

Our Lady of Mercy may use whatever format is considered effective for report cards. Report cards should include a comprehensive listing of courses/subjects, a letter or numeric equivalent indicating achievement levels, and specific comments (optional). In all cases, Our Lady of Mercy uses the Archdiocesan grading scale.

<u>Average</u>	<u>Grade</u>
90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
74 – 79	C
70 – 73	D
0 – 69	F

Parents may make inquiries as to the assessments that resulted in the cumulative grade on a report card. Parents have five (5) days after the issuance of report cards to challenge a grade. The date of issuance is the date the report cards were mailed. After five (5) days the grade will become permanent. Grade changes will not be made unless academic evidence warrants such a change. Furthermore, despite parent requests, comments will not be modified or deleted.

SEMESTER GRADES

Students at Our Lady of Mercy receive final grades at the end of each semester. These grades will include a final examination that will count 10% - 9th, 15% - 10th and 20% - 11th and 12th of the semester grade.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards are mailed home at mid-term and at the end of each semester. These reports are a means of informing parents of a student’s progress and of providing both the teacher and the student with objective criteria for evaluation. In accordance with school policy, all financial obligations must be met before report cards will be sent out. Report cards and/or transcripts may be held for:

- Non-payment of tuition and/or fees.
- Athletic equipment, Books, or Musical Instruments not returned.
- Unfulfilled disciplinary obligations.
- Computer or other school property not returned.

Students must contact the business office to clear deficiencies before receiving report cards or having transcripts mailed.

Potential Failure Reports may be mailed to parents as the deficiency occurs to inform them of the student’s academic difficulty. If parents have questions concerning their student’s progress, arrangements should be made to meet with the individual teachers. The student may be included in this meeting.

HONOR ROLL

To be considered eligible for either of the two (2) Honor Roll lists, a student must take at least seven subjects. The Honor Roll is based on the grades received during each grading period for courses in the following disciplines: Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Theology, and Foreign Language. **All electives are excluded.** Eligibility is as follows:

- Excellence Honors - Must have a 96+ Grade Point Average (unrounded) and no grade below 85.
- Honors - Must have a 90+ Grade Point Average (unrounded) and no grade below 80.

Students in AP classes will receive 8 bonus points on their semester grade to a maximum of 108.

Students in Honors classes will receive 4 bonus points on their semester grade to a maximum of 104.

VALEDICTORIAN & SALUTATORIAN

Consideration for Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be based on the following criteria: graduating seniors with the highest cumulative grade point averages at the end of the seventh semester; attendance at Our Lady of Mercy for a minimum of three (3) full years; successful completion of five (5) AP classes beginning with the class of 2023; no ISS or OSS, and exemplary attendance. The Principal in consultation with the Faculty Graduation Committee will make the final decision on the selection of the Valedictorian and Salutatorian.

Honor Pledge

I pledge on my Honor that I shall abide by the rules and uphold the ideals of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School and the Gospel Values of Jesus Christ. I will protect my good name and that of my school, and will see that others do the same.

I. Philosophy

The values of honesty, scholarship and trust are essential to the mission of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. We strive to provide an environment that recognizes these values as instrumental to building the moral character of our students while stressing the importance of personal responsibility and fairness.

For this reason, students who attend Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School will adhere to a strict Honor Code. Students are required to abide by the Honor Pledge on all work. The Honor Code goes beyond Academic Honor. It informs the conduct of every Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School Student - on the field, in the locker room, on the weekends, with underclassmen and peers. Failing to abide by the Honor Code will result in disciplinary action. The Honor Council will enforce the Honor Code, educate the students on how to live as honorable people, and recommend the penalties for the offense to the Principal.

II. What constitutes an Honor Code Offense?

A person who violates honor by lying, cheating, unauthorized collaboration / communication, plagiarism, stealing, unauthorized recordings / photographs goes through the Honor Council Process. A person who violates discipline policy does not go through the Honor Council, but through the discipline system.

- A. Lying: an attempt to cover up one's own misdeeds or the misdeeds of others; giving false information; misrepresenting the truth; falsifying the signature of another person on any document.
- B. Cheating: deliberately giving, receiving, or copying any unauthorized information on any quiz, test, exam, or other written work. It is passing off another's work as one's own (Including from the Internet). Merely having discussions in advance, notes, or other information on one's person while taking a test could constitute an Honor Council Violation.
- C. Unauthorized Collaboration/Communication: sharing or exchanging information, news, or ideas with classmates verbally or through the use of an electronic device during any assessment (including take home test), writing project, or class assignment.
- D. Plagiarism: passing off the words or ideas of others as your own work without citing them properly whether published or unpublished. Using the computer to misrepresent information as one's own is considered computer fraud/plagiarism. Copying a computer file is the same as copying or having someone else write a paper/report/vocabulary answers and is not allowed for any reason.
- E. Stealing: taking something which belongs to another without consent. Additionally, damage or destruction of any school property will not be tolerated and may constitute an Honor Council Offense.
- F. Unauthorized Recordings/Photographs: making or receiving any recordings (audio or video) or a picture made using any type of camera of faculty, students, assessments or academic assignments.

III. Institution of the Honor Code

Students' and parents' signatures on the Handbook form indicate that they understand and will abide by/support the code of Honor.

IV. The Process of an Honor Violation Case

When the Administration is informed about a possible honor violation - by teacher or student –teachers will be assigned the case. The teacher will inform the parents that they have made a referral to the Honor Council. The Assistant Principal will call to inform the parents of the time and date of the Honor Council meeting. The meeting with parents and students will last no longer than 30 minutes.

At the hearing:

- The Assistant Principal will explain the case to all present.
- All written statements are shared.
- The student and the parents are invited in.
- The student is invited to give his or her testimony.
- Follow-up questions from Honor Council Members.
- The student and parents are excused, so that the council can review the evidence.
- Honor council members discuss case and vote amongst a minimum of three possible determinations: Guilty, Negligent, Not Guilty (Negligent means there is some negligent behavior, but no evidence of actual honor violation).
- Honor Council will make their recommendation to the Principal.
- The Principal will inform the parents of the final decision within 24 hours.

V. Number of Honor Council Violations

If a student accumulates two Honor Council violations reported by a teacher, staff member, or student, he or she will have a complete hearing with the Honor Council Committee. If a student receives a third violation and following the customary honor council review, he or she will not receive a standard penalty, but will have a hearing with the Discipline Committee which determines continued matriculation at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. A first or second honor council referral could result in a minimum penalty of one detention or a maximum penalty of permanent expulsion, after consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, depending on the severity of the initial referral. Historically, students who have received a third honor council violation referral have been permanently removed from the student body.

VI. Student Responsibilities

While it may be difficult for a student to report an Honor violation since it is a classmate who may be involved, the student should know that he or she is helping not only a fellow classmate, but also the integrity of the entire school. The student should take pride that he or she had the courage to acknowledge the problem and act upon it rather than allow it to harm the Mercy community as well as the student. The witness should report the incident to a teacher, counselor, the Principal or Assistant Principal. The name of the witness is never revealed.

VII. Penalties

Penalties range from (but not limited to) detentions, Saturday School, lunch detentions, restitution, letters of apology, essays, school clean up, grade changes (at the discretion of the teacher) or suspension (depending on the severity of the violation), potential loss of membership/participation in honor societies and athletics, or even expulsion from school. The penalties are recommended by the Honor Council and are reviewed by the Principal, who then informs the parents and the student of the penalty. Historically, students who have received a third Honor Council referral have been permanently removed from the student body.

Note:

The Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School Honor Code is based on information from “A Handbook for Developing and Sustaining Honor Codes” (CSEE), the Montclair Kimberly Academy Code (Montclair, New Jersey), St. Mary’s Episcopal School Code (Memphis, Tennessee), Holy Innocents Episcopal School Code (Atlanta, Georgia), St. Pius X Catholic High School (Atlanta, Georgia), St. Thomas High School (Houston, Texas), and based on faculty discussions at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE GUIDELINES

The building will be opened at 7:00 a.m. prior to first period. The internal doors from the lobby will be open to students at 7:30 a.m. The building will be locked **fifteen (15)** minutes after school is dismissed. Students involved in activities following school need to be at their destination by 3:30 p.m. After 3:30 p.m., students waiting for a ride must gather in the atrium and not reenter the building.

Once a student is dropped off at school, he/she may not leave campus until he/she is picked up by a parent or guardian (EXCEPTION: with written parent/guardian consent and the administration's approval).

EARLY DISMISSAL

- Requests for early dismissal must be made in writing, in advance, by a parent/guardian of the student. The request must include the date and time of dismissal. The reason for the absence should also be included.
- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to make personal/medical/dental appointments after school hours. Absences during class time will have a definite effect on the student's grades and may have an effect on class standing.
- Students must take their written request for early dismissal to the attendance office upon arrival in the morning (prior to the first bell). Office personnel are in at 7:00 a.m.
- Telephone requests will be honored only in emergency situations. While the parent/guardian may take a student out of school at any time, it is the Assistant Principal's prerogative to excuse or not to excuse the absence, tardiness or early dismissal. This includes class absences in order to attend athletic/special events or other school activities.
- If the class absences of a student, excused or unexcused, exceed twelve (12) days per school year or six (6) days per semester, the student may be required to appeal to the Faculty Discipline Committee to receive credit for the course.

FIELD TRIPS/ ATHLETIC EVENTS/EXTRACURRICULARS

In order to participate in an athletic event and/or extracurricular activity that requires early dismissal or to participate in a school sanctioned field trip, a student must have no failing grades and no more than five absences and/or tardies, excused or unexcused. Exceptions are by administrative approval only.

ABSENCES

Excused

As in early dismissals, if the absence is anticipated, a written excuse should be prepared stating the reason as well as the duration of the absence. Also, the student should obtain and complete an informed absence form from the attendance office. This should be completed three (3) days prior to the anticipated absence. **It is the student's responsibility to contact each teacher or check the blog to obtain the assignments for the excused period.**

If the student's absence is unanticipated, the parents/guardians are asked to call the school by 8:30 a.m. the day of the absence. **An excused absence will be recorded for documented illness, death in the family, medical appointment, or court summons provided that written documentation is presented. The written excuse must be brought to the office the day the student returns to class.** The following procedure will follow an absence:

- The student reports to the school office and is admitted back into class based on his/her documentation for the absence.
- The attendance office then records the absence as either excused or unexcused in the attendance database to which all teachers have access.

Students who are absent for five (5) or more consecutive days must return to school with a note from a doctor. This excuse will be duly honored and the student will be given one day per absence, up to five days, to make up work without penalty. After five days, the student will be permitted to make up work within a period of time designated by the administration. **The student is responsible for making up all work missed. It should be**

emphasized that although staff and faculty will do all they can to assist a student that may be behind due to excused absences, it remains the student's responsibility to seek this assistance.

Juniors and Seniors are granted two (2) days to visit colleges per school year. **In order for these to be excused, a form from the Guidance Office must be signed and approved by each of the student's teachers at least two (2) school days in advance.** College visits will not be approved for the day before the PSAT's are administered.

Unexcused

Starting with the 2005/2006 school year, the state of Georgia has mandated new attendance policies regarding unexcused absences and tardiness for schools. OLM will comply with these mandates. They are as follows:

- Parents of students who have 5 unexcused absences per semester will receive a letter from the attendance office notifying them of academic ramifications.
- Parents of students who have more than 5 unexcused absences in a semester will receive a letter explaining the driver's license/truancy laws in Georgia and academic and disciplinary ramifications. (If students have 10 unexcused absences in a school year, they could lose their driver's license)

While the parent/guardian may take a student out of school at any time, it is the administration's prerogative to excuse or not to excuse the absence, tardiness or early dismissal. This includes class absences in order to attend athletic events or other school activities during school hours.

If the absence is unexcused, the student may be allowed to make up work missed up to a maximum of 70%.

Also, students must be present for a minimum of four full class periods to participate in any extra-curricular activity. This policy relates to practice and competition. Athletes and performers must be on time the day following a competition or performance.

Attendance at school the day prior is required for all students who attend Homecoming Dance and Prom.

TARDINESS

Punctuality is an essential characteristic of a responsible person. Any student not in an assigned room by the start of class indicated by a bell ringing is tardy and must sign in to class using the sheet provided by the teacher. The teacher will record the tardy as excused or unexcused as part of the attendance procedure. Students who arrive late to school in the morning must receive a pass to first period from the front office.

A student who accumulates five (5) **excused or unexcused** tardies per semester from any combination of the above occurrences will receive Saturday School and parents will be notified. A student who accumulates an excess of 5 will receive administrative review and appropriate disciplinary action which may include ISS (In-school) or OSS (Out-of-School) suspension.

Students who are late to a teacher's class can expect additional consequences from that teacher. These consequences will include detention, parent contact as well as other punishments determined by the teacher.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

The discipline system at Our Lady of Mercy is an attempt to develop in the student the practice of self-discipline characterized by a sense of responsibility, maturity and respect for teachers, administrators, staff, and the rights of others. A student's enrollment at OLM indicates willingness by the student and his/her parents/guardians to accept and to support OLM's philosophy and objectives. Discipline policies allow for the creation of a safe and secure atmosphere for learning. Because every student is important, no one student will be allowed to inhibit the learning of others or the teaching process. OLM students are expected to know the school policies and behave appropriately; they are expected to report to all scheduled classes, assemblies, etc. on time and with the materials necessary for learning (pen/pencil, textbook, notebook, assignment, etc.). In the classroom, students are to conduct themselves respectfully and in a manner conducive to a learning environment. Similar responsible behavior is expected in the halls and other non-academic areas of the school campus.

The school reserves the right to review the academic, attendance, and disciplinary record of students at the end of each year to consider whether any students should be placed on academic and/or disciplinary probation or if they should not be permitted to return the following school year. Corporal punishment and verbal threats of physical harm are strictly prohibited.

A Disciplinary Review Committee (see below for more details) composed of faculty and a staff member advises and makes recommendations to the administration on serious disciplinary matters as requested by the Principal. A Discipline Review Committee may be convened at any time if deemed necessary by the administration. This committee will make a recommendation to the Principal concerning what action(s) should take place.

Parents/guardians are expected to support the discipline policies of the school, realizing that the purpose of the policies is to promote commendable and productive behavior.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of our students. Students whose conduct is unsatisfactory and/or disrespectful and who violate good order and common sense are subject to disciplinary action. **The administration reserves the right to take action on any unforeseen, yet unacceptable, inappropriate behavior.** Only the Principal and Superintendent have the authority to expel a student, and may do so at his/her discretion.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is the mission of OLM to ensure that each student has a successful school experience in a safe and supportive environment. Personal honor, integrity, and respect for others are expected of all students. In order to assist the student members of the OLM community in their attempt to live within the spirit of these expectations, guidelines for their personal conduct and penalties for failure to follow these guidelines are in place. These penalties can consist of denial of privileges, discipline contract, detentions, Saturday school, suspensions, withdrawal or expulsion. Teachers may request students to see them at an appointed time, such as after school, in order to help guide them in correcting misbehavior. If a teacher requests that a student see him or her, then it is the expectation that the student comply with the request. If not, the teacher may give the student a discipline consequence.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS

Public displays of affection and other inappropriate physical conduct and verbal statements are unacceptable at OLM and will be corrected. Continued inappropriate displays of affection or other inappropriate behavior will be considered a serious disciplinary infraction and may result in In School Suspension.

DENIAL OF PRIVILEGES

Students may be denied privileges that are normally accorded them when their conduct is not in keeping with the rules and regulations of the school. Extracurricular and athletic participation is a privilege; therefore, a coach, Administrator, or Principal may suspend or remove a player from a practice, competition or season for violation of any academic or discipline policies.

SOCIAL PROBATION

Students who commit a serious infraction or who have a series of minor infractions may be given social probation which means that the student may not participate in any extracurricular or athletic activities. In addition the student will be required to be off the campus by 3:15 p.m. each afternoon. Parents unable to pick up students on social probation will have to pay \$25/hour for a teacher to supervise their student.

DISCIPLINE CONTRACT

Students may be placed on discipline contract by the administration when their conduct is not in keeping with the rules and regulations of the school. The discipline contract is designed to assist the student in correcting misbehavior so that he or she may remain at OLM and be successful. The discipline contract may include the assignment of a faculty counselor to help guide the student in correcting his or her behavior. Parents will be notified regarding the discipline contract. Contracts will remain in force until such time that the administration agree that the student has shown the ability to respect and comply with the expectations, policies, rules and regulations of OLM as set forth in the student/parent handbook. If while on discipline contract a student's conduct is lacking in improvement, then the student may be subject to further disciplinary action. Parents will again be notified when the discipline contract is no longer in force.

DETENTION

Any staff or faculty member may impose detention. **It is the student's responsibility to serve the detention in the detention coordinator's room the day the detention is received or the day after it is received.** Detentions are held Tuesday through Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. If a student is not in the detention coordinator's room by 3:00 p.m., the student is considered late and will receive an additional detention to be served the next day along with serving the remaining time for that day. If a student is absent on the day that he/she is to serve a detention, the detention will be served the next day. **DETENTION TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING ATHLETIC CONTESTS AND WORK RESPONSIBILITIES.** Detention is an extension of the school day, and therefore students are to be in school uniform and school rules and policies still apply when serving detention. **Failure to attend an assigned detention will result in a Disciplinary Referral.**

Consequences for accumulated detentions are as follows:

1 detention	Notation in student record
3 detentions	Saturday School
5 detentions	ISS and/or meeting with parent/guardian and an administrator
More than 5	OSS and/or meeting with parent/guardian and an administrator

DISRUPTING LEARNING

Because our primary mission is the education of all students, Mercy will not tolerate behaviors which disrupt the learning of other students in classrooms. Students whose behavior draws inappropriate attention and requires consistent redirection will be subject to disciplinary action including removal from the classroom.

SATURDAY SCHOOL

Saturday School was established as an alternative to suspension for problems such as tardiness, truancy, and other infractions of school rules. The parents/guardians of students who are assigned Saturday School will be notified via email, a letter or telephone by the administration with the date of the Saturday School to be served. Saturday School is held from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., and the student's parent/guardian is required to enter the building to sign the student in and out of Saturday School. Students are to be in school uniform when attending Saturday School. The fee for Saturday School is \$20.00 and must be paid upon sign-in. **Failure to attend an assigned Saturday School will result in disciplinary action and a fee of \$20.**

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)

Students who violate the discipline policy are subject to having to serve a class day or multiple class days in ISS. The parents/guardians of students who are assigned ISS will be notified via email letter from the administration with the date that it is to be served. Any ISS assignment received automatically disqualifies the student from any athletic or extracurricular practice/competition for the school days that the ISS is assigned. If the ISS date is assigned on a Friday the suspension may include Saturday practice or competition. **Failure to attend a scheduled ISS will result in an automatic Out of School Suspension and administrative conference with the student and parents.**

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (OSS), EXPULSION, AND DISMISSAL

The Principal may impose OSS and expulsion or dismissal for serious offenses. Student OSS is dependent ultimately on the decision of the administration. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments or learning missed because of the suspension. A student who has been suspended out of school will receive a maximum grade of 70% on all assignments or assessments missed during OSS.

Serious offenses, in addition to those outlined elsewhere in this handbook, include the following: **stealing, cheating, plagiarism, vandalism, serious moral transgressions, defiant actions, civil disobedience, possession of any object that might reasonably be considered a weapon, vulgarities, or any other action that brings discredit upon the school or seriously impairs the rights of others.**

Continued offenses of a less serious nature would give reason to believe that the student is either unable or unwilling to conform to the expectations of the school. **Students must make up any and all work missed due to suspension on the day they return to school. Work that is not made up will result in a grade of zero.**

Students under suspension may not attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities from the beginning of suspension to their return to school. Parents/guardians will be notified of any suspension and generally will be required to meet with administration.

EXPULSION

As a definition, expulsion is considered a termination of enrollment. Expulsion shall be used only as a final measure or in response to an egregious offense. Expulsion results from repeated refusal to obey school rules or from conduct which endangers self and others, property, health or safety of others, and is deemed to be in the best interest of the school community. One extremely serious offense may also be cause for expulsion.

Students asked not to return the following year for behavior reasons are not considered expelled. The student has not been accepted for re-enrollment in the next academic year because of prior behavioral problems. Students not allowed to return due to failure to meet required academic standards are not considered expelled. These academic requirements are articulated in the parent-student handbook. The Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools will be informed before any action leading to expulsion is taken.

All disciplinary actions taken by Our Lady of Mercy shall be preceded by internal procedures and supported by defensible records. In those cases, where the code of discipline has reached or exceeded the allowable accumulated infractions, the Principal may expel a student after consultation with the Superintendent. Established policies and procedures must be evident during the period of accumulation (i.e., notification of parents, parent conference, behavioral contract, suspension, and/or etc.). The parents may make an appeal of expulsion to the Superintendent.

In those cases of serious breach of discipline that may result in Out of School Suspension or Expulsion the principal may elect to convene the Discipline Review Committee to examine the specific details of the situation and make a recommendation for consequences. Parents should be given twenty-four (24) hours notice as to the assigned date of the Discipline Review Committee meeting. Upon request by the parents, such notification may be waived. The committee will meet with the student and parent and make a recommendation to the principal who will communicate his/her final decision in writing.

The final disciplinary action rests with the Principal. An appeal of expulsion is made to the Superintendent.

Before the hearing is held, the parents and the student are informed of the possible recommendations of the committee and that once the hearing is in progress the student may not have the right to voluntarily withdraw in lieu of expulsion, unless that is the recommendation of the committee. If the decision to expel the student is made, the parents are notified in writing.

When a specific disciplinary issue arises from outside Our Lady of Mercy resulting in direct repercussions for a school of the archdiocese, the Principal(s) involved must immediately contact the Superintendent. In those cases, the individual school(s) should follow their handbook procedures in order to ensure established policies are followed in assigning discipline. However, in cases involving students from more than one Archdiocesan School and where expulsion could be considered, the Discipline Committee is convened and makes a recommendation to the Superintendent. The decision for expulsion or other disciplinary action in such cases rests with the Superintendent with appeals made to the Office of the Archbishop.

In those situations that arise for which no policy exists, the Superintendent in consultation with the Office of the Archbishop will render a final decision. In keeping with Canon Law, the Archbishop or his designee reserves the right to make decisions in all matters regarding archdiocesan elementary and secondary schools.

Teachers and Administrators, before assigning detention or imposing other serious disciplinary actions, will provide the student the opportunity to be heard and to have explained clearly the reasons for the disciplinary action taken.

Students or parents/guardians who have grievances have a right to appeal if they feel that they have not been dealt with fairly. The appeal for all grievances must be made to the next in line of authority, in order: Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The address for the Superintendent of Catholic Schools is: Catholic Center, 2401 Lake Park Drive S.E., Smyrna, GA 30080-8862.

GEORGIA LAW AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Parents/guardians and students need to be aware that school attendance and behavior records can affect the license to drive for students in the State of Georgia. School violations involving threatening or violent behaviors, involvement with drugs, alcohol or weapons on school grounds can render the student liable to police action and/or arrest and can seriously affect a student's ability to obtain or keep a driver's license. More information is available through the Governor's Office of Highway Safety by phone at 888-420-0767 or on the website: <http://www.gohs.state.ga.us/>

GENERAL INFORMATION

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

By enrolling at Mercy, students have agreed to participate in the entire program offered. All students are required to participate in ALL school activities that are a part of the academic/religious program. As Mercy is a Catholic high school, Masses and/or prayer services are held each month and all students are required to attend and participate.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to cooperate with all school personnel and with each other, and to behave appropriately at all times, especially at school functions on or off campus. Students can be disciplined for conduct, whether inside or outside of the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of OLM.

Discipline consequences will be determined by the administration/faculty/staff. Consequences can range from denial of privileges, detentions, Saturday School, suspension or expulsion dependent upon the situation.

1. OLM has a concern with students whose conduct on or off our school campus brings discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of its student body. Therefore, such conduct or behavior which is in opposition to our Catholic philosophy and moral standards, on the part of our students, could require a penalty or dismissal from the school. Students must adhere to OLM's regulations for student conduct at all times including but not limited to the time they leave home for school until they return home in the afternoon or evening. Any misbehavior or conduct unbecoming an OLM student which goes against Christian values in public places, including the internet, electronic devices or in vehicles of any sort that is reported to the school will be subject to investigation and penalty. Students may not bring discredit to the name of OLM.

2. It is considered a serious offense if students deliberately cause a disturbance on another campus or during an off-campus OLM sponsored event and shall be considered the same as if such actions were to take place on our campus.

3. Students are always expected to maintain order in the school. Students who repeatedly cause disturbances in class are liable to be suspended from the class. This may result in loss of credit for the course. Causing a disturbance in the Learning Commons, another study area, cafeteria, gym, or auditorium will likewise result in removal from that area as well as other disciplinary action.

Students disrupting the Learning Commons during the lunch will be restricted to the cafeteria. During lunch hours students using the Learning Commons must be engaged in quiet study only. There is no talking in the Learning Commons during lunch hours.

4. The use of inappropriate, abusive, or profane language is strictly prohibited on our campus, at extra-curricular events on another school's campus, or at off-campus activities sponsored by OLM.

5. Students may not leave the campus between arrival at school and the end of the school day unless they have received early dismissal permission or are on a school-supervised outing. Permission for early dismissal must be requested by a parent. Students who are truant from school will be suspended and called before the Discipline Review Committee.

Students may not go to the parking lot during school hours unless they secure permission from the principal or assistant principal.

6. Students must arrive on time for the first period class each day. Students are expected to be in all classes on time.

7. Students are not permitted to walk around or loiter in the halls during the school day, nor are they permitted to loiter in restrooms or empty classrooms during the school day. Students may never remain at any location on campus unattended by a school employee.

8. During school hours, students may not be in areas considered "out of bounds." "Out of Bounds" is a term used to describe any situation where a student is not where he/she is supposed to be. This includes before, during, and after school situations. Whatever the identified destination, students must not deviate from the logical route or take longer than should be expected to arrive at their destination. For example, if a student is going to the bathroom, he/she must go to the bathroom closest to his/her classroom or if a student receives a pass from the office to go to class, he/she should take no more than five (5) minutes to arrive at that classroom. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Bobcat Den
- Locker Rooms outside of P.E. class or sporting event use
- Cross Country trail if a coach is not present
- Faculty Rest Rooms
- Any wooded areas
- Inside the Academic Doors before 7:30 a.m. and after 3:30 p.m. without adult supervision
- Any storage areas on campus
- In the parking lot during school hours without administrative permission.
- Any other area deemed by the administration as "out-of-bounds"

9. Students may only be in the main school building and Bobcat Den on regular school days between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. with the supervision of a faculty or staff member. Students who attempt to gain access to the building after the doors have locked must enter from the main school building entrance. Pounding, knocking on doors and requesting admission through any other school door is not permitted. Outside of these days or times, students may only be in the school building if accompanied by a faculty or staff member.

10. Food and drinks (except for water bottles from school vending machines) are not allowed in any area of the school building at any time before, during or after the school day apart from the cafeteria. Seniors are allowed to eat in Senior Courtyard during lunch. Students are not allowed to order any type of food and have it delivered to the school during school hours. Students are allowed to eat snacks during the break providing they clean up after themselves.

11. The chewing of gum and/or spitting of any type in the school building are not permitted.

12. Students may not sell tickets, candy, or other products in school without the approval of the principal.

13. Students are required to turn in all official forms with parents' signatures within 2 school days or on the dates specified by all school offices. This includes, but is not limited to class syllabi, discipline contracts, registration materials, etc.

14. Students are required to come prepared for class which includes but is not limited to bringing devices/books, homework and classroom supplies as directed by the teacher each day.

15. Students are to wear their uniform appropriately and within the guidelines stipulated in the handbook.

16. Gambling (e.g., pools concerning athletic contests), betting, and any other form of gaming are prohibited.

17. Students are never to give their locker combination to others. Only appropriate decorations are permitted inside the lockers. Lockers are not to be jammed in any way that prevents their closing because this may permanently damage the locking mechanism and allow for inappropriate access by other students. **Only approved decorations by the administration may go on the outside of a student's locker.**

18. Students are not allowed to have visitors on campus during regular school hours, including lunch periods. Students from other schools (other than OLM alumni) are not allowed on campus during school hours and will be asked to leave.

PERSONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Parents and students should be aware that Georgia law has established a school safety zone which includes the schools and areas within 1000 feet of those schools, in which tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, and weapons are strictly forbidden. OLM is a drug, alcohol, tobacco free campus at all times and during all events. OLM is required by law to report drug and weapon violations to the police.

The administration reserves the right to determine the school's involvement at the time of the incident or at the time the incident is reported to school administration.

1. The use, possession, sale, purchase or distribution of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products (including, but not limited to "spice" and/or "herbal supplements" designed to mimic or produce effects similar to illegal substances) on or off our campus at any time, including but not limited to personal and/or after-school functions, is strictly prohibited. The use or possession of tobacco products, other nicotine delivery devices, or any type of electronic cigarette on school property of any school function is prohibited. Examples are, but not limited to, chewing tobacco and vaping. A school function is any activity in which the name of OLM is used whether the activity takes place on school grounds or not. The amount of alcohol/drugs/tobacco is irrelevant. The possession of drug-related paraphernalia or alcohol is likewise prohibited. Students who demonstrate by their behavior that they are involved in illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol could be subject to a random drug test ordered by a member of the administration. In addition, students who are associated with other students in possession of alcohol, drugs or tobacco products in any vehicle are subject to the same disciplinary penalties. If the student refuses help or will not agree to abide by the school's policies; he/she will NOT be permitted to remain in the school community.

2. The use or possession of a dangerous weapon or explosive compound is strictly prohibited on our campus at any time, including after-school functions. This includes, but is not limited to, all types of fireworks. OLM reserves the right to search any item that is brought onto campus. Toy weapons, pocket knives and other tools are included in this category.

3. Fighting is strictly prohibited before, during, and after school between our students, or between our students and others. If a student makes a choice to get involved in a physical confrontation with another student, then he/she makes the choice to accept the consequences, whether he/she initiated the action or responded to it. Students should be aware that the penalty for fighting may be imposed on all participants equally.

RESPECT

Personal honor, integrity and respect for others are expected at all times of every student. Students, faculty and staff are required to be respectful to each other and expected to always portray that respectful behavior in their daily lives. Respect includes but is not limited to:

- Listening
- Wording of speech
- Body language
- Tone of speech
- Written Communication
- Social Media

Discipline consequences will be determined by the administration/faculty/staff. Consequences can range from denial of privileges, detentions, Saturday School, suspension or expulsion dependent upon the situation.

1. Students shall always conduct themselves with due respect toward one another and faculty/staff members. Student disrespect towards the faculty and staff should be considered a most serious infraction.

2. It is considered a serious offense if students harass faculty and staff of OLM or if they invade their privacy by disturbing them at their homes, on their cell phones or on the internet. Students will be held accountable for negative comments on social media outlets written about the school, staff, or other students.

3. The hazing or initiating of any student in the school or as part of an athletic team, fine arts organization or club is strictly prohibited.

4. Students are required to show responsible and respectful behavior in the cafeteria and to the cafeteria staff. Students misbehaving or not picking up after themselves will be penalized.
5. Students may express their points of view provided they do not seek to coerce others to join them in their mode of expression and provided they do not intrude on the rights of others. All meetings and assemblies on the campus, as well as the distribution of literature or buttons and/or display of materials, must have the prior approval of the administration.
6. Lying in order to cover up one's own misdeeds or the misdeeds of others is an offense against the school community. In more serious situations lying and/or refusing to furnish information during a school investigation can be grounds for expulsion.
7. Theft, damage, or destruction of the property of others or of the school - including but not limited to library books and materials, graffiti, writing, marking, or defacing desks, tables, walls, books, lockers, etc.- are violations of the rights of others. If a student defaces or damages school property, the parents/guardians concerned will be notified and required to pay for the cost of repairs and/or replacement based on current replacement costs. It is important that our students have a deep respect for the property of OLM and others.
8. Failure to follow a reasonable request of a faculty or staff member will be considered insubordination and subject to a serious discipline sanction.

HARASSMENT

It is imperative to maintain an educational environment that encourages optimum human growth and development. Respect for the dignity of each person is essential to Catholic tradition. It is vital that each school program maintains a learning and working environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation of students by any other student, lay employee, religious, or priest. The school will treat allegations of harassment seriously and will review and investigate such allegations in a prompt, confidential, and thorough manner. Substantiated acts of harassment will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Students found to have filed false or frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to treatment that is hostile or intimidating because of the individual's perceived differences including, but not limited to race, creed, color, national origin, physical or mental impairment or sex. Harassment can occur any time during or after school or during school related activities. It includes, but is not limited to, any and all of the following:

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: The posting of derogatory comments or images about students or adults in the Mercy community is unacceptable and will be considered a serious discipline infraction. The identity of students reporting inappropriate postings will be protected and considered confidential.

VERBAL HARASSMENT: Derogatory comments and jokes, threatening words spoken to another person or communicated through a digital device.

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT: Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement.

VISUAL HARASSMENT: Derogatory, demeaning or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings or gestures.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Conduct himself/herself in a manner which contributes to a positive school environment
- Avoid any activity that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating or harassing
- Immediately report all incidents to a supervising adult
- Discontinue the inappropriate conduct immediately when informed that he/she is perceived as engaging in intimidating, harassing or unwelcome conduct.

OLM has an absolute "NO RETALIATION" policy in regard to any discipline issues regardless of persons involved. Appropriate disciplinary penalties will apply to anyone involved in any form of retaliation.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as any act committed against someone joining or becoming a member or maintaining membership in any organization that is humiliating, intimidating or demeaning, or endangers the health and safety of a person.

Hazing includes active or passive participation in such acts and occurs regardless of the willingness to participate in the activities. Hazing creates an environment and school climate in which dignity and respect are absent and therefore is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

No student, parent, teacher, administration or volunteer shall permit, condone or tolerate hazing. This policy applies to hazing behavior that occurs on or off school property and during and after school hours.

Invitation into campus organizations, athletic teams, and other activities undertaken by such organizations or individuals must be consistent with the stated purpose of the organizations and the educational mission of the schools of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Any activities that may be construed as hazing are prohibited. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.

Students found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline which may include but is not limited to detention, suspension or expulsion from the school. The Archdiocese of Atlanta will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, parent, teacher, administrator or other archdiocesan employee or volunteer who is found to have violated this policy. Civil authorities may also be contacted dependent on the nature of the hazing incident.

Reporting Procedures

Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to the building principal. The principal will notify both the Superintendent of Schools and the Office of Safe Environment for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The Archdiocese of Atlanta will undertake or authorize an investigation by an archdiocesan official or by a third party designated by the Archdiocese.

Reprisal

The Archdiocese of Atlanta will take appropriate action against any student, parent, teacher, administrator, school employee or volunteer who retaliates against anyone who makes a good faith report of hazing, or who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation or hearing about a hazing incident. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

OLM is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone in the school. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, OLM expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy re-emphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others.

Sexual Harassment Defined

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material, whether in form of music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one's possession in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school grounds; continuing unwanted written or oral communication directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene T-shirts, hats or buttons; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and/or sexually explicit gestures; inappropriate exposure of body parts and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment. Isolated trivial incidents are not sufficient to constitute harassment and will be handled according to the student discipline policy.

Allegations of any type of harassment are to be reported to the teacher and the administration. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential by all parties involved. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation. If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency, and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual, and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all of the following:

- Verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim,
- A parent/student/principal conference,
- Written warning/ reprimand and parent notification, entered in the student's file,
- Detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities,
- Discipline contract, possibly requiring professional intervention,
- Suspension or expulsion.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is handled separately because of its potential criminal nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the principal or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident (GA. Code Section 19-7-5) that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools will be contacted immediately in these situations. Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when: the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Georgia law. In these cases, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

GANGS

Youth gangs and gang-related activity are prohibited. A gang is defined as any non-school sponsored group, usually secret and/or exclusive in membership, whose purpose or practices include unlawful or anti-social behavior or any action that threatens the welfare of others. Gang activity could possibly include the following:

- Recruitment and/or initiation,
- A manner of grooming, hair style, and/or wearing of clothing, jewelry, head coverings or accessories which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark, or other attributes denotes membership in a gang,
- Displaying gang markings (tattoos) or slogans on school or personal property or clothing,
- Possessing literature that indicates gang membership,
- Fighting, assault, hazing, extortion, establishing turf,
- Use of hand signals, gang vocabulary, and nicknames,
- Possession of weapons or explosive materials,
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia,
- Attendance at functions sponsored by a gang or known gang members,
- Exhibiting behavior fitting police profile of gang-related drug dealing,
- Being arrested or stopped by the police with a known gang member,
- Selling or distributing of drugs for a known gang member,
- Helping a known gang member commit a crime, or any other action directly resulting from membership or interest in a gang.

Consequences

- If a student is suspected or identified as being a member of a gang, shows interest in joining a gang, initiates or participates in any gang related activity, or has been approached for recruitment, any or all of the following steps may be taken:
- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and appropriate intervention initiated.
- A behavior contract will be prepared stating the conditions for the student remaining in the school.
- Students may be referred to counseling (personal and/or family).
- Students may be referred to the Department of Human Services or other welfare or childcare agencies of the respective county.
- Students may be referred to outside agencies or programs for treatment when use of drugs and or alcohol is involved.
- Students may be referred to the Task Force on Violent Crime.
- Police, Juvenile Court, and other appropriate authorities will be notified of violence and/or illegal activities.
- Students may be suspended and/or expelled as already outlined in the school discipline policies.
- Parents/students will be held liable and financially responsible for all forms of vandalism.

Jurisdiction

Realizing that gang activity is a community concern, communication will be maintained with the police department and Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools on all matters related to gang activity within this community. Involvement and jurisdiction of school authorities in gang related incidents occurring outside the school or off school property will be determined in cooperation with archdiocesan legal authorities and the police, and will take into consideration the nature of the incident, the safety of the student, the effect of the incident on other students, and the good order and functioning of the school.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ASBESTOS-FREE BUILDING

Our school does not contain asbestos in any form. All reporting procedures, as required by AHERA, are executed annually. The school's management plan is available for your review upon request.

AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING POLICY

No audio/video recording devices may be used during functions of the school without the expressed permission of the Principal. Such events include, but are not limited to: classroom presentations, awards ceremonies, performances, parent conferences, administrative conferences, and religious services. This policy also includes recording of conversations either in person or by telephone by or among students, parents, teachers, or school administrators on school property or involving the use of the school telephone.

BOOK BAGS

All book bags or athletic bags are to be with the student, placed in lockers or on a hallway hook at all times except for school mass and assemblies when book bags should remain in the locked classroom. Hallway floors will be cleared of all book bags during the evening and given to the front office. Students will need to see the front office to retrieve their bag and may receive a detention. Habitual violators will have additional consequences.

CHILD ABUSE LAWS

Our Lady of Mercy abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Georgia. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services. The faculty and staff are mandated reporters of any suspected or reported abuse of a minor child.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE SCHOOL

Good communication between the home and school is an important part of fostering growth in the child. It is important for all of us, students, teachers, and parents to do all that we can to promote communication and mutual understanding. One of the significant ways in which we can do this is by learning and working through the procedures followed by the institution. We ask, therefore, that you become familiar with the following procedures and use them when communicating with the school:

General Procedures

Telephone Calls/E-Mails

The most effective and efficient way to reach a teacher or staff member is by e-mail.

However, if you wish to talk with a member of the faculty or administration and they are unavailable when you call the school, please leave the following information with the receptionist or on the staff member's voice mail:

- your name
- phone numbers where you can be reached
- when you can be reached at each of those numbers

If your telephone call is not returned within two school days, please call again. If this second call is unanswered please notify a member of the administration. E-mails will be treated in the same manner as telephone calls. E-mail addresses may be found on the Our Lady of Mercy web site (www.mercycatholic.org). Faculty and administration will not respond to emails sent to their personal email accounts.

Appointments

It is important that parents who wish to meet with a member of the faculty or with an administrator call ahead to schedule an appointment. Due to the daily changing academic schedule "drop-in" visits on faculty members are not allowed. The presentation and instructional time is paramount. "Drop-in" visits detract from the normal schedules or the opportunity for the teachers to use their planning time to prepare for class, thus the need to schedule an appointment.

CONDUCT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

The community that Mercy represents has a right to protect its reputation. An Our Lady of Mercy student is a Mercy Bobcat twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. A Mercy student's activities are always subject to review. (Please review discipline policies.)

Any student who becomes involved in public misconduct, whether it relate to a school activity or not, may be reviewed by the Principal for possible disciplinary action. It is important to remember that even misconduct outside of school reflects unfavorably on the school and the entire student body.

DANCES SPONSORED BY ANY SCHOOL GROUP

Attendance at school-sponsored dances is a privilege, not a student right. Only Mercy students, friends of Mercy students, Mercy alumni, and persons connected with the band will be admitted to the dance. To attend dances, students must have parental and administration approval. The cost of these dances varies and is announced in advance. It is important that students follow all announced deadlines for formal dance reservations. Students are expected to observe good taste in their dress, behavior, and dancing.

The following policies apply to Our Lady of Mercy dances:

- Only current OLM students and their dates may attend.
- Students may be asked to present their I.D. card for admittance.
- All school policies are in effect and strictly enforced.
- No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products are permitted at the dance or on school property.
- Once students leave the dance, they will not be permitted to re-enter and the school will not be held responsible for their actions.
- OLM has reciprocal agreements with other Diocesan schools regarding enforcement of student behavior.
- Any lewd/vulgar dances, such as slam/freak-dancing, grinding, etc., are unacceptable and prohibited.
- No book/gym bags, extra-large purses, etc. are allowed.
- OLM is not responsible for lost/stolen personal items.
- Students assigned Discipline Ineligibility may not attend.
- Students will not be permitted to loiter on the grounds after the dance.
- Any disruptive behavior will result in loss of privileges to attend future dances.

FORMAL/SEMI-FORMAL DANCE DRESS

Students and their dates must adhere to the guidelines below and are expected to be dressed appropriately at OLM dances. Students are responsible for their date's appropriate attire and behavior. Those unable to comply with the dress code will be refused admittance. Inappropriate behavior during the dance may cause the student and his/her date to be removed from the dance.

Boys

Suits or tuxedos; dress shirt with tie; dress shoes and; hair well groomed; no earrings; no hats. Dress shirt and shoes must be worn at all times.

Girls

Semi-formal cocktail dresses or floor-length formal gowns must be worn. These may be strapless, halter style, or with spaghetti straps; however, slits on the side may only be to the knee; no plunging necklines or backs; no bare midriffs or open sides. Semi-formal dresses must be at least knee length. Shoes must be worn at all times unless instructed otherwise.

DRESS CODE FOR SPECIAL EVENTS AND OUT-OF-UNIFORM DAYS

On occasion, out-of-uniform days are allowed. Dress is according to the themes dictated by the special day. In all cases, students are expected to be neat and well groomed. Students are not permitted to come to school in shorts or unsightly jeans, pajama bottoms, tank tops, low-cut or revealing tops, nor in sheer-type blouses or shirts. Skirts must adhere to the uniform skirt length. Hats are not to be worn in the building. No garment may ever be worn that is cut off, ragged, or torn. Blouses or tops which expose the midriff when wearer is in any position may not be worn. No shirts with reference to alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, drug use, inappropriate moral messages, racial, or prejudicial statements or inferences may be worn. Leggings, stretch tights, jeggings or any other tight fitting pants

should not be worn. Should a student come to school in uniform on an out-of-uniform day, that student is to remain in uniform with all components properly worn. In all cases, students whose clothing does not meet the expectations of the school will be sent home or their parents must bring them proper clothing.

Note: Because of the unique and constantly changing nature of fashion, the school reserves the right to classify any style of dress or grooming as inappropriate.

Members of the National Honor Society may wear NHS polo shirts provided advance permission has been granted by the Assistant Principal.

DRESS CODE FOR SCHOOL

Students are expected to follow the guidelines for school uniforms set forth here. Students that do not adhere to this policy will be considered out of uniform and subject to the discipline policy. Students that are out of uniform will receive a detention. More serious violations of the dress code will result in parent contact, referral to the administration and In School Suspension.

DRESS CODE FOR MASS

Students are expected to wear the winter uniform without fleeces or letter jackets and may not carry purses or book bags. Students without a Mass uniform will receive a detention.

SUMMER/SPRING UNIFORM

Worn from the beginning of school until Thanksgiving and from after spring break until the end of school. This uniform includes the Polo, white button collar shirt, or blouse.

WINTER UNIFORM

The winter uniform is worn from Thanksgiving until after spring break. This uniform includes the white button collar shirt or blouse and optional sweater, vest or Mercy letter jacket. Boys must wear ties with collar buttoned.

GENERAL UNIFORM GUIDELINES

Boys and Girls Slacks

All students will wear dark charcoal gray poly-blend slacks purchased from J&R Clothing. Boy's slacks should be fitted to the waist and be hemmed properly. Pants worn on or below the hips are not permitted. **Solid black or solid brown belts must be worn by boys and girls.**

Girls Skirts/Skort

Girls may wear a dark watch-plaid skort. Senior girls may wear the plaid skort or a plain gray skirt. All of these items must be purchased from J&R Clothing. The hem of the skort/skirt must extend to the knee. Skirt length must be determined as appropriate by teachers and administrators. Skirts may not be rolled at any time in order to alter the length. No pins may be worn in a skirt. Girls whose skirts are determined to be inappropriate will receive a detention and may be sent home.

Summer Uniform Shirts

Golf shirts will be gray with a stitched Our Lady of Mercy emblem and they will be available only from J & R Clothing. All shirts must be tucked in.

Shirts/Blouses

All students will wear white oxford weave shirts with a button-down collar. They may be short or long sleeve. If students choose to wear long sleeves, they must be rolled down and the cuffs buttoned. Boys must always have the top button buttoned when the tie is worn. Oversized blouses and shirts are not allowed. Seniors have the option of wearing a commemorative senior sport shirt. All shirts and blouses must be tucked in. Athletic team shirts or club shirts are not permitted to be worn during the school day unless permission is granted by the administration.

Shoes

For both boys and girls, the only acceptable uniform shoe is the tan **leather** Sperry/Docksider style which must be properly worn at all times. All shoes must have scuff-proof soles. Shoelaces must be worn and tied.

Socks

Argyle socks or socks with print designs or logos may not be worn. Girls must wear knee high gray or burgundy socks or footed tights, no leggings, with skirts or skorts. Girls are not permitted to mix and match colored socks. Boys are to wear only **black dress socks**. Girls wearing pants are to wear **only black dress socks**.

Sweaters and Jackets

Students may wear the OFFICIAL acrylic or cotton burgundy sweater, cardigan or vest or official Mercy letter jacket or school approved jacket. The sweaters must be purchased at J&R Clothing. Other brands will be considered out-of-uniform and may not be worn. Sweaters and jackets may not be tied around a student's waist during the school day. Mercy outerwear other than the letter jacket may not be worn during the school day. **Note: All students should own a sweater or a letter jacket because out-of-uniform sweaters, jackets, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and sweatpants may not be worn in the school building during the school day. Students may wear approved fleece jackets with tie and/or shirt exposed.**

T-Shirts

All t-shirts worn under the uniform shirt/blouse/golf polo must be completely white and unadorned and should not be visible at the sleeves. Long sleeve t-shirts are not permitted to be worn under a short sleeve Mercy shirt. No t-shirts with advertisements or concert promotions (white or colored) are to be worn at any time.

Ties

A burgundy/gray stripe tie will be worn by all underclassmen. These ties are available at J&R Clothing and are worn with the winter uniform. Senior boys have a senior tie they must wear. Conservative black bow ties may be worn.

Hats

Hats will not be worn on campus during the school day nor should they be carried in any part of student's clothing. Hats may be confiscated and turned in to the administration. Detentions may also be issued. No ear warmers, bandanas, or scarves can be worn in the buildings.

Other Specific Areas

Chains, metal studs, and/or unusual markings/designs on clothing and/or accessories are prohibited. This includes designs or colors on contact lenses. Writing on or otherwise defacing uniform clothing or shoes may be subject to disciplinary action.

Any clothing that does not comply with uniform guidelines or the dress code for special events is subject to confiscation without return.

HAIR STYLES

Hair, in general, must be not distracting. The school reserves the right to control the extremes in hairstyles to include dyeing or bleaching hair colors which are distracting or hair that is unkempt in appearance. Hair should not be dyed unnatural colors. Shaving patterns in the hair are not allowed. Hair accessories must be plain, no greater than two inches in width, and either burgundy, black, grey, or white in color. It is impossible to include and define every conceivable hair style. Therefore, parents and students should consult the administration if there is a question.

Acceptable length of hair for boys is to the eyebrows in front and trimmed above the collar and the bottom of the ear on the rear and sides. Actual hair length for boys may not be longer than 3 inches. Ponytails may not be worn by boys. The administration reserves the final word on what constitutes acceptable hairstyles. Students who violate the hair style policies will receive a detention and may be sent home until the hair style is corrected.

FACIAL HAIR

Male students must be clean shaven (no visible hair on face). No exceptions will be allowed. The administration reserves the final word on what constitutes acceptable hairstyles. **Students who violate this policy will receive a written warning and will need to shave that evening before returning to school. Students who continue to be in violation or who violate the policy again will receive a detention.**

JEWELRY

Students should not wear excessive, inappropriate, or expensive jewelry to school. Jewelry for both boys and girls should be modest. Only necklaces that have a light chain and bear a religious medal or symbol may be worn outside the uniform. Rosaries are not permitted to be worn. Girls may wear one small stud earring in each ear. No bars are allowed. Male students are not permitted to wear earrings or spacers **on campus**. No other piercings or piercing plugs are acceptable for boys or girls. Thick chains, beaded, leather, woven or stone necklaces or bracelets are not permitted. Only one bracelet or watch is allowed to be worn on each arm. The Principal reserves the final word on what constitutes acceptable jewelry.

TATTOOS

Temporary or permanent tattoos must never be visible when a student is on campus or participating in any activity that is school related.

PHONES

All personal electronic, game, and communication devices may be a distraction to the educational process and are not allowed to be used on campus during the regular school day. Students who have a valid need to use a telephone during the school day must report to the office and receive permission from the office staff. Students are allowed to use cell phones before 7:30 a.m. and after 3 p.m. No phones are allowed to be used in the cafeteria during lunch. Cell phones **MUST** be in the locker and in the **OFF** position during school hours.

On the first offense, the phone will be taken by the teacher or staff and given to the school administration who will secure the phone and determine the disciplinary consequences, which may include long term confiscation of the device. Students who refuse to give up the device when requested to do so by faculty or staff will face additional disciplinary consequences to be determined by administration. Students may use headphones/earbuds in the cafeteria in the morning until 7:30 a.m. Once students pass through the double door to the academic hallway or enter the building from the side door in the Chapel area in the morning, they may not use phones, headphones, Bluetooth devices, or earbuds until school is dismissed.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Periodic emergency drills are necessary for the safety of the students and faculty. When the alarm sounds, students will follow designated instructions appropriate for the emergency drill. Students must be quiet until released to return to the school building. Students are to remain with their teacher and report to the parking space near the tennis courts designated for their classroom.

MASS BEHAVIOR

Mass is the most important event in which our community participates. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. All conduct during Mass should be with the utmost reverence. It is a time in which we have an opportunity to show our love for God and strengthen our community.

The space in which our community celebrates the Mass is a holy place. To show respect for the holy sacrifice of the Mass we will treat the location of the Mass as a place of reverence and worship. All of our actions in Mass should contribute to our spiritual well-being rather than draw attention to ourselves. Students will go to Mass in silence. Any talking, distracting, and disruptive behavior on the way to or during Mass is a violation of who we wish to be as a community.

In order to engage our mind, body, and spirit we attempt to participate fully in all parts of Mass. This involves singing, responding, standing, kneeling, and observing proper silence throughout Mass.

Improper Mass behavior includes any actions that distract the community or draws attention to oneself such as, but not limited to:

- Personal conversations and talking during Mass
- Sleeping and/or slouching
- Distracting behavior in the communion line (high fives, shaking hands, talking)
- Not following Mass protocol
- Inappropriate laughing and noise
- Intentionally clapping off beat
- Any other actions that draw attention to oneself and away from the Mass.

Any of the listed misbehaviors or other distracting behavior that occurs during Mass could result in a disciplinary referral.

MEDICATION POLICY

The school must be informed if a student is on medication. If medication is required, a form must be completed by the physician and returned to the school office. Medication will not be dispensed without this form on file. Medication is kept in the clinic. **NO PRESCRIBED MEDICATION MAY BE KEPT WITH THE STUDENTS.**

If a parent/guardian desires to have the school dispense prescribed medication, the parent/guardian must bring the medication to the school in the original pharmacy container with the dosages and physician's name clearly marked ("school-packs" which have the required information on them are readily available from any pharmacy). Medication that is in any container other than an original pharmacy container will not be accepted.

The parent/guardian and nurse or office staff will sign a form which indicates the number of pills or tablets which are being left at the school. The school will keep the medication in a locked cabinet. Each time a student comes in for his/her medication, both the nurse and the student will sign the log. This log will be kept on hand at the school. Logs will be available for parent/guardian inspection upon request.

High school students may carry epi-pens/inhalers with the approval of the school nurse and/or trainer. If a student uses an epi-pen/inhaler while on campus, s/he must report to the clinic to record the usage. Failure to follow the appropriate use of an epi-pen/inhaler will result in the loss of the privilege of carrying them on campus. Further disciplinary consequences may apply at the discretion of the administration.

SCHOOL NAME, LOGO AND MOTTO

No one may use the school name, logo or motto on any type of social media or in any other way, e.g. putting the name on t-shirts, without the express written permission of the principal.

SEARCHES

The school reserves the right to search lockers and any items brought on campus, to include electronic devices, as well as all automobiles driven onto the campus. Such searches are intended for the safety of Mercy students and to ensure that contraband (such as drugs, alcohol, or weapons) is never brought on campus. Dog searches may also be used as part of this process. **Students assume the responsibility for items discovered in their possession.**

SEXUALITY ISSUES

The Catholic Church teaches that sexuality is a gift from God. It is only in the context of marriage that sex can be expressed in a healthy, holy and wholesome manner. Sex outside of marriage is contrary to the use of this gift and to the dignity of life itself.

Early Marriage

The Sacrament of Marriage is a life-long commitment intended for mature adults. The school strongly discourages early or student marriage precisely because a great majority of these end in separation or divorce. The school is designed to serve the formation needs of young men and women rather than married couples. Therefore, student marriage is strongly discouraged and will result in discontinuance of studies at OLM.

Pregnancy

In the event of pregnancy, Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School will make every effort to provide support, understanding, and compassion. In consultation with parents/guardians and students, the Principal will decide upon the appropriate manner for continuing with an uninterrupted high school program of studies.

If a decision is made to temporarily continue education apart from the school, a student may return and receive a diploma at graduation provided that all necessary requirements are met. The same support, understanding and counseling provided our young women will also be provided an OLM young man who has brought about a pregnancy. Counseling will be provided in an atmosphere of respect, trust, and confidentiality.

If there is a question of whether a student is pregnant, the Principal reserves the right to require a statement from a physician as to the student's status before that student returns to school.

Abortion

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School strongly opposes abortion, the deliberate destruction of human life. The school will provide all available resources and nurturing support for a pregnant student out of respect for the absolute dignity of human life.

In the event the school becomes aware, despite its support, that one of its students has willfully chosen to obtain an abortion, the student will be dismissed from Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. For the same reason, other members of the Mercy student body, including the father, will be dismissed if they have helped procure an abortion.

SICKNESS

Students who become ill during the day should report to the school office. No student may leave the school to go home during school hours until the office has contacted the parents/guardians and permission has been granted to depart. This permission must be followed by a written excuse the day the student returns to school.

Once a student checks out of school due to illness, the student may not return to school that day, participate in, or attend any extracurricular activities.

Students must be temperature and vomit free for a period of 24 hours before returning to school.

STUDENT RECORDS

Our Lady of Mercy adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy) regarding access to student records. Parents/guardians have a right to review a student's permanent record with appropriate 48-hour notice to the principal or assistant principal. The parent/guardian will be allowed to view the record in the presence of an administrator; no items are to be removed from the student permanent record.

Students requesting records/transcripts/recommendations must make a five school-day request to the School Office. All forms should be submitted to the Our Lady of Mercy school office for distribution. Completed forms will be sent via the U.S. Mail. Special handling will require that all postal fees be paid by the parents.

STUDENT HEALTH

OLM purchases student health insurance for every student while on school grounds and/or when they are involved in school-sponsored activities off campus. The insurance is secondary to the parents' primary coverage.

Required Health Records for School

Per Archdiocesan Policy and The State of Georgia current immunizations are required for school attendance. All students entering school (through 19 years of age) must be immunized according to the rules and regulations established by the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR). For current requirements, please go to www.health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/. Form 3231, The Certificate of Immunization is the official record of immunization and is required for each student attending Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School. This form can only be obtained through your student's physician or the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR).

The Catholic Church does not recognize an immunization exemption based upon matter of conscience/religious convictions, and does not accept any alternative or homeopathic immunization that has not been approved by the FDA. Medical exemptions are considered and are applicable when a child has a long term condition that contraindicates immunizations.

Parents requesting a medical exemption from any Georgia State required immunization must provide a detailed explanation of the child's disability and/or disease process as documented by a licensed pediatrician. This documentation must be provided on the pediatrician's official letter head, and must contain the physician's medical license number. It must state if the medical exemption is temporary or permanent. The Archdiocese of Atlanta reserves the right to obtain a second medical opinion in such cases.

USE OF FACILITIES

Our Lady of Mercy is a regional school and its facilities before or after school hours may be used for school related purposes. Parents of enrolled students wishing to use the building before or after school for school related purposes may do so upon receiving permission from the principal and scheduling the event with the Business Manager.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE

Electronic networks and other new technologies have changed the way we communicate and share information. The ability to access information through the computer will be used by students and staff to further educational goals and objectives by providing educational resources previously unavailable; Internet information will support and enrich our curriculum. Learning how to access this information and how to communicate electronically are now fundamental skills and an important goal as we prepare students for the future.

DEFINITION

A Network is a defined set of computers, linked together through a cable – wire, telephone, or wireless – allowing access to one another for the purpose of file sharing and transfer. The Internet is an online computer network that connects millions of computer users and information resources around the world. Using the Internet will allow students to do research, find homework help, and communicate with students, teachers, scientists and people around the world from all walks of life.

Our Lady of Mercy will have a network consisting of every computer and printer at the school with server controlled access to educational software. Through this network, Our Lady of Mercy will provide filtered access to the Internet. Internet resources may include, but will not be limited to:

- Information/news from research institutions such as major universities, government organizations, etc.
- Library catalogs all over the world, including the Library of Congress.
- Common interest groups on the Internet, such as: chat rooms, bulletin boards, etc.
- Electronic Mail communication.
- Online databases of professional information such as: electronic journals, newswires, etc.
- Public domain software.
- The World Wide Web.

ELECTRONIC NETWORK USE

To emphasize that electronic network use at Our Lady of Mercy is for appropriate activities:

- Access will be provided for school-related, academic activities only.
- Access will only be provided with the knowledge and approval of a member of the OLM faculty.
- The school and its employees are not responsible for any unauthorized use of the school network, equipment, and software that is in violation of this policy.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Students will not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal information includes address, telephone, school address, work address, last name, etc. Students will not agree to meet with anyone that they have communicated with using the school Internet access. Students will promptly disclose to a teacher or other school employee any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

PRIVACY

Network storage areas will be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to keep the network working properly and to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Also, in the global community of the Internet, no communication is “private.”

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The student is responsible for using the school account provided in an ethical, responsible and legal manner for school-related tasks only. Students and parents must sign the Student Access Contract in order for the student to have approved access to the school system. Students will access only those resources or topics, which are related to academic pursuits. **Students are expected to communicate with faculty and staff using only their school issued email accounts.** Students are responsible for their behavior on the school computer network, just as they are in a classroom or a hallway. Students will use appropriate language and follow the same rules of conduct as required in the Our Lady of Mercy Handbook. **ACCESS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.**

PROHIBITED NETWORK ACTIVITIES

- Using or importing (transferring in) offensive, obscene, libelous, disruptive or inflammatory language, pictures or other material on any computer or network within the school is prohibited.
- Students should not respond to any harassment encountered and must report any incidents to the appropriate staff member.
- Students with personal online accounts such as America Online may not install their operating software on school equipment and may not access the service provider using school software or equipment.
- No software may be copied to the school network.
- For safety reasons, students shall not reveal phone numbers, addresses or any other personal information.
- Students shall respect the privacy of each other's e-mail.
- Students shall use all resources on the Internet in accordance with the policies of the institutions providing the service.
- Students will use the electronic network for legal activities only. Illegal activities include, but are not limited to: Knowingly spreading viruses; violating copyright laws and plagiarizing; using unauthorized software; impersonating another user; unauthorized entry; and/or destruction of a computer system or files.
- Students shall not use the network for any commercial activity.
- Students shall not use the network to make personal purchases or unauthorized orders using the school name.
- Students shall use the network in such a way that use of the network by other users is not disrupted.
- Students shall not present personal viewpoints on the system so as to make them appear to represent the school.
- Students shall not infuse inappropriate materials onto the school system, nor are links to inappropriate materials at other sites permitted. Inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to, libel, plagiarism, illegal activities, copyright infringement, misinformation, harassing materials and obscene materials. Publishers must have permission to publish copyrighted information on their pages or documents if they are not the author or creator.
- Students shall not vandalize individual workstations or the networking system. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt including, but not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, "Hacking", unauthorized entry to private directories, destruction or modification of data, damage to or modification of equipment or software configurations.

CONSEQUENCES OF UNACCEPTABLE STUDENT USE

The use of electronic networks is a privilege, not a right. Misuse of an electronic network account or a violation of this policy may result in the account or the user's access privilege being denied, revoked or suspended. Misuse will subject the student to disciplinary action at the appropriate level in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior and the severity of the violation. The school's administration will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved. Our Lady of Mercy will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the school network.

LIABILITY

Our Lady of Mercy makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Our Lady of Mercy will not be responsible for any damages you 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.

Our Lady of Mercy makes no express or implied warranties for the Internet access it provides. Our Lady of Mercy cannot completely eliminate access to information that is offensive or illegal and residing on networks outside the school. The accuracy and quality of information obtained cannot be guaranteed. Our Lady of Mercy will not guarantee the availability of access to the Internet and will not be responsible for any information that may be lost, damaged or unavailable due to technical or other difficulties. Information sent or received cannot be assured to be private.

Access to computer communication technology is provided for school-related, academic activities only. All copyright laws are to be honored and academic honesty is expected at all levels of use.

Family Stewardship Agreement

Background checks and all safe environment requirements as established by the Archdiocese of Atlanta are required of **ALL** volunteers who come into the school on a regular basis, work with children, or chaperone/drive on curricular or extra-curricular activities. All background checks are confidential and will be handled by the administration.

Parents and family members should report to the office to sign-in for any volunteering activity during school hours. Outside of school hours, volunteers must check in with that event's coordinator. Parent volunteers should not approach faculty during school hours regarding their child; instead, conferences should be arranged for needed discussions.

Examples of stewardship activities include, but are not limited to:

- Fundraising events
- Facilities and grounds clean-up and beautification
- New family mentor program
- Assistance at athletic and fine arts events
- Concessions
- Library assistance
- Cafeteria assistance
- Book and uniform sale (summer)
- Faculty and Staff appreciation events
- Mailings
- Assistance with **student** organizations

School Phone Numbers

Main Office: (770) 461-2202

FAX: (770) 461-9353

Admissions: ext. 410

Athletics: ext. 402

Attendance: ext. 400

Chaplain: ext. 420

Guidance: ext. 435



Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School

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861 Highway 279

Fayetteville, GA 30214

www.mercycatholic.org