MERCY HIGH SCHOOL

Back to School 2020–2021

COVID-19 Management Procedures

Challenging young women to grow academically, emotionally, socially, aesthetically, and spiritually, since 1963.
COVID-19 Management Procedures for Mercy High School (as of August 4, 2020)

We are all in this together. Please honor yourself and your Mercy community with:

- Face mask wearing;
- Social distancing;
- Proper hygiene;
- Stay home if you are not feeling well.

Back-to-school and community procedures are subject to change based on new regulations or changes made by the Mercy Administration.

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August 4, 2020

Dear Students and Families:

To prepare for the 2020–2021 school year, I assembled a COVID-19 Management Team dedicated to creating a safe and effective learning plan for students, families, faculty, and staff. After many weeks of preparation, we are releasing our procedures for the 2020–2021 school year that will begin on August 26, with our regularly scheduled professional days.

Student orientations begin August 28 for transfer students. On August 31, the Freshwomen and Juniors gather for orientation and on September 1 the Seniors and Sophomores have their session. The first full day of classes is Wednesday, September 2.

We are preparing our building for in-person learning while making virtual accommodations for those who desire them. One-way hallways and stairways, live streaming classes, hands-free water bottle filling stations, ventilation and exhaust in every classroom and bathroom, plexiglass in the main office and other high traffic areas, face masks worn at all times, and hand sanitizer throughout the school are a few examples of what we are implementing. In addition, we are building flexible school day options to change our learning from an in-person with virtual accommodations option (Level 1) to a hybrid (Level 2) or to a fully online option (Level 3) if the public health situation deems it necessary to do so. Our class schedule also allows for an activity period where our community can build upon the personal connections that we care about so much. You can also access this document by clicking on ‘COVID-19 Updates and Information’ from our web site (www.mercyhigh.com/).

Because of a seamless transition to remote learning this past spring, I am confident that under these circumstances, your daughter will continue to receive the best education possible at Mercy High School.

I understand that your family may have unique concerns. If you have any questions after reading this brochure, please contact Ms. Drewry, Dean of Students (adrewry@mercyhigh.com).

If you plan to have your student learning remotely at the start of the school year, please notify Mrs. Bullock, Dean of Academics and Technology (mbullock@mercyhigh.com) by August 21 so that those preparations can be made.

Best,

Alissa K. DeJonge ‘95, President
Level 1 Learning:  
In-Person Model with Virtual Options

Planning for In-Person or Virtual Learning

• If any student, teacher or staff member desires to learn, teach, or work from home for a set period of time, please contact Mrs. Bullock (mbullock@mercyhigh.com) to make arrangements. It is expected that the virtual learning choice, in general, will be a month in duration and is renewable. Please provide at least one week’s notice about your plan so that we can make the appropriate accommodations.

• Please keep in mind the state travel regulations which require a 14 day quarantine upon return if you visit certain areas. Please check the following link [https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Travel-In-or-Out-of-CT](https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Travel-In-or-Out-of-CT) and contact the Main Office (860-346-6659) to coordinate any need for self-quarantine.

Daily Medical Screening

• For those coming into the building, each morning they will be asked to verify their wellness through a FACTS web form that is completed at home. These forms will be received by the Main Office staff. School staff will conduct temperature checks for anyone entering the building who has not submitted a temperature check through the FACTS program.

If anyone has a fever above 100.4 degrees F, or is experiencing two or more of the COVID-19 symptoms, please learn/teach from home.

• If a student’s temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees during the course of the day, a parent will be contacted for the student to be sent home. **We strongly encourage students have their temperatures checked at home to avoid coming to school only to be sent home in the case of a fever.**

• If anyone (themselves or anyone in the household) tests positive for COVID-19, please contact the Main Office (860-346-6659). Mercy will communicate this information in accordance with ADA and privacy requirements. Appropriate measures will be taken in consultation with public health officials, including contact tracing. Other measures may include the temporary closing of the building, deep cleaning for extra sanitation, and self-quarantining of exposed individuals.

• All are encouraged to stay home if they are not feeling well. Parents are asked to notify the Main Office if your daughter is staying home. Faculty and staff will need to notify Mrs. Bullock.

Face Masks

Face masks/coverings must be worn at all times during the school day and must cover both the mouth and nose.
Everyone in the building will be required to provide themselves with an appropriate face mask. Students and staff must adhere to the “Face Masks and other PPE Protocol” information at the end of this document. Please contact the Main Office (860-346-6659) if you have any extenuating circumstances that prevent you from wearing one.

Mercy face masks are available for purchase online through the school store. Individual masks should be free of any writing. Face masks must adhere to Mercy’s uniform policy.

Any face mask deemed inappropriate by the Administration will not be allowed and the student will be given another mask to wear for the day.

**Attendance**

- Students must be physically present either in a classroom or remotely. Prior approval from Mrs. Bullock is necessary for a student to attend classes remotely. A revised attendance policy is detailed at the end of this document and also noted in the student/parent handbook.

- Mercy will monitor the number of COVID-19 cases by town, and if there is a spike in a certain town, Mercy may request that the students who reside in that town to remain home for learning.

- If Mercy moves to the hybrid (Level 2) or complete remote learning (Level 3) learning options, then please adhere to the attendance policy for either in classroom or remote learning.

**Moving Through the School**

- Students will follow the directional arrows located in the hallways outside the classrooms. The corridor outside the Main Office will not be accessible to students unless they have been called to an Administrator’s Office or need to see the school nurse. The Tiger Den will be closed to students until further notice.

- The hallway near the Finance Office and Campus Minister’s Office as well as the hallway outside of the Multi-Purpose Room will have traffic in both directions. Signs will be set up that encourage social distancing.
Block Schedule/School Day

- Mercy will follow a block schedule. Fewer classes with longer class period lengths will reduce the number of students traveling through the hallways. This schedule could also be used in case a hybrid (Level 2) or complete remote learning (Level 3) shift were to take place. Therefore, students would have continuity in their schedule no matter where they were learning.

- An activity period at end of the day is to be used for extra test time, tutoring, teacher office hours, and socially distanced club meetings.

Before and After School Hours

Mercy strongly encourages all students with transportation to be in the school building only during the official school hours (8:15 a.m.–2:30 p.m.); however, there are socially distanced waiting areas for students who need extended hours (7:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.).

- Students who arrive very early (between 7:00 a.m.–7:45 a.m.) to school—whether by car or by bus—will enter through the cafeteria door to wait in the cafeteria (or multipurpose room if determined by the proctor) and sign in with the proctor. For students who plan to arrive at school prior to 7:00 a.m., please contact Ms. Drewry (adrewry@mercyhigh.com) to set up that arrangement. Students will not be allowed to sit in the hallways. The Main Office doors and classrooms will be opened at 7:45 a.m. for students. After 7:45 a.m., students may wait in their first classroom of the day; the first class starts at 8:15 a.m.

- Students may leave the building at the start of the activity period (1:45 p.m.) if they do not have any planned activities that day. Students may also leave after the activity period (2:30 p.m.) with staggered dismissals. If a student is staying past 2:30 p.m., she will need to go to the cafeteria (or multipurpose room if determined by the proctor) and sign in with the proctor and leave through the cafeteria door. All students should be picked up by 5:00 p.m. unless with a coach or activity proctor. If a student needs to stay in the building beyond 5:00 p.m., please contact Ms. Drewry (adrewry@mercyhigh.com) to set up that arrangement.

Activities/Assemblies/Field Trips

- Socially distanced activities and club meetings will take place in the activity period provided at the end of each day. Ms. Drewry will provide a schedule weekly listing any club/activities that will take place during this period. If a student is not participating in a particular activity during this period, she is able to leave the building through the foyer or cafeteria doors, or sit in the designated waiting area for her bus or ride home.

- Socially distanced assemblies will be held; a lower capacity of students will sit in the auditorium, with additional students watching the event through live streaming in their classrooms or remotely. Where applicable, outdoor settings that adhere to our security guidelines will be used.

- All external field trips have been canceled for the first semester.
Socially Distanced Classrooms

All classes have in-person and streaming options so teachers/students can be at home or in school on any given day. Class assignments and tests/quizzes will be run through Microsoft Teams to allow for a seamless transition between online and in-person learning.

- Hand sanitizer stations are placed in each classroom where students and faculty will be reminded to sanitize in and out of the classroom. Extra furniture and fans have been removed from all classrooms.

- Students’ desks face in one direction and are spaced to be socially distant. Teachers’ desks are located at the back of the classroom. Students and faculty will be responsible for wiping down their desks and/or workstations after use. Disinfectant wipes and non-latex gloves will be provided for cleaning.

- All classrooms used have fresh air sources and exhaust. Larger class sizes will be moved to larger rooms to accommodate the social distance required.

Maintenance Protocols

- Restrooms will be cleaned three times each day. All touchpoints will be addressed throughout the day.

- Hand sanitizer: The products in the building contain 70% to 80% alcohol (Purell contains 70% alcohol and Code All Clear contains 80% alcohol) to combat the COVID-19 virus.

- Cleaning of desks: Vinyl gloves and Quick and Clean Disinfecting wipes will be in every classroom.

- Building: Each evening all rooms will be cleaned, desks disinfected, all touch points and restrooms cleaned and disinfected. Magnashield 88 will be applied with Protexus Electrostatic Sprayer on non-porous furniture. Evening shift will utilize Protexus Electrostatic Sprayers.
Restrooms

To socially distance restrooms, every other bathroom stall and sink will be closed. Hands-free flushing and faucets have been installed in every bathroom. No hand air dryers are available. Hands-free paper towel holders have been installed. Posted signs will encourage hand hygiene procedures in the restrooms as well as throughout the school building.

- Bathrooms by the cafeteria are closed to the general public although handicapped stalls will be open.
- No bathrooms are to be used during passing times.
- Hand sanitizer stations are located outside each bathroom—please sanitize before you enter and when you leave the restroom.

Athletics

- Students who drive to school should store their sports equipment in their cars. All other students will place their equipment in a designated socially distant area.
- The CIAC has not yet made a determination for fall sports. Once determined, Mercy will update all athletes and parents. Mercy will adhere to rules set forth by the CIAC.

Physical Education Classes

- Students will not use the PE locker room. Students who are taking PE this semester MAY wear athletic shoes to school. Students will not change their clothes for PE class.
- All physical education classes will be held in a socially distanced manner. Weather permitting, classes will take place outside.

Music Classes

- Music classes will be held in a socially distanced manner.
Water Fountains

- Mercy will only continue operation of bottle-filling water stations (located in two different areas of the building). Water fountains with spigots will be turned off. To hydrate throughout the day, all students are strongly encouraged to carry water bottles.

Senior Study Periods

- Seniors who have study first period must report to the cafeteria to sign in by 9:05 a.m. Those seniors who have last period study and are not staying for the office hours/activity period, may sign out in the designated area following afternoon announcements and closing prayer. They may sign out at 12:40 p.m.

Lockers

- Lockers will not be assigned to any students at this time. Students will travel to all classes with a backpack carrying all items with them. In addition to their academic items, students may carry water bottles filled with water, hand sanitizer or wipes.

Visitors

- Visitors must schedule an appointment ahead of time. Parents leaving items for their daughter will be asked to place them in a designated area outside of the Main Office.

Busing

- Both Durham School Services (out-of-town) and Dattco (in-town) are requiring masks to be worn on the bus at all times. Buses will be loaded from back to front, and socially distanced as much as possible, depending on the number of bus riders. Buses will be disinfected before and after route runs on a daily basis.
Signage

- One-way hallways and one-way stairwells will be marked with signs.
- Signs are placed throughout the building as a reminder of the importance of face mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing.

Health Office/Wellness Center

- You may enter the Nurse’s office by using the door across from the Tiger Den. You will not enter the Nurse’s office through the Main Office this year. Mrs. Lupacchino will notify the Main Office when a student is with her.
- The Tiger Den will be the holding room for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms.
- The conference room across from Guidance will be an additional wellness room. You will need to obtain permission from Administration or Guidance to enter.
**Lunch**

- There will be three lunch waves—students may not have the same wave each day.

- Students may eat on picnic tables, in the cafeteria, the auditorium, the gymnasium, or in multipurpose room (not in classrooms)—and will be assigned an area in which to eat their lunch.

- Students will be required to wipe down their areas after use—wipes and non-latex gloves will be provided. This will not only limit exposure to large group gatherings but also limit the number of students in a confined space with masks removed to eat.

- A system will be in place with Chartwells for anyone who would like to pre-order boxed lunches from the cafeteria. More information will follow regarding this procedure.

- Additional power cords will be available in the lunchrooms so that students may charge their devices during this time.

- Students will not be allowed to use the microwaves. Students may refill their water bottles at the water station located outside the cafeteria.

**Library/Media Center**

- Permission must be received from Mrs. Crutchfield to be in the Media Center or to arrange for pickup of printed materials. Mrs. Crutchfield will keep a record of the students in the Library and Media Center.

- Students must wipe down their workstation after use whether for study hall, research, or online learning. Shared equipment must be wiped down after use (i.e. printer, photocopier). Disinfectant wipes and non-latex gloves will be provided.

- Book checkouts will be made online. Reserved books will be placed outside the library in a bin for pickup. There will also be a return bin for books.

- Orientation for the library will be given through Microsoft Teams. Special emphasis will be on online databases and the online card catalog.
**Shared Equipment**

- Teacher microwaves, Keurig machines, copy machines, and shared equipment must be wiped down before and after each use. Disinfectant wipes and non-latex gloves will be provided.

**Main Office**

- Plexiglass will be installed on the front counter and around Mrs. Brennan’s and Mrs. Broderick’s desks.
- Mail will be delivered to teachers and all administrative departments. Faculty and Staff will be required to sign in through the payroll system.

**COVID-19 Training**

- **⚠️ All faculty and staff will be given training in COVID-19 procedures (i.e. proper mask wearing/cleaning/storing, how to disinfect, understanding symptoms) during their faculty meetings prior to student orientation.**

- **⚠️ All students will be notified and given training in COVID-19 procedures during orientation.**

- Procedures may be changed at any given time based upon new regulations. Additional training sessions may take place as needed should new safety protocols be advised.

**Mercy’s COVID-19 Management Committee**

- **Maria Bergan**, Executive Assistant to the President
- **Lori Broderick**, Administrative Assistant, Main Office
- **Melissa Bullock**, Dean of Academics and Technology
- **Marla Buono**, Director of School Counseling
- **Jennifer Crutchfield**, Library Media Specialist
- **Alissa DeJonge**, President
- **Tom Delude**, Assistant Finance Director, Transportation Coordinator
- **Ann Drewry**, Dean of Students
- **Lori Flynn**, Director of Finance
- **Tim Kohs**, Director of Athletics
- **Patty LaBella**, Faculty
- **Susan Lupacchino**, RN, School Nurse
- **Mike Marino**, Director of Security
- **Gail Mullaney**, RN, Faculty
- **Sr. Peggy O’Neill**, RSM, Registrar
- **Daryl Ruggiero**, Director of Maintenance
- **Mary-Clare Wamester**, Director of Admissions
Level 2 Learning:
Hybrid Model
(½ Student Body in Building,
½ Student Body Remote)

If the public health statistics or guidance from the State of Connecticut create the need for our learning to move to a hybrid option, then the Mercy Administration will notify families.

- We will follow the Level 1 Learning procedures with fewer students in the building.

Level 3 Learning:
All Virtual Model

If the public health statistics or guidance from the State of Connecticut create the need for our learning to move to an all virtual option, then the Mercy Administration will notify families.

- We will follow the Level 1 Learning procedures with all students learning remotely.
Face Masks and Other PPE Protocol for Staff and Students

⚠ Face masks/coverings must be worn at all times during the school day and must cover both the mouth and nose.

⚠ Each individual is responsible for providing their own masks.

⚠ Any face mask deemed inappropriate by the Administration will not be allowed and the student will be given another mask to wear for the day.

- Center for Disease Control (CDC) coronavirus face covering guidance can be found at:

How to Put on Your Face Mask/Covering

- First, wash your hands or apply hand sanitizer.
- Pick up your mask by its ear loops. Without touching the mask itself, bring the loops up to your ears, securing them as tightly as possible. If the mask is equipped with ties instead of loops, tie the upper pair around the rear crown of your head, then the second pair around the nape of your neck.
- Be sure that it covers your nose and your mouth. The mask keeps you from spewing any bacteria into the air by covering your nose and your mouth.
- Adjust the fit of the mask to ensure your chin is covered. You can pull the mask around the base of your chin, if possible. Tucking your mask beneath the chin is a surefire way to prevent the risk of having to adjust it when you leave your house.
- Secure the mask around the bridge of your nose. Some masks come equipped with a metal tab just where the bridge should be (if you feel a metal tab on your chin, you’ll know your mask is upside down). Be sure to pinch this into place so that the top of the mask feels snug to your face. Even if there is no metal tab, try your best to ensure it won’t slip down your nose later.
- Refrain from touching the middle section of the covering.
- For disposable masks, the colored side faces outward and the white side touches your face.
Removing Your Face Mask/Covering

- After you’ve safely removed your mask or coverings by handling its ties or loops, you should dispose of any surgical masks, as these are made for single use only.

- Cloth masks should be cleaned after each use and can be washed with your regular laundry. Use regular laundry detergent and the warmest appropriate water setting for the cloth used to make the face covering.

Hand Sanitizers

- Each person should bring their own personal hand sanitizer to use throughout the day. There will also be sanitizing stations throughout the school building.

- Hand sanitizers should contain a minimum of 70% alcohol. Sanitizers that contain benzalkonium chloride are not considered as effective in killing viruses and bacteria and are not used at the school.

- The FDA warns that some sanitizers may contain methanol (wood alcohol) and should not be used because of its toxic effects.


Gloves and Plastic Face Shields

- These are not required for staff or students but may be worn should the person choose to do so.
Revised Attendance Policy

Mercy High School strongly believes that a student’s attendance is critical to the quality of her education. True learning goes beyond mastery of subject matter. It includes the participation and interaction that presence in class provides, as well as, fostering growth, religious awareness, and personal responsibility.

Loss of Credit

- No credit will be granted in any full year course in which a student has twenty absences.
- No credit will be granted in a one-semester course in which a student has ten absences.
- Credit may be gained after a student passes a certified summer school course or completes a prescribed program as determined by the Administration.
- The following are absences that will not count toward loss of credit. These include:
  - School-related activities such as field trips, sports, pre-scheduled appointments with guidance or Administration, approved meetings, etc.
  - Home bound instruction (approved by Administration)
  - Bus problems
  - Exceptional circumstances as approved by the Administration

All other absences from class (in-school or remote), for any reason (including visits to the nurse), will count toward the limit as stated above.

Absence does not excuse a student from tests, quizzes or assignments. Students will be held responsible for all work upon their return to school. When students are absent from school, they may use Microsoft Teams to obtain homework assignments. Students who are in danger of losing academic credit in a course(s) will be subject to review by the Administration.

E-Learning Attendance

Any student who desires to learn from home for a set period of time, must contact Mrs. Bullock (mbullock@mercyhigh.com) to make arrangements. It is expected that the virtual learning choice, in general, will be a month in duration and is renewable. Please provide at least one week’s notice about your plan so that we can make the appropriate accommodations.
For anyone who is traveling out of state, please contact the Main Office (860-346-6659) as soon as the plans are known to coordinate any need for self-quarantine.

Students who attend class virtually are expected to:

- Be on time for class
- Have their webcam on
- Wear a Mercy polo shirt
- Be seated in an area conducive to learning
- All attendance policies that apply to building attendance apply to students attending school remotely.

**Planned Absence**

Mercy High School provides adequate vacation breaks in the school year. The school does not condone extended days or weeks for vacation.

- **College visits should be planned for faculty meeting days, holidays and school vacations.** Failure to adhere to this request will result in an “unexcused” absence.

- **Doctor’s appointments and dental appointments should be made for after school hours.**

- If a student knows that she will be absent for reasons other than illness, she must notify the Main Office in advance by bringing in a note from a parent or guardian.

- A student who will be absent for more than two days will be given a form to be signed by her teachers and returned to the Main Office.

- Students will be held responsible for all material covered during absence.

**Absence Due to Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances**

Parents/guardians must phone the absentee reporting line (860-343-5473) or email the Main Office (office@mercyhigh.com) by 10:00 a.m. to report their daughter’s absence, whether she is learning at Mercy or remotely, and the reason for the absence. Absentee calls made by the student will not be accepted. If a student is absent for more than three consecutive days for illness, a physician’s note must be filed in the Main Office.