

Waldron Mercy Academy Parent and Student Handbook 2020 - 2021



This handbook is intended to serve as a guide to help students and their families come to know Waldron Mercy Academy's programs and opportunities as well as to set forth basic expectations and agreements. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the contents. We are hopeful that the handbook will answer many questions you may have about academics, security, discipline, school rules, and other topics.

The policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are not a right or part of the enrollment contract. The procedures herein do not confer any contractual rights on any student, but instead serve as an aid to the school in its everyday decision making responsibilities.

Please understand that no set of rules or guidelines can cover every conceivable situation that might arise at a school. The rules, policies and procedures set forth in this handbook are intended to apply under normal circumstances. However, from time to time, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This handbook does not limit the authority of Waldron Mercy Academy to deviate from the normal rules and procedures set forth in this handbook, and to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by the school taking into consideration the best interests of the Academy, its faculty, employees, students or overall school community. The policies may also be revised or updated periodically, even during the school year. You will be advised of any changes as they are made by email. Any student or parent with a question about any handbook policy or statement should feel free to speak with the Vice Principal or Principal.

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Mission Statement and Catholic Identity

Waldron Mercy Academy, a Catholic school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, is a diverse, faith community rooted in the gospel values of mercy and justice. We are a school where the joy of discovery inspires serious study, social responsibility, and strong faith.

Catholic Identity

Waldron Mercy Academy is a Catholic independent elementary school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and is recognized by the Archbishop of Philadelphia as a Roman Catholic school. The primary purpose for the school's existence is the teaching of the Catholic faith in the spirit of mercy. While a primary goal of the school is academic excellence, all programs exist within the framework of the Catholic Church. Catholic liturgy, sacraments, traditions, and prayers are taught as an integral part of the school's curriculum. Liturgy is celebrated regularly, prayers said daily, and Catholic traditions celebrated according to the liturgical season.

The curriculum for theology is consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. All supplementary material used in the curriculum must conform to Catholic moral teaching and doctrine.

Family-School Partnership

You have joined an important partnership between Waldron Mercy Academy and your family. This document presents our vision of that partnership which is characterized by trust and understanding and ensures your children develop to their greatest potential as Waldron Mercy Academy students. The following are a set of guidelines adapted from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), that will foster a strong working partnership between parents and Waldron Mercy Academy.

Parents Working with Schools

1. Parents recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. Parents uphold the authority of school personnel, and speak respectfully of the administration and faculty in the presence of children and on social media.
3. In selecting Waldron Mercy, parents seek an optimal match for the needs of the student, their own expectations, and the philosophy and programs of the school.
4. Parents are familiar with and support the school's policies and procedures.
5. Parents provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits.
6. Parents involve themselves in the life of the school.
7. Parents seek and value the school's perspective on the student.
8. When concerns arise, parents seek information directly from the school, consulting with those best able to address the concerns.
9. The school suggests effective ways for parents to support the educational process.

Schools Working with Parents

1. The school recognizes that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. During the admission process, the school clearly and fully presents its philosophy, programs, and practices to parents and encourages dialogue that clarifies parental expectations and aspirations for the student.
3. The school seeks and values the parents' perspective on the student.
4. Teachers and administrators are accessible to parents and model candid and open dialogue.
5. The school keeps parents well informed through systematic reports, conferences, publications, and informal conversations.
6. The school suggests effective ways for parents to support the educational process.
7. The school actively seeks the knowledge it needs to work effectively with a diverse parent body.

School-wide Emergency Communication

Waldron Mercy Academy uses a notification service to send a telephone and/or email message/text message providing emergency information, such as delays, early closings or cancellations due to unforeseen circumstances, or inclement weather. There will also be a notice on WMA's website and voicemail. You can also watch ABC-CBS-NBC television networks for Waldron's announcement.

If it becomes necessary to close WMA during a school day, your child must have a prearranged plan. All extracurricular activities and sports are canceled if school is canceled during the school day. Mercy After Care closing times are communicated separately.

Availability of bus transportation in inclement weather is determined by the school district where the family resides. Be aware that Waldron Mercy may be open, but the various districts may not be providing transportation. It is imperative that parents be aware of decisions being made in their home districts. We do our best to notify parents about their transportation information when an emergency occurs; however, circumstances beyond our control may hinder or delay this process.

1. **Delayed opening:** The School will endeavor to call parents if there is a delayed opening; please do not call the office. For a typical two-hour delay, WMA will be opened and supervised by 9:30 AM. There will be no supervision available for children before 9:30, so please do not drop children off before this time. Children who ride buses may arrive at whatever time their district buses are transporting. Please check your local radio or TV stations before sending your child to the bus stop to be sure the status of the opening has not changed.
2. **Weather Related Early Dismissal:** Since school may be cancelled due to weather once the school day begins, parents should have an emergency plan in place so their child knows what to do when the bus drops them off. Please do not call the school in the case of an early dismissal as it overwhelms our phone lines and prevents us from receiving busing information; your child should know what to do before they leave home. In the case of an early dismissal parents who want to pick up children who regularly ride the bus should email their teacher stating that the

child is not to be sent home via bus. **This change must be acknowledged by the teacher. If you do not get a response from the teacher, you MUST assume your directions will not be followed.**

Communication with Families

WMA publishes a school-wide newsletter. The Weekly, every Thursday for parents, which will be sent to the preferred email on file in the database. The online calendar, found on our website, is also a useful tool for information.

The school asks for your understanding with the following:

- Please support the school's primary focus of learning. This means recognizing that our staff are busy with a day planned to the minute, even during their planning periods, and may not even see your email. If you need an immediate response, please call school, and the staff member will call within 24 hours.
- Parents are asked to remember that staff can be responsible for as many as 80+ students, each with needs, and a day busy with teaching and administrative responsibilities. As a result, parents are asked to be reasonably patient with requests. (This is not an excuse for poor communication from the school, however.)
- Please understand that emails sent at night or on a weekend may not be read until the following business day at the earliest. In an emergency, please call school in the morning.
- Emails should not be used to convey sensitive, confidential, or emotional content or to problem-solve. Please use your email to request a meeting or phone call to discuss any issues.
- Staff are encouraged not to send emails longer than 2-3 paragraphs that are specific to a student or a situation, so if you have sent a complex issue the response will typically be a request for a meeting.
- Staff are directed that any ongoing exchange of emails will be resolved by a request for a meeting to address the issue.
- If you do not receive a response from a staff member after three school days, please send a second email copying the principal.

Financial Policies

Current tuition rates and payment plans can be found on our website. WMA has partnered with SMART TUITION to offer a variety of ways to pay tuition and fees with online account access, mobile apps, and a 24/7 customer support center. Check, direct debit, MasterCard, VISA, Discover and American Express are accepted. Please note that a convenience fee will be added to all credit card payments.

We are grateful to those families who remit their tuition payments on time, since this allows the school to meet its payroll and other financial obligations. Families may select the 1st or the 15th as their due date for recurring ACH payments. Check payments are due by the 15th of each month. If payment is not received within a 5 day grace period from the due date, a late fee of 2% plus a follow up fee of \$20 will be added to the family's account. Any requests for special payment arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the WMA Business Office. Failure to keep a student billing account current jeopardizes your child's enrollment status. Please contact

the business office if you have any questions.

Parents' Association

WMA has a vibrant Parents Association. The objectives of the Parents' Association, along with a listing of the current Parents' Association Officers can be found on our website on the Parent's Page.

Visiting and Volunteering

For the school year, 2020-2021, no visitors or volunteers are permitted in the building.

Academic Integrity

WMA expects all students to abide by ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, or copying work, is strictly prohibited. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Academic Probation

Students who are not progressing successfully in their studies, those whose grades are 75 and below, may be suspended from sports and other extracurricular activities until consistent, academic improvement is made. The teacher, in whose class the student is showing insufficient academic progress, should meet with the director, parent, and student to outline a plan for improvement. If no improvement is made over the course of two weeks, a decision may be made to suspend the student's activities by the principal. Parents and appropriate teachers/coaches will be notified.

The suspension of activities and their reinstatement is decided upon by the principal.

Academic Status / Conferences / Report Cards

WMA's school year is divided into three trimesters with report cards distributed in December, March and June.

Parent-teacher conferences for students are scheduled during the first and second trimesters, presenting the opportunity to discuss the student's goals and performance. Students attend conferences with their parents in grades 5-8 as conferences are student-led in these grades. Parents in grades 4-8 may log in to the WMA student information system by using their school-assigned username and password to access grades. Parents are encouraged to regularly review their student's progress and contact the appropriate teacher with any questions, as the information provided gives students the opportunity to improve their work, if needed.

Any student in Grades 4 to 8 who is failing to meet academic expectations will be subject to intensified supervision. If careful monitoring and evaluation of the student's progress warrants it, the student may be asked to consider such alternatives as attending summer classes, repeating the grade, or seeking a different school placement. This will be determined after an academic review with the administration, teachers, and parents.

It is important to note that the student information system automatically calculates the student's grade so the grade shown on the website is not necessarily the final grade that will be

on the report card. There are typical “black-out” periods for parent’s access to the system during the school year, including the opening of school until Back to School Night, several days at the end of each trimester in preparation of report cards, and during summer vacation.

Homework

While homework is intended to be a reinforcement and expansion of lessons, it helps students develop responsibility and good study habits, learn effective time management and self-regulation skills, build self-advocacy skills, and apply learned concepts. It will be checked and may be assigned a grade. Teachers will update their homework sites throughout the week as needed. No new homework will be assigned the day a weekend or holiday break begins; this time can be used to catch up on previously assigned work or to enjoy time spent with family.

Specific homework requirements for each grade/subject are communicated at the beginning of the school year. A guideline for time spent on homework in Middle School is as follows: 15-20 minutes per subject for 5th and 6th grade and 20-25 minutes per subject for 7th grade and 8th grade.

If the time spent on homework extends significantly beyond these parameters, or if a child is struggling and becomes emotionally upset, the child's teacher should be contacted. Teachers value parental insights and will work with students to develop strategies or make accommodations to help make that time positive and productive.

In the Lower School, parents play an important part in homework by helping their child create a scheduled time and place for homework and a system for packing up for the next day. It is helpful if parents review homework assignments and determine if their child has understood and correctly completed the assignment. However, taking too active a role in completing homework deprives children of the necessary developmental growth of assuming their own responsibilities.

In Middle School, students should review and study each day’s work, work on long term assignments and complete all homework assignments independently, allowing the teacher to determine the level of each student’s mastery. In appreciation of the demands put on middle school students’ time, on most days, during their Advisory period, students in Grades 5-8 are given the opportunity to work on homework and ask for teacher assistance. At home it is helpful if parents assist their students in creating and adhering to a routine and changing it if necessary, allow them to complete work on their own, be available for questions as asking for help is an important strategy, provide reminders about due dates, and ask questions concerning progress.

Note that during aftercare, caregivers are hired to supervise a group of children and therefore provide limited individual assistance/direction for homework; you need to review your child’s work when they arrive home.

Behavioral Expectations

The principles underlying Waldron Mercy’s policies are rooted in our core values and expectations of respect for self and others, common courtesy, integrity and the implicit agreement when a student is admitted to the school that she or he will exhibit a truly Mercy attitude, believing in his or her own potential for excellence and encouraging one another to achieve according to their own potential. Students should be aware that their first obligation is to give service to God and to others, and the second is to strive to fulfill the requirements of being a student in good

standing – elements that should guide all student actions, decisions, and behaviors. Appropriate student behavior also extends to: virtual learning, the Mercy After Care (MAC) program and any other school-related activity, including riding the bus to and from school and sporting events. The discipline policy extends to these activities.

School-wide Expectations

While we anticipate that each teacher and class will develop a set of guiding principles for good behavior, all WMA students are expected to live our Mission of Mercy, doing all in their power to conduct themselves with respect to the values of the Sisters of Mercy, by:

- Persevering – trying to the best of one’s ability, being willing to keep trying, working toward class objective, staying “on task,” and accepting challenges.
- Preparing – accepting responsibility for learning by completing homework and study assignments, developing good study and organizational skills, meeting deadlines, ensuring that work submitted is original and that unauthorized assistance in academic work is neither given nor received, coming to class with all books and materials and arriving on time.
- Participating – exhibiting a positive attitude, asking appropriate questions or for help when needed, working independently or cooperatively in groups, becoming self-motivated, and following class procedures.
- Respecting – practicing non-violence in word and action every day, seeking peer-mediation or conflict resolution to settle disagreements, being considerate and polite to all members of the WMA community including fellow students, telling the truth and not misleading others, acknowledging the importance of the learning of others by being courteous in the halls, cafeteria and classrooms, using resources including the WMA building and school property with care, following all playground and Cafeteria rules and obeying instructions of the adults in charge, remaining in supervised areas unless given permission by a faculty/staff member, and refraining from chewing gum in school.
- All policies in this handbook, particularly the Uniform; Technology, including keeping cell phones off and in backpacks while on school property, unless given permission by a teacher for a specific purpose; and Behavioral, particularly the Anti-Hazing, Bullying and Cyberbullying, Drugs and Alcohol, Harassment, Off-Campus Behavior, and Threatening Behavior Policies as outlined in the Handbook following the School Discipline section.

Disciplinary Procedures

Through self-discipline, a student refrains from behavior which would disrupt or hinder his or her own learning or that of others. Discipline is enforced in order to help the student change an unacceptable behavior, so student and parental cooperation and support for the teacher’s desire to change unacceptable behaviors to acceptable ones are essential. We incorporate a discipline code in order to respond with consistency to issues that arise.

WMA uses a Discipline Log that is explained in detail to the students and parents at the start of school. All teachers enter data in a discipline log that is only shared among those with a need to know and is reviewed by the directors and principal periodically. Logs are not shared when a student transfers schools. Teachers contact the parent by phone or email when points/infractions are given. When a certain level of points/infractions have been received, the

student will be given a detention and the parent will be notified.

Anti-Hazing Policy

Hazing involving students, student groups or any individuals at WMA is strictly prohibited.

Definition

Hazing is defined by the State of Pennsylvania (Act 175) as “any action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a person or which willfully destroys or removes public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into or affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in, any organization. The term shall include, but not be limited to, any brutality of a physical nature, such as whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, drug or other substance, or any other forced physical activity which could adversely affect the physical health and safety of the individual, and shall include any activity which would subject the individual to extreme mental stress, such as sleep deprivation, forced exclusion from social contact, forced conduct which could result in extreme embarrassment, or any other forced activity which could adversely affect the mental health or dignity of the individual, or any willful destruction or removal of public or private property. For purposes of this definition, any activity as described in this definition upon which the initiation or admission into or affiliation with or continued membership in an organization is directly or indirectly conditioned shall be presumed to be ‘forced’ activity, the willingness of an individual to participate in such activity notwithstanding.”

Responsibility for Compliance

All WMA students, faculty, staff and recognized organizations are responsible for abiding by this policy, both on campus and off campus, including on privately owned facilities and/or property. Recognized organizations are responsible for any activity in violation of this policy by any individual or group affiliated with the organization (new member, member, auxiliary, or alumnus), unless it is proven that the group or individual activity was independent of, and occurred without the knowledge or consent of, the recognized organization. Such responsibility will apply equally to situations in which one or more members knew or should have known of the activity and failed to make every reasonable attempt to prevent or stop it.

Reporting of a Possible Violation

Anyone who witnesses or suspects that hazing has occurred shall immediately report what was witnessed or the basis for the suspicion that hazing has taken place, to the principal. If the hazing has occurred in connection with a School club, organization or sport, then the incident shall also be reported to the person or coach responsible for the club, organization or sport.

Violations and Sanctions

The principal shall have discretion to impose any discipline deemed appropriate for an incident of hazing against both the individual who engaged in the conduct and the School organization of which they were a member. Discipline and penalties shall include, but not be limited to, withholding diplomas or transcripts, the imposition of fines, restitution, probation, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. In the case of WMA organizations, penalties may include withdrawal of permission for the club or organization to continue to operate on campus or other school property or to otherwise operate under the recognition or sanction of WMA. Imposition of

discipline by WMA does not preclude any criminal penalty which may be imposed for violation of criminal laws and WMA will fully cooperate, and share information, with law enforcement as part of any investigation.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

A safe, secure and respectful educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards and build appropriate relationships with others. As a Catholic school, Waldron Mercy strives to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and cyberbullying in any form are not tolerated.

All forms of bullying and cyberbullying by students are prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying or cyberbullying shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical conduct directed at another member of the school community that:

- Occurs in a school setting;
- Results in physical, emotional or mental harm; and
- Substantially interferes with a student's education, or
- Creates a threatening environment, or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of WMA.
- School setting shall mean in school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by WMA.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, taunting, intimidating, threatening or terrorizing another member of the school community by sending or posting inappropriate or derogatory email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including social networking sites. All forms of cyberbullying are unacceptable and to the extent that such actions are disruptive to the educational process, offenders shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

Complaints of bullying or cyber-bullying shall be investigated promptly. Neither reprisals nor retaliation as a result of the submission of a complaint will be tolerated.

A violation of this policy shall subject the offending student to appropriate disciplinary action, consistent with the discipline code, which may include suspension or expulsion.

This policy also applies to off-campus bullying and cyberbullying directed at another member of the school community, if that behavior substantially interferes with a student's education, or causes a substantial disruption of the orderly operation of WMA, or brings discredit or dishonor to WMA.

Drugs and Alcohol

General

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling or purchasing any alcoholic beverages or other mind-altering substances (including synthetic salts or other substances) on or near WMA property or at School-related activities. Off-premises possession, use, sale or purchase of mind-altering substances and off-premise alcohol abuse is also prohibited.

This policy does not prohibit the proper use of medication under the direction of a physician. However, the misuse or abuse of such drugs is prohibited. Students who are taking

prescription or nonprescription drugs must notify the School nurse and complete the appropriate form when they report to school.

Consequences

In addition to determining the appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to WMA's Disciplinary Rules, WMA reserves the right to impose the following additional or different requirements as appropriate for the circumstances: determination of possible legal action; required professional counseling approved by the administration; removal from all elected or appointed positions of leadership in WMA; required random and/or regularly scheduled drug and/or alcohol testing at a School-approved local clinic or doctor's office for a time period and at intervals to be determined by WMA's administration. Refusal of a student (directly or through a parent/guardian) to undergo testing or to cooperate fully with any of these tests is considered a positive result and will result in automatic expulsion.

Smoking/Vaping/Tobacco Products

School policy expressly forbids students from smoking, vaping, juuling, or using tobacco products, as well as possessing such products (as well as oils or liquids associated with same), at any time in or on School property, buses or other School vehicles, adjacent properties, or School Sponsored trips. All cigarettes (including electronic), vaping devices, smokeless tobacco, lighters, matches, etc. or other devices similar to cigarettes, lighters, matches, etc. brought on campus by students will be confiscated. Discipline will be imposed based on the circumstances existing at the time and may include suspension, probation, or expulsion. Depending on the circumstances existing at the time, a violation of this policy may also be a violation of the School's Drugs and Alcohol Policy and reportable to law enforcement.

Harassment

Harassment of any type is not tolerated. WMA may investigate any complaints of harassment. WMA determines if such a case is present. Students involved in harassing behavior may face disciplinary actions under the discretion of the principal.

Sexual Harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual attention, sexual advances, or requests for sexual favors or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual Harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. Any student or parent/guardian who is determined to have violated this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under the discretion of the principal.

Off Campus Behaviors

WMA does not wish to unnecessarily involve itself in a student's off campus behaviors. However, WMA's rules and regulations apply at all times a student is enrolled in WMA. In addition, WMA reserves the right to take action to the extent that off campus behaviors impact the individual's ability to continue at WMA or impact other students' or employees' ability to be comfortable at WMA. We expect students to avoid all types of behaviors, including behaviors that may be harmful to one's body, self-esteem, or health. As examples, off campus Internet activity, criminal activity, sexual activity, use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, may result in a student receiving disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from WMA.

Threatening Behavior by a Student

“Threatening behavior” means any statement, communication, conduct, or gesture, including those in written form, directed toward oneself or any member of the school community that causes a reasonable apprehension of physical harm to a person or property. A student can be guilty of threatening behavior even if the person who is the object of the threat does not observe or receive it, so long as a reasonable person would interpret the maker’s statement, communication, conduct, or gesture as a serious expression of intent to physically harm.

Any student who presents an immediate danger to herself, himself, students, or school personnel will be removed from the school until the school has information in writing from a medical professional who determines it is safe for the student to return.

The School takes all threats seriously, even when students make comments in jest, on the Internet, by text, or away from School toward or about another student, employee, or the School. Students are prohibited from bringing any type of weapon to School or School-sponsored events, including knives, guns (all types), fireworks, etc. This prohibition includes, without limitation, pocket knives (even those that are part of a key chain), firecrackers, matches, lighters, smoke bombs, stink bombs, or any type of explosive device. Any such item may be confiscated and, if appropriate, turned over to law enforcement. Any pictorial depictions of weapons, or verbal or written comments that the administration determines in its discretion appear to be threatening in nature, or any behavior that is threatening, will result in disciplinary consequences.

All members of our community are required to immediately report any comment, posting, text, or other form of communication or information that they receive or learn about that reflects that someone has made a threat toward or about another student, an employee or the School. If there is any communication or behavior that concerns you, report it to one of the directors or to any administrator.

Threats of violence or acts of violence by a student, employee, parent or other individual may be reported to law enforcement and any other authorities the School deems appropriate. The School will cooperate with investigations by authorities, and the School may also conduct its own investigation. With respect to such threats or acts by students, the School may report such threats or acts of violence to future schools, camps, athletic programs, and other organizations in which the student participates. The student’s transcript or report card may also note the threat or act. In determining whether to report such threats or acts of violence, the School may consider, among other factors, the gravity and nature of the threat or act of violence, the disciplinary history of the individual, academic or work performance, behavioral history, social profile, other information available to the school (i.e. access to weapons, mental health information, family situation, etc.), and/or the outcome of any investigations.

General Policies and Procedures

Attendance/ Absence

Additions for Attendance for the academic school year 2020-2021: *Attendance will be taken at 8:15 for all students including virtual learners. Virtual Students must attend all zoom meetings and will be marked absent if they do not attend any in a day.*

Consistent attendance is very important for each student's academic progress in school. Since absence interferes with a student's progress, every child must be present daily unless illness, death in the family, or other emergency prevents attendance. Any pattern of suspicious absence will be reported as truancy. This may warrant investigation and result in disciplinary action.

When it is necessary for a student to be absent from school, please telephone school between 7:45 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. to report the absence, at 610-664-9847, ext. 110. **Children must be present at least 3 1/2 hours in school, or they will be marked absent. An absence disqualifies a student in sports and/or extracurricular activities for that day.**

On the day the student returns to school, a note is required for the homeroom teacher. In cases of frequent or prolonged absences (three or more consecutive days), a doctor's certificate is required. If you know in advance that a child will be absent, please send a note prior to the anticipated absence.

Special Types of Absences/Lateness

- Students preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation will be excused for retreats related to the sacrament.
- Students will be excused from school to attend a family funeral.
- Grade 7 students will receive two (2) excused days in seventh grade along with the three (3) excused days in eighth grade.

It is suggested that students make medical appointments/treatments during non-school hours. If this cannot be done, the student must submit a note from the physician stating the date and time of the treatment, upon arrival at school.

Arrival / Lateness

For the Academic school year 2020-2021 Students will go directly to their classrooms upon arrival in the morning.

Success in school is affected by a child being late. Please make sure your child is in school on time. Teachers will take attendance at 8:15 a.m. A child not in his or her classroom at that time will be marked late and must enter through the front door to formally sign in.

An excused lateness would be any student arriving on a bus or van or inclement weather under the discretion of the principal or a medical appointment accompanied by a doctor's note.

Chronic unexcused lateness (10 plus) will warrant a meeting with the Principal or Vice-Principal.

For the safety of our students, parents must refrain from using cell phones during arrival on campus and remember to maintain a safe speed of 10 miles per hour.

By Car: For the 2020-2021 School year Preschool, PreK Montessori Students will be dropped off at bus line doors, Mrs. Maletta's students and siblings at the front door, and K-8 (except Mrs. Maletta's class) at the carline doors.

By Bus: Students transported by bus enter the building through the carline door.

Walkers: Students enter through the main door.

Dismissal / Early Dismissal

Dismissal begins with prayer followed by instructions for dismissal lines at 2:50 p.m. (11:50 a.m. on early dismissal days).

Students who need to be picked up before the regular dismissal time will need a note stating the reason and time for the early dismissal from an adult who has legal custody. Early dismissal means leaving WMA before 2:30 p.m. Teachers will send students who leave early to the Front Hall. Parents please ring the bell at the front door and remain outside. Your student will be sent outside to you.

By Car: Parents MUST pick up their children using the designated car lines, displaying a car ID card in the front windshield with the names and grades of all the children that they are transporting. For the 2020-2021 School year Preschool, PreK Montessori Students will be picked up and dropped off at bus line doors. Mrs. Maletta's students and siblings at the front door, and K-8 (except Mrs. Maletta's class) at the carline doors. Please do not leave the car for any reason. Please follow the directions of the teachers in the car line who will escort the children to each car. **Parents must refrain from using cell phones during dismissal on campus and to maintain a safe speed of 10 miles per hour.**

For safety and campus traffic flow reasons, parents are not permitted to park their cars on or off campus and pick students up at any door during arrival and dismissal times. They MUST use the car line during those timeframes.

By Bus: Students will be dismissed from the classroom as their buses arrive. A teacher will walk them to the buses. If a bus does not arrive at school by 3:40 p.m., parents will be notified.

Walkers: Students who live within a one-mile radius of school are permitted to walk to their destinations after school. Walkers will line up in the front lobby. A faculty member will lead them off campus, crossing them over Montgomery Avenue and Merion Road. Students who are walking are required to have permissions on file at school. Students who do not have permissions will be required to call their parents and get permission before they will be allowed to walk.

Child Custody Issues

It is the responsibility of a biological or adoptive parent or guardian to provide the most up-to-date and current Custodial Agreement or Court Order. These Agreements and Orders are on file at the Front Desk, Mercy After Care (if applicable) and Principal's Offices. Teachers will be notified about any specific details regarding communication, transportation or other issues, to ensure compliance and the safety of the student.

Dress Code

The Dress code for the 2020-2021 school year will be more relaxed. Students will wear the school uniform on Monday of each week. Spirit wear may be worn on other days and a gym uniform on gym days. Any comfortable shoe may be worn with sneakers on gym days.

Waldron Mercy Academy's dress code speaks to the idea that school is a place of learning and

our students should therefore reflect that seriousness of purpose. We encourage students at WMA to take pride in their appearance. When students look and feel good about themselves, they act and work accordingly.

Investigations and Searches

Students are expected to cooperate in investigations. Students are expected to be honest, but honesty is not necessarily a mitigating factor and students' own statements may be used against them. Failure to cooperate with an investigation may be cause for disciplinary action.

If a student refuses to participate or cooperate at any stage of an investigation, or is unable to do so for whatever reason, including without limitation, pending criminal charges, WMA reserves the right to take action, including proceeding without a statement from the student, or to require the student to withdraw from WMA. WMA will cooperate with authorities and may share information resulting from any of its investigations.

A search of any item in a student's possession may occur when any member of the faculty or school administration has reason to believe that a disciplinary infraction or the existence of physical or other potential harm to the student or others will be discovered. In addition, in the school's ongoing efforts to ensure compliance with WMA rules and that students engage in appropriate behavior, and to maintain a safe school environment, WMA may inspect and conduct a search of any place or item on WMA campus or at a school-related event including, but not limited to, a student's locker, book bag, backpack, vehicle, computer, or personal electronic devices. Inspections and searches may be conducted on a routine or random basis or as deemed necessary. Students must provide any passwords or other access required to inspect such places or items upon request by a school administrator. Inspection of electronic devices includes laptops, phones, cameras, and any other electronics, including the contents of same (texts, emails, photos, images, address books, etc. whether such message or information was sent over the school's system or any personal account such as Yahoo, AOL, Gmail, etc.). Further, WMA may seize and permanently retain property disclosed by an inspection or search which is considered potentially harmful, dangerous, illegal, or inappropriate, or the possession of which is a violation of WMA's rules, community standards, and/or local, state, or federal law.

Non-Discrimination Policy

WMA admits students regardless of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin who possess the motivation, ability, and character which would enable them to succeed in our School community to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at WMA and WMA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Textbooks

Textbook forms must be on file in the office for every Waldron Mercy Academy student. Damage or loss of a school textbook, CD or other instructional material is the responsibility of the student. A bill will be issued by the Business Office to the family to compensate for the loss.

Safety and Security

Waldron Mercy Academy pays close attention to the security and safety of the entire school community. WMA employs a full-time security officer who is a retired police officer, and all staff members are required to carry walkie talkies. WMA follows best practices for responding to emergencies and for instruction in and practices for fire drills, for shelter-in-place drills, and for handling an intruder, as well as in requiring clearances of all volunteers as defined in our Visiting and Volunteering Section, in offering safe environment lessons, and in staffing a safety committee. During the school day when school is in session visitors need a government-issued ID (passport or license) to enter the building. WMA's check-in system verifies each adult entering the building against a national predator database and prints out a badge that shows the license picture. With this process all adults in the building are wearing either a school issued ID or a date and time stamped picture ID sticker.

Cameras

WMA uses security cameras on campus for the purpose of enhancing campus safety and security. Video recordings are to be used for School-related, internal purposes only. Video will not be provided to any parent, student, or third party absent of a court obligation to do so. The school has the authority to provide law enforcement access to video feeds in an emergency situation. Signage concerning the use of cameras is posted on campus. Security cameras are only installed in public areas. These areas include but are not limited to fields, hallways, classrooms, courts, entrances and exits to the campus, and parking lots. Security camera usage is prohibited in any space where there is reasonable expectation of privacy, which includes restrooms. No sound is to be monitored or recorded. All video recordings are the sole property of Waldron Mercy Academy.

Child Abuse Reporting

WMA teachers and other personnel are mandatory reporters under Pennsylvania child abuse reporting laws. Please understand that we must take our obligations seriously and if we assess that a situation requires it, we will make a report to child abuse authorities of situations that we reasonably suspect constitute abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Depending on the circumstances, we may not be able to communicate with parents about the report until authorized by child abuse authorities to do so. We ask for your understanding as we do our best to protect the children under our care.

ContactLens¹

Contact lenses are commonly worn by students and in many instances, are the only corrective eyewear they possess. However, there are hazards associated with the wearing of contact lenses in the Science Lab.

Should a chemical splash to the eye occur, the chemical could be held under the contact lens and against the surface of the cornea, possibly causing permanent eye damage. The involuntary spasm of the eyelid and the "panicked" nature of the student, if a chemical splash

¹ Information provided through Flinn Scientific Safety Seminars available at <http://www.flinnsci.com>

occurs, impair the quick removal of the contact lens which may result in irreversible damage.

OSHA and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) agree that dusty and/or chemical environments (irritating fumes, etc.) may represent an additional hazard to contact lens wearers.

For years these potential hazards prompted safety specialists to prohibit the wearing of contact lenses in the science lab. Recently the American Chemical Society has reversed its stance on this issue. However, the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety lists more than 400 chemicals in their Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards that recommend against contact lens use.

Students wear protective goggles when performing some experiments; however, the science faculty at Waldron Mercy Academy recommends that teachers and students not wear contact lenses on lab days.

The Contact Lens Policy will be discussed further with students in the Science Lab and a waiver will be sent home to be signed, if necessary. The waivers are on file in the Science Lab.

Crisis Plan

The safety of our children is our main priority. In the event of a crisis or emergency, parents play a very special role. If communication is operational, every effort will be made to contact each parent. To that end, parents will be notified by our emergency alert phone system, which will call the phone numbers provided by you if there is an emergency at WMA which causes the evacuation of the building.

Evacuation of School Building (not the campus)

Students will go directly to the gymnasium at:

Merion Mercy Academy
511 Montgomery Avenue
Merion Station, PA
610-664-6655

Parents would use the Meetinghouse Lane entrance which leads to the gym, rather than the Montgomery Avenue entrance, since that would probably be blocked. Faculty and staff will be with the children at all times. Parents should go directly to this location to pick up their children. We ask that parents follow instructions given on-site for orderly dismissal of their children.

Campus Evacuation

Students will walk to:

Cynwyd Elementary School
101 W. Levering Mill Road
Bala Cynwyd, PA 610-645-1430

This school, a designated safe place for the students, was chosen because it can accommodate our entire student and faculty/staff population.

Food Allergy Awareness

Food allergies are a growing health concern in our community. In recent years we have experienced a significant increase in the number of children with life-threatening food allergies, in particular to peanuts and tree nuts. In order to provide a safe learning environment, we are encouraging a Food Allergy Aware Program on our campus. The success of this program relies on the daily efforts of everyone who learns, works, plays, and visits our campus. By following a few simple guidelines we can make WMA a safe school for all students.

First a Few Facts about Nut Allergies

Peanut and Tree nut allergies affect 1 in 125 children, nationally. At WMA, nearly 30 children are allergic to peanuts and/or tree nuts. There is no cure for nut allergies. Strict avoidance is the only measure of prevention. Nut allergies are rarely outgrown. Nuts are responsible for the majority of fatal food allergic reactions among the school age population.

What is the Allergic Reaction?

Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening allergic reaction. Symptoms can vary, but may include:

- Itching, hives, flushing of the skin
- Swelling of the lips or tongue
- Tightness or hoarseness of the throat
- Cough, wheeze, shortness of breath
- Abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
- Drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness, death

What is the Treatment of Anaphylaxis?

Swift and immediate action including the injection of epinephrine, most often supplied as an EpiPen.

How Parents Can Help Create a Food Allergy Aware Campus?

- Do not send food containing peanuts/nuts to school with your child for snack.
- Do not send candy to school for snack or lunch. Candies most often contain, or may contain, nuts.
- Do not send food or candy to school to share with classmates – this is especially important around Christmas, Valentine's, birthdays, etc.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation and commitment to the children at WMA. If you have any questions, please contact Candace Flowers, R.N., at cbflowers@waldronmercy.org.

Science Lab

Students must adhere to the following procedures when working in the Science Lab:

- Equipment or supplies may not be removed from the classroom by students without the teacher's permission.
- Students may not bring food or beverages into the lab.
- Classroom science activities should never be performed at home without parent/teacher permission.
- Experiments may never be performed by students unless the teacher is present.
- Personal safety equipment (goggles, aprons, gloves) must be worn by the students for the

- duration of the experiment when designated by the teacher.
- When in the Science Lab, students must direct their attention to the lab activity and behave appropriately.
- Students will be removed from the lab activity for inappropriate/unsafe behavior.
- Students must notify the teacher immediately of any accidents, i.e., glassware breakage, solution spills, eye splashes, or cuts.
- Students must notify the teacher immediately of any unsafe conditions i.e., broken glassware, malfunctioning equipment, frayed electrical wires.
- Students need to read and follow directions exactly as presented. They also should listen to the teacher for additional verbal instructions before beginning the activity.
- If the teacher asks for a student's attention during the activity, he or she is to immediately stop the activity and listen for further instructions.
- Students are not to work alone unless specifically directed to do so by the teacher. When reading labels or taking measurements, lab partners should double check readings.
- Students must know the proper name and proper use of all science equipment used in the activity. They are never to use a piece of equipment for anything other than for which it is designed.
- Students must have a signed science safety contract on file before participating in any lab activity.

Student Services

Dining

For the 2020-2021 school year, breakfast will be suspended. Lunches are available for purchase, and will be delivered to the students' classrooms. All students will eat lunch in their classrooms or outside. Fifth and eighth grade may eat in the gym separated by dividers and 12' of space.

If a student wants to bring a hot lunch to school, the parent should heat the food at home and place it in a thermal container as the students do not have access to a microwave.

Williamson Hospitality Services, a division of the Compass Group, is our food services provider. Information on their services, including payment instructions and contact information, are available on our website under the Student Experience tab.

Health / Medical

For the 2020-2021 school year, the health and safety section is superseded by the [WMA Health and Safety Plan](#) posted on our website and approved by our Board of Trustees. Parents MUST read the plan before signing off on the handbook.

Waldron Mercy Academy employs a full-time registered nurse. If your child has a medical problem, please notify the homeroom teacher and the nurse of the problem. Parents/guardians of children with known food allergies, bee and insect sting allergies, and like reactions must alert the school and provide all medication with written instructions for emergency treatment from the prescribing doctor. If possible, expiration dates of EpiPens and inhalers should cover the school year. Parents must replace expired medicines.

Following a nighttime bout of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or fever, a student should stay at

home and be watched for further symptoms. Fever is defined as a temperature of 100 or above without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student's temperature should remain normal without the use of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

It is also advisable for students to stay at home from school if they present any of the following: unusual skin eruptions, chills, rash, discharge or redness of eye(s), or persistent cough. A student should not arrive at school with an injury that occurred at home to be evaluated by the school nurse. Any serious injury occurring at home must be evaluated by the student's health care provider.

Health and Immunization Records

The Lower Merion School District nurse is responsible for keeping immunization and health records and checking the height, weight, hearing and vision of every child and for making referrals to parents when problems are found.

Each family must have an Emergency Information Form on file in the nurse's office. An updated form is required each year. This form provides vital information to assist the school in locating parents/guardians, emergency contact persons, and a family physician in the event of an emergency, and signed consent to administer certain over-the-counter medications.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has mandated that all children new to WMA and all those entering Kindergarten or First Grade present documented proof of immunizations according to regulations from the Department of Health in the State of Pennsylvania.

Dental examinations are required of new students and those entering kindergarten, grades 3 and 7.

Students must have a complete physical examination upon original entry into school and upon entering Grade Six. Students coming from out of state must have an examination if the student's record does not meet Pennsylvania requirements. Parents are urged to take their children to their own physician for examinations to provide continuity of care. Your family physician is familiar with your child and is best able to detect any physical changes. He is able to begin immediate treatment if indicated and to follow through with needed care and immunization boosters. The appropriate forms are posted on the school website for your convenience to download when examinations are required.

Medication Administration Policy

The school nurse keeps medications in a locked medicine cabinet in the nurse's office. The school nurse, not the teacher, administers the medication. Students are permitted to carry their inhalers or Epipens, if needed, in their backpacks. Epi pens may be kept with the teachers or on their person in the classroom.

When it is necessary for medication (prescription and/or non-prescription) to be given to a student during school hours, the following procedures MUST be followed:

1. A medication consent form MUST be completed and returned to the school nurse. Forms are available in the nurse's office and on our website under Medical Forms on the Parent tab.
2. All medication prescribed by the family physician MUST be delivered by the parent/guardian to the school nurse. Students are not permitted to carry medications with them in school other than EpiPens and inhalers..
3. A doctor's written request/prescription and directions for dosage, number of days to be given and time to be administered, along with written consent from the parent or guardian, MUST accompany the Pharmacy packaged medicine. Unless a doctor has specifically prescribed a

different dosage, medicines will be administered according to the dosages on the package. This includes over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, and seasonal allergy medicines.

Accident at School

If a pupil is injured in an accident, the school nurse or other designated school employee will administer first aid. First aid is interpreted as being the immediate and temporary care given to a pupil who has been injured or has suddenly taken ill until the parents can be reached to take the child home, to the doctor, or to the hospital. In an emergency, the nurse will arrange to have the student transported to the hospital.

Accidents occurring at school are reported to the school nurse, the principal, and the parent, particularly in regard to any head injuries that require a visit to the nurse. The nurse will contact the parent. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached the emergency contact will be called.

The teacher or staff member present and responsible for the child at the time of the accident will complete a report immediately following the accident which will be forwarded to the school nurse.

Accommodations

We understand that there may be circumstances when a parent or physician may request that WMA provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student's medical needs or physical, mental, or learning disability.

In general, it is WMA's policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student's minor needs in circumstances in which the administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of WMA and/or its staff and will not result in a significant disruption to the teacher's ability to instruct other students, to classroom or school order and discipline, will not require a threat of harm to the safety of other students or employees, will not require a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission, and will not impose responsibilities on school employees for which they are not trained. We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may not be able to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, we may require a sharing of responsibility for the accommodation.

For any type of accommodation (including administration of medication at school), the parent must contact the WMA nurse of the need. The WMA nurse will then advise the parent of the type of medical documentation needed, which generally will state the student's diagnosis, how the condition limits the student, the recommended accommodations, and the length of time that the accommodation(s) will be needed.

Release for Communications with Physician

Sometimes, the documentation received from the physician may raise questions or be unclear as to the recommendations. For that reason, the parent(s) must sign a Release of Information form, permitting WMA to contact the medical professional, when necessary. In addition, if there is any cost associated with the physician's cooperation (i.e., to answer a set of questions submitted, etc.), the parent must agree to bear the cost of such process.

Assessment of Request

Once the parent's request and medical documentation has been received by WMA, appropriate persons within the administration will meet with the parents to clarify information and

to discuss whether WMA will be able to implement the accommodation requested. In some cases, the parent may be asked to provide (at the parent's cost) any special equipment needed, training for WMA's staff, or other associated matters. In addition, WMA may advise the parent that WMA will allow a particular accommodation, but the full responsibility for doing so will rest with the parent. For example, if the student needs to be tested or have certain types of medicines administered during the day that WMA or nurse believe are beyond the scope of WMA's responsibility, WMA may allow the parent to make arrangements to visit the campus for the purpose of testing and administering.

Limitations on Requests

Please understand that WMA is not a medical facility and does not have the personnel, training, or equipment to handle certain types of medical procedures best left to the student, parent, or physician. In addition, WMA reserves the right to deny a request for accommodation or to modify any consent previously granted.

Responsibilities for Implementing Accommodations

Depending on the nature of the request, WMA may agree to provide the accommodation directly; may require the student to provide the accommodation (such as taking prescribed medications with observation by the nurse), or may require that the parent provide all aspects of the accommodation. In addition, to the extent that a student may need some type of adjustment or accommodation during off-campus activities, WMA may condition the student's participation in such activities upon the parent agreeing to participate in the activity for purposes of monitoring and addressing the student's needs.

Release and Waiver

Depending on the nature of the request and the type of the accommodations, WMA may require the parent to execute a release and waiver in favor of WMA as a condition to providing the accommodations.

Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)

An AED is a portable device that checks the heart rhythm. If needed, it can send an electric shock to the heart to try to restore a normal rhythm. AEDs are used to treat [sudden cardiac arrest](#) (SCA). SCA is a condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. Using an AED on a person who is having SCA may save the person's life. Waldron Mercy Academy has four AED units: one outside of the nurse's office, one on the second floor, one on the lower Garden level, and one outside the gym.

Communicable Diseases

See the WMA 2020-2021 Health and Safety Plan approved by the Board of Trustees.

Concussions

Concussions are both a medical and educational issue. After sustaining a concussion, and before the student returns to school, the school nurse should receive a letter from the physician. The letter should describe the student's injury and the specific and necessary modifications to the student's school day. Additional physician recommendation and documentation must be provided as the student recovers, to continue, make changes to, or discontinue the academic plans that have been put in place. WMA will make every effort to follow the accommodations as directed by

the physician to help the student to recover and gradually return to a full course load. WMA will make adjustments to the student's attendance as suggested by the physician recommendations. The initial focus should be returning to school before returning to sports, so students must be cleared by the physician and written orders provided to the school nurse before the student can return to gym, sports or activities.

Elevator Use by Student

If a student suffers an injury which makes navigating the stairs difficult, they may use the school elevator until the injury is healed. In order to borrow an elevator key on the first day, the student's parent or guardian must present a doctor's note to the Front Desk. The key is to be returned to the Front Desk at the end of the day, and the student may borrow it again the following day, if necessary. Students should always use the buddy system and never ride the elevator alone. Please note that student accounts will be charged \$10 for any lost keys.

Personalized Learning Plans

Waldron Mercy offers unique resources to accommodate students who need additional support in all subject areas. There are four specialists on staff who work in conjunction with the academic team to address any specific needs, including organizational and time management challenges, a student has. Students may also take advantage of the suggestions and strategies from the support teachers to improve their study skills and test preparation. If needed, the support classroom provides a distraction free space for test taking. In addition to these teachers, the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU) also provides support staff in math, reading, and speech for our Lower School students. All of this support is provided to students during regular school hours.

Two of our specialists run study groups after school for students in grades four to eight. These groups are individualized to meet students' needs and cover the subject areas in which they need extra help.

Please note that upon granting written permission for your child to receive remedial support in the areas of math or reading, you are acknowledging the commitment to support your child in these areas of concern during the summer months. Your child will be required to attend a summer program or receive a minimum of 10 tutoring sessions. This obligation is designed to strengthen and support reading and math skills. Information regarding this support with a list of programs and tutors will be sent to the parent in March.

Transportation

Public school districts are required to provide transportation for non-public school students under Act 372. Not all districts provide transportation for younger children or early dismissals. Please check with your school district for this information.

No student may ride a school bus if they are not registered with the school district. Children may not take a bus other than their own as most school districts do not allow unauthorized students to ride their buses, even with parental note.

Parents need to inform their child's teacher and the front desk in writing if they are changing the form of transportation their child is taking home from school. Teachers do not always check their emails during the day as they are instructing students.

Technology Policies

RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY

Waldron Mercy Academy

Revised August 2020

PURPOSE

Technology is a valuable and real-world educational tool. **Waldron Mercy Academy will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including: interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, cyber bullying awareness and response to ensure an appropriate use of technology, including video conferencing platforms.** The policy outlined below applies to all technology use including but not limited to Internet use. The Responsible Use Policy for Technology (RUP) applies to all students, faculty, administrators, staff, volunteers or community members allowed access to school technology resources. In some cases, outside or personal uses of technology may be applicable under this policy.

SCOPE OF USE

We recognize that the digital world allows anytime, anywhere access. Uses mentioned in this policy apply to **inside** school use and may in certain instances apply to personal technology use and/or uses **outside of school**. Where personal and/or non-educational use of technology creates substantial disruption in school, including but not limited to harming or interfering with the rights of other students or teachers to participate fully in school or extracurricular activities, these activities may be viewed as a violation of the Responsible Use Policy and may be subject to the disciplinary measure found herein.

N.B. The types of electronic and digital communications referenced in this RUP include, but are not limited to, social networking sites, cell phones, mobile computers and devices, digital cameras, video conferencing platforms, text messaging, email, voice over IP, chat rooms, instant messaging, cloud, and web-based tools.

GOAL

The school's goal is to prepare its members for a responsible life in a digital global community. To this end, the school will:

- Integrate technology with curriculum to enhance teaching and learning.
- Encourage critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
- Facilitate evaluation and synthesis of information.
- Encourage ethical practices and provide education for Internet safety, digital citizenship and the creation of a positive digital identity.
- Provide a variety of technology-based tools and related technology skills.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF USER

Waldron Mercy Academy will make every effort to provide a safe environment for learning with technology including Internet filtering and safeguards. The students, faculty, administrators, staff, and school community are granted the privilege of using the computer hardware and software peripherals, and electronic communication tools including the Internet. With this privilege comes the responsibility for appropriate use.

At Waldron Mercy Academy, we use information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways. We embrace the following conditions or facets of being a digital citizen.

- **Respect One's Self:** Responsible users will select online names that are appropriate and will consider the information and images that are posted online.
- **Respect Others:** Responsible users will refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people.
- **Protect One's Self and Others:** Responsible users will protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials or communications.
- **Respect Intellectual Property:** Responsible users will suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, images, media, or other sources relied upon or used in work created.
- **Protect Intellectual Property:** Responsible users will request permission to use the software and media others produce and abide by license agreements for all software and resources.

TECHNOLOGY USE GUIDELINES

Educational Purpose/ Responsible Use: Technology is to be used to enhance student learning. Students are able to access social networking and gaming sites only under the guidance and supervision of the teacher for the educational outcomes identified within the lesson and given appropriate age.

Copyright/Intellectual Property and Identity: All sources obtained for teacher and student work should be properly cited. Users are to respect the rights and intellectual property of others in accordance with Federal Copyright Law. Transferring copyrighted material to or from a school without express permission of the owner is a violation of Federal Law and could result in copyright infringement claims.

Communications: Electronic and/or Digital communications with students should be conducted for educationally appropriate purposes and employ only

school-sanctioned means of communication. The school-sanctioned communications methods include:

- Teacher school web page, school-issued email and/or phone number
- Teacher created, educationally focused networking sites
- Student Information System
- Communication platform, e.g., Seesaw, Google classroom

Teachers, administrators or staff members in their normal responsibilities and duties may be required to contact parents outside of the school day. A teacher, administrator or staff member is free to contact parents or guardians using a home phone or a personal cell phone. However, they should not distribute their home phone number or a personal cell phone number to students. If a student contacts a teacher or administrator using a teacher or administrator's personal numbers, email or social networking sites, the teacher or administrator should immediately report this to the administrator or appropriate authorities.

Electronic and Mobile Devices, Cell phone/Wearable technology: Users must adhere to local school policy that may further define uses of mobile devices. The administrator of the local school will determine permissible use. If a particular mobile device is to be used for an educational purpose, the school administration and/or teacher will provide parameters for this use.

Smart Speakers: Primarily intended for at-home consumer use, these always-listening devices are not directly intended for the classroom. Therefore, smart speakers (Echo, Google Nest, etc.) are not to be used in the classroom nor connected to the network on a permanent basis during the academic year.

Remote/Distance Learning: Remote or distance learning may be used to supplement face-to-face instruction, or where appropriate, may be the primary modality of instruction. To effectively engage in remote or distance learning, users are expected to:

- Participate from an appropriate location in the home.
- To the user's best ability, be in a well-lit and quiet area.
- Wear appropriate and respectful attire. (See attire section in 2020-2021 Academic Plan)
- Where able, only use first name and last initial to identify yourself via video conferencing software.
- Students are not to use or preserve a photograph, image, video, including-live streaming, or likeness of any student, or employee without express permission of that individual and of the principal.
- This Responsible Use Policy applies to students using personal devices for remote instruction.
- Maintaining hardware/devices provided by the local school is the responsibility of the student/family.

Examples of Unacceptable Uses –

Users are not to:

- Use technology to harass, threaten, deceive, intimidate, offend, embarrass, annoy or otherwise negatively impact any individual.
- Post, publish, disseminate or display any defamatory, inaccurate, violent, abusive, profane or sexually oriented material. Users must not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude or threatening language. Users must not knowingly or recklessly post or disseminate false information about any persons, students, staff or any other organization.
- Use a photograph, image, video, including-live streaming, or likeness of any student, administrator, employee or volunteer without express permission of that individual and of the principal.
- Create any site, post any photo, image or video of another individual except with express permission of that individual and the principal.
- Attempt to circumvent system security, blocked sites or to bypass software protections.
- Deliberately visit a site known for unacceptable material or any material that is not in support of educational objectives. Students must not access social networking sites or gaming sites, except for educational purposes under teacher supervision.
- Violate license agreements, copy disks, CD-ROMs, or other protected media.
- Use technology for any illegal activity. Use of the Internet for commercial gains or profits is not allowed from an educational site.
- Breach confidentiality obligations of school or school employees
- Harm the goodwill and reputation of the school or system in the community
- Transmit any material in violation of any local, federal and state laws. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, licensed material and threatening or obscene material.
- Attempt to modify software and/or hardware configurations on a school issued device without proper permission and direction.
- Load personal software onto a school device or school issued device without proper permission or direction.
- Attempt to remove covers or protective shells to make repairs to hardware.

Reporting: Users must immediately report any damage or change to the school's hardware/software that is noticed by the user.

School's Right to Inspect: The school reserves the right to inspect user directories for inappropriate files and to remove them if found and to take other appropriate action if deemed necessary, including notification of parents. The school also reserves the right to inspect any personal electronic devices brought onto campus. In such case, students must provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a School administrator. Do not assume that any messages or materials on your computer or the school's systems are private.

Administrative Rights: The school has the right to monitor both student and employee use of school computers and computer accessed content. Due to the evolving nature of technology, Waldron Mercy Academy reserves the right to amend or supplement this policy at any time without notice.

Personal Use of Social Media

This section of the policy refers to the personal use of social media sites such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumbler, Ask.fm, Snapchat, Vine, and TikTok.

Teachers and students may not mention members of the school community on social media without their consent unless the subject is of public concern and the speech falls under applicable constitutional protections.

“Friending” or “Following” of current students by teachers is forbidden on a teacher’s personal social media site. Teachers should also not ‘friend’ former students unless and until such student has attained the age of majority. Personal and professional posts must use appropriately respectful speech, and refrain from harassing, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, threatening or other inappropriate communications. Teachers are encouraged to have professional social media accounts and parents are encouraged to follow those for announcements and resources. Teachers are to inform local administrators as to any class utilizing social media, which should be for educational purposes only.

Policy Violations

Inappropriate use in contradiction to the above rules will be addressed by the administration of the school. Violation of these rules may result in any or all of the following:

- Loss of use of the school network, computers and software, including Internet access. The student will be expected to complete work on a non-networked, stand-alone computer system.
- Issuance of demerits/detentions, if applicable.
- Disciplinary action including, but not limited to, dismissal and/or legal action by the school, civil authorities, or other involved parties

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Electronic Device Policy

Students are allowed to bring personal electronic devices to school. These include any and all devices that can take photographs; record audio or video data; store, transmit or receive messages or images; or provide a wireless connection to the Internet; as well as any new technology developed with similar capabilities. Electronic devices may not be used during the school day. Cell phones should be off and in backpacks while on school property, unless given permission by a teacher for a specific purpose. Watches with Internet capabilities must be placed in schoolbags during the day. Abuse of usage of electronic devices will result in discipline at the teacher or School’s discretion.

WMA reserves the right to inspect user directories for inappropriate files and to remove them if found and to take other appropriate action if deemed necessary, including notification of parents are encouraged to follow those for announcements and resources. Teachers are to ask local administrators for any class use of social media. of parents. WMA also reserves the right to inspect any personal electronic devices brought onto campus. In such case, students must provide any passwords to inspect the device upon request by a school administrator. Do not assume that any messages or materials on your computer or WMA’s systems are private.

Chromebook Policy

Chromebooks are school-issued computers and belong to WMA. WMA carries accidental damage on the Chromebooks, but any intentional damage will be charged to the student's account. Students must report any damage to the Chromebook to the director of technology immediately after damage occurs. Loss or theft of a Chromebook must also be reported immediately. Peripherals such as chargers (AC adapters), batteries and carrying cases are not covered under the accidental damage warranty. A replacement or repair fee will be charged to the student's account for damaged or lost chargers, batteries and carrying cases. Parents will be notified of any charges to the student's account.

At school, all networks for this device are appropriately filtered. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to ensure that the appropriate filters be used on this technology and hardware at home. WMA reserves the right to review the contents of this hardware at any time.

Google Suite for Education

Students in grades 3-8 use the Google Suite for Education tools. These apps allow students to work on projects individually and collaboratively, store files online, and access their files anywhere there is an Internet connection. Gmail accounts issued to the students are to be used for academic use only, not personal. The Gmail accounts are configured so that students are not able to send/receive emails outside the waldronmercy.org or wmatigers.org domains. Any parent who would like to monitor his/her child's account will be given the password and instructions on how to access the child's account. We welcome the opportunity to have conversations with the students on safe digital practices now and in the future with these productivity tools.

Google requires that students under the age of 13 have parental consent to use the Google Suite for Education. If your child is under the age of 13, signing off on the WMA Responsible Use Policy and handbook indicates your consent to having your child have a Google Suite for Education account. Please [read more](#) for information on Google's compliance with FERPA and COPPA.

Students graduating from eighth grade will have their Google accounts deleted one week after graduation. Students leaving the school for other reasons will have their accounts deleted upon notice of withdrawal.

Please contact the director of technology at technologydirector@waldronmercy.org with any questions or concerns.

Access Restriction

Waldron Mercy Academy maintains the right to immediately withdraw the access and use of student accounts when there is reason to believe that violations of law or school policies have occurred. In such cases, the alleged violation will be referred to the principal and director of technology for further investigation.

Privacy

The general right of privacy will be extended to the extent possible in the electronic environment. Waldron Mercy Academy and all users should treat electronically stored information in individuals' files as confidential and private.

Students are prohibited from accessing files and information other than their own. Waldron Mercy Academy reserves the right to access student accounts when there is reasonable suspicion that unacceptable use has occurred.

In the normal course of system administration, the system administrator may have to

examine activities, files and email to gather sufficient information to diagnose and correct problems with system software or hardware.

Web Tools

Online communication is critical to our students' learning, and tools such as blogs, and other web resources will be used in classes to offer authentic, real-world vehicles for student expression and collaboration. Students may be using Quizlet, Adobe Spark, and Flipgrid which require that students under the age of 13 have parental consent. Signing off on the WMA handbook and technology policy indicates your consent for the use of these tools. Expectations for the use of these tools follow WMA guidelines for Internet safety and digital citizenship. Students are expected to act safely by keeping ALL personal information - full name, address, birthday - out of their posts. Speech that is inappropriate for class is also inappropriate for a blog or other web tool.

Students participating in Skype and video conferencing sessions are expected to treat the person with whom they are communicating with the same respect and attention that they would give a visiting speaker.

Students who do not abide by these terms and conditions may lose their opportunity to take part in the activity and/or be subject to consequences appropriate to misuse.

Tech Policy Additions for 2020-2021

iPads for students in grades pre-k to 2 and Chromebooks for students in grades 3-8 will be sent home daily. This will allow for continued access to classroom instruction should a sudden change in a student's health prevent them from coming to school. Please charge the devices each night and remember to have your child bring them to school every day.

Because distance learning is an option in the academic plan, the School prohibits screenshots, photos, audio/video recordings and distribution of any virtual educational experiences. This is in order to protect privacy, prevent cyberbullying and reduce distribution of content from virtual educational experiences. Parents/guardians and other household members who normally are not privy to day-to-day classroom activities, agree to respect and keep confidential any personal or private information inadvertently discovered about other students due to their proximity to virtual education.

Parent/Family Cooperation

As stated elsewhere, the School believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the School and family members (defined as parent, student, or other person associated with the student) is essential to the fulfillment of the School's educational purpose and responsibilities to its students. If the parent's or other family member's behavior, communications, or interactions on or off campus (including during school-sponsored events) is disruptive, intimidating, overly aggressive, or reflects a loss of confidence or disagreement with the School's policies, methods of instruction, or discipline, or otherwise interferes with the School's safety procedures, responsibilities, or accomplishment of its educational purpose or program, the School reserves the right to dismiss the student, the family or the family member from the community. In addition, the School reserves the right to place restrictions on parents' or other family members'

involvement or activity at School, on School property, or at School-related events for reasons that the School deems appropriate.

Appendices

Textbook Loans

Dear Parent/Guardian:

State legislation authorizes the loan of textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment by the Secretary of Education to Pennsylvania children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in non public and private schools. Our school is now in the process of requesting specific textbooks, materials, and equipment to be loaned to your child(ren).

It is required, however, that a parent/guardian of each child attending the nonpublic or private school individually requests a loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment. We are, therefore, attaching below the individual request form. Please sign the form, date it, and return it to WMA immediately.

Thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ann Marie Praca", enclosed within a green rectangular border.

Principal

CERTIFICATE OF INDIVIDUAL REQUEST FOR LOAN OF TEXTBOOKS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

I hereby request the loan of textbooks, instructional materials and equipment in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending Waldron Mercy Academy.

Name of Student(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

*This program is available to Pennsylvania residents only.
This form is to remain on file at the school.*

Handbook Signature Page

By signing this handbook I and my child agree that the student/enrollee and all parents and guardians will abide by the rules and regulations adopted by Waldron Mercy Academy including, but not limited to, the Student Handbook and such other policies as may be adopted and amended from time to time by the Academy.

I understand that the school believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the school and the parent or guardian is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. I agree to be supportive of the Academy's mission, its curriculum, administration, faculty and staff. I agree to bring any criticism or concerns directly to the appropriate authority (teacher, advisor, or administrator) depending on the nature of the concern, and that lobbying of other parents against the Academy will be frowned upon. I understand and agree that the school reserves the right to terminate enrollment of my child if the school concludes, in its sole discretion, that the actions of a parent or guardian seriously interfere with the school's accomplishment of its educational purpose.

I also understand that a student's disregard of the rules and regulations of the Academy may be deemed sufficient cause for dismissal. I acknowledge that the Academy has the right to require the withdrawal of any student at any time if the student's behavior or academic achievement does not meet the Academy's standards, or when the conduct or cooperation with Academy authorities of either the student or the parent/guardian is not in keeping with the Academy's standards.

Last Name (Please print.)

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Homeroom

Student Signature

Homeroom

Student Signature

Homeroom

Student Signature

Homeroom

RESPONSIBLE USE POLICY FOR TECHNOLOGY
Student Internet Access Contract

I understand that when I am using the Internet or any other computer/telecommunications device, I must adhere to all rules of courtesy, etiquette, and laws regarding the copying of information as prescribed by either Federal, State, or local laws, and Waldron Mercy Academy.

The signature below of my parents(s) or guardian(s) means that I agree to follow the guidelines of this Responsible Use Policy for Technology for Waldron Mercy Academy.

Student Name/s

Graduation Year/s

Grade/s

Parent or Guardian: We ask that you review this policy with your child and sign below:

Student Access Contract

I hereby release Waldron Mercy Academy, its personnel and any other institution with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the Internet, including but not limited to claims that may arise from the unauthorized use of the system to purchase products or services.

I will instruct my child regarding any restrictions against accessing materials that are outlined by the Responsible Use Policy for Technology for Waldron Mercy Academy. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following rules for personal safety.

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Responsible Use Policy for Technology for Waldron Mercy Academy. I hereby give my permission for my child to use the Internet and will not hold Waldron Mercy Academy liable as a result of my daughter's/son's use of the Internet on school premises. I understand that my child has agreed not to access inappropriate material on the Internet.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date / /

Photo Release Agreement

Throughout the year, images and likenesses (including photos, audio, and/or video) of students are taken during school, at games, and at other events. These images and likenesses, including names, may be used by the school in different media, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Press releases/photo captions (photos/stories may appear in newspapers, magazines and/or television)
- Emailed newsletters
- Blue & Gold, WMA's alumni magazine, mailed twice per year
- Admission materials
- Waldron Mercy Academy website
- WMA social media pages — including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, etc.

If you have questions, please contact Carolyn Leonard, Coordinator of Marketing and Communication.

Waldron Mercy Academy requires parent(s) or guardian(s) to check an option and sign below for all enrolled children. Please complete the form above by the first day of school, Tuesday, September 8, 2020. If not completed by that date, it is presumed that WMA has your permission to use your child(ren)'s name, image, and likeness in publications and online.

☐ No, my child(ren)'s name, image, and likeness is **NOT** allowed to be used by Waldron Mercy Academy, including print or online.

☐ Yes, my child(ren)'s name, image, and likeness **IS** allowed to be used by Waldron Mercy Academy, including print or online.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student(s) Full Name(s)

Student(s) Grade(s)/Homeroom(s)