



Mill Creek Academy
Parent and Student Handbook
2025-2026

Leading the Charge in Lifelong Learning!

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Welcome Back to School!

We are excited about the upcoming school year! The staff, students, and parents worked extremely hard last year, and we are looking forward to making this year even better. In addition, we will continue to further strengthen our school-wide community relationships to help us reach our goals.

At MCA, our goal is to provide high quality instruction, in a caring environment, that ensures that every child is prepared for secondary education and beyond.

Our commitment to our students and community continues to drive our vision, *"The Learning Community of Mill Creek will ensure that **ALL** achieve their fullest potential through challenging, purposeful learning opportunities where lifelong learning becomes a passion!"* **We are The Mighty Mustangs!**

Our Core Values are as follows:

- Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship are essential to the well-being of individuals and society.
- All individuals have intrinsic value.
- Every individual can contribute something of worth to society.
- Individuals are responsible and accountable for their choices and decisions.
- To grow and thrive, individuals need caring relationships and a nurturing environment.
- Supportive family relationships are the foundation of the community.
- High expectations lead to higher performance which, in turn, empowers the individual and strengthens society.
- Continuous learning is a lifelong process that is essential to a productive and enriched life.
- A safe and orderly environment is conducive to learning.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Goodwin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Goodwin, Ed.D.

Principal

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GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

ST. JOHNS COUNTY DISTRICT MISSION

The St. Johns County School District will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY DISTRICT VISION

All students will choose a learning path that leads to a well-rounded graduate who demonstrates good character and leadership.

MILL CREEK ACADEMY MISSION

Mill Creek Academy will inspire our students to become life-long learners with integrity.

MILL CREEK ACADEMY VISION

The Learning Community of Mill Creek will ensure that ALL achieve their fullest potential through challenging, purposeful learning opportunities where lifelong learning becomes a passion!

MILL CREEK ACADEMY FACTS

School Information: Originally Established 1879
Mill Creek Academy: Established 2018
School Hours: Mon./Tues./Thurs./Fri.
8:25 am – 2:45 pm
Wed. 8:25 am – 1:45 pm
School Mascot: Mustangs
Colors: Blue and Yellow

2025-2026 PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Tangela Chue
Vice President Elementary: Christina Dixon
Vice President MS: Tassia Fitzgerald
Treasurer: Amanda Mullins
Secretary: Tiffany Bloomer
Communications: Kim Zinck
Parliamentarian: Mailie Santiago
Liaison between MCA/PTA: Amanda Dykeman

PTA CHAIRS:

Business Partner Rep: Christina Dixon
Spirit Night Rep: Diana Jordan Baldwin
Teacher Appreciation Rep: Elizabeth Smith/Kelsey Summers
Helping Hands: Kirsten DiSalle/Susanne Stalvey
Spirit Wear Rep: Crystal Eustice
SAC Rep: Diana Jordan Baldwin
Middle School Social Events Rep: Sonia Johnson
Membership Rep: Tangela Chue
Volunteer Coordinators: Susanne Stalvey/Jessica Purcell

MILL CREEK DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

At Mill Creek Academy, learning and using life skills are critical to the success of all students. As a lifelong learner, students should develop life skills that represent the Character Counts Pillars and **MUSTANGS LEAD!**

Mustangs LEAD:

1. Lead by Example
2. Encourage Respect
3. Act Responsibly
4. Demonstrate Safety

We encourage parents to join us in our commitment to teach, model and practice these essential life skills. It is the responsibility of the staff and parents to provide a safe and appropriate learning environment.

MILL CREEK ACADEMY: THE "ONE" RULE

In the Mill Creek community, students need to remember that only one rule is necessary for all of us:

Treat others the way they want to be treated.

This rule applies to the way adults treat children as well as the way children treat adults. This rule is also applicable and worth remembering when we talk about adult-to-adult interactions. We encourage all adults to teach and model this to students as they learn to interact with their peers.

NOTE TO PARENTS – WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

We want you to know that you can reach us to discuss your child or provide information in many ways. We have progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, student planners, newsletters, voicemail, email, Home Access Center (HAC), and Schoology. We will work to keep you updated and should you need to discuss something in detail, contact your child's homeroom teacher or an administrator.

ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL CHANGES

Please notify our office immediately if there is a change in your address, telephone number, email, or your emergency contacts. This information is very important in case your child becomes ill or injured. **Students will not be released to anyone who is not listed on the emergency contact list.** If you would like neighbors or friends to be eligible to pick up your child from school, please list them on your emergency contact list. Please make sure this information is updated whenever necessary. Proof of residency must be provided to change an address.

RELEASING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

School staff shall definitively establish the identity and authority of any person who requests the release of a student from school prior to regularly scheduled dismissal. If the person requesting the release of the student is a person other than a parent or guardian listed on the emergency contact form, the principal or teacher concerned shall not release the student without consent of the parent or guardian who is listed on the emergency contact form. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent or guardian at the time of registration, to make sure emergency contact information is accurate and complete. If a non-enrolling parent contends that he or she has been improperly omitted, it is that parent's responsibility to resolve the issue with the enrolling parent or seek a court order if the parties cannot resolve the issue.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION- NEW! PARENT SQUARE

Mill Creek Academy is transitioning to a new communication platform called Parent Square for mass communication, which will be replacing School Messenger. We encourage you to download the free mobile app, available for iOS and Android. You can also access Parent Square from your web browser at www.parentsquare.com.

SIGNING STUDENTS IN AND OUT

Students reporting late to school must have a parent/guardian sign them in at the office before going to class. Students leaving during the scheduled school day must have a parent/guardian sign them out at the office before leaving. Parents are unable to sign-out their student after 2 PM (M, T, R, F) and 1 PM (W). For student safety, picture identification is required when signing a student in or out. Parents need to send a note to the teacher in advance of a student signing out early.

VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS –NEW! RAPTOR SYSTEM

All visitors must be cleared through our Raptor System. If you are new or have not completed an application within the last 3 years, please submit your application as soon as possible. Be sure to read all of the information regarding school access. Anyone currently approved and up-to-date in the KeepNTrack system will roll over to the Raptor system.

[HTTPS://WWW.STJOHNS.K12.FL.US/VOLUNTEER/](https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/volunteer/)

ALL VISITORS ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE AND SIGN IN THROUGH SCHOOL ACCESS, SHOW ID AND RECEIVE A SCHOOL ACCESS BADGE. THE SCHOOL ACCESS BADGE MUST BE WORN WHILE ON THE SCHOOL CAMPUS. PARENTS ARE INVITED TO VISIT THE SCHOOL REGULARLY AND BECOME INVOLVED IN ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. STUDENTS FROM OTHER LOCATIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO VISIT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY OR DURING SCHOOL FUNCTIONS AFTER SCHOOL.

- Parents or guardians interested in visiting DURING SCHOOL HOURS, NEED to complete an online volunteer/school access application. The application is available on the school website under Parent Information/School Access. Once you have been approved, your application is good for three years. Please understand the approval process may take several weeks.
- While volunteering in our school, chaperoning a field trip, assisting a teacher, or coordinating classroom activities and celebrations, it is important that you not be accompanied by younger children. This is for the safety of the young child and to ensure the volunteer is able to focus on the important task of assisting in the educational setting.
- Parents with younger children will still have an opportunity to volunteer through the PTA program, "Helping Hands." Please check the PTA website for dates and times.
- In order to maintain the learning environment, we ask that volunteers stay no longer than 3 hours per classroom.
- Due to cafeteria capacity, parents/visitors will not be able to visit during lunch. Parents are welcome to sign their student out and take them to lunch and have them return before the end of their scheduled lunch time.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

1st	2nd	3 rd *	4th	5th	6th	7th
8:25-9:11	9:15-10:01	10:05-11:24	11:28-12:14	12:18-1:04	1:08-1:54	1:58-2:45

*A lunch 10:05-10:35, B lunch 10:54-11:24 (3rd Period)

Wednesday (Early Release)

1st	2nd	3 rd *	4th	5th	6th	7th
8:25-9:15	9:19-9:59	10:03-11:11	11:15-11:50	11:53-12:28	12:31-1:06	1:09-1:45

*A lunch 10:03-10:33, B lunch 10:41-11:11 (3rd Period)

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year. We conduct fire and lockdown drills as required by the Florida law. We will also practice drills for the following scenarios: severe weather (high winds) and evacuation. Our school district also requires bus evacuation drills for our bus riders. Safety is of the utmost importance.

MILL CREEK EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Mill Creek Extended Day Program is a community service available to all Mill Creek Academy students. The students in the program are provided with a closely structured and supervised yet fun afternoon schedule of activities, care and fun. Time will be provided each day for homework, snack and free play as well as a variety of activities within the daily program. Additional, fee based activities are also offered. Please visit our website for additional information.
<https://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/extendedday>

Sometimes due to unforeseen conditions, dates or times activities can be changed. Parents will be notified if changes are made, however please check with students, check the MCA website or call the school office at 904-students, check the MCA website or call the school office at 904-547-3720

ATTENDANCE

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Communication between parents/guardians and school officials must be made when students are absent from or tardy to school. **Any student who has been absent from school for an entire day or any part of a day is to submit the MCA Absentee Form the day the student returns to school. MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD SUBMIT AN ABSENTEE FORM WHEN THEY MISS ANY PERIOD.**

The MCA Absentee form is available in two different formats. Absentee forms can be submitted digitally by using the link [MCA Digital Absentee Form](#) found on our website under Parent Information. You can attach a doctor's note using the upload feature. You will receive email confirmation of your submission.

Absentee forms are also available in printable form on the Attendance tab under Parent Information. The form can be completed and sent in with your student. If you have a note from a doctor, please send it in with the Absentee form. Reminder, if your student has been out

3 (three) or more days, you will need to provide a note from a physician.

The absentee form will be required upon returning to school. Automated phone calls and emails will still be sent out on the day of the students absent to alert parents.

Excused absences include: Personal illness, death in the family, religious holidays of the student's established religious faith, required court or law agency appearances, public functions, school related state competitions, scheduled doctor or dentist appointments. **Unexcused absences include shopping trips, pleasure trips, suspension from school, appointments without prior approval except in case of emergency.**

For a complete list of excused and unexcused absences, students and parents should refer to the *Student Code of Conduct*.

It is extremely difficult to be highly successful in management of class work if attendance is irregular. Students having 5 unexcused absences within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences within a 90 calendar-day period shall be reported to the principal/designee to secure and determine rationale for such absences. If a student is absent more than fifteen days, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to provide a doctor's note.

Excused Make-up work: If your child is ill and absent for two days, contact the classroom teacher or front office to arrange for the schoolwork your child has missed. Middle School students will check Schoology first. It is the responsibility of the middle school student to make his/her own arrangements with the teacher to make up the missed work.

Students with an extended illness may qualify for the Hospital Homebound program. For other extended absences, please notify the principal, in writing, prior to the absence.

We encourage medical appointments to be made after school hours or during early release hours whenever possible to reduce the amount of instructional time lost.

TARDINESS

Tardies to school negatively affect a student's overall attendance percentage and academic progress. The parent/guardian needs to provide an appropriate excuse

for their child's tardy to school. **ALL** tardies to school are unexcused, unless a note is issued by a Professional Care Provider (**notes must be received on the day of the tardy prior to the student's lunch period**).

School starts at 8:25 AM. If a student arrives at school after the school day begins, he/she must report to the office and receive a pass before going to class. A parent/guardian contact is necessary to verify the reason for the late arrival. Personally, accompanying the student to the receptionist is required.

The **following consequences** will apply quarterly for **any tardy**.

- 3rd unexcused tardy – warning/parent contact
- 4th – 9th unexcused tardy – alternative lunch location
- 10th tardy - 1-Day In-School Suspension and parent conference

Procedures

- Parents must escort their child to the main office when tardy for school.
- Students are considered tardy any time they are not in their classroom ready to learn at 8:25 a.m.
- Parents will receive a notification via the School Messenger system when a student is tardy to school.
- Students will receive a tardy notice upon late entry.
- Students will eat lunch in an alternative location within one week of their tardy date.

TARDY TO CLASS (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY)

During the school day, middle school students are permitted 3 minutes to move from one class to another. **Tardies to class** will be handled by the class teachers. The following procedures and consequences will apply quarterly.

- 3rd tardy to class -parent notification
- Additional tardies to class – alternative lunch location

TRUANCY

Truancy is defined as an absence from school without the parent's or guardian's knowledge or consent. In some instances, a student may be considered truant because of a parent's or guardian's negligence. Habitual truancy is defined as 15 or more days of unexcused absences in a

90-calendar-day period. Truancy steps that may take place:

- Administration shall report such absence to the Director of Student Services.
- Student Services personnel shall give written notice, either in person or by registered mail, to the parent when no valid reason is found for child's absence from school, requiring enrollment or attendance within three (3) days from the date of notice.
- If such required notice is ignored, the Student Services Office shall report the case to the Superintendent and take steps necessary to bring criminal prosecution against the parent, guardian, or other responsible persons.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

STUDENT CONDUCT

Mill Creek Academy is guided by the **MCA Positive Behavior Systems Handbook** and believes in a pro-active approach to student safety and well-being involving parents and all associated with the activities of the school day and school events. Students are responsible for following all school rules and regulations anytime students are involved in activities associated with the school. This includes from the time students leave their homes, throughout the school day, until they arrive at home after the school day or school activities. Student responsibility applies to any school district property, school field trips, school sponsored activities, walking to and from the school or when participating in school transportation. School transportation includes between home and the bus stop, while at the bus stop and when riding on the school bus.

We are constantly seeking ways to reward positive behavior and help students develop positive self-esteem through our incentives and Positive Behavioral Supports. With continued cooperation and communication among parents, teachers, and students, we can continue the high standards for academic success. We want Mill Creek to continue to be a safe and secure place for every individual. If a student is referred to the office for a serious problem, a parent will be contacted by phone.

BEHAVIOR OF EXCELLENCE

Students that are going “above and beyond” showing PBIS behaviors will be recognized.

SJCSD STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are responsible for the choices they make. All Mill Creek students and parents are required to read the online Code of Conduct, which supports our goal of excellence in behavior. All parents and students are required to read, sign and return the acknowledgement page that is part of the online registration and returning student verification process. A copy is also available on the St. Johns County Website:

www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/rules/conduct.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Showing how MUSTANGS LEAD is considered **behavior excellence** within the Mill Creek learning community. Presenting with EXCELLENCE holds all stakeholders responsible for their own behaviors. We are EXPECTED to meet the PRIDE expectations of EXCELLENCE in EVERYTHING we do.

Mustangs LEAD:

1. Lead by Example
2. Encourage Respect
3. Act Responsibly
4. Demonstrate Safety

Throughout the school year, each teacher will model, expect, and reinforce how MUSTANG LEADERSHIP behaviors look and sound like in the classroom. These expectations are also specific in the hallway, cafeteria, media center, and other common areas.

For students who do not meet the MCA LEAD excellence, the following corrective measures may be taken:

The Mustang Progression Plan

1. Redirection of Behavior
2. In-Class Consequence
3. Check System (Middle School), Character Reflection (Elementary)
4. Referral to administration

Redirection of Behavior

- 1st step - A VERBAL WARNING will be given to the redirect student behavior: no consequence-reminder of Mustangs LEAD.

- 2nd step- A new intervention will take place by the classroom teacher. The teacher will notify the parent with a phone call to discuss behavior concern/classroom consequences.

In Class Consequence

Possible disciplinary consequences may include, but not limited to:

- Conference after class
- Reflection Sheet
- New seating opportunity
- Reteach behaviors
- Loss of privileges

- 3rd step- ELEMENTARY: Classroom consequence- Teacher documents classroom behavior issues and consequences in their notes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: Check System- Give student check/reflection form. Email parent to inform reflection sheet is coming home.
Dean/Administration will be notified.

- After the 3rd step, – Referred to Administration. Administration will contact parents regarding consequence. SJCSD Student Code of Conduct will be a guideline when determining consequences.

Referral – Violation of Student Code of Conduct

- A referral may be issued immediately for any level 2 offense or higher.
- Consequences are aligned to the St. John’s County Code of Conduct.
- Refer to PBIS Section on detailed information on “Meeting LEAD Expectations”.

ITEMS PROHITED AT SCHOOL

Only those articles that are used for educational purposes should be brought to school. Items that may be distracting from the educational process or a risk to the safety and well-being of others must be kept at home. Students are not allowed to sell or trade items at school. **Students should not bring any toys or expensive items to school.**

MCA MUSTANGS LEAD Behavior Expectations

Matrix 2025-2026

	L LEAD BY EXAMPLE	E ENCOURAGE RESPECT	A ACT RESPONSIBLY	D DEMONSTRATE SAFETY
Hallway	• Follow hallway rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Restroom	• Follow restroom rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Playground	• Follow playground rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Cafeteria	• Follow cafeteria rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Classroom	• Follow classroom rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Bus	• Follow bus rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports
Assembly	• Follow assembly rules • Walk quietly • No running or jumping • No eating or drinking • No talking back to staff	• Greet others with a smile • Use polite language • Respect personal space • Respect others' property	• Follow rules • No talking back to staff • No disrespecting others • No disrespecting property	• Walk safely • No running or jumping • No playing games • No playing sports

Universal Signals (Be mindful of environmental requirements and safety policies.)

Universals signals will be used throughout the learning environment (all classrooms and all common areas) to provide consistency in gaining a groups attention.

Raise your hand signal - A well-practiced and consistently implemented attention signal is essential in group-learning situations.

Universal Call Back- "Mighty Mighty"... "Mustangs LEAD!" Students then raise their hand in a horseshoe to demonstrate they are quickly ready to listen.

Volume Levels:

Level 0 (Silent): independent work in class, hallways (elementary), media center, assemblies

Level 1 (Low Volume): partners/small group work

Level 2 (Conversational): class discussion, lunch, bus, hallways/class change (middle school)

Level 3 (Celebration): recess, athletics, dances, applause for assemblies/performance

BULLYING / INTIMIDATION / HARASSMENT

"Bullying" means intimidation, unwanted aggressive behavior, or harassment that is repetitive or is substantially likely to be repeated and causes a reasonable student to fear for his or her physical safety or property; substantially interferes with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of any student without exception; or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. Bullying is repetitive, an imbalance of power, and targeted. Bullying may consist of physical actions, including

gestures, oral, or written communication, and any threat of retaliation for reporting of such acts. Bullying of students is prohibited on school property, at any school function, or on a school bus.

Should a student experience any of these behaviors they **MUST** tell a teacher, a counselor, or an administrator **immediately**. Always tell your parent/guardian. Everyone at Mill Creek has the right to feel safe physically and emotionally.

The Guidance Counselor will provide bullying education throughout the year to guide conversations and provide support throughout their school years.

CHARACTER COUNTS!

The St. Johns County School District, along with area businesses, youth organizations and civic groups, selected the national character educational program of CHARACTER COUNTS! as a countywide initiative to instill positive character traits in our young people. As adults, we are responsible for modeling appropriate behaviors, which has been proven as the best way to teach character in others.

MCA provides character education based on core ethical values, in particular, the Six Pillars of Character. These pillars are TRUSTWORTHINESS, CARING, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, CITIZENSHIP, and FAIRNESS. Teachers identify students who exemplify monthly pillars and students are recognized monthly as Character Counts Students!

DRESS CODE

The dress and grooming of our students should contribute to the health and safety of the individual, promote a positive educational environment and not disrupt the educational activities and processes of the school. Mill Creek Academy follows the school district's dress code guidelines explained in the Student Code of Conduct. All shoes should have a toe or back strap to keep the shoe in place.

BACKPACK/BOOK BAGS

Students may use backpacks to transfer materials from class to class and from school to home. Each middle school student has the opportunity to rent a locker and is encouraged to use this storage system to prevent

overloading the backpack. NO ROLLING BACKPACKS are allowed without documented medical need, which must be approved by administration.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES

Technology is prevalent within our society. However, at MCA we will work to develop responsible boundaries with technology.

We recognize that parents may want their student to have a cell phone/watch for safety reasons and at Mill Creek, we recognize that cell phones/watches can be used as a learning device. However, should a student choose to bring their device to school, honoring the technology agreement will be strictly enforced.

The cell phone/watch will be the student's and parent/guardian's responsibility at all times. The school is not responsible for investigating lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones.

APPROPRIATE DEVICE USAGE: NEW!

Students are permitted to possess cellular phones and other wireless communication devices on school grounds, school buses, and at school-sponsored events. However, all devices must remain powered off and securely stored in a student's backpack, purse, locker, or vehicle during the school day.

In accordance with House Bill 1105, **the use of wireless communication devices by elementary and middle school students is strictly prohibited during the school day.** Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in the confiscation of the device. Repeated violations will be treated as defiance of school rules and may lead to disciplinary consequences.

Violation of this law is a Level II Offense in the SJCS Student Code of Conduct.

1. First Offense: Warning given
2. Second Offense: Phone is taken to front office for student to pick up at end of day and a consequence will be provided
3. Third Offense: Phone is taken to front office and parent contacted to pick up phone at end of day and a consequence will be provided.

Any future offense: Phone is taken to front office and parent contacted to pick up phone at end of day and more serious consequences will be provided.

Due to teaching and practicing responsible boundaries, we BELIEVE that all students will be respectful and work to encourage one another to ensure the success of the technology agreement.

PROFANITY/ABUSIVE LANGUAGE/MATERIALS

Profanity, including racial slurs, is not permitted at Mill Creek Academy. Also prohibited is the use of words, gestures, pictures, or objects that are otherwise not acceptable at school and/or upset the normal day or any school activity. The use of profanity will result in disciplinary action.

PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION (PDA)

PDA is not allowed while students are on school campus or during any school sponsored events. PDA includes, but is not limited to, hugging, kissing, hand-holding, etc. Engaging in acts of PDA will result in disciplinary action.

PUPIL DETENTION, SEARCH, AND SEIZURE

The principal, teacher, or any other member of the staff is authorized to detain temporarily and question a student when circumstances indicate that such student has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a violation of law or a regulation of the school board.

- If at any time reasonable suspicion arises that the student is unlawfully concealing any stolen or illegal property, including but not limited to an alcoholic beverage, illegal drugs, cell phones, or any weapon as prohibited in school board regulations, a member of the instructional staff may search for the presence of the items without a parent/guardian being present.
- If a search of a student or his/her locker or other property reveals stolen or illegal items as prohibited by law or school board regulations, such item(s) may be seized, and such action taken as provided for by law or school board regulations.

SUSPENSION (OUT OF SCHOOL)

The principal or their designated representative may suspend a student from school for misconduct in accordance with the SJCS Student Conduct Code. The suspension shall be reported immediately to the parent/guardian of the student. Suspended students are not allowed on any SJCS campus during this time unless approved by administration. Additionally, students may

not attend or participate in school activities on or off campus while suspended.

ALTERNATE CLASSROOM/IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION

The principal or his designee may place a student in the Alternate Classroom for misconduct in accordance with the SJCS District Student Conduct Code. The placement in the Alternate Classroom shall be reported immediately to a parent/guardian. Each student will receive his/her class work/homework assignments for the time spent in the Alternate Classroom and he/she is expected to work on given assignments while there.

STUDENT SERVICES & INFORMATION

CAFETERIA

All students who make purchases in the cafeteria need to memorize their six-digit student ID number. Parents may check their child's account as to the remaining balance or food purchased by calling the Food Service Manager or using PayPams.

The basic rules, which govern Mill Creek lunch periods, are:

- Students may bring lunch and/or **unopened** drink containers from home.
- Students line up in the service line upon reporting to the cafeteria with their teacher.
- Students are not allowed to use the accounts of other students. Borrowing money from other students is prohibited.
- After eating, students will throw away all trash at designated times.
- Students remain seated at their table throughout lunch. Students are not allowed to move to other tables or go to other parts of the building during their lunch period without special permission.
- **Neither food nor drinks can leave the Café or be consumed in the hall or stored in the lockers.**
- Students may possess a water bottle only. The bottles must only contain water.

Breakfast and lunch meals are served each day. Lunch times depend on the schedule of the student. Students who are eligible for free lunches are also eligible for free breakfast. Free/reduced meal applications need to be turned into the cafeteria as soon as possible when school begins. Registration packets may be obtained from the Front Office or found on the St Johns County School District website. Students are responsible for paying for

all meals until their free/reduced application has been approved.

Parental Restrictions: Restrictions can be placed on your student's meal account by requesting, in writing, the restrictions. Once restrictions are placed, they can only be removed by the parent in a written letter/email to the food service manager.

Food Allergies: If your child has food allergies, please provide the school nurse with a physician's note indicating the allergies and appropriate medical attention required.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Materials are checked out of the Media Center in accordance with Media Center policy. Failure to return items will result in loss of Media Center privileges, including checking out additional books, and may result in suspension from participation in extra-curricular activities until received. In addition, students who have purchased a yearbook will not receive this item until Media Center obligations are met. Instead, the money may be used to offset the cost of the missing book. The Media Center is open from 8:00 A.M. until 2:30 P.M. You must have a pass from your teacher to come to the Media Center.

GUIDANCE & COUNSELING

The purpose of the counseling and guidance program is to help students develop interpersonal relationships, make informed decisions, and develop the ability to explore and plan for careers. Terms to describe school counseling are preventive, situational, supportive, and temporary crisis. In general, school counselors are not involved in long-term therapeutic counseling of the type one would seek in private counseling.

The counselors are available for individual sessions with students who wish to make an appointment. Teachers, parents, the nurse, and administrators may also make student referrals. (If a student requests to be called a name significantly different than their birth name, the request will be referred to the corresponding counselor to obtain parent permission to fulfill the student request. This procedure is in response to recent state legislation and Florida Department of Education rules).

Counselors also help coordinate class scheduling, teacher conferences, the exceptional student referral process, and testing procedures.

K-2 Guidance Counselor: Suzanne Longobardi
3-5 Guidance Counselor: Victoria Russo
6-7(A-M) Guidance Counselor: Amy DiDimenico
7 (N-Z)- 8 Guidance Counselor: Rick Seifert

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students enrolled in physical education classes will dress appropriately and participate in activities unless they have medical excuses. Excuses for a day's absence will be honored with a note from the parent, but if more than 5 days are missed, a doctor's note/excuse will be required. Failure to dress out in middle school will result in a lower grade in the class as PE requires participation.

LOCKERS (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY)

Students will be able to rent lockers and combination locks at the beginning of the school year. Rented lockers will be assigned. Lockers/locks are school property and are subject to inspections by authorized school personnel. Students are not allowed to use their own locks. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. Let an adult know if you need help opening your locker. We discourage decorating the interior/exterior of lockers.

- Always close your locker door and turn the dial to make sure it is locked.
- Keep your locker area neat and clean.
- Keep your locker combination secret.
- Students are not to place any adhesive products on or in their lockers.
- Students are not allowed to move lockers without consent from an administrator. Consequences will be assigned for students housing themselves in a non- assigned locker and for allowing a student to use an unassigned locker.
- Students are to use only his/her assigned locker.
- Student is responsible for a lost lock fee of \$5.

If a student chooses to abuse his/her locker by slamming the door, kicking it, or pulling it open without using the combination, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

LOST AND FOUND

Students who find items that have been left unattended should turn them in to a staff member or the office. All items brought to school should display the student's name, clearly written in permanent ink. **Do not bring valuable clothing, watches, purses, electronic devices**

etc., to school. Clearly mark all personal items with your name so the item can be returned, if lost.

Lost and Found is in the front office. Students who lose personal belongings should check the Lost and Found. **After 30 days, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.**

TEXTBOOKS

Students will be required to replace textbooks that are lost or damaged at the replacement cost.

TRANSPORTATION-

NEW! BUSPLANNER AND CHIPMUNK APP

Please check the District site regarding bus schedules and create an account for the Chipmunk App and BusPlanner website.

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/news/2025-2026-bus-schedules/>

Transportation is provided free for students living more than two miles from their school. Riding the bus is a privilege that is earned by obeying safety and behavioral rules. Bus routes comply with state guidelines. Our first concern is safety. We provide supervision during loading and unloading of buses. The bus driver provides supervision while students are on the bus. Drivers must watch traffic and road conditions while driving. Therefore, drivers must rely on the cooperation of students in order to maintain a safe and orderly situation on the bus. Students must practice responsible self-discipline while riding the bus. A student, who chooses not to do so, cannot be allowed to jeopardize the safety of others and will be required to arrange other transportation with their parent/guardian to and from school.

Students riding the bus to and from school will ride an assigned bus each day. **Students will not be issued bus passes to ride another bus or change bus stops unless approved by transportation (see below).** We regret any inconvenience but recognize safety as our top priority. Bus drivers are authorized to issue referrals for rule infractions that could result in disciplinary action, including bus suspension. Parent requests or complaints regarding bus service should be directed to the director of transportation at 547-7810.

PROVISIONAL TRANSPORTATION WAIVER

Provisional Transportation Services are afforded to students enrolled in St Johns County School District schools on a space available basis for a specified period

of time due to extenuating circumstances. Provisional Transportation Services are afforded to students on existing bus routes and bus stops at scheduled times only. Students afforded Provisional Transportation Services are subject to the student code of conduct while aboard buses. If you have multiple students for whom you are requesting a waiver, please fill out this form once for each child, separately. Waiver requests for multiple students cannot be accepted. For more information, please visit:
<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transportation/ptwaiver>

TRANSPORTATION CHANGES

Transportation changes for ELEMENTARY students (Bus, Parent Pick-Up, Extended Day, etc.) must be received, in writing. No courtesy bus rides will be allowed. Please send a note to your student's teacher before 8 AM on the day the transportation change is needed. If there is a situation during the day and a change in normal dismissal is needed, a guardian will need to email mcattransportation@stjohns.k12.fl.us BEFORE 2 PM (1 PM on Wednesdays). Include your elementary child's name, grade, teacher and how they need to get home. We do not accept phone calls for transportation changes.

Middle school students are not allowed to return to campus if they leave during dismissal times.

BICYCLES, E-BIKES, & SCOOTERS

Students riding bicycles, electric bicycles, or scooters to school must wear a safety helmet in accordance with the Florida Statutes (F.S. 316.2065 and 316.20655). For their safety, students should never ride any type of bicycle, electric bike, or scooter on school grounds. Upon arrival at school, students are required to disembark their vehicle at the entry gate and walk it to the designated storage area. The same protocol should be followed when leaving the campus. Students are encouraged to lock these items in the designated storage areas.

FIELD TRIPS & EXTRA CURRICULAR

Reward field trip eligibility is determined based upon **academics, behavior and attendance**. Administration reserves the right to revoke privileges. If a student loses this privilege after paying, a refund will not be provided past the deadline date. This policy also applies to the eighth-grade trip to Washington, D.C. as well as Gradventure.

We understand that families would like to join their child's field study. Depending on the nature of the field study, the number of chaperones needed may fluctuate and is determined by the grade level team. **Only pre-approved by the teacher, cleared, chaperones may attend field studies.**

SCHOOL NURSE & CLINIC GUIDELINES

We make a special effort to help students establish good health habits and stay healthy. The success of our efforts, however, depends on parental follow-through at home.

Students should not come to school when they are ill and have an elevated temperature of 100 degrees or higher or a suspected contagious condition. Students should **stay at home until symptom free, including fever and or vomiting, for 24 hours.** This is for your own protection as well as for others in the classroom. A registered nurse is on duty each day in the clinic.

Medication Guidelines:

- **SJCSD requires parents to bring in and pick up medications, prescriptions, over-the-counter inhalers, and topical ointments with current expiration dates on them. All medications, over-the-counter and prescribed, must be kept in the nurse's office.**
- All non-prescription over-the-counter medication must be kept in the nurse's office and sent in the original container marked with the student's name and accompanied by a parent's authorization to administer. Only the instructions on the container will be followed unless the physician provides alternative instructions. If a question should arise, the school nurse will have the right to refuse administration of the medication until further clarification is received and documented from the physician.
- Any change in the time or dosage of medication must be accompanied by a written request from the physician.
- In middle school, it is the student's responsibility to come to the health room for assistance in taking medication.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (HONOR CODE)

Mill Creek Academy is an institution in which intentional, purposeful learning takes place on a daily basis. Useful

and lasting learning does not occur unless the process students go through to learn is an honest process, which reflects their true abilities as measured by their own efforts. Progress, which is based on unsound learning, as in the case with cheating or copying another's work, is not a genuine process. Cheating prepares a student for failure, not success. In an academic institution, dishonesty serves to undermine the academic and intellectual integrity of the school.

By establishing the honor code, the faculty and administration of MCA indicate their commitment to work to eliminate such acts as cheating and to deal with offenses in a firm and decisive manner.

CHEATING

Cheating involves one or more of the following:

- Using the work of another person as your own.
- Copying from (or providing your answers for) another student's assignments, homework, test answers, reports projects, or writing assignments.
- Preparing for cheating in advance. Such action involves:
 - Having in your possession a copy of a test to be given or that has been given by a teacher before you take it.
 - Having in your possession and using previously prepared answers to a test or quiz (this includes information written directly upon your person).
 - Unauthorized use of text or notes during a test or examination.
 - Asking another student for test information or providing such information to another student during the test, quiz, or examination.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is defined as using another person's ideas, expressions or work without giving the original author credit.

Forging is a form of cheating and is defined as writing a note with the intent of misleading a staff member. Signing or allowing others to sign your parent's name to a school paper is also forging.

Cheating/Plagiarism/Forgery are Level II offenses according to the SJCS Student Code of Conduct and consequences will be issued by Administration.

3RD – 5TH GRADE GRADING

Student grades are calculated taking into consideration both academic grades such as tests, quizzes, and class projects and investment grades such as homework. The value of academic grades is 70% summative and 30%

formative. Mastery of objectives is our priority, and this is why we have structured grading in this manner.

SCHOODOLOGY

Schoology will be used as the main communication tool for students and parents/guardians. Students will receive access information at the beginning of the school year and will be required to use the tool as a learning tool throughout the school year.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY)

Mill Creek Academy's eligibility expectations have been established to help students be successful and responsible for their academic expectations. It is to be used in a positive educational manner. Students earning an F in any subject have a one-week grace period to raise their grade to a D- or higher. Any student with multiple F's on the most recent reports are not eligible to try out for the current seasonal sport. Eligibility reports will be run the morning of every activity or event to determine if students have regained their eligibility.

Students, while on the non-eligible list, will not be eligible to participate in or attend any school functions outside of the school day including reward or incentive fieldtrips during the school day. In the event that a student is assigned to ISS/Alternate Classroom or OSS, the student would be considered ineligible to attend. This would include all district athletic and PTA sponsored events.

FORGOTTEN PROJECTS/HOMEWORK

In helping students gain responsibility, we will monitor the frequency of items brought to the front office once the school day has started. At any time, should administration observe this practice becoming disruptive to the environment or student, other actions will be taken to prevent disrupting the learning environment.

Homework

Homework plays an essential role in students' overall academic achievement. At MCA, students and parents should expect approximately 10 minutes per grade level of homework across all subjects (elementary). For example, 1st grade would have a total of approximately 10 minutes of homework. 2nd grade would have approximately 20 minutes of homework, etc. Expect 5 – 8 hours of homework for middle school students. Parents play an important role in supporting homework. Below are several ways (not inclusive) parents can support homework.

- Communicate with the teacher about student

performance, progress, homework.

- Specify regular time for homework, establish structures for time use.
- Structure homework within the flow of family life.
- Articulate and enforce expectations, rules, and standards for homework behavior.
- Reinforce and reward student's homework efforts, completion, correctness.

MAKE UP ASSIGNMENTS

When a student is absent from school, all assignments are to be made up. Generally, one day is given to complete the work for each day of absence. If the child has been ill or will be absent for a period of **two or more days**, a request for assignments can be made by calling the school office or emailing a teacher on the team. For absences of fewer than two days, the student is responsible for getting the make-up assignments from the teachers upon returning to school or from a friend. Middle school students can also utilize Schoology to review/work on missed assignments. Parents should call before 9:00 A.M. to request homework.

HOME ACCESS CENTER

The Home Access Center (HAC), is a web-based application that is part of our Student Information System called eSchoolPlus. Please visit the website below to access or sign up for an account.

<https://homeaccess.stjohns.k12.fl.us> This system provides parents and students with a daily summary page, schedule and attendance, discipline information, class work, test scores and course requests.

STUDENT AWARDS, RECOGNITION & ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMS

In order to promote a positive student climate, it is a priority at MCA that students be recognized for being contributing citizens in the decision-making process. As a contributing member of the student body, students remain engaged and excited about learning, both academically and socially. Currently, MCA recognizes student leadership in the following ways:

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY HONOR SOCIETY

The National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) provides students in grades 4-5 a place to develop and apply their passion for service, while obtaining

the skills to be confident young leaders for years to come.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The National Junior Honor Society is an organization of student who excel in the areas of scholarships, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. Students with a 3.75 GPA and rank at or above the 85% on the teacher evaluation scale. Character and citizenship are the main criteria in the teacher evaluation scale. Students are invited to be part of the NJHS in 7th grade.

BIRTHDAYS

If you wish to bring in a birthday treat on your child's special day, it must be pre-approved by the classroom teacher and store bought. Due to food allergies, please check in with the classroom teacher in advance. Your child's homeroom teacher will provide an appropriate time for you to drop off the treat and your treat must be approved by the teacher for potential food allergens. The safety and health of all students is a priority. In addition, to help minimize classroom disruptions, please do not send in balloons.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

A conference can be arranged with an administrator, counselor, individual teacher, or a team of teachers. To protect instructional time and the learning environment, we ask that parents prearrange to meet with staff members. Parents can call and leave a message, send a teacher email, or send a note to the teacher to request a conference. Teachers will have conferences with all parents in the month of October.

PARENT/TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

PTA is an integral part of our school. PTA supports students, staff and administration financially and through many hours of volunteer work. PTA sponsors family nights and dances and other fun opportunities for students to come together. In addition, they sell spirit wear and help fund community service projects. We encourage all families to join PTA. Membership packets are available at Meet and Greet and in the front office.

COMMUNICATION

E-Mail- All staff at Mill Creek Academy can be reached by e-mail, with a reply within 48 hours. For most staff (example: John.Doe@stjohns.k12.fl.us). Check with your

student's teacher for any exceptions or visit our website and select the appropriate link.

Home Access Center- This is a web-based application that allows parents to view their child's educational information (i.e. grades, attendance, report cards). Parents will need to register for their username and password using the HAC link on the school website. Instructions and further information can be retrieved from the district website www.stjohns.k12.fl.us under the heading For Families. Additional information can be found on our school's website under Home Access Center (HAC) or call Mrs. Jessica Veon at (904) 547-3727.

Schoology- Schoology will be used as the main communication tool for students and parents/guardians. Parents will receive communication from the school at the beginning of the year with access directions. At Curriculum Chat night in the Fall, parents will be given further instructions on how to use the system throughout the school year.

School Closings- Local radio and television stations will carry all school closing announcements due to inclement weather or other emergencies by 6:30 a.m. whenever possible. In addition, you can log on to the St. Johns County website (www.stjohns.k12.fl.us) to view announcements.

Teacher Newsletters/Schoology Page- Teachers are responsible for communicating the learning goals for students via newsletter or Schoology Page. Teacher newsletters are sent weekly or bi-weekly and Schoology pages are updated weekly.

Visiting Classrooms- Parents may only visit with an appointment. Parents coming on campus for a meeting must complete a health screening and all district health protocols. Parents may visit classrooms **only** with the prearranged permission of the teachers and must be prescheduled 24 hours in advance. "Drop-ins" are not allowed. All visitors are required to sign in at the front office. For the safety of all students, parents and visitors are not allowed to go directly to any area in the building without permission. **Siblings are not permitted to accompany parents while visiting a classroom.** Because our staff has required duties and meetings, we are unable to accommodate parents who do not have a scheduled appointment. We are unable to allow unannounced classroom visitations prior to the

beginning of the school day. K parents may not walk students to their classrooms after August 15, 2022. All other parents may not walk their students to class.

Website- Communication is the key to a successful school/home partnership. Our school website provides information about upcoming events: <http://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>

MILL CREEK ACADEMY POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SYSTEM HANDBOOK

School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a proactive, team-based framework for creating and sustaining safe and effective schools. Emphasis is placed on prevention of problem behavior, development of pro-social skills, and the use of data-based problem solving for addressing existing behavior concerns. School-wide PBIS increases the capacity of schools to educate all students utilizing research-based school-wide, classroom, and individualized interventions. PBIS is an approach in behavior management that is implemented on a school-wide level and taught in all school settings such as the classroom, cafeteria, hallways and stairs, restrooms, outside, distance learning classroom, and the school bus. PBIS methods are research-based and include proactive strategies for defining and teaching expectations, supporting appropriate student behaviors, and responding to inappropriate behavior to create a positive school environment. In addition to school wide expectations, teachers implement PBIS practices in the classroom including preventative and responsive approaches designed to decrease disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student social behavior and academic outcome.

The key components of an effective school wide PBIS system involve:

- Clearly defining and teaching a set of behavioral expectations
- Consistently acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior
- Constructively addressing problematic behavior
- Effectively using behavioral data to assess progress

We believe that it is important for students to make responsible choices; choices which are the result of teacher input and guidance; and choices which are based on the knowledge of the consequences. We also believe that students demonstrate marked improvement when they are recognized using positive reinforcement for behavior and classroom successes.

Another important component of PBIS is celebrating successes! We make a concerted effort to acknowledge students as they make good choices and showing Mustang LEAD behaviors.

Lead by Example, Encourage Respect, Act Responsibly, Demonstrate Safety

Mustang LEADERS Lead by Example: Students and staff at MCA are expected to lead by example as role models.

Examples of leading by example include, but are not limited to the following:

- Motivate others
- Support and encourage others
- Be a team player
- Active listening
- Use positive and appropriate language
- Respect school property

Mustang LEADERS Encourage Respect: Students and staff are expected to respect each other.

Examples of respectful behavior include, but are not limited to the following:

- Listening to each other
- Talking politely and using appropriate language
- Using appropriate body language
- Using an appropriate tone and volume
- Avoiding words that are hurtful to others

- Accepting individual differences (this includes cultural, learning, appearance, and other differences)
- Touching others' property only with permission
- Being mindful of other people's space
- Treating school property with care

Mustangs LEADERS Act Responsibly: Students and staff are expected to be responsible.

Examples of responsible behavior include, but are not limited to the following:

- Be on time
- Be prepared
- Complete assigned work
- Keep your area clean (lockers too)
- Follow directions
- Listen to your teachers and staff members
- Show appreciation
- Stay in assigned area
- Be motivated to do your best
- Use technology responsibly (Internet, social media)

Mustang LEADERS Demonstrate Safety: Our number one priority is safety at MCA. Students and staff are expected to follow all safety rules for the school and buses and respect other people's right to be safe emotionally and physically.

Examples of physical and emotional safety include, but are not limited to the following:

- Walking in the hallway
- Walking when entering and exiting the building
- Keeping hands and feet to yourself, and sitting quietly
- Playing on and around playground equipment appropriately
- Following bus rules
- Avoiding fighting and play fighting
- Using appropriate tone and volume at all times

Teaching Expectations

MCA teachers and staff members teach behavioral expectations to all students in the building. These expectations are taught in real contexts. Teaching appropriate behavior is more than telling students what behaviors they should avoid. Instead, specific behaviors are modeled and explained. During the first weeks of school and throughout the year, these behavior expectations are taught and modeled. School-wide procedures and routines are established in all settings to provide students with examples of positive behaviors. Teachers and staff will model and rehearse positive examples with students to ensure all students have the opportunity for success. Through modeled practice, students will have an opportunity to practice the expectations in a positive way until they demonstrate fluent performance.

MCA follows the SJCS D Student Code of Conduct.

CHARACTER COUNTS! IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY

The Six Pillars of CharacterSM



St. Johns County School District Pillars of the Month

August- All Pillars September-**Fairness** October- **Responsibility** November-**Citizenship**
December-All Pillars January- **Respect** February-**Caring** March-**Trustworthiness**
April- All Pillars May-Citizenship (with an emphasis on patriotism)

To learn more about the Character Counts! Program in St. Johns County, please visit <https://ccstjohns.com/> for more information.