



# **Mill Creek Academy**

## **Parent and Student Handbook**

### **2026-2027**

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***Leading the Charge in Lifelong Learning!***

Principal: Jacqueline Ottosen  
Assistant Principal: Bruce Allie  
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# Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year!

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We are excited to begin another year of learning and growth together. Our staff, students, and families accomplished a great deal last year, and we look forward to building on that success. Together, we will continue strengthening the relationships that make our school community successful.

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

Our commitment to students and our community continues to guide 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 shared core values are:

- 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 partnering with you for a successful school year!

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Ottosen  
Principal

# 2026-2027 Handbook Contents

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|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION .....                        | 2  |
| ST. JOHNS COUNTY DISTRICT MISSION .....                 | 2  |
| ST. JOHNS COUNTY DISTRICT VISION .....                  | 2  |
| MILL CREEK ACADEMY MISSION .....                        | 2  |
| MILL CREEK ACADEMY VISION .....                         | 2  |
| MILL CREEK ACADEMY FACTS .....                          | 2  |
| 2026-2027 PTA BOARD .....                               | 2  |
| MILL CREEK DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY .....                  | 2  |
| MILL CREEK ACADEMY: THE “ONE” RULE .....                | 2  |
| ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL CHANGES .....       | 2  |
| ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL .....                             | 2  |
| SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: PARENTSQUARE .....                | 2  |
| SIGNING STUDENTS IN AND OUT .....                       | 3  |
| VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS: RAPTOR SYSTEM .....            | 3  |
| MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES .....                      | 3  |
| EMERGENCY DRILLS .....                                  | 3  |
| MILL CREEK EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM .....                   | 3  |
| ATTENDANCE .....                                        | 3  |
| ATTENDANCE MATTERS .....                                | 3  |
| TARDINESS .....                                         | 4  |
| TRUANCY .....                                           | 4  |
| SCHOOL CLIMATE .....                                    | 4  |
| STUDENT CONDUCT .....                                   | 4  |
| BEHAVIOR OF EXCELLENCE .....                            | 4  |
| SJCSD STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT .....                     | 5  |
| BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS .....                             | 5  |
| MCA MUSTANGS LEAD BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS .....           | 5  |
| UNIVERSAL SIGNALS .....                                 | 5  |
| BULLYING / INTIMIDATION / HARASSMENT .....              | 5  |
| CHARACTER COUNTS! .....                                 | 6  |
| DRESS CODE .....                                        | 6  |
| BACKPACK/BOOK BAGS .....                                | 6  |
| ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES .....                    | 6  |
| TESTING .....                                           | 6  |
| PROFANITY/ABUSIVE LANGUAGE/MATERIALS .....              | 6  |
| PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION (PDA) .....                 | 6  |
| PUPIL DETENTION, SEARCH, AND SEIZURE .....              | 7  |
| SUSPENSION (OUT OF SCHOOL) .....                        | 7  |
| ALTERNATE CLASSROOM/IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION .....          | 7  |
| STUDENT SERVICES & INFORMATION .....                    | 7  |
| CAFETERIA .....                                         | 7  |
| LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER .....                              | 7  |
| GUIDANCE & COUNSELING .....                             | 7  |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION .....                                | 7  |
| LOCKERS (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY) .....                      | 7  |
| LOST AND FOUND .....                                    | 8  |
| TEXTBOOKS .....                                         | 8  |
| TRANSPORTATION: BUSPLANNER AND CHIPMUNK APP .....       | 8  |
| TRANSPORTATION CHANGES .....                            | 8  |
| BICYCLES, E-BIKES, AND SCOOTERS .....                   | 8  |
| FIELD TRIPS & EXTRA CURRICULAR .....                    | 8  |
| SCHOOL NURSE & CLINIC GUIDELINES .....                  | 8  |
| STUDENT ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY .....                   | 9  |
| ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (HONOR CODE) .....                   | 9  |
| CHEATING .....                                          | 9  |
| 3RD-5TH GRADE GRADING .....                             | 9  |
| SCHOOLGY .....                                          | 9  |
| EXTRA CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY) ..... | 9  |
| FORGOTTEN PROJECTS/HOMEWORK .....                       | 9  |
| MAKE UP ASSIGNMENTS .....                               | 9  |
| STUDENT AWARDS, RECOGNITION & ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAMS ..   | 10 |
| NATIONAL ELEMENTARY HONOR SOCIETY .....                 | 10 |
| NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY .....                     | 10 |
| PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT .....                  | 10 |
| PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES .....                        | 10 |
| PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) .....                  | 10 |
| COMMUNICATION .....                                     | 10 |
| POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SYSTEM (PBIS) HANDBOOK .....          | 12 |
| MUSTANGS LEAD BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS MATRIX .....        | 14 |
| CHARACTER COUNTS PILLARS .....                          | 15 |

## 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 lifelong 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.<br>8:40 am – 3:00 pm<br>Wed. 8:40 am – 2:00 pm |
| School Mascot:      | Mustangs                                                              |
| Colors:             | Blue and Yellow                                                       |

### 2026-2027 PTA BOARD

President: Lisa Mangefrida  
 Vice President Elementary: Tatum Pettrey  
 Vice President MS: Christina Dixon  
 Treasurer: Jill Flanigan  
 Secretary: Melissa Stachitas  
 Communications: Malie Santiago  
 Parliamentarian: Tangelia Chue  
 Liaison between MCA/PTA: Amanda Dykeman

Committee Chairs  
 Business Partner: Christina Dixon  
 Spirit Night Rep: TBD  
 Teacher Appreciation: Elizabeth Smith  
 Helping Hands: Kirsten DiSalle, Susanne Stalvey  
 Spirit Wear Rep: Crystal Eustice  
 SAC Rep: TBD  
 Middle School Events Rep: TBD  
 Membership: TBD  
 Volunteers: TBD

## MILL CREEK DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

At Mill Creek Academy, the development and application of life skills are essential to every student's success. As lifelong learners, students are encouraged to build skills that reflect the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars and Mustangs LEAD.

### Mustangs LEAD:

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

We invite families to partner with us as we teach, model, and practice these essential life skills. Staff members and families share responsibility for creating a safe, supportive, and appropriate learning environment.

### MILL CREEK ACADEMY: THE "ONE" RULE

One guiding rule supports our entire Mill Creek community:

*Treat others the way they want to be treated.*

This rule guides how adults interact with children, how children interact with adults, and how adults interact with one another. We encourage all members of our community to teach and model this expectation as students learn to build positive relationships with their peers.

### NOTE TO FAMILIES: WE ARE HERE TO HELP

We want families to feel informed, supported, and connected. Communication is available through progress reports, parent-teacher conferences, student planners, newsletters, voicemail, email, Home Access Center (HAC), Schoology, and ParentSquare. For questions or a detailed conversation, please 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 and complete the form on ParentSquare. 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.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students may not be dropped off until 8:05am. School staff are available from 8:05-8:35 to help students for arrival to get to their appropriate destination. Always follow the directions of staff in the parking lot to ensure safe arrival and dismissal. Dismissal begins at 3:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday; and 2:00pm on Wednesday.

<https://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/faq/>

## SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: PARENTSQUARE

Mill Creek Academy uses ParentSquare for mass communication, including classroom communication and the weekly school newsletter. Families are encouraged to download the free mobile app for iOS or Android. ParentSquare may also be accessed through a web browser at <http://www.parentsquare.com/>

## SIGNING STUDENTS IN AND OUT

Students who arrive late must be signed in by a parent/guardian at the front office before reporting to class. Students leaving before the scheduled end of the school day must be signed out by a parent/guardian at the front office. Early checkout is not available after 2:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday or after 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday. For student safety, photo identification is required. Families must complete the ParentSquare form before an early checkout. Mill Creek will initiate an early checkout only when a student visits the clinic; students should not use personal devices during school hours to arrange checkout.

## VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS: RAPTOR SYSTEM

All visitors must be cleared through the Raptor system. New visitors, or those who have not completed an application within the past three years, should submit an application as early as possible and review all school-access information.

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/volunteer/>

All visitors must report directly to the front office, sign in through School Access, present identification, and receive a School Access badge. The badge must be worn at all times while on campus. Families are encouraged to become involved in school activities. Students from other locations may not visit during the school day or during after-school functions.

- 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.
- All Parent Conferences and School events during the school day require clearance through School Access.
- 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 2 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        | 3rd*        | 4th         | 5th        | 6th       | 7th       |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 8:40-9:25 | 9:29-10:14 | 10:18-11:36 | 11:40-12:26 | 12:30-1:16 | 1:20-2:06 | 2:10-3:00 |

\*A lunch 10:18-10:48, B lunch 11:06-11:36 (3<sup>rd</sup> Period)

Wednesday (Early Release)

| 1st       | 2nd        | 3rd*        | 4th         | 5th         | 6th        | 7th       |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 8:40-9:27 | 9:31-10:10 | 10:14-11:24 | 11:28-12:03 | 12:07-12:42 | 12:46-1:21 | 1:25-2:00 |

\*A lunch 10:14-10:44, B lunch 10:54-11:24 (3<sup>rd</sup> Period)

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills are conducted throughout the school year to help students and staff respond safely and confidently. Fire and lockdown drills are conducted as required by Florida law. The school also practices severe-weather, evacuation, and bus-evacuation drills. Student and staff safety remains our highest priority.

## MILL CREEK EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

The Mill Creek Extended Day Program is a community service available to all Mill Creek Academy students. The program provides a structured, closely supervised, and enjoyable afternoon schedule. Time is provided for homework, snack, free play, and a variety of daily activities. Additional fee-based activities are also available. Please visit the school website for more information.

<https://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/extendedday>

Because unforeseen circumstances may require changes to activity dates or times, families will be notified when changes occur. Please also check with your student, review the MCA website, or call the school office at 904-547-3720.

## ATTENDANCE

### ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Consistent communication between families and school staff is essential when a student is absent or tardy. A student who misses an entire school day or any portion of the day must submit the MCA Absentee Form on the day the student returns. Middle school students must submit an absentee form when they miss any class period.

The MCA Absentee Form is available in two formats. Families may submit the form digitally through the MCA Digital Absentee Form link under Parent Information on the school website or through ParentSquare. A doctor's note may be attached using the upload feature, and an email confirmation will be sent after submission. <https://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/attendance/mca-absentee-form/>

A printable Absentee Form is also available on the Attendance tab under Parent Information. The completed form may be sent to school with the student. If a doctor's note is available, please submit it with the form. A physician's note is required when a student has been absent for three or more days.

The absentee form is required when the student returns to school. Automated phone calls and emails will continue to be sent on the day of an absence to keep families informed.

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/vacation 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

Arriving on time supports a student's attendance, academic progress, and readiness to learn. A parent/guardian must provide an appropriate explanation for a tardy. All tardies are unexcused unless documentation is provided by a professional care provider on the day of the tardy and before the student's lunch period.

School begins at 8:40 a.m. A student who arrives after the school day begins must report to the front office, receive a pass, and then proceed to class. A parent/guardian must accompany the student to the receptionist and verify the reason for the late arrival.

The following consequences will apply quarterly for any tardy.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> unexcused tardy – warning/parent contact
- 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> unexcused tardy – alternative lunch location
- 10<sup>th</sup> 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 8:40am.

- Parents will receive a notification via email and/or text 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 4 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.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 follows the MCA Positive Behavior Systems Handbook and uses a proactive, collaborative approach to student safety and well-being. Students are responsible for following school rules and expectations whenever they are participating in school-related activities—from the time they leave home until they return home after school or a school activity. These expectations apply on district property, during field trips and school-sponsored activities, while walking to and from school, and throughout school transportation, including travel between home and the bus stop, time at the bus stop, and time on the bus.

We continually seek opportunities to recognize positive behavior and strengthen student confidence through incentives and Positive Behavioral Supports. Ongoing partnership and communication among families, teachers, and students help us maintain high standards for academic and behavioral success. Our goal is for Mill Creek Academy to remain a safe, secure, and welcoming place for every individual. If a student is referred to the office for a serious concern, a parent/guardian will be contacted by phone.

### BEHAVIOR OF EXCELLENCE

Students who go above and beyond in demonstrating PBIS and Mustangs LEAD expectations 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: <https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/schoolservices/conduct/>

## BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Demonstrating Mustangs LEAD reflects behavioral excellence throughout the Mill Creek learning community. Every stakeholder is responsible for personal choices and conduct, and all members of the community are expected to pursue excellence in everything they do.

### Mustangs LEAD:

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

Throughout the school year, teachers will model, teach, expect, and reinforce what Mustangs LEAD behaviors look and sound like in the classroom. Expectations also apply in hallways, the cafeteria, the Media Center, and all other common areas.

When a student needs additional support in meeting MCA LEAD expectations, the following progressive corrective measures may be used:

### 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 and Classroom Support

- Step 1 - The student receives a verbal reminder and redirection connected to Mustangs LEAD. No consequence is assigned at this step.
- Step 2 - The classroom teacher provides an additional intervention and contacts the parent/guardian by phone to discuss the behavior concern and classroom response.

### Possible In-Class Supports and Consequences

Possible responses may include, but are not limited to:

- Conference after class
- Reflection Sheet
- New seating opportunity
- Reteach behaviors
- Loss of privileges
- Step 3 - Elementary: The teacher assigns a classroom consequence and documents the behavior concern and response.
- Step 3 - Middle School: The teacher uses the Check System and provides the student with a check/reflection form. The parent/guardian is notified by email that the reflection sheet is coming home, and the dean/administration is informed.
- After Step 3, the student may be referred to administration. Administration/Dean will contact the parent/guardian regarding the consequence, using the SJCSD Student Code of Conduct as a guide.

## 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. Johns County Code of Conduct.
- Refer to the PBIS section for detailed information about meeting LEAD expectations.

## ITEMS PROHIBITED AT SCHOOL

To support a focused, safe learning environment, students should bring only items needed for educational purposes. Items that may distract from learning or create a risk to the safety or well-being of others must remain at home. Students may not sell or trade items at school and should not bring toys or expensive personal items.

## MCA MUSTANGS LEAD Behavior Expectations

Matrix 2026-2027

|            | L<br>LEAD BY<br>EXAMPLE                                                                                                                                                             | E<br>ENCOURAGE<br>RESPECT                                                                                                                                                                                                              | A<br>ACT<br>RESPONSIBLY                                                                                                                                                                                   | D<br>DEMONSTRATE<br>SAFETY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hallway    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep hands and feet off walls</li> <li>Stay in line</li> <li>Pick up dropped items</li> <li>Be thoughtful in movement</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Stay in the right</li> <li>Be aware of your surroundings</li> <li>Be aware of others</li> <li>Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul> |
| Restroom   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep up after yourself</li> <li>Be personal and alert</li> <li>Quality and quantity</li> </ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk hands with step</li> <li>Use water and supply safely</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  |
| Playground | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take turns</li> <li>Use up quality and quantity</li> <li>Use equipment appropriately</li> </ul>                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of your surroundings</li> <li>Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul>                                                                                   |
| Cafeteria  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep up your area and trash outside</li> <li>Be personal and alert</li> <li>Use equipment appropriately</li> </ul>                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul>                                                                                                         |
| Classroom  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be honest</li> <li>Respect others' belongings</li> <li>Use materials correctly</li> <li>Be prepared</li> </ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul>                                                                                                         |
| Bus        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember your bus number</li> <li>Listen to the bus staff</li> <li>Keep the bus clean</li> <li>Follow directions</li> <li>Keep track of your belongings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay seated</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |
| Assembly   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Respect others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model self</li> <li>Respect and encourage individuals to express your time</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect others property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember your bus number</li> <li>Listen to the bus staff</li> <li>Keep the bus clean</li> <li>Follow directions</li> <li>Keep track of your belongings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay seated</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> <li>Be safe and alert</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |

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

Universal signals are used consistently in classrooms and common areas to help groups transition quickly and safely to attentive listening.

Raise-Your-Hand Signal - A well-practiced and consistently used attention signal supports effective group learning.

Universal Call Back - The adult says, "Mustangs LEAD!" and students respond by: stop what you are doing, raise your hand, voices off Level 0, and look at the speaker.

### 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/performances

## 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.

A student who experiences bullying, intimidation, or harassment must tell a teacher, counselor, or administrator immediately and should always tell a parent/guardian. Every member of the Mill Creek community has the right to feel physically and emotionally safe.

The school counselors provide bullying-prevention education throughout the year and support students in developing safe, respectful relationships.

### CHARACTER COUNTS!

The St. Johns County School District, together with area businesses, youth organizations, and civic groups, selected the national CHARACTER COUNTS! program as a countywide initiative to strengthen positive character traits in young people. Adults play an essential role by consistently modeling the behaviors and values we want students to develop.

MCA provides character education centered on the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Caring, Respect, Responsibility, Citizenship, and Fairness. Teachers identify students who exemplify the monthly pillar, and those students are recognized 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 an important part of modern life. At MCA, we help students develop responsible and healthy boundaries for technology use.

We understand that families may want students to carry a cell phone or watch for safety. If a student brings a device to school, the student must follow the technology agreement and all school expectations.

Cell phones and watches remain the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian at all times. The school is not responsible for investigating devices that are lost, damaged, or stolen.

#### APPROPRIATE DEVICE USAGE:

Students may possess cell phones and other wireless communication devices on school grounds, buses, and at school-sponsored events. During the school day, however, devices must remain powered off and securely stored in a backpack, purse, locker, or vehicle.

In accordance with House Bill 1105, elementary and middle school students may not use wireless communication devices during the school day. A device may be confiscated when these expectations are not followed. Repeated violations will be treated as defiance of school rules and may result in disciplinary consequences.

This will include texting/calling during school hours to inform parents of illness, completion of testing, items needed, and any other personal device usage. All parent communication during school hours must be done from a school phone, unless given permission to use personal device from a school official.

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: The phone will be taken to the front office, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick it up at the end of the day, and more serious consequences will be assigned.

We are confident that students can demonstrate respect and support one another by following the technology agreement and practicing responsible device boundaries.

Devices should be stored away upon arriving on school campus and remain stored away in backpacks/purse/etc. during dismissal while walking to dismissal locations. Repeated use during these times may result in a disciplinary consequence.

### TESTING

Students will participate in state testing three times during the school year in Fall, Winter, and Spring. Students are expected to participate on their schedule testing day, arrive at school on time, and follow all testing policies and procedures. Any violations including cell phone/device use during testing sessions will invalidate students' test. Students who miss testing will make up testing on a different day during the testing window upon availability.

Cheating is a Level II offense in the student code of conduct, talking, looking at other student's screens, and phone/device use during state testing will be considered as cheating and will invalidate students' test and constitute parent notification and possible disciplinary action. This includes notifying parents when testing is complete through personal device usage.

Students who begin testing may not leave campus and return to testing. If students are picked up before completion of their state test, the test will be invalidated. If students are ill or feeling sick, they should remain at home. Students who become ill during testing will be sent home and complete testing upon returning. If sick students remain on campus after beginning their test, they will continue testing until completion.

### 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 another staff member may temporarily detain and question a student when circumstances indicate that the student has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a violation of law or a school board regulation.

- 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 designated representative may suspend a student from school for misconduct in accordance with the SJCSO Student Code of Conduct. The parent/guardian will be notified promptly. During a suspension, the student may not be present on any SJCSO campus unless approved by administration and may not attend or participate in school activities on or off campus.

## ALTERNATE CLASSROOM/IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION

The principal or designee may assign a student to the Alternate Classroom for misconduct in accordance with the SJCSO Student Code of Conduct. The parent/guardian will be notified promptly. Students will receive classwork and homework assignments and are expected to complete assigned work during the placement.

## STUDENT SERVICES & INFORMATION

### CAFETERIA

Students who make cafeteria purchases should memorize their six-digit student ID number. Families may review the remaining balance and food purchases by contacting 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.
- Students should refrain from sharing food and drinks.

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 8:15 A.M. until 2:45 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, nurses, 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 DiDomenico

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. PE uniforms are required. Visit <https://www.schoolpay.com/login/> to place your order. 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. \*Personal locks are not permitted and will be removed.

- 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: BUSPLANNER AND CHIPMUNK APP

Please review the District Transportation site and create an account for the Chipmunk app and BusPlanner:

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/transportation/busplanner/>

Transportation is provided at no cost for students who live more than two miles from their school. Riding the bus is a privilege supported by safe and responsible behavior. Bus routes follow state guidelines. School staff supervise loading and unloading, and the driver supervises students while they are on the bus. Because drivers must focus on traffic and road conditions, students must cooperate and use responsible self-discipline. A student whose behavior jeopardizes the safety of others may lose bus-riding privileges and will need alternate transportation arranged by a parent/guardian.

Students who use school transportation will ride their assigned bus each day. Bus passes to ride a different bus or use a different stop will not be issued unless Transportation has approved the change. This practice supports student safety. Bus drivers may issue referrals for rule violations, which may result in disciplinary action, including bus suspension. Questions or concerns about bus service should be directed to the Transportation Department at 904-547-7810.

### 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, and similar changes) must be submitted through ParentSquare. Courtesy bus rides are not available. Please complete the ParentSquare form by 10:00 a.m. on the day the change is needed and send a note to the classroom teacher. For an unexpected change during the school day, submit the ParentSquare dismissal-change form before 2:00 p.m. or before 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Include the student's name, grade, teacher, and dismissal plan. Transportation changes cannot be accepted by phone.

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

### BICYCLES, E-BIKES, AND SCOOTERS

Students who ride bicycles, electric bicycles, or scooters to school must wear a safety helmet in accordance with Florida Statutes 316.2065 and 316.20655. For safety, students may not ride bicycles, e-bikes, or scooters on school grounds. Upon arrival, students must dismount at the entry gate and walk the vehicle to the designated storage area; the same procedure applies when leaving campus. Students are encouraged to secure these items with a lock.

### FIELD TRIPS & EXTRA CURRICULAR

Eligibility for reward field trips is based on academics, behavior, and attendance. Administration may revoke this privilege. If eligibility is lost after payment, refunds will not be available after the stated deadline. This policy also applies to the eighth-grade Washington, D.C. trip, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Islands of Adventure, and Gradventure.

We understand that families may wish to participate in a child's field study. The grade-level team determines the number of chaperones needed based on the nature of the trip. Only chaperones who are preapproved by the teacher and cleared through School Access may attend.

### SCHOOL NURSE & CLINIC GUIDELINES

We are committed to helping students develop healthy habits and remain well. The success of these efforts depends on close partnership and follow-through at home.

Students should remain home when they are ill, have a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, or may have a contagious condition. Students should be symptom-free, including free of fever and vomiting, for 24 hours before returning. This practice protects the student and others in the classroom. A registered nurse is available in the clinic each school day.

**Medication Guidelines:**

- SJCSO 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 a learning community in which intentional, purposeful learning takes place every day. Lasting learning depends on an honest process that reflects each student's own effort and ability. Work based on cheating or copying does not represent genuine learning or progress. Academic dishonesty undermines the academic and intellectual integrity of the school.

Through the Honor Code, the faculty and administration affirm their commitment to prevent academic dishonesty and respond to violations in a firm, consistent 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 SJCSO Student Code of Conduct and consequences will be issued by Administration.

**3RD-8TH 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.

More information about grading can be found through the student progression plan.

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/spp/elem/grading/>

<https://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/spp/middle/grading/>

**SCHOODOLOGY**

Schoology is used as a primary learning and communication platform for students and families. Access information will be provided at the beginning of the school year, and students are expected to use the platform throughout the year as part of their learning.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY (MIDDLE SCHOOL ONLY)**

Mill Creek Academy's extracurricular eligibility expectations are designed to help students remain academically successful and responsible. Students must meet the Bylaws and expectations required through each membership. A student earning an F in any subject has a one-week grace period to raise the grade to a D- or higher. A student with multiple F grades on the most recent report is not eligible to try out for the current seasonal sport. A student not meeting the character/discipline requirements is not eligible to try out for the current seasonal sport. Eligibility reports are reviewed on the morning of each activity or event to determine whether eligibility has been restored. While on the ineligible list, students may not participate in or attend school functions outside the school day, including reward or incentive field trips held during the school day. A student assigned to ISS/Alternate Classroom or OSS is also considered ineligible to attend. This applies to district athletic events and PTA-sponsored events.

**FORGOTTEN PROJECTS/HOMEWORK**

To help students build responsibility, the school monitors how often forgotten items are delivered to the front office after the school day begins. If the practice becomes disruptive to the student or learning environment, administration may take additional steps to reduce the disruption.

**Homework**

Homework supports students' overall academic achievement. Elementary students and families should expect approximately 10 minutes of homework per grade level across all subjects. For example, first grade may have approximately 10 minutes, second grade approximately 20 minutes, and so forth. Middle school students should expect 3-4 hours of homework or more depending on the selected courses.

- 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.

#### CHARACTER COUNTS AWARDS

Elementary students are nominated monthly and recognized quarterly for the character trait of the month. Families are invited to attend, but attendance is through invitation and RSVP with a limit of 3 attendees per child.

#### 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.

#### CELEBRATION ROCK

Celebrate birthdays and milestones by submitting a request to PTA to paint our celebration rock! Visit our PTA page for more information: <https://mcapta.givebacks.com/>

## PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Families may request a conference with an administrator, counselor, individual teacher, or team of teachers. To protect instructional time, conferences must be arranged in advance. Drop in conferences will not be honored. Families may call and leave a message, send an email, or

send a note to request a meeting. Families are also able to request a conference request form from the front office to arrange the conference with all of your information. Teachers will hold conferences with all families during October.

## PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

PTA is an integral partner in our school community. Through financial support and many volunteer hours, PTA supports students, staff, and administration; sponsors family nights, dances, and other opportunities for students to connect; sells spirit wear; and helps fund community-service projects. All families are encouraged to join. Membership information is available at Meet and Greet and in the front office.

## COMMUNICATION

Email - Mill Creek Academy staff members may be contacted by email or ParentSquare and will respond within 48 hours. Most email addresses follow the format John.Doe@stjohns.k12.fl.us. Please check with your student's teacher for any exceptions or use the staff links on the school website.

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](http://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 our computer operator at (904) 547-3720.

Schoology - Schoology supports student learning and communication with students and families. Access directions will be shared at the beginning of the school year, and additional guidance will be provided during Curriculum Chat in the fall.

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](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us)) to view announcements.

Teacher Newsletters and Schoology Pages - Teachers communicate student learning goals through a newsletter or Schoology page. Newsletters are distributed weekly or biweekly, and Schoology pages are updated weekly.

Visiting Classrooms- Parents may only visit with an appointment. 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. Kindergarten parents may not walk students to their classrooms after the end of the first week of school. All other parents may not walk their students to class.

Visiting for Lunch- Parents may only visit students for lunch through invitation and our incentive program. All lunchroom visits are by

invitation and RSVP and require sign in and sign out through the front office.

Website - Strong communication supports a successful school-home partnership. The MCA website provides current information and upcoming events: <http://www-mca.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>

## MILL CREEK ACADEMY POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SYSTEM HANDBOOK

School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a proactive, team-based framework for creating and sustaining safe, effective schools. PBIS emphasizes prevention of problem behavior, development of prosocial skills, and data-based problem solving. It strengthens a school's capacity to educate all students through research-based school-wide, classroom, and individualized interventions. PBIS expectations are taught in all school settings, including classrooms, the cafeteria, hallways and stairs, restrooms, outdoor areas, distance-learning classrooms, and school buses. Teachers use preventive and responsive classroom practices to reduce disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student social behavior and academic outcomes.

The key components of an effective school-wide PBIS system are:

- 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

Students benefit when responsible choices are supported by clear teaching, guidance, and an understanding of consequences. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior and classroom success helps students make meaningful improvement.

Celebrating success is an important part of PBIS. We intentionally recognize students when they make positive choices and demonstrate Mustangs LEAD behaviors.

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

Mustang Leaders Lead by Example - Students and staff are expected to serve as positive 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 treat one another with respect.

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

Mustang Leaders Act Responsibly - Students and staff are expected to demonstrate responsibility.

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 - Safety is our highest priority. Students and staff are expected to follow school and bus safety rules and protect every person's right to feel emotionally and physically safe.

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 teach behavioral expectations to all students in authentic school settings. Effective teaching includes more than identifying behaviors to avoid; staff members explicitly explain, model, and practice the behaviors students are expected to demonstrate. During the first weeks of school and throughout the year, school-wide routines and procedures are taught in every setting. Through guided practice and positive feedback, students have repeated opportunities to build confidence and demonstrate the expectations successfully.

MCA follows the SJCSd Student Code of Conduct.

# MCA MUSTANGS LEAD BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS MATRIX 2026-2027

|            | L                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | E                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | D                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            | LEAD BY<br>EXAMPLE                                                                                                                                                                                                | ENCOURAGE<br>RESPECT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | ACT<br>RESPONSIBLY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | DEMONSTRATE<br>SAFETY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Hallway    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice Level 0</li> <li>Pause and allow individuals to cross your line</li> <li>Hold doors for others</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep hands and feet off walls</li> <li>Stay in line</li> <li>Pick up dropped items</li> <li>Go straight to destination</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Stay to the right</li> <li>Be aware of your surroundings</li> <li>Keep a safe distance</li> <li>Hands and feet to self</li> <li>Make sure you can always see an adult</li> </ul>     |
| Restroom   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Report any problems/issues</li> </ul>                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice level 0</li> <li>Allow privacy</li> <li>Wait your turn</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean up after yourself</li> <li>One person per stall</li> <li>Quickly and quietly</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash hands with soap</li> <li>Use water and supplies wisely</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |
| Playground | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> <li>Be a problem solver</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice level 3</li> <li>Patiently wait your turn</li> <li>Be a cooperative team player</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Invite others to join</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take turns</li> <li>Line up quickly and quietly</li> <li>Use equipment appropriately</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of your surroundings</li> <li>Keep hands and feet to self</li> <li>Mulch stays on the ground</li> <li>Walk to the playground</li> <li>Stay in approved areas</li> </ul>                                |
| Cafeteria  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> <li>Be a problem solver</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice level 1 at table</li> <li>Raise hand for help</li> <li>Use manners</li> <li>Listen and follow directions of staff members in the café</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean up your area and trash before dismissing</li> <li>Stay in your seat</li> <li>Ask for permission to get out of seat</li> <li>Use time wisely</li> <li>Use bathroom before 3 minutes of dismissal</li> <li>Be on time for arrival and dismissal</li> <li>Remember personal belongings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Only eat your food</li> <li>Only buy lunch for yourself</li> <li>Alert staff of spills</li> <li>Keep hands and feet to self</li> </ul>                                               |
| Classroom  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> <li>Be a problem solver</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect differences</li> <li>Follow teacher expectations</li> <li>Wait to be called on to speak</li> <li>Treat others the way you want to be treated</li> <li>Be an active participant</li> <li>Stay on task</li> <li>Always give your best effort</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be honest</li> <li>Respect other's belongings</li> <li>Use materials correctly</li> <li>Be prepared</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk at all times</li> <li>Use classroom materials correctly</li> <li>Keep chairs on all 4 legs</li> <li>Follow directions</li> </ul>                                                                           |
| Bus        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Be a team player</li> <li>Active listening</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voice level 1</li> <li>Listen to the bus staff</li> <li>Help others</li> <li>Respect personal space</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remember your bus number</li> <li>Listen for your bus stop</li> <li>Keep the bus clean</li> <li>Follow directions</li> <li>Keep track of your belongings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay seated</li> <li>Face forward</li> <li>Keep aisles clear</li> <li>Keep body and other objects inside the bus at all times</li> <li>Enter and exit with eyes on the stairs</li> <li>Wear seatbelt</li> </ul> |
| Assembly   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be a role model</li> <li>Motivate others</li> <li>Support and encourage others</li> <li>Stay with your class at all times</li> <li>Wait quietly to be seated</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 0 voice</li> <li>Positive cheers only (no booing)</li> <li>Focus on the speaker</li> <li>Use positive and appropriate language</li> <li>Respect school property</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate clapping/participate appropriately</li> <li>Line up quietly when preparing to leave the assembly</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay seated unless your name is called</li> <li>Walk to get your award</li> <li>Hands in your lap, feet on the floor</li> <li>Focus on the teacher, wait and follow directions</li> </ul>                       |

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

## CHARACTER COUNTS! IN ST. JOHNS COUNTY



### 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.