

As a private, religiously affiliated school, Mercyhurst Preparatory School is not subject to the same legal requirements that apply to public schools. Nonetheless, consistent with our mission and vision, we are committed to the following policy. We share with IB the belief that all students “should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible” (*IB Access and Inclusion Policy*).

Access and Inclusion Policy

As a Mercy-sponsored school, we are committed to creating a community in which all students can broaden their intellectual endeavors and enhance their individual talents. We value and manifest the charism of Catherine McAuley, which places great emphasis on concern for the dignity of all persons and guides us in promoting inclusiveness and ensuring that all students accepted to Mercyhurst Prep have access to appropriate learning supports.

We aim to achieve this through:

- Careful study of placement exam results, primary school records, and standardized testing
- Liaising with elementary school teachers, counselors, and principals
- Meeting with parents and students prior to admission to determine if Mercyhurst Prep has a program to meet the needs of the student
- Partnering with parents of enrolled students to determine the best course of action
- Maintaining relationships with outside agencies for referrals and diagnostic testing when indicated
- Summer skill strengthening programs in study skills and math for entering ninth graders

Services available to all students include after school help and review sessions, action planning and mentoring with teachers and counselors, and student-to-student tutoring. Pennsylvania residents have access to Act 89 services, which provide individualized learning programs geared to strengthening foundational knowledge in language arts and math. While classes are held for 90 minutes every other day, the school also provides a daily 90 minute class in Algebra I for students who require additional math support.

The school also provides a fourth term remedial summer program for those students requiring more time to master yearlong concepts. Counselors and the academic dean work with families to determine if this option is in the best interest of the student.

Additional supports and/or reasonable accommodations are provided when indicated as a result of staff/parent conferencing, consultation with medical experts, or diagnostic testing. Such supports should apply to ongoing teaching and learning as well as assessment. The Academic Coaching Program provides additional services to identified students and their teachers to assist with adaptations to teaching and learning strategies. The counseling staff/IB coordinator requests appropriate accommodations for standardized testing and/or optimal access arrangements for IB examinations as indicated. Parents/guardians arrange for required current expert documentation as needed. Students utilize supports as recommended to minimize barriers.

Medical accommodations are also provided where indicated. The school nurse works with families of students with special needs to ensure that an appropriate plan is in place and that medical supplies are available. With proper documentation, students may have available at school over-the-counter and prescription medication, a diabetic kit, and EpiPens. All medication, with the exception of Epi-pens which students may carry on their person, is stored in a locked cabinet and dosage and time are logged when medications are dispensed.

Non- or partially ambulatory students have access to wheelchairs, an elevator and a stage lift.