

## **Special Needs 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 entrance 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, math lab, 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. ELL classes are available for those students requiring support in English language acquisition. International students residing at Pennsylvania International Academy (PIA) have access to a study hall moderated by a certified English teacher five days per week. 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.

Additional supports and/or accommodations are provided when indicated as a result of staff/parent conferencing, consultation with medical experts, or diagnostic testing. The counseling staff/IB director arranges for necessary accommodations for standardized and/or IB examinations.

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.

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, elevator keys and a stage lift.