

The Mill Creek School

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Student Handbook
2016-2017

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Handbook: The purpose of this Mill Creek School Student Handbook (“Handbook”) is: (i) to provide an overview of the program available at the Mill Creek School, (ii) to provide an outline of Mill Creek’s expectations of its students, and (iii) to provide notice to the students and the students’ parents/guardians of Mill Creek School’s policies and guidelines.

Mill Creek School’s Policies and Guidelines: Mill Creek has certain policies and procedures, which must be followed by Mill Creek’s students and the students’ parents/guardians. All such policies and procedures are included in the Handbook. Mill Creek also has policies and procedures which govern the administration, faculty, and staff at Mill Creek. These policies and procedures are not part of the Handbook, but they can be made available to students as well as the students’ parents/guardians upon written request.

Mill Creek’s Mission Statement: The mission of The Mill Creek School is to provide a quality educational program to young people and adolescents in a supportive, safe setting that encourages personal, social and academic growth. We are committed to offering opportunities that enable our students to achieve their highest level of critical thinking, value themselves and others, and be prepared to move on as knowledgeable citizens who are prepared to contribute to the communities in which they live.

The School: An Overview: The Mill Creek School is a secondary educational program offering a comprehensive academic curriculum for high school students. It is fully licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey. Academic credits earned at Mill Creek are honored by the school districts from which our students come and the schools they leave us to attend. The Mill Creek School has a strong academic program, offering courses that lead to a high school diploma.

The Mill Creek School is designed to enable adolescents who are struggling with personal, behavioral, and/or educational difficulties to continue their studies and to improve their ability to be successful in school. The school itself is a setting where academic achievement and personal growth can take place together in a warm and caring environment.

Mill Creek is a place where students are expected to fulfill their academic requirements, manage their behavior responsibly and address personal concerns that have been problematic in previous school settings. While Mill Creek is not designed to provide one on one care for individual students, the staff of the school is available throughout the day to offer the student assistance with meeting these expectations.

The school offers a full academic schedule of classes in which each student has an individualized program worked out with his/her Mill Creek advisor. Our approach is one in which we offer a personalized and supportive experience. Students are encouraged to

engage actively and openly around educational and personal concerns.

II. ADMISSIONS

Referrals are usually initiated by the student's home school district. In order to institute a referral, materials about the student are sent to the Director of the Mill Creek School. When the materials have been reviewed and the applicant appears to be a potential candidate for placement, the student and family are invited for an interview and tour of the Mill Creek School. If at this point the applicant seems appropriate, the Director will ask the student to visit the school for a few days (if school is in session). The student will be assigned a temporary advisor and will be asked to attend classes and activities. At the end of the visit, Mill Creek will make a decision about acceptance, and the student, the family and the school district will be informed.

For private referrals, families should contact the director of the school. The intake process is the same, but details of financial arrangements must be agreed upon before a student may begin.

III. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Students accepted into the program at the Mill Creek School are expected to focus on their academic needs while working to address the social, behavioral, and educational issues that may have been problematic for them. Each student comes to us with some past experiences which have interfered with the ability to

function up to his or her potential at school. We maintain a safe and supportive atmosphere in which students are able to begin addressing those problematic behaviors and experiences. The expectations that follow are designed to help foster such an atmosphere.

Participation in Treatment

Students who enter Mill Creek are expected to address any behavioral issues, healthcare concerns, as well as other matters that have been problematic in previous school settings. To help them do so, they are required to be active participants in counseling outside of school. This component is to be arranged and supported by the parents or guardians of the student. If asked in writing, the Mill Creek School's clinical staff can attempt to help locate a therapist or counselor if one has not been found.

Attendance

It is expected that all students will be punctual in arriving at school and for classes. Students are expected to be in assigned classrooms at the beginning of the class period. 100% attendance should be the goal for students and good attendance is necessary for high achievement in any subject area. If a student's attendance is less than 80%, the student becomes ineligible for credit, meaning the student could fail the applicable courses and, in that case, the student would have to repeat the courses and achieve passing grades in order to graduate from Mill Creek. If the Mill Creek staff has determined that there are

extenuating circumstances, the student may be given an Incomplete. Details about completion of credit must be worked out with the advisor and teacher. An Incomplete will usually result in a lower grade.

When it is known in advance that a student needs to miss all or part of a day, the parent/guardian should call the school office with that information and the student must provide a written note, signed by the parent/guardian, to the student's advisor on the day the student arrives back to school. In addition, the student should speak to his/her advisor and teachers to make arrangements for completion of all missed assignments. If a student is absent from school for 3 or more consecutive days we must receive a note from a physician to consider the absences excused.

If the student is ill or will not be attending for any reason, the parent/guardian should call the school office by 8:15 that morning (215) 471-4900, extension 100. The reason for the absence should be specified. In addition, the student must provide a written note, signed by the parent/guardian, to the student's advisor on the day the student arrives back to school.

In the event a student does not provide a handwritten note regarding an absence, the absence will be considered unexcused and the student's grades may suffer as a result.

Vacation

If a family would like to take a student out of school for vacation or travel, this is to be arranged in advance through the student's advisor. The student must provide a written note, signed by the parent/guardian, stating the length of time the student will not be in school, to the student's advisor by the first school day following the student's vacation. The advisor will attempt to provide assignments to help the student remain current in his or her classes.

In the event Mill Creek is not notified in advance and the note is not provided, the absences will be considered unexcused and the student's grades may suffer as a result.

Lateness

If a significant problem occurs which makes punctuality a problem on a given day, the parent/guardian should make sure to call the school office (**215-471-4900, extension 100**) that morning. The reason for lateness and expected arrival time should be specified. In addition, the student must provide a written note, signed by the parent/guardian, to the student's advisor either on the day the student arrives late or the first school day following the day on which the student arrives late. In the event the student does not provide a handwritten note providing a reason for lateness in the time frame provided here, the lateness will be considered unexcused. Students arriving late must sign in, inform staff of their arrival, and then go directly to their scheduled class.

Homework

As stated above, the Mill Creek School has a strong academic program, offering courses that lead to a high school diploma. As such, students will be expected to complete work outside of school, or homework, for the purpose of reinforcing skills learned during class. While homework policies may vary from one class to another, all of the teachers expect that assigned homework will be completed. Consequences follow when it is not. These consequences sometimes lead to a student receiving an incomplete or no credit in that class. Students having trouble with homework can receive help if they wish, including participating in our after-school tutoring program; however, the students are responsible for seeking assistance.

Although homework is meant to be completed outside of the school day, Mill Creek wants to provide its students with every possible opportunity to succeed. This is why Mill Creek has designated certain times for homework completion during the school day. Students are responsible for using this time wisely. Students are encouraged to arrange for and to request additional help from teachers when needed. In addition, if students expect that they will have difficulty completing homework on time, students are responsible for requesting additional time to complete homework in advance of when the homework is due. Extensions on homework will be given purely at the teacher's discretion.

IV. RULES

Acknowledgment of Rules

Before students are accepted to The Mill Creek School, they are told of the school's expectations both through the provision of this Handbook and through orientation at Mill Creek. Students and parents are asked to read and sign an acknowledgment form, stating that both the students and the parent/guardian have read and understood the contents of this Handbook. If either the student or the parent/guardian have questions or do not understand anything in this Handbook, they may reach out to Mill Creek's Director for assistance and explanation.

Key Rules and Obligations at Mill Creek

No person may participate in Mill Creek's program without absolute adherence to Mill Creek's rules and policies described in Section V. The following rules must be adhered to for students to remain in the program:

- A) Mill Creek has a zero tolerance policy for the use of drugs and other intoxicating substances. As stated in Mill Creek's Substance Abuse Policy, students may not use, abuse, or possess drugs or alcohol on the grounds of the school or during any school-sponsored activity. This includes misuse of any prescription or over the counter medications, or failure to adhere to Mill Creek's Medication Policy.

- B) No sexual acting out or violent behavior at any time.
- C) As stated in Mill Creek's Weapons policy, no weapons may be carried onto the grounds of the Mill Creek School, by students or parents/guardians – or by any administrators, faculty, or staff at Mill Creek.
- D) Plagiarism, which involves the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own, is not permitted at Mill Creek. While plagiarism policies may vary slightly from one class to another, plagiarism will not be tolerated at Mill Creek and one attempt at plagiarism could result in both failure of the assignment and failure of an entire course.
- E) Students are expected to treat teachers, other students in the community and their property with respect. There can be no rude, abusive, intimidating, or destructive behavior. Students are expected to refrain from provoking one another, speaking to one another in a way that is designed to be hurtful, insulting others, or making another student's experience here difficult and unpleasant. If there are disagreements with staff or peers, it is expected that these will be addressed in a civil, respectful manner.

Violation of Rules

A violation of these rules, and the policies listed below in Section V, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including the immediate dismissal of the student from the school, depending on the severity and the nature of the violation and the degree to which the violation affects the safety, the well-being, and the educational environment of Mill Creek. Disciplinary Actions are more specifically covered in Section VI of this Handbook.

If the Mill Creek staff determines that there is sufficient reason to terminate the student's placement, a meeting will be offered. This may include the student and his/her parent(s), a representative from the sending district, and outside therapists. In the event Mill Creek intends to dismiss or expel a student that is placed at Mill Creek via an individualized education plan (IEP) or in a case involving a student with disabilities, Mill Creek shall take all steps required to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to follow Mill Creek School policy and procedure including, for example, requiring a risk assessment for potentially at risk students should the situation require.

In the event a student is dismissed or expelled from Mill Creek, the sending school district will be responsible for offering alternate placement.

V. POLICIES

No person may participate in Mill Creek's academic program without absolute adherence to Mill Creek's rules noted above and the policies described in this Section V. The following policies must be adhered to for students to remain in the program:

Substance Abuse Policy

It is Mill Creek's position that use of any drugs or intoxicating substance (i.e., alcohol) is incompatible with the physical and mental health, any treatment process, personal growth, and education advancement of Mill Creek's students. The use of drugs or intoxicating substance of any kind at Mill Creek or outside of school is considered a serious problem by Mill Creek. Students are expected to refrain from the use of drugs and any intoxicating substances both inside of and outside of school. Students may not carry, possess, or distribute drugs or any intoxicating substance onto Mill Creek's premises or during any school trips or any school-sponsored activity. Mill Creek reserves the right to subject students to random drug screens and to search students', students belongings, and students' lockers if Mill Creek has reasonable suspicion to believe that: (i) drugs and intoxicating substances are being carried, possessed, used, or abused by Mill Creek's students or (ii) the carrying/use/abuse of drugs and/or intoxicating substances has the potential to interfere with the educational mission of Mill Creek.

In the event it is found that a student is in violation of this Drug and Alcohol Policy by, for example, carrying, possessing, using or abusing drugs and intoxicating substances, the consequences will depend on the results of an investigation by Mill Creek, the severity of the behavior, and the effect the behavior has on the Mill Creek community and its students. The following procedure occurs:

a) The student's parent(s) and therapist may be notified by the Mill Creek staff.

b) Depending on the severity of the violation of this policy and the effect the behavior has on the Mill Creek community and its students, Mill Creek may decide it is best to dismiss the student from school whether permanently or via temporary suspension, or the student may be placed on Restricted Status, as further described in Section VI below.

c) Other recommendations may be made by the Mill Creek School, based on the input of the faculty, with the intention of helping the student address the issue of substance abuse. These recommendations may include but are not limited to the following interventions:

- A note documenting the incident may be sent to the sending school district.
- The student may be required to join an adolescent substance abuse group outside of school.

- If the student is to remain in the Mill Creek academic program, the student may be required to be evaluated by an outside, independent adolescent substance abuse specialist. (Mill Creek will not be responsible for the cost of this evaluation.)
- A crisis meeting may be scheduled to discuss treatment plans and recommendations.

If all interventions are unsuccessful, or it appears that there is a pattern of: (i) bringing substances onto Mill Creek's premises, (ii) distributing drugs or intoxicating substances to other students (iii) substance use or abuse is continuing in a self-destructive manner, or in a manner that may be harmful to the Mill Creek School community, then Mill Creek may not have the resources necessary to educate and attend to the student's educational, disciplinary and treatment needs. In that case, it will be Mill Creek's recommendation that the student find a more appropriate setting that offers an intensive substance abuse component. Parents are expected to support that decision. Mill Creek will reasonably participate in any planning sessions to help the student find such a setting. If a student successfully completes such a program, appears to have the problem under control, and is committed to working toward abstinence, Mill Creek may consider that student for readmission.

Medication Policy

Students who need to take prescription medications during the day are not allowed to carry them on their person at any time once they enter school. The parent/guardian must bring in the medication to the main office where the medication will be stored in a locked cabinet. All prescription medication must be taken under the supervision of a staff member. This is also required for students who need to take medication on an “as needed” basis.

In addition, students are not allowed to carry any over-the-counter medications once they enter school. These must also be brought to the main office and stored in a locked cabinet. All over-the-counter medication must be taken under the supervision of a staff member.

For a student to be able to take a prescription or over-the-counter medication during the school day, whether on a daily or “as needed” basis, the parent/guardian must send in the following to the Program Coordinator:

a) Written orders from the prescribing physician giving the name of the drug, the dosage, what time the medication is to be administered, including “as needed” proposed time schedules, if applicable, and symptoms for which the medication is given. If a student has medication which they can take on an “as needed” basis, Mill Creek must have approval from the parent/guardian before Mill Creek will dispense medication to the student each time that

that the student requests it. This is to ensure that proper dosage is not exceeded.

b) A completed Mill Creek School Emergency Contact and Medical Information for a Child form. Permission from parent/guardian as designated on this form will last for the length of the school year.

c) Prescribed medication must be brought to Mill Creek in an appropriately labeled pharmacy container and/or over-the-counter medication must be brought to Mill Creek in its original container as purchased. This is to ensure that proper dosage is not exceeded.

If a student has medication which they can take on an “as needed” basis, we must have approval from the parent before the student may take the medication each time that they request it. This is to ensure that proper dosage is not exceeded.

Students must ask a designated staff person for their medication when they need to take it. As noted, the student must take all authorized medication under the supervision of a staff member. All dispensations of medication will be recorded on the medication chart in Medical office.

Parents/guardians are also required to notify the school of any changes in medications, including types of medications and/or changes in the prescribed routines and dosages. These must also be accompanied by written orders from the prescribing physician.

Students cannot take any medications at Mill Creek without the above-referenced documents.

Questions or concerns about medication should be directed to the Program Coordinator.

If a student brings medication onto Mill Creek's premises and does not comply with this Medication Policy, Mill Creek will regard the student as carrying and possessing drugs onto Mill Creek's premises. As a result, such behavior will be deemed to be a violation of Mill Creek's Drug and Alcohol Policy and the student will be disciplined in accordance with that Policy.

Smoking Policy

Smoking or the use or distribution of any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and related vapor products, is not allowed at any time during the school day, including the ride to and from school. This includes school trips or any school sponsored activity. We recognize that some students may smoke cigarettes. We will offer support and assistance to any student who is attempting to break this habit. Violation of the smoking policy will result in disciplinary consequences. Repeated violations will put a student's placement at Mill Creek in jeopardy. We ask that parents assist us in our efforts to maintain a smoke free school environment. Smoking in the building is a fire code violation.

If a student does not comply with this Smoking Policy, Mill Creek will regard the student as

carrying and possessing drugs onto Mill Creek's premises. As a result, such behavior will be deemed to be a violation of Mill Creek's Drug and Alcohol Policy and the student will be disciplined in accordance with that Policy.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Mill Creek School is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, caring, and respectful learning environment for all students. Bullying of students occurring in school is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. For the purposes of the policy, "school" includes the school building, school grounds, and school-sponsored social events, or trips. This policy also applies to cyber bullying, which can be defined as bullying through using technology and need not occur in person. Some examples of cyber bullying include bullying through social networking sites, email, instant messaging, chat room exchanges, internet posts, or text messages or images.

Bullying is a pattern of aggressive, intentional or deliberately hostile behavior that occurs repeatedly and over time. Bullying behaviors normally fall into three categories, physical, emotional, and verbal. If a student is found to be engaging in bullying behavior at school or engaging in cyber bullying, the consequences will depend on both the results of an investigation by Mill Creek and the severity of the behavior and the effect the behavior has on the Mill Creek community and its students. If the behavior has resulted in substantially

interfering with another student's educational opportunities, creating an uncomfortable or threatening school environment, or disrupting the orderly operation of the school, consequences may include but are not limited to mediation, a parent conference, counseling, suspension, or expulsion.

Weapons Policy

The Mill Creek School recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of Mill Creek's students and staff and is prohibited by law.

For the purpose of the Weapons Policy, the term "weapon" shall mean any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or capable of threatening or inflicting bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to: any firearm, shotgun, or rifle, taser, whether loaded or unloaded; any knife, cutting instrument, or cutting tool; any nunchaku or other type of martial arts weapon; any chemical agents such as pepper spray or mace; laser pointers; stun gun; incendiary device; any other tool, instrument or object used or intended to be used to inflict bodily harm to another. The term weapon shall also include any simulated, replica, toy, or look-alike weapon.

A student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; or under the student's control while

on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school.

The Mill Creek School prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school district buildings, onto school property, to any school sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity.

The Mill Creek School authorizes the use of administrative entry searches and the use of scanning equipment to aid in the detection of weapons. In addition, on school grounds, Mill Creek reserves the right to conduct searches of students, students' personal belongings, and students' lockers, if Mill Creek has a reasonable suspicion that there is a weapon on Mill Creek's school grounds.

The Mill Creek School shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law and Mill Creek School policy. The Director of the Mill Creek School may recommend modifications of such dismissal requirement on a case-by-case basis.

In the case of a student with disabilities and/or students who are placed at Mill Creek via an IEP, Mill Creek shall take all steps required to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

and follow Mill Creek School policy, including, for example, requiring a risk assessment for potentially at risk students should the situation require.

In accordance with local ordinance, possession of a firearm in or within 100 feet of the Mill Creek School premises is prohibited.

The discovery of any weapon prohibited by this policy shall be reported promptly to the student's parents/guardians and to local law enforcement officials.

The Director or the Director's delegates shall react promptly to information and knowledge concerning weapons on school property. Such action shall be in compliance with state and federal law and regulation and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials.

- Report all incidents relating to dismissal/expulsion for possession of a weapon to the sending school district.
- Ensure that the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials sets forth procedures to be followed when an incident involving an act of violence or possession of a weapon by any person occurs on school property.
- Acts of violence or possession of a weapon in violation of Mill Creek School policy

shall be reported to the Office of Safe Schools as required by law and regulations.

- The Mill Creek School shall annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Mill Creek School policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

This policy shall not apply to a weapon, or item that otherwise would be considered a weapon, being used as part of a supervised school program approved by the district by an individual who is participating in the program. Additional exceptions to this policy may be made by the Director, who shall prescribe special conditions or administrative procedures to be followed. In no case shall an exception to this policy violate local ordinances regarding possession of weapons.

Mill Creek has relied on the following references to draft its Weapons Policy:

Philadelphia School district Weapons Policy

Possession of Weapon on School Property 18 pa. C.S.A. Sec 912

Gun Control Act – 18 U.S.C See 921,922

Gun-Free Schools Act – 20 U.S.C. Sec. 7151

Individuals With Disabilities Education. Title 34,
Code of Federal Regulations – 34 CFR Part 300

Risk Assessment Policy

The Mill Creek School is responsible for providing a safe education environment for its students and Mill Creek is also responsible for promoting and safeguarding student welfare.

The Director will:

- ensure that where concerns about a student's welfare are identified, the risks are appropriately managed;
- ensure that staff, students, parents/guardians and others are consulted, where appropriate, to find practical solutions to welfare issues;

In the event it is believed that a threatening or risky situation has presented itself at Mill Creek, Mill Creek may require an external risk assessment be completed. Threatening or risk situations are situations that could adversely affect the safety and welfare of Mill Creek's students. Threatening or risky situations might include: threats made directly against oneself, others students, teachers, or other school officials; threats made indirectly by telephone, in writing, over the Internet or through interpersonal contacts; communications or behaviors suggesting a student's intent to mount an attack at school; allegations of bomb-making or that a student possesses a firearm; suicidal ideation; claims of past self-harm; etc.

Mill Creek does not have the capacity to complete risk assessments internally and Mill Creek believes that internal risk assessments could continue to expose other students to threats and risks in certain situations. This is why Mill Creek requires external risk assessments. As noted above, in the event it is believed that a threatening or risky situation has presented itself at Mill Creek, Mill Creek may require an external risk assessment be completed. In the event Mill Creek requires an external risk assessment, Mill Creek will contact the parent/guardian and require that the student be immediately picked up from school and that student be immediately evaluated for potential risk of harm to themselves or others. Mill Creek will send a written note to the parent/guardian within one (1) day of asking that the student be picked up and evaluated for potential risk of harm to themselves or others. The student will be permitted to return to school once the parent/guardian obtains, and their own expense, a risk assessment in writing from a licensed mental health professional, stating that it is safe for the student to return to Mill Creek.

In the event Mill Creek requires an external risk assessment, the student's absence from school will be excused and the students' advisor and teachers will work with the student upon return to catch up on missed assignments and lessons.

Use of Technology: Internet Policy

We are fortunate to have an abundance of personal computers with Internet access for student and staff use. Internet access is provided to allow for a broad

array of resources and information that can enhance and supplement the curriculum. Students are forbidden from accessing and using the Internet without receiving permission from Mill Creek staff. When on the Internet students are responsible for their actions. Students may use the Internet for educational purposes only. Below is a non-exclusive list of non-permissible uses of the Internet:

- posting or distribution of information that is harmful or prejudicial to students, fosters disruptiveness among the students so as to interfere with the learning environment in the school, threatens immediate harm to the welfare of the school community;
- illegal activity; including the violation of copyright laws;
- to access or obtain pornographic materials;
- to send material that has been determined to be offensive or objectionable;
- to intentionally cause damage to hardware, software or data;
- to gain or attempt to gain access to restricted material or systems;
- for gambling
- for cyber bullying

- to use in violation of any of Mill Creek’s rules or policies, whether or not included in this Handbook.

Any attempt to alter programs or damage school computer equipment will be considered a violation of Mill Creek’s Internet Policy and will be disciplined accordingly. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the loss of computer system privileges, disciplinary action at Mill Creek and/or appropriate legal action. Primary responsibility for behaviors related to Internet use outside of school rests with parents/guardians.

Use of Technology: Personal Computers Policy

Students may use, as a privilege, their personal computers or organizers with staff permission and under direct supervision of Mill Creek staff for school related, educational purposes (i.e., related to school projects and assignments) only. They are not to be used to access video games or for social or entertainment purposes, or for any non-permissible purpose in the Internet Policy. Use of personal devices (laptops, organizers, etc.) will be denied to any student who refuses to adhere to this Personal Computers Policy. Mill Creek staff cannot take responsibility for lost or damaged electronic equipment belonging to students.

Use of Technology: Cell Phone Policy

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to the Mill Creek School, but the cell phones must be turned off

during school hours. Students are not to use the phones in class for any purpose without direct permission from a staff member. This applies to text messaging as well. Students will have access to staff telephones as needed, if this is deemed appropriate. Cell phones may not be used during the school day to access video games or for social or entertainment purposes, or for any non-permissible purpose in the Internet Policy. We ask that family members respect and support this Cell Phone Policy. Violations may result in the loss of privileges, as well as other disciplinary action deemed to be appropriate by the Mill Creek School.

Dress Code Policy

Students are expected to wear clothing that is viewed by staff as appropriate for a school setting. If a student comes to school wearing clothing that is deemed inappropriate, parents will be notified. Students are not to wear anything that is pro-drug/alcohol/intoxicating substance, represents violence, or is considered sexually provocative in any way. Students should not wear tops with spaghetti straps nor should they wear “belly shirts” or crop tops that cannot be tucked in. Tops should not be overly revealing and undergarments should not be exposed. Students are welcome to wear shorts or skirts, but they should be of a reasonable length. Students are not to wear jewelry that contains spikes or any object that suggests violence or aggression. If a student violates the dress code policy on more than one occasion Mill Creek may request a meeting with parents/guardians to resolve the problem, or engage

other disciplinary actions as necessary. We expect parents to support our efforts in maintaining a safe and positive learning environment. In the event a student's violation of the Dress Code Policy is disruptive to the Mill Creek School environment on a given day, Mill Creek reserves the right to either dismiss the student for the day or require that new clothes be brought to school. If new clothes cannot be brought to school, then Mill Creek reserves the right to dismiss the student for the day. In the event a student is dismissed from school for violating the Dress Code Policy, the student's absence from class will be deemed to be unexcused.

VI. STUDENT STATUS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION AT MILL CREEK

Student Status

All students are expected to follow the behavioral requirements of the Mill Creek School and the rules and policies outlined in this Handbook. There are three "statuses" to which students can belong at Mill Creek: (i) regular status, (ii) merit status, and (iii) restricted status. A student's "status" dictates what type of privileges the student can be afforded, and what level of supervision is required for the student at Mill Creek.

Regular Status

All students begin at Mill Creek on regular status. Regular status means students are abiding by the rules and policies of Mill Creek and this Handbook, are

known to be making great efforts at their academics. Students on regular status are allowed to walk freely in the hallways of the school area between classes, and participate in all recreational activities.

Merit Status:

If a student is in good standing academically, is meeting all program expectations, and is considered to be responsible, trustworthy, and able to deal with daily events in a non-disruptive way, he/she may earn Merit Status. To be eligible for Merit Status: (i) the student must be in good academic standing academically, (ii) the student's work must be up to date, the student must maintain almost perfect attendance, (iii) the student must be following the guidelines of this Handbook, (iv) the student must not have been on Restricted Status for the past two weeks, (v) the faculty and staff must believe that the student is capable of acting in a mature and responsible manner while unsupervised, and (vi) the student must be regarded as responsible, trustworthy, and able to deal with daily events in a non-disruptive way. Students on Merit Status are expected to model appropriate school behavior and are encouraged to assume a leadership role within the Mill Creek community.

In order to be placed on Merit Status, the student makes a request to their advisor, who in turn presents the student's request to the faculty, who will consider whether the student meets the criteria necessary to be awarded Merit Status. If approved, the student remains in Merit Status unless Merit Status is placed

on hold for the welfare of the student, or unless a student violates one of the requirements. If the Merit Status is placed on hold, it can be restored at the discretion of the faculty and staff. If this privilege is lost, the student can reapply through the advisor after a period of two weeks.

The additional features of Merit Status include the following:

- a) Student may have lunch in the garden area.
- b) Special recognition will be offered to any student who maintains Merit Status for an entire quarter.
- c) A letter of commendation is sent home, and statement made in the quarterly newsletter, recognizing the student's achievement.

Restricted Status:

When a student violates Mill Creek's guidelines, rules, and policies described in this Handbook, that student may be placed on Restricted Status for whatever period of time the faculty and staff at Mill Creek deem necessary to educate and protect the student properly and to promote a safe educational environment at Mill Creek. Restricted Status may also be used to help students who are struggling with certain behavioral to feel more supervised. Students are not placed on Restricted Status as a disciplinary

action per se, but are instead placed on Restricted Status to ensure the student is receiving the education and protection the student need and to ensure that other students at Mill Creek can be educated in a safe, stable environment. The restrictions added to the usual expectations for students are as follows:

1. Students must be at a staff designated area during the school day with the exceptions of attendance at class and scheduled activities.
2. If a student has been placed on Restricted Status they are not eligible for the monthly perfect attendance activity.
3. If a student has been placed on Restricted Status they will not be allowed to attend school trips for five days following the end of their time on “status.” An exception may be made for all-school and classroom trips.
4. When a student is placed on Restricted Status a member of the school staff will call to inform parents and a letter will be sent home.
5. Special variations of Restricted Status may be imposed as deemed helpful by the advisor or administration of Mill Creek.
6. Arrangements to return to Regular Status are worked out with the advisor.

Failure to comply with the conditions of Restricted Status could result in suspension from school.

Suspension and Expulsion

Purpose

This subsection governs the suspension and expulsion of students from the Mill Creek School. Mill Creek recognizes that exclusion from Mill Creek's educational program, whether by suspension or expulsion, is the most severe sanction that can be imposed on a student and one that cannot be imposed without due process. Mill Creek intends not only that this policy be applied when facts and circumstances clearly warrant the imposition of a suspension or expulsion, but also that expulsions are pursued by the Mill Creek School only when absolutely necessary and appropriate. In addition, Mill Creek is aware that, if a student is expelled from the School District, it is that student's parent and/or guardian who is responsible for working with the sending school district in order to ensure the student's continued education. However, Mill Creek intends to assist all expelled students, their parents and/or guardians, and the sending school district by, upon expulsion of the student, providing advice as to alternative education options for the student that are separate from the school from which the student was expelled.

Definitions

Expulsion: The exclusion of a student from the Mill Creek School for a period exceeding 10 school days. Expulsions may be permanent or may be for a specified period of time. A student may only be expelled by a majority vote of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee.

Parent Conference: An informal conference held by the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee to review and consider the reasons for a student's suspension and/or expulsion with the student's parent and/or guardian.

Suspension: The exclusion of a student from school for a period of 10 or fewer school days. This may take place in or out of school. In-school suspension requires the student to remain in a designated area for all or part of the day with all work and reading materials in the room. Students must have lunch in the designated area. Out of school suspension means that a student is not allowed to return to school until a meeting is held to respond to the student's situation.

Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee: A committee of Mill Creek faculty and staff that convenes to determine appropriate disciplinary action for Mill Creek's students.

Potential Expulsion Meeting: The meeting at which the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee will vote to decide on the question of whether a student should be expelled.

Suspension

The Mill Creek School may suspend any student whose misconduct, disobedience, and/or violation of the Handbook is serious enough to warrant such a sanction. If a student is unable or unwilling to follow the guidelines, policies and procedures of Mill Creek or manage the requirements and expectations of the Mill Creek's program, that student may be suspended from school. The Director, on the advice of Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee, may suspend any student for violations of the guidelines, policies and procedures of Mill Creek or failure to manage the requirements and expectations of the Mill Creek's program for up to 10 school days. A student shall not be suspended for more than five days at a time except in cases where the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee determines that the student's continued presence poses a threat of disruption to the academic process, or a threat to the safety of the Mill Creek community.

Suspension Procedure: When a student is suspended, a conference with the student shall immediately take place to inform the student of the reasons for the suspension. The Mill Creek School shall immediately give the parent/guardian of a suspended student notice of a Parent Conference in order to review the reasons for the student's suspension. The Parent Conference shall take place as soon as reasonably possible following the commencement of a suspension. In cases of suspension that exceed 3 days, the Parent Conference shall take place no later than the third

day of the suspension, unless both parties agree otherwise.

Parent Conferences shall be held after adequate and timely notice is given to the student's parent and/or guardian. Notice shall be in writing and include: (i) the date, time, and location of the hearing/conference; (ii) the reasons for the suspension; (iii) an explanation that the parent and/or guardian shall have the right to review student records when such review is permitted under the law.

Expulsion

Mill Creek may expel any student whose misconduct, disobedience, and/or violation of the Handbook is serious enough to warrant such a sanction. Expulsions are effective upon the affirmative vote of a majority of Mill Creek's disciplinary committee. Expulsions are permanent unless a period of time for the expulsion is specified by the Director at the time the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee votes on the expulsion. Expulsions for weapons related offenses shall be for at least one year. However, the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee may, but is not required to, consider imposing a lesser sanction for a weapons offense if recommended by the students' advisor because of special circumstances presented by the students and/or the student's parent/guardian.

Students under 17 years of age who are expelled are not excused from compliance with compulsory attendance laws. The responsibility for ensuring a

student's compliance with compulsory attendance laws lies with the student's parent and/or guardian.

The School District shall continue to educate, remotely if necessary, all students recommended for expulsion throughout the expulsion process.

Expulsion Procedure: No student shall be expelled without a formal meeting of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee for a vote on expulsion and a Parent Conference. All members of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee will attend the Parent Conference.

Prior to a final decision to expel the student, a conference with the student shall immediately take place to inform the student of the reasons for the expulsion. This conference will take place either in person or over the phone, depending on the severity of the violation and/or the potential risk to the safety of the Mill Creek community. Before making the decision to expel a student, Mill Creek may first decide to place the student on temporary suspension, pending expulsion.

The Mill Creek School shall immediately give the parent/guardian of a student facing expulsion notice of a Parent Conference in order to review the reasons for the student's expulsion. The Parent/Guardian Conference shall take place as soon as reasonably possible following the determination that a student may be expelled and that a Potential Expulsion Meeting of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee will take place. The Parent/Guardian Conference shall take place no

later than three days following notice that the student may be expelled, unless both parties agree otherwise. In the event the student is suspended, pending expulsion, the Parent/Guardian Conference shall take place no later the third day of the suspension, unless both parties agree otherwise. At the parent conference, the parents will have the opportunity to present information and documentation to the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee as to why the student should/should not be expelled.

Parent Conferences shall be held after adequate and timely notice is given to the student's parent and/or guardian. Notice shall be in writing and include: (i) the date, time, and location of the Parent Conference; (ii) the reasons for the proposed expulsion; (iii) an explanation that the parent and/or guardian shall have the right to review student records when such review is permitted under the law.

At the Parent/Guardian Conference, notice shall be provided of the upcoming Potential Expulsion Meeting of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee, who will vote on the whether to expel the student.

Notice of the Potential Expulsion Meeting shall include: (a) the date, time, and location of the Potential Expulsion Meeting; (b) the reasons why the School District is recommending that the student be expelled; (c) the fact that the Potential Expulsion Meeting will be held in private; (d) the fact that the student or the parent and/or guardian may request copies of a the Potential Expulsion Meeting minutes at their own expense.

Potential expulsions shall be brought before the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee by: (i) the Director notifying the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee that a student has allegedly engaged in conduct serious enough to warrant expulsion, (ii) the scheduling of a Parent/Guardian conference, Mill Creek giving adequate and timely notice to the student's parent/guardian that the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee will be meeting to vote on the student's expulsion, and (iii) collection of information about the incident(s) or violation(s) allegedly warranting expulsion, including information and documentation collected during the Parent/Guardian conference.

The Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee will hold the Potential Expulsion Meeting within 10 days of Mill Creek's notice to the student's parent/guardian. At the Potential Expulsion Meeting, the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee shall weigh all of the evidence collected by the Mill Creek School and by the student's parent/guardian when the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee votes on the question of whether the student should be expelled.

At the Potential Expulsion Meeting, the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee shall vote on whether the student shall be expelled for any length of time or whether a lesser sanction shall be imposed. The Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee shall notify the student's parent/guardian of the date of the vote prior to the vote taking place and shall notify the students' parent/guardian of the decision of the vote on the day the vote is made.

Readmission of Permanently-Expelled Students:

Students who have been permanently expelled from The Mill Creek School by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee may not apply for readmission to the Mill Creek School. Temporarily-expelled students need not apply for readmission for the reason that they are automatically readmitted to the Mill Creek School upon the expiration of the expulsion period.

In the case of a student with disabilities and/or students who are placed at Mill Creek via an IEP, Mill Creek and the Mill Creek Disciplinary Committee shall take all steps required to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to follow Mill Creek School policies and procedures, including, for example, requiring a risk assessment for potentially at risk students should the situation require.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

Independent Living: In the event that a student wishes or needs to live in a setting other than at home with parents or guardians, advance arrangements must be made which are satisfactory to the Mill Creek School staff and the sending district.

Guests/Visitors: Due to issues of confidentiality and our desire to preserve a nurturing and safe environment, students are not allowed to bring any guests into the school. Former students who left Mill Creek in good standing may visit after calling and receiving permission from a staff member. These

visits must not interfere with classes or scheduled activities.

Student Relationships: Many students have developed lasting and meaningful friendships with peers at school. When relationships reach a point where they become exclusive, it often contributes to problems that can detract from academic performance. Mill Creek discourages students from dating other Mill Creek students while enrolled in the program. Exclusive relationships can limit a student's ability to focus on their own personal issues and also may limit social opportunities. When problems arise in exclusive relationships, overall student performance is often affected limiting the student's ability to function at school. While Mill Creek cannot forbid such relationships, it is our expectation that parents will set limits as needed.

VIII. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parents of all students are provided with a number of opportunities to develop better skills in working with their child. Parents are encouraged to attend the all-school parent meeting in the fall, at the beginning of the academic year at Mill Creek and to involve themselves in family counseling if that is considered advisable. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the monthly Parent Group. Mill Creek expects parents to be available to participate in planning conferences and crisis meetings if necessary. Parents are expected to make arrangements for and support counseling outside of school. The student's advisor

should be contacted anytime there is a change in counseling for any reason. Mill Creek expect parents to work cooperatively with Mill Creek staff in our efforts to assist students as they confront the concerns that have been problematic, and have interfered with academic and/or social emotional growth.

IX. SCHOOL-RELATED SERVICES

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Advisor: A key role of each teacher and administrator is to serve as an advisor to a group of students. He/she is the primary case manager for the student. This includes scheduling, overseeing the IEP, providing supportive interventions, communicating with parents, school districts and therapists, arranging for crisis or planning meetings, and being available to and informed about the student in the school.

Regular faculty meetings are held to review the progress of each student, and to modify planning. The advisor is the advocate for his/her students in this setting. Transition planning for the student is also part of the responsibility of the advisor.

Role of Consulting Psychologist: The Mill Creek Consulting Psychologist is available to provide clinical support in the following areas:

- Consult with Mill Creek staff about areas of concern relating to individual students.

- Serve as liaison to mental health practitioners and provide services to Mill Creek students and their families.
- Administer psychological evaluation (testing) for students when needed.
- Assist in crisis intervention with students as the need arises.
- Provide educational training to Mill Creek staff on issues such as diagnoses and treatment of adolescent concerns.
- Act as a resource for parents.

Role of Program Coordinator: The Program Coordinator shares some administrative responsibilities with the School Director, supervises faculty and support staff, oversees the effective utilization of students' IEPs in the classroom and review of IEPs in faculty meetings, and insuring that students' individual educational needs are being met. The Program Coordinator meets with faculty members in their role as Advisors to provide guidance and accountability for them in this role.

In addition, the Program Coordinator:

- Oversees policies and concerns related to medication, attendance and discipline.
- Responsible for facilitating the Careers and Transition program.

- Manages the Group Counseling program and leads counseling groups.
- Available to parents, students and staff for crisis counseling as the need arises; as a liaison between Mill Creek School and outside therapists and agencies; and, to provide family counseling when needed.

Role of Education Coordinator: The Education Coordinator shares some administrative responsibilities with the School Director, supervises faculty and support staff, oversees the effective utilization of students' IEPs in the classroom and review of IEPs in faculty meetings, and insuring that students' individual educational needs are being met. The Education Coordinator meets with faculty members in their role as Advisors to provide guidance and accountability for them in this role.

In addition, the Education Coordinator:

- Oversees policies and concerns related to transportation, medication, attendance and discipline.

Group Counseling: Students at Mill Creek participate in group-counseling. The groups range in size and may vary in function. Groups focus on a variety of topics, such as post-graduation or transition plans, developing better social skills, and effectively managing general issues of adolescence. Involvement in group counseling is seen as an integral part of a student's overall educational plan and a valuable

component in helping students have satisfactory and successful school experiences.

Transitional/Vocational Services: Students who are in their senior year are offered the opportunity to explore post high school options in greater depth through the Careers and Transition program. This program guides students by providing them with information and questionnaires which help to identify their particular talents and interests and assist with developing appropriate educational and vocational goals. Students may visit colleges and vocational programs and may receive assistance with finding part-time or volunteer jobs as part of their involvement in the program.

Meeting twice per week, the curriculum exposes students to many aspects of life beyond high school. This includes areas related to practical life skills necessary for functioning successfully as they transition into adult life. Parents and students are invited to meet with staff to develop and coordinate transition plans that meet the future needs of their child. Areas such as seeking accommodations in a college setting, accessing support service services in the local community, and identifying the types of schools which could provide a suitable fit for students' specific needs may be discussed in these meetings. Guidance is provided to students and their families in identifying colleges or vocational programs that provide support and accommodations to meet these needs.

Additional Academic Information and Offerings

PSAT and SAT Offerings: Each year Mill Creek offers interested 11th graders (and some 10th and 12th graders) the opportunity to take the PSAT's. These tests are practice tests for the SAT's. We are able to offer the test to students at Mill Creek.

Mill Creek is not an official test site for the SAT's. Students interested in taking the SAT's can receive applications at Mill Creek, and we can aid with filling them out. The applications have a list of test sites so that students can determine which location is best for them. Untimed or extended time SAT's are usually administered at Mill Creek once each school year.

In order to take the SAT's at Mill Creek School, students must apply for and be approved for specific accommodations. Parents are responsible for completing the application process.

Evaluations: The school year is divided into four quarters. For each segment of the year, the teacher of that subject writes a narrative evaluation for each student. This evaluation summarizes the work covered, the performance of the student and the credit earned. This narrative format enables us to discuss what a student has actually done and what still needs to be accomplished.

A student can receive "**Credit**," an "**Incomplete**," or "**No Credit**" for a course at Mill Creek. Receiving "Credit" means that the student adequately completed the required work and adequately mastered the skills taught in that subject. An "Incomplete" means that

the student did not complete the work required and/or did not demonstrate adequate mastery of the skills taught. Students are given the opportunity to change their mark of "Incomplete" to "Credit." The advisor and the teacher of the subject in question determine a deadline by which the student must have the work completed in order to receive credit. Students should expect their numerical grade to be reduced by an "Incomplete". Receiving "No Credit" means that the student is unable to receive credit and must repeat that particular quarter of work. All of these marks are accompanied by the teacher's explanatory narrative as well as a number grade for the quarter.

Number grades represent the following letter grades:

90 – 100	=	A
80 - 89	=	B
70 - 79	=	C
65 - 69	=	D
64 & Below	=	F

For Grade Point Average (G.P.A.)

90 – 100	=	4.0
86 - 89	=	3.5
80 - 85	=	3.0
76 - 79	=	2.5
70 – 75	=	2.0
65 – 69	=	1.0

In addition to teachers' evaluations, the advisor of each student writes a report explaining how the student has performed overall during the quarter both

academically and socially. The advisor also coordinates the evaluation materials which are distributed to the student, the parents, the referring school district and the therapist. A conference takes place between the advisor and the student after the teachers have written the evaluations so the student has an opportunity to review and discuss the evaluation before it is sent out. At this conference, plans can be made for program changes and opportunities for increased success. Class scheduling also takes place during this conference. One day each quarter is designated "Advisee Day" for this purpose.

Two weeks after a quarter begins, the faculty has an oral academic review to alert advisors of any academic problems already surfacing for students. At mid-quarter, written progress reports are sent to parents, therapists, and the school districts to make them aware of students' progress in all academic areas. Alert notices are sent two weeks prior to the end of the quarter to parents and therapists for any class in which students are in danger of failing.

After School Program: Students in need of more structured time or additional tutoring to complete class work or homework have the option of participating in the After School Program. The After School Program begins at 2:45 and ends at 3:45 on Monday through Thursday and is proctored by a faculty member. This program is optional. Students must arrange for their own transportation home, as school districts generally cannot provide this. Parents must contact their child's advisor before noon for the student to be allowed to stay after school that day.

This can be denied to a student if appropriate arrangements are not made in advance.

X. SPECIAL EVENTS

Excursions: A number of special events are planned during the year for both educational and social/recreational purposes. These events and trips include visits to museums, outdoor activities, community service offerings, educational trips, and cultural activities either at school or in the local community. Some of these trips are for students who had perfect attendance the previous month or for those who received full credit in all of their subjects. For some students, social issues present a significant area of concern. These events provide those students with an opportunity to interact with peers and staff in settings that are less formal and more social. All school trips are an important part of a student's experience at Mill Creek and, as such, attendance is mandatory.

Early Dismissal: Several days during the school year are designated as early dismissal days. After coming to school at the regular time, students will be dismissed at 12:00 P.M. The school districts are aware of these special days and provide early pick-up for students. They are also marked on the school calendar. These afternoons offer the teachers and staff the opportunity for special meetings and conferences for continued enrichment and training. Lunch is not available to students on early dismissal days.

XI. GENERAL INFORMATION

Transportation: The Mill Creek School does not provide transportation to and from school, although most school districts do. During the admission process, this matter should be discussed with the sending school district.

If transportation is provided by the sending school district, students will be expected to arrive on and return home on the vehicle provided by that school district. Students are not allowed to ride to or from school on a bus from another district. Students are expected to abide by the Mill Creek School's rules and safety policies when riding their bus.

Parents/guardians may drive students to or from school. If a student misses the bus in the morning and a parent/guardian decides to send their child to school on public transportation, or by any other form of transportation, they must accept full responsibility. Mill Creek School cannot accept liability for any event that may occur under these circumstances.

If a student has an on-going commitment after school (e.g. medical or work related), parents/guardians must request, in writing, that their child be allowed to use an alternate form of transportation. Due to potential liability concerns, the sending school district must also be willing to agree to these alternate arrangements. Parents/guardians must accept full responsibility for the safety of the student once he/she leaves school.

If there is a need for alternate transportation for a specific day as a result of a medical or work-related appointment, the Education Coordinator must receive a one-time request before 9:00 AM, and it must be understood that this request may be denied.

Lockers: Students are provided with lockers. To attain one, students are encouraged to bring in a combination lock; give the combination to a staff member, who will then assign them a locker. Students are requested not to leave personal possessions in any area of the school. Mill Creek is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended by students, even if those belongings are lost or stolen. Specifically, Mill Creek is not responsible for belongings left unattended by students in unlocked lockers, even if those belongings are lost or stolen. If the need arises, the staff reserves the right to open a student's locker for any reason, including locker searches.

Lunch: Students may bring lunch from home or they can purchase lunch from Kirkbride Dietary Services. There are microwave ovens and refrigerators in the pantry on both the 1st and 2nd floors. To purchase lunch students will need approximately \$3.00 to \$5.00.

Photo Release: Mill Creek publishes photos of its students in the student yearbook, as well as other publications provided to the students' families and the Mill Creek community. Mill Creek will not publish photos of its students online or otherwise outside of the Mill Creek community without the

permission of the students' parents/guardians unless Mill Creek is required to do so under the law.

School Schedule and Snow Emergency Days:

A calendar for the school year is distributed to all students upon admission and/or the beginning of each school year. While our school dates will not coincide with the local school district of each student, all Mill Creek students will be expected to be in school when we are in session. We have a minimum of 180 days of school during the regular school year as well as a limited summer session, which is optional.

The school day is from 8:15 AM to 2:40 PM. Students will be expected to be on school grounds during that time. Should there be a need to leave the grounds for any reason, permission from the advisor or administration is required.

Mill Creek will close for inclement weather when the Philadelphia School District is closed or dismisses early. When a student's home district is closed due to weather or the district is not providing transportation, the student will be excused from attending on that day. Any work missed is the student's responsibility and must be made up subsequently.

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