

2019-2020

**Parent and Student
Handbook**



**The Heights Charter
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mission Statement

The Heights Charter (THC) is founded on the belief that all children are born with the capacity for excellence. Our goal is to enable students to become self-motivated, competent, life-long learners. We provide students with a rigorous, standards-based program within a small school nurturing environment that incorporates strong family and community ties. To this end, we offer a non-traditional K-8 independent study/hybrid program that offers classes at our Resource Center along with individually designed curriculum and instruction.

Guiding Principles

We believe that learning best occurs when:

- Children are in an environment of supportive relationships.
- Parents, students, and teachers work as an educational team.
- Parents are involved in the educational process and school governance.
- The learning environment is safe and non-judgmental.
- Relationships are based on mutual cooperation and respect.
- Class sizes are small.
- Nurturing educational passion is an integral part of every activity

Expectations of Students and Parents

- Students will maintain at least a 95% attendance record (based on monthly Independent Study Logs).
- Students will complete at least 90% of their assignments.
- Students in fourth grade and above are required to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
- Students and their families will behave in a way that does not disrupt the Resource Center's environment of learning and respect.

Expectations of Teachers and Staff

The teachers and staff at THC will:

- Provide strong, engaging instruction within a small school environment.
- Communicate important information via weekly newsletter.
- Work as a partner in your child's education through direct communication with primary teachers or upper grade case load managers. Primary teachers and case load managers conference with parents in person or electronically, supplying updates on the progress students are making toward their learning goals.
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.
- Respond to and resolve conflict professionally and appropriately.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

95% Attendance

Attendance Expectation: A condition of enrollment at THC is that a student maintains at least a 95% attendance record. This statistic will be determined by the monthly Independent Study Logs that parents are required to sign at the end of every reporting period. Extenuating circumstances for absences will be evaluated by the Director of the school. Examples of extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to: prolonged illness (as documented by a letter from a doctor), a disruptive emergency within the family, and other reasons listed in California Education Code Section 48205.

Family Vacations and Absences: Because THC is an independent study charter, families have more flexibility in planning and taking trips that may enrich a student's educational program. However, students are required to maintain progress toward their educational goals during family vacations/absences. *If a student is a regular attendee of classes at the Resource Center, parents are required to request learning materials to be completed during the vacation or absence at least one week in advance of the student's last day of regular attendance. The request must be emailed to the main office or the student's caseload teacher.* Again, students are required to fulfill all work due or assigned during the vacation or absence.

Students and families who do not meet these basic attendance expectations will have a Parent/Student/Teacher/Case Load Manager conference. An action plan will be developed to assist and support the student so he/she can improve his or her attendance. If the student fails to comply with these requirements for attendance, he/she will be assessed by the Director and teachers to determine whether an independent study program is his/her best educational choice.

90% Assignment Completion

A child's free time should not solely be filled with school assignments. We encourage and promote outside enrichment activities such as sports, service clubs, and various other activities. However, class time at the Resource Center needs to be maximized. It is expected that certain assignments such as (but not limited to) essay drafts, literature reading, and math practice should be completed independent of teachers. Students who haven't completed work prior to the assigned date slow the momentum of the class. Because of this, it is a condition of enrollment that students complete at least 90% of all assignments. Note that there are numerous after school tutoring opportunities and Homework Lab periods built into our students' weekly schedule. *Though the staff at THC assists, it is the family's responsibility to make sure the student completes assignments and turns them in on the due dates.*

Students and families who do not meet these basic assignment completion expectations will have a Parent/Student/Teacher/Case Load Manager conference. An action plan will be developed to assist and support the student so that he/she can improve their assignment completion. If the student fails to comply with these requirements for assignment completion, he/she will be assessed by the Director and teachers to determine whether an independent study program is his/her best educational choice.

Grade Point Average

Students in fourth grade through eighth grade must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher each semester.

Students and families who do not meet these basic GPA expectations or students who miss more than two (2) assignments as indicated on the Master Agreement contract will have a Parent/Student/Teacher/Case Load Manager conference. An action plan will be developed to assist and support the student so that he/she can improve their grade point average. If the student fails to comply with these requirements for grade point average, he/she will be assessed by the Director and teachers to determine whether an independent study program is his/her best educational choice.

Appropriate Behavior

THC is an independent study charter. The opportunity to attend non-mandatory enrichment classes at our Resource Center is a privilege. If a student is extreme or consistent in his or her disruptions to the teaching and learning environment at the Resource Center, the Director will recommend the student transition to a completely independent study model.

THC maintains rules and expectations to fulfill the following goals:

1. Maintain orderly operations.
2. Maintain optimal learning opportunities for students. Resource Center facilities must be free of behaviors that interfere with teaching and learning.
3. Help students develop skills and behaviors necessary for healthy social interaction, both present and future.
4. Help students learn how their decisions affect the quality of their lives and others.
5. Help students develop responsibility and character.

The Heights Charter Rules

Treat others with the same respect with which you are treated by the adults at THC.

Your actions, dress, possessions, etc. may not compromise the safety of others or be disruptive and/or distracting to the educational environment at THC.

Prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

- Disrupting teaching or learning environments
- Unapproved cell phone use
- Profanity or vulgarity
- Plagiarizing or cheating
- Wearing any prohibited article of clothing or bringing any prohibited item to the Resource Center
- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying of other students or staff
- Any action constituting grounds for suspension or expulsion
- Any other violations of THC policy, rules or regulations

Prohibited clothing accessories, and items include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing that is see through, suggestive, or revealing without appropriate undergarments
- Tops or dresses that are low-cut or have shoulder straps less than 1" wide; off the shoulder tops or dresses are not allowed.
- Tops that expose the midriff, halter tops, or tube tops. Tops that are low cut in the front, back or side will not be allowed.
- Shorts, skirts, or dresses (without opaque leggings) that are shorter than mid-thigh. No excessively short shorts, skirts or dresses will be allowed.
- Clothing or accessories that 1) display profanity, vulgarity, nudity, put-downs, offensive, discriminatory or libelous images or language; 2) promote violence; 3) promote drug, alcohol, or tobacco use; and/or 4) are unsafe or gang-related, including wallet chains or any oversize chains.
- Sagging pants will not be allowed. Pants should be worn at waist level and fasten securely with a button, snap, or zipper. Pants or shorts that have belt loops must be worn with a belt.
- Pants that are too long, worn too low, too large, or too loose are not permitted.
- Inappropriate shoes for P.E. Close-toed, athletic shoes must be worn for P.E.
- Toys or items from home that are distracting to the teaching or learning environment.

A student's violation of any of these rules will result in consequences. The consequence imposed will depend on factors including, but not limited to the nature of the infraction and the student's discipline history. A student may request a meeting with the Director to discuss any consequence imposed on him or her.

Computer Use Policy

Computers will be used at THC to complete appropriate educational tasks (research, reading practice, spelling tests, learning games, word processing, art, assessments, etc.). The technological resources provided by THC must be used in a safe, responsible, and proper manner in support of the THC instructional program and for the advancement of student learning. Students are prohibited from using THC computers or THC technology in a way that may damage the equipment or network (such as downloading viruses, etc.), distract from the teaching and learning environments or violate the law or THC policy, rules or regulations. Before a student is authorized to use the THC's technological resources, the student and his/her parent/guardian shall sign and return the Acceptable Use Agreement specifying user obligations and responsibilities.

Students will be held responsible for their conduct on school computers. THC staff will guide students toward appropriate materials and supervise students while they are using online services at THC. THC computers have student filters loaded; however, if a student wants to open a site that might be questionable, he or she must ask permission from the supervising teacher. While THC is able to exercise reasonable control over content created and purchased by THC, it has limited control over content accessed via the internet and no filtering system is 100% effective. Neither THC nor its staff shall be

responsible for the failure of any technology protection measures, violations of copyright restrictions, or user mistakes or negligence.

Students shall not use the internet to perform any illegal act or to help others perform illegal acts. Illegal acts include, but are not limited to, any activities in violation of local, state, and federal law and/or accessing information designed to further criminal or dangerous activities. Such information includes, but is not limited to information that if acted upon could cause damage, present a danger, or cause disruption to THC, other students, or the community. Damaging, debilitating or disabling computers, computer networks or systems through the intentional or overuse of electronic distribution or the spreading of computer viruses or other harmful programs are prohibited. Any unauthorized online access to other computers by means of hacking into other computers, downloading hacker tools such as port scanners, and password crackers, designed to evade restrictions are also strictly prohibited.

Other actions that are forbidden to students while using THC technology include, but are not limited to: downloading files or music programs; sending personal emails, instant messages, or using chat rooms or applications; accessing internet game sites without teacher permission; accessing offensive sites, messages, or .images; using obscene or defamatory language; harassing, insulting, or attacking others; and trespassing in other's folder, work, or files. Students who violate this policy may have their computer privileges limited and may be subject to discipline.

Cell Phone and Other Electronic Signaling Devices Policy

Student cell phones and other electronic signaling devices should be turned off and out of sight in backpacks during the school day (unless given approval to complete a classroom task by a teacher and under his or her supervision). If you need to call home, you may use the school phone with permission from THC staff. Students may use their phones at the Resource Center to briefly talk or text with their parents/guardians after being dismissed at the end of the school day, but this privilege may be revoked if a student abuses it or otherwise violates this policy. Students who use their cell phones or other personal electronic signaling devices without permission during the school day will have to surrender the device for the rest of the school day. Parents can pick up the device at the end of the day in the office. At no time shall THC be responsible for preventing theft, or loss or damage to cell phones or other electronic signaling devices brought onto campus.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Operational Expectations

To maintain orderly operations and a safe campus, the staff of THC has the following parental expectations:

- Work with the THC team to ensure your student maintains 95% attendance, 90% assignment completion, a minimum 2.0 GPA (for 4th or 8th grades) and is not a disruption to the teaching or learning environment.
- Read the weekly THC Newsletter for important updates, announcements, and important calendar information. Nearly all answers to parent questions can be found within the weekly newsletters.
- Read all THC emails and answer all THC telephone calls.
- Keep all contact information for yourself and your emergency contacts up to date.
- Honor the Resource Center's policy of **dropping off students no earlier than 8:30 a.m.** and **picking up no later than 3:30 p.m.** We understand that emergencies arise. Please communicate with THC at 619-792-9000 if alternate arrangements need to be made.
- If picking up a student before the end of the day, please check out the student in the Resource Center's main office before pulling your child from his or her classroom. For safety/emergency purposes, it is critical the main office of the Resource Center know exactly which students are on campus at any given moment.
- If arriving more than 20 minutes late to a class at the Resource Center or returning a student following an appointment (doctor, dentist, etc.), please check in your student with the main office.

DO NOT DROP OFF the student at his or her classroom. For safety/emergency purposes, it is critical the main office of the Resource Center know exactly which students are on campus at any given moment.

- Do not call your student's cell phone during the school day. Our expectation is that student cell phones are turned off and out of sight in their backpacks. If you need to speak to your child, please contact the Resource Center's main office at 619-792-9000. Students may accept brief parent calls while at the Resource Center after they have been dismissed for the day.
- Do not send toys, games, distracting pencil boxes, or other items to school with your child unless they are specifically requested or approved by a teacher.
- Proceed at student drop off and pick up safely, quickly, and efficiently. Teacher conferences during this chaotic time are discouraged and not appropriate.
- Volunteering is encouraged. There are always tasks at hand. Scan the weekly newsletter for specific needs. Please note: If you volunteer in your student's classroom, it is our expectation that you are helpful to all students and not just your own. Please see the THC School Visitation and Volunteer policy for more information.
- When on the grounds of the Resource Center, parents (as well as staff) should act as role models for student behavior. Profanity, gossiping, tobacco use, alcohol or drug use, and weapons are prohibited.

Communication Policy

To maintain our partnership in your student's education, it is THC policy to communicate often with parents. The best source of general information is our weekly emailed newsletter. If you have specific questions about your primary level child (TK-3rd grade), your child's teacher is the best contact. If you have specific questions about your upper level child (4th – 8th grades), your child's case load manager is a good starting point. All teachers may be contacted via email using the general school email – heightscharter@gmail.com. If you would like a meeting with a specific teacher or case load manager (or both), please email in advance to set up a meeting time. While all teachers try to be accommodating, pop-in meetings are not always workable due to time constraints or scheduling conflicts.

THE HEIGHTS CHARTER ANNUAL NOTICES

Nondiscrimination Statement

The Heights Charter does not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, immigration status, religion, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, pregnancy, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes in the California Penal Code.

THC adheres to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities, including but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004.

THC is committed to providing a work and educational atmosphere that is free of unlawful harassment under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Titles IV, VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin); The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the IDEIA; and Section 504 and Title II of the ADA (mental or physical disability). THC also prohibits sexual harassment, including cyber sexual bullying, and harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, religious affiliation, creed, color, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin or ancestry, immigration status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation. THC does not condone or tolerate harassment of any type, including discrimination, intimidation or bullying, including cyber sexual bullying, by any employee, independent contractor or other person with which THC does business, or any other individual, student, or volunteer. This applies to all employees, students, or volunteers and relationships, regardless of

position or gender. THC will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted. Inquiries, complaints, or grievances regarding harassment as described in this section, above, should be directed to the THC Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) Compliance Officer: Diana Whyte, Director, The Heights Charter, P.O. Box 969, Alpine, CA 91903-0969, telephone 619-792-9000.

Conflict Resolution Policy

Conflict may arise from time to time. The best course of action if this occurs is to contact the teacher directly. Most conflicts are created by miscommunication, so an open dialogue resolves most issues. We encourage you to schedule a meeting with the teacher as soon as possible, so the conflict does not escalate with time.

If this does not resolve the issue, please set up a meeting with the Director.

If that still does not resolve the conflict, you may seek resolution from the THC Board which meets most months. The Board's resolution of the conflict is final.

If you have a conflict with the Director, the first step is to contact the Director. If this does not resolve the conflict, the final step is to take the matter to the THC Board. Their resolution of the conflict is final.

The THC Newsletter and the THC website lists the dates and times of upcoming Board meetings.

Note: Using physical or verbal aggression against another child or adult, including profanity or abusive language or non-verbal intimidation is prohibited. Depending on the severity, local law enforcement may be contacted. These actions will be reported to the Director and consequences will follow all applicable laws, regulations and ordinances.

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education

Per AB 2601, Ed. Code Sections 51938 and 51939, commencing with the 2019-2020 school year, charter schools must ensure that all pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, receive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education, as specified. A parent or guardian of a student has the right to excuse their child from all or part of comprehensive sexual health education, HIV prevention education, and assessments related to that education through a passive consent (opt-out) process. THC does not require active parental consent (opt-in) for comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education. Parents and guardians may:

- Inspect written and audiovisual educational materials used in comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.
- Excuse their child from participation comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education in writing to THC.

Child Find

We are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of the academic environment and society. THC provides special education instruction and related services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), Education Code requirements, and applicable policies and procedures of the East County SELPA. These services are available for special education students enrolled at THC. We offer high quality educational programs and services for all our students in accordance with the assessed needs of each student. THC collaborates with parents, the student, teachers, and other agencies, as may be indicated, in order to appropriately serve the educational needs of each student.

Pursuant to the IDEA and relevant state law, THC is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating children enrolled at THC with known or suspected disabilities to determine whether a need for special education and related services exists. This includes children with disabilities who are homeless or foster youth. THC shall not deny nor discourage any student from enrollment solely due to a disability. If you

believe your child may be eligible for special education services, please contact Kimberly Koenig, Psychologist/Special Education Teacher at 619-792-9000.

Section 504

THC recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program of THC. Any student who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity, including, but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodations by THC. The parent of any student suspected of needing or qualifying for accommodations under Section 504 may make a referral for an evaluation to the Director.

Immunizations

To ensure a safe learning environment for all students, THC follows and abides by the health standards set forth by the state of California. The immunization status of all students will be reviewed periodically. Those students who do not meet the State guidelines may be excluded from school until the requirements are met. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease for which they have not been immunized may be excluded from school at the discretion of THC.

Physical Examinations and Right to Refuse

Students will be screened for vision and hearing. The Heights Charter will adhere to Education Code Section 49450, et seq, as applicable to the grade levels served by THC.

All pupils are to have completed a health screening examination on or before the 90th day after the pupil's entrance into first grade or such pupils must have obtained a waiver pursuant to Health and Safety Code Sections 124040 and 124085. This examination can be obtained from your family physician or possibly through the services provided by your County Health Department. Information and forms are distributed to pupils enrolled in kindergarten. If your child's medical status changes, please provide the teacher with a physician's written verification of the medical issue, especially if it impacts in any way your child's ability to perform schoolwork.

A parent or guardian may file annually with the Director a statement in writing, signed by the parent or guardian, stating that he or she will not consent to a physical examination of his or her child. Thereupon the child shall be exempt from any physical examination, but whenever there is a good reason to believe that the child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, he shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until THC is satisfied that any contagious or infectious disease does not exist.

Oral Health Assessment

Students enrolled in kindergarten in a public school or while enrolled in first grade if the pupil was not previously enrolled in kindergarten in a public school, are required to have an oral health assessment completed by a dental professional. Please contact the office if you have any questions about this requirement.

Surveys About Personal Beliefs

Unless you give written permission, your child will not be given any test, questionnaire, survey, or examination containing any questions about your child's or his/her parents' or guardians' personal beliefs or practices in family life, morality, or religion.

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP)

THC shall annually administer required state testing to the applicable grades (e.g., the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a parent's or guardian's written request to THC officials to excuse his or her child from any or all parts of the state assessments shall be granted.

English Learners

THC is committed to the success of its English Learners and support will be offered both within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English language learning. THC will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners as they pertain to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learners and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, reclassification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. THC will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding English Learners and the rights of students and parents.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Pursuant to California Law, THC will provide each student who meets federal eligibility criteria for free and reduced price meals with at least one free or reduced price, nutritionally adequate meal per school day. Applications for free or reduced price meals are included in the first day packets to all families and can also be obtained in the main office. All families are encouraged to complete the application form in order to include as many eligible students as possible. Completed application forms can be returned to the main office.

Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by THC for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of intent to remove the student no less than five (5) school days before the effective date of the action (Involuntary Removal Notice). The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action. The hearing shall be consistent with THC's expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until THC issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to THC's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon parent/guardian request for a hearing, THC will provide notice of hearing consistent with the expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of THC's expulsion hearing process.

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the Student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If parent/guardian requests a hearing and does not attend on the date scheduled for the hearing the Student will be disenrolled effective the date of the hearing.

If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known district of residence within thirty (30) days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent THC from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or re-occur.

Pupil Records, Including Challenges and Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older (eligible students) certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. **The right to inspect and review the student's education records within five (5) business days after the day THC receives a request for access.** Parents or eligible students should submit to the THC Director or designee a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The THC official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. **The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.** Parents or eligible students who wish to ask THC to amend a record should write the THC Director or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it should be changed. If THC decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, THC will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing. If THC decides to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the Director must order the correction or the removal and destruction of the information and inform the parent or eligible student of the amendment in writing.
3. **The right to provide written consent before THC discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.** One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to THC officials with legitimate educational interests. A THC official is a person employed by THC as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the School board. A THC official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of THC who performs an institutional service of function for which THC would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another THC official in performing his or her tasks. A THC official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, THC discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. Note that THC will not release information to third parties for immigration-enforcement purposes, except as required by law or court order.
4. **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by THC to comply with the requirements of FERPA.** The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202.
5. **The right to request that THC not release student names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters or institutions of higher education without prior written parental consent.** FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from student's education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in §99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to THC officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student §99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires THC to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A School may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student to the following parties: a) Charter School officials who have a legitimate educational interest as defined by 34 C.F.R. Part 99; b) Other schools to which a student seeks or intends to enroll so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer. When a student transfers schools, the Charter School will mail the original or a copy of a student's cumulative file to the receiving district

or private school within ten (10) school days following the date the request is received from the public school or private school where the pupil intends to enroll. Charter School will make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the request for records at his/her last known address, unless the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student. Additionally, Charter School will give the parent or eligible student, upon request, a copy of the record that was disclosed and give the parent or eligible student, upon request, an opportunity for hearing pursuant to Section (IV)(3) above; c) Certain government officials listed in 20 U.S.C. §1232g(b)(1) in order to carry out lawful functions; d) Appropriate parties in connection with a student's application for, or receipt of, financial aid if it is necessary to determine eligibility, amount of aid, conditions for aid or enforcing the terms and conditions of the aid; e) Organizations conducting certain studies for the Charter School in accordance with 20 U.S.C. §1232g(b)(1)(F); f) Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions; g) Parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; h) Individuals or entities, in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. Subject to the exceptions found in 34 C.F.R. §99.31(a)(9)(i), reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance, so that the parent or eligible student may seek a protective order; i) Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; j) State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law; k) A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently enrolled or former student, a short-term residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a student, and a caregiver (regardless of whether the caregiver has been appointed as the pupil's educational rights holder) who has direct responsibility for the care of the student, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or nonrelated extended family member, or a resource family, may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline, and online communication on platforms established by THC for student and parents, and any Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan that may have been developed or maintained by THC; and/or l) A victim of an alleged perpetrator of a crime of violence or a non-forcible sex offense. The disclosure may only include the final results of the disciplinary proceedings conducted by THC with respect to that alleged crime or offense. THC discloses the final results of the disciplinary proceeding regardless of whether THC concluded a violation was committed.

Directory Information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information can be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish year books. THC has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Student's address
- Parent's/guardian's address
- Telephone number
- Student's email address
- Parent's/guardian's email address
- Photograph
- Student date of birth
- Student's dates of attendance
- Student's participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received by the student
- The most recent previous public or private school attended by the student

If you do not want THC to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify THC in writing at the time of enrollment or re-enrollment. Please notify the Director at 619-792-9000.

Education of Foster Children and Youth

THC has adopted a policy governing the education of foster youth, consistent with state and federal law.

Homeless Students

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who (42§U.S.C. 11434(a):

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in a motel, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of “homeless”.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the School Liaison.

School Liaison. The following staff person is the School Liaison for homeless students ((42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J) and (e)(3)(C)):

Diana Whyte, Director, The Heights Charter, P.O. Box 969, Alpine, CA 91903-0969,
telephone 619-792-9000

The School Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)):

- Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at THC.
- Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, any other preschool programs administered by THC, if any, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
- Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
- Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, THC charter, and Board policy.
- Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
- School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
- The School Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
- Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965

and that the youths may obtain assistance from the School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Act.

For any homeless student who enrolls at THC, a copy of THC complete policy shall be provided at the time of enrollment. A copy of the complete Policy is available upon request at the main office.

Diabetes

THC will provide an information sheet regarding type 2 diabetes to the parent or guardian of incoming 7th grade students, pursuant to Education Code Section 49452.7. The information sheet shall include, but shall not be limited to, all of the following: 1) A description of type 2 diabetes; 2) A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes; 3) A recommendation that students displaying or possibly suffering from risk factors or warning signs associated with type 2 diabetes should be screened for type 2 diabetes; 4) A description of treatments and prevention of methods of type 2 diabetes; 5) A description of the different types of diabetes screening tests available. Please contact the office if you need a copy of this information sheet or if you have any questions about this information sheet.

Mental Health Services

THC recognizes that when unidentified and unaddressed mental health challenges can lead to poor academic performance, increased likelihood of suspension and expulsion, chronic absenteeism, student attrition, homelessness, incarceration, and/or violence. Access to mental health services in our community is not only critical to improving the physical and emotional safety of students, but it also helps address barriers to learning and provides support so that all students can learn problem-solving skills and achieve in school and, ultimately, in life.

- San Diego Access and Crisis Line (ACL) 888-724-7240, available 24/7
- East County Mental Health Clinic, 1000 Broadway, Suite 110, El Cajon CA 92021, 619-401-5500

Suicide Prevention

The Governing Board of THC recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider and attempt suicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. As a result, we are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing campus that minimizes suicidal ideation in students.

The School's suicide prevention policy can be requested for review in the main office.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

The Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and wellbeing of all students at The Heights Charter. In creating this policy, THC has reviewed Education Code Section 48900 et seq. which describes the non-charters' list of offenses and procedures to establish its list of offenses and procedures for suspensions and expulsions. The language that follows closely mirrors the language of Education Code Section 48900 et seq. THC is committed to annual review of policies and procedures surrounding suspensions and expulsions and, as necessary, modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

The School's suspension and expulsion policy can be requested for review in the front office.

Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Policy

THC believes all students have the right to a safe and civil learning environment. Discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, and bullying are all disruptive behaviors which interfere with students' ability to learn, negatively affect student engagement, diminish school safety, and contribute to

a hostile school environment. As such, THC prohibits any such acts of discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment, intimidation, and bullying altogether. This is inclusive of instances that occur on any area of the school campus, at school-sponsored events and activities, regardless of location, through school-owned technology, and through other electronic means. A copy of the complete policy is available upon request at the main office.

Title IX, Harassment, Intimidation, Discrimination and Bullying Coordinator:

Diana Whyte, Director, The Heights Charter, P.O. Box 969, Alpine CA 91903-0969

Uniform Complaint Procedures

THC has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. THC is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs THC shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints using policies and procedures known as the Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) adopted by our Governing Board.

A copy of the policy is available on request at the main office.

Acknowledgement and Acceptance of The Heights Charter

Parent and Student Handbook Policies

Mission Statement

The Heights Charter is founded on the belief that all children are born with the capacity for excellence. Our goal is to enable students to become self-motivated, competent, life-long learners. We provide students with a rigorous, standards-based program within a small school nurturing environment that incorporates strong family and community ties. To this end, we offer a non-traditional K-8 independent study/hybrid program that offers classes at our Resource Center along with individually designed curriculum and instruction.

Expectations of Students and Parents

- Students will maintain at least a 95% attendance record (based on monthly Independent Study Logs).
- Students will complete at least 90% of their assignments.
- Students in fourth grade and above are required to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
- Students and their families will behave in a way that does not disrupt the Resource Center's environment of learning and respect.

Acknowledgement

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies and guidelines set forth in this Handbook. I also acknowledge that my child (Student) has read this Handbook or I have discussed it with him or her.

Please note: The Heights Charter is an independent study charter. The opportunity to attend non-mandatory enrichment classes at our Resource Center is a privilege. If a student is extreme or consistent in his or her disruptions to the teaching and learning environment at the Resource Center, the Director will recommend the student transition to a completely independent study model.

Signature

Print Parent Name	Parent Signature	Date
Print Student Name	Student Signature	Date
Print Student Name	Student Signature	Date
Print Student Name	Student Signature	Date