



Mt. Helix Academy  
5955 Severin Drive  
La Mesa, CA 91942  
619-243-1400

Dear Mt. Helix Academy Family,

I am so pleased to welcome you to Mt. Helix Academy, a school in the family of schools operated by The Institute for Effective Education, and a WASC accredited school.

We are dedicated to providing our students with a safe, warm and nurturing school in which scientifically-validated instructional methods and curriculum achieve outstanding results for all of our children.

The mission of Mt. Helix Academy is to teach the skills and knowledge necessary for its students to be high academic achievers and enthusiastic, self-managed learners, who are likable to others and are highly ethical in social interactions.

This handbook is designed to ensure a successful and enjoyable educational experience at Mt. Helix Academy for you and your child.

I look forward to working with you and your family as valued members of our Mt. Helix Academy community.

Mike Collins, M.S.  
Director, Mt. Helix Academy

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# **The Institute for Effective Education**

## **TIEE Mission Statement**

“The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE) is dedicated to education that is unparalleled in scope of curriculum, effectiveness of instruction, and pervasiveness of positive ambience. To achieve this goal, TIEE is committed to using the principles, methods, and facts established by behavioral science research of the highest standard in order to educate individuals, whose talents span the full spectrum of ability.”

The Institute for Effective Education is a California non-profit [501(c)(3)] corporation, chartered in 1972 to implement the mission statement above. TIEE operates five nonpublic schools, Mt. Helix Academy, Children’s Workshop, Mission Valley Academy, COOK Education Center and the Urban Skills Center. All of these schools are certified by the California Department of Education, which permits them to contract with public school districts to serve students whose needs cannot be met by their public school or by programs available in the school district. TIEE’s nonpublic schools have been the recipient of perennial commendation from State reviewers, local school administrators, and educational researchers from around the country. One State reviewer flattered us by commenting: “If students couldn’t learn here, they couldn’t learn anywhere.” To learn more about TIEE’s family of schools, visit our website at [www.TIEE.org](http://www.TIEE.org).

## **School Program**

This section of the Mt. Helix Academy Handbook describes the school's program, its unique teaching methods and materials, and how students are evaluated. It summarizes the commitment of The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE) to each child attending Mt. Helix Academy and to the families who trust that their children will be given the highest quality education possible in the safest and most positive school environment. (See Appendix A for more information about TIEE and its other programs.)

In many important respects, Mt. Helix Academy is a "traditional" school. Lessons make up the majority of each student's day; classes are led by skilled teachers; instruction emphasizes the fundamental academic skills of reading, speaking and writing, mathematics, critical thinking (i.e., problem solving), and various content areas like physical and social science. In short, students are guided along an educational path that emphasizes strong academic achievement.

Less traditional, is the emphasis at Mt. Helix Academy on each student's acquisition of skills in self-management, in social interaction and in the highest ethical conduct. We want Mt. Helix Academy students do well in any school they may enter and in any educational pursuit they may choose. Above all, we want them to become highly regarded, contributing members of our community. Consequently, the all-school goal for our students extends well beyond academic achievement.

To prepare students this well and this broadly, Mt. Helix Academy differs from most other traditional schools in fundamental ways. The curriculum provides cumulative review and reinforcement of skills previously taught and permits systematic building of new skills and knowledge on those already mastered. The teaching materials used at Mt. Helix Academy are specially designed so that all students will learn the important critical thinking strategies they need and will use. Because Mt. Helix Academy teachers know how to engage students, maintain their attention on what they are learning and maximize active participation in their lessons, students at Mt. Helix Academy learn more rapidly than it is likely they would elsewhere. Moreover, because they are so successful as learners and because their teachers practice the philosophy of "catching 'em being good," Mt. Helix Academy students learn to love new learning opportunities.

Mt. Helix Academy also differs from more traditional schools with respect to its teachers and their training. In order to be continuously successful with all of their students, even the best teachers benefit from regular coaching from an expert teacher trainer who frequently observes their teaching activities. That is why the primary duty of the Director of Mt. Helix Academy, Mr. Mike Collins, is ongoing teacher training. As a result, parents can expect their child's teachers to be superbly competent.

Finally, we believe that each student should be permitted to learn as rapidly as he or she can. The traditional system of classrooms, each containing a single grade of students defined primarily by chronological age, too often stifles individual growth. At Mt. Helix Academy students are assigned to instructional groupings which permit the teaching staff to work as a team in providing every child the opportunities necessary to learn as efficiently and effectively as possible.

## **The Modules and Their Goals**

Mt. Helix Academy consists of three programs or "modules." Each module serves students across a grade range and permits greater latitude of programming for students than is typical of the system of grades most of us are accustomed to in school. The modular system enables students to grow according to their own abilities and, thus, for many of them, much faster than is possible at most other private and public schools. (For example, a first grader who reads at the third-grade level and does math at the first-grade level will be taught reading with other students who are also at the third-grade level and will be taught math with students who are at the first-grade level.) Within each Module, students are assigned to "homerooms" according to their age. This practice facilitates interaction among age-mates, parent-teacher communication, ancillary program scheduling, and field trip planning.

**The Primary Module.** The Primary Module serves children who would typically be placed in Transitional Kindergarten through 2nd grade. Their basic skills classes are very small, averaging one teacher for each group of eight students, so all students can be given the individualized attention needed to progress. On completing the Primary Module (at approximately age 8), students will have learned the basic skills at the level of most

fourth graders in other schools, and they can be expected to enter the third grade and do well at schools with the highest academic standards. For children who complete the entire Primary Module (TK-2) at Mt. Helix Academy, the following accomplishments are expected:

- o Children will perform as well or better than most children two or more years older in all basic skills, including oral and written language, reading, and math;
- o Children will organize their study space and their time more successfully than children two or more years older than they are;
- o Children will like school and say positive statements about virtually all skill areas, their teachers and their fellow students; and
- o Children will have many friends among their schoolmates. They will say positive statements about and have positive interactions with all of their schoolmates.

**The Elementary Module.** The Elementary Module serves children who are in grades three through five. These students are taught basic skills and standard content subjects in classes averaging one teacher for each 12 students. On completing both the Primary Module and the Elementary Module at Mt. Helix Academy, students will (at approximately age 11) have acquired the academic skills and the self-management and social skills necessary to be among the high achievers at any other school. For children who complete the entire Primary Module and the entire Elementary Module at Mt. Helix Academy, the following accomplishments are expected:

- o Children will perform as well or better than most fifth graders in all basic skills, including oral and written language, reasoning, reading and mathematics;
- o Children will eagerly acquire knowledge concerning physical, biological and social sciences and they will also acquire such knowledge on their own, using emerging information technology;
- o Children will enthusiastically demonstrate skills and interest in non-academic areas, including music, visual arts, and drama;
- o Children will display self-management concerning school-related activities and learning that is superior to many high school graduates. As a result, they will be prepared for success in any middle school or junior high school program they may subsequently enter;

- o Children will like school and say positive statements about virtually all skill areas, their teachers, their fellow students and themselves as learners; and
- o Children will have friends among their schoolmates, their social interactions will be highly ethical, and they will display effective conflict resolution, as well as other forms of social problem solving.

**The Junior High School Module.** The Junior High School Module serves students who are traditionally placed in grades six through nine. Having completed the Primary Module, the Elementary Module and the Junior High School Module (at approximately age 14), students will have acquired the academic skills, the self-management and social skills necessary to be among the high achievers at any high school they may enter. They will think of themselves as college bound and will already have accomplished many of the skills needed for success at any college. These students will appear intellectually very mature for their age. For children who complete the entire Primary Module, Elementary Module and Junior High School Module at Mt. Helix Academy, the following accomplishments are expected:

- o Children will acquire the academic skills, including reasoning and problem solving, essential to enrollment in and to subsequent success in any high school;
- o Children will continue to acquire skills for life-long enjoyment in non-academic areas and will perform them for the enjoyment of others as well;
- o Children will display knowledge of and take an active interest in local community activities, including programs of human service;
- o Children will be self-managed learners who will use information technology to conduct their own academically relevant projects;
- o Children will like school and consistently say positive statements about their futures in high school and college; and
- o Children will make friends easily, will have friends among their schoolmates and will display highly ethical social interactions, including effective conflict resolution and the skill to resist "bad influences".

**Aim High Day School Program**

The Aim High Day School program serves students in grades 1 – 8 who are not succeeding academically in regular school environments. Students are provided with individualized instruction in all subject areas. Academics are taught individually or in



very small groups, with students placed at the appropriate skill level to maximize their success. Self-management, organization skills and social skills are carefully taught. Aim High students participate with their Mt. Helix Academy age-mates in visual and performing arts, computer literacy instruction, physical education and academics, when appropriate.

### **Aim High Learning Center**

The Aim High Learning Center provides the additional support that is sometimes necessary to ensure that a student is academically and socially successful. The Aim High Learning Center provides the following individually planned services to students enrolled in Mt. Helix Academy:

- Aim High Resource Program – provides services to students who require a more intensive instructional program in one or two subject areas in order to make satisfactory progress. The Resource Program is a “pull-out” program which provides intensive instruction in target subjects at the same time those subjects are being taught in the student’s classroom.
- Aim High Academic Tutoring Program – provides after-school academic tutoring to students who need supplemental instruction in one or more subjects in order to maintain adequate progress in their regularly scheduled classes, but who do not require the intensity of assistance that would be provided in the Aim High Resource Program. There is an additional cost for this service.
- Aim High Homework Club – provides serviced to students who need extra supervision in order to complete their homework successfully. This club is available for an additional cost and lasts for 1 hour after school.

## **Assessment and Reporting of Achievement**

### **Achievement Testing**

The achievement of Mt. Helix Academy students are evaluated in a combination of ways, because each measure of intellectual and social development has both strengths and limitations. Among the tests of achievement are (a) the daily evaluations that teachers make of their students, which relate directly to the Mt. Helix Academy curriculum; (b) certain curriculum-based assessments of basic skills that permit evaluation of Mt. Helix Academy students against local standards; and (c) norm-referenced achievement testing that permits evaluating how well the school is doing against national norms.

### **Curriculum-Referenced Assessments**

Basic skills are taught at Mt. Helix Academy in small groups with highly structured and well-sequenced lessons. Teaching of these lessons requires obtaining many student responses, each of which is evaluated and corrected if necessary. Advancing from one lesson to the next depends on achieving mastery of the skills taught in earlier lessons. Consequently, teachers monitor and assess their students’ progress throughout each basic skills lesson.

In addition to this system of daily evaluation, student progress in the Mt. Helix Academy curriculum is evaluated in three other ways. In all skill areas, after students have undergone a period of instruction, they are assigned independent work. Because independent work requires students to use the skills they have been learning, it provides teachers with daily samples of each student's progress in those skills.

Second, after a given set of lessons in each of the basic skills, mastery tests are administered which demonstrate whether students have retained the skills and knowledge already taught.

Finally, as an occasional supplement to this information on student progress, the school Director or another teacher will teach the students and will, thereby, have an additional opportunity to determine whether they have mastered the skills being taught.

Taken together, these methods of assessment permit highly reliable judgments of the skills and knowledge our students have learned relative to the Mt. Helix Academy curriculum, and they form the basis of trimester reporting to parents of student progress.

### **Norm-Referenced Assessment**

Once each year, Mt. Helix Academy students are administered a norm-referenced test which compares how Mt. Helix Academy students rank against students their age from across the country. Students in the Primary Module are given an individually administered test (e.g., the Wechsler Individualized Achievement Test), while students in the Elementary and Junior High School Modules are administered a group test (e.g., the Stanford Achievement Test).

### **Report Cards**

Parents will receive by mail a written report of their child's progress four times during the year at approximately 9-week intervals. The specific reporting dates for each school year are indicated on the annual calendar, a copy of which is provided to parents at the beginning of each school year. At the conclusion of the first reporting period in November, parents are scheduled for a Parent-Teacher Conference to discuss their child's progress in more detail.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

At the conclusion of the first reporting period in November, parents are scheduled for a Parent-Teacher Conference to discuss their child's progress in more detail.

## **School Schedule**

### **Calendar and School Hours**

#### **Annual Calendar**

Mt. Helix Academy operates on a traditional calendar. A master calendar is distributed to parents identifying the specific day on which school opens, as well as school break periods, national holidays, reporting periods, and other key dates of interest. An online calendar of events is located on our website. Additional copies of the calendar may be obtained on the Mt. Helix Academy website, [www.mthelixacademy.org](http://www.mthelixacademy.org)

### **School Hours**

Classes for all students begin at 8:00 a.m. The teaching staff is available to supervise the social and play activities of these students at 7:45 a.m.

Unless advance notice to the contrary has been provided to parents, dismissal for students is at the following times:

- Transitional Kindergarten & Kindergarten - 2:45 p.m.
- Grades 1 and 2 - 2:55 p.m.
- Grades 3, 4 & 5 - 3:00 p.m.
- Grades 6, 7, 8, & 9 - 3:15 p.m.

The school calendar should be consulted for pre-designated Staff Development Days and Parent Conference Days. Dismissal on those days occurs at the following times:

- Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, grades 6, 7 & 8 – 11:25 a.m.
- Grades 3, 4 & 5 – 11:45 a.m.
- Grades 1 & 2 – 12:00 p.m.

### **Arrival and Departure**

#### **Arrival of Students at School**

Students may arrive at school as early as 7:00 a.m. However, students arriving earlier than 7:45 a.m. must be taken to the Extended Day Care room and parents will be billed for the service. (See the description of Extended Day Care.) For their personal safety, students may not be left unattended on the school grounds.

#### **Dismissal of Students from School**

Students in Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade who are not picked up by 3:15 p.m. and students in grades 6 – 8 who are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be taken to the designated Extended Day Care room and parents will be billed for the service. (See the description of Extended Day Care.) For the personal safety of students, they may not be left unattended on the school grounds.

#### **Early Dismissal of Students from School**

Mt. Helix Academy encourages parents to schedule medical and other appointments involving their child after school hours so that students may derive maximum benefit from their schooling.

However, it is recognized that this is not always possible. When it is not and the student must leave school before the end of the school day, the adult with whom the student is

leaving must report to the school office and sign out the child. School office staff will then dismiss the child from school. If the child returns to school the same day, s/he must report to the school office to be readmitted.

To facilitate an early dismissal, parents are requested to provide the school office with a signed request that identifies the date, time and reason for early dismissal before 8:00 a.m. on the day of a known appointment.

## **School Activities**

Certain special events are planned throughout the school year to supplement daily lessons and expand on the skills and knowledge of Mt. Helix Academy students. Some of these activities are scheduled during the school day and some are scheduled after the school day. Occasionally, students hold performances in the evening to display their talents for the enjoyment of their families and friends. Very often these events have the effect of enhancing school spirit and of permitting parents to enjoy their children's accomplishments.

### **After School Clubs and Activities**

Depending on student interest level, after school clubs are formed and enrichment activities provided for a separate fee. This permits students to engage in a variety of activities for periods lasting no more than six weeks. Several optional after school music lessons are offered to Mt. Helix Academy students for an additional fee.

### **Off-Campus Activities**

#### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an essential part of the educational process at Mt. Helix Academy, because they permit students to apply the skills and knowledge they have been acquiring and thereby learn something of the "real world" application of their education. At the start of each academic year, a permission slip for field trips must be signed by a parent or guardian, in order for a student to participate in any off-campus activities. Transportation for field trips will be arranged and provided by the school. Parents will be advised at least 24 hours in advance if special articles of clothing should be worn to facilitate the child's field trip experience.

#### **Overnight Trips**

Junior High School students and certain Elementary Module students will have the opportunity to experience overnight trips during the school year. The schedule, destination and rationale for all trips will be available to parents early in the school year and written approval will be sought for each overnight trip as it occurs. Additional fees will be charged to parents of participating students based on the number of students, program fees, transportation costs, chaperone requirements and administrative expenses.

The goal will be to make these trips both as educational and affordable as possible. Limited financial assistance may be available on written request to the School Director.

Each year students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade have the opportunity to participate in a living history program on the Star of India, berthed in San Diego Harbor. Students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade may participate in an annual trip to Boston, Massachusetts, as a part of their study of U. S. History.

Students in the Junior High School Module will have the opportunity to participate in the Pali Mountain Outdoor Education program each fall. In addition, students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades may participate in a trip to Washington, D.C., which is scheduled every other year.

## **Annual Events**

### **Science Fair**

Each year, all 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Mt. Helix Academy participate in the development of a science project using the scientific method to investigate natural phenomena. These projects are presented at the school's annual Science Fair and may qualify for entry in the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair.

### **Multicultural Open House**

Held each year on the last Thursday of March, Multicultural Open House night has truly become one of the most popular highlights of the Mt. Helix Academy year. Hundreds of students, their families, and friends from the community immerse themselves in the multicultural world that is Mt. Helix Academy.

Visitors have the opportunity to roam our giant tent and sample delicious foods from the world's many cuisines. It's a virtual international food fair. Afterwards, participants can tour the school's authentically decorated classrooms. Students and staff have collaborated for a month to make their rooms seem just like entering another culture, including Native America, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, India, Japan, Russia, China, Thailand, Egypt, Brazil, Mexico, and Latin America.

The annual effort has resulted in impressive student projects that have included writing original myths and Haiku poetry; making origami, carp kites, Kachina dolls, masks, sand paintings, totem poles, rain sticks, leather projects, terracotta soldiers, and Indian jewelry; planting and growing bulbs; counting in Dutch; designing their own Coat of Arms with Celtic letters; and using technology for presentations on the people of various lands.

Multicultural night is a great socialization opportunity, a terrific way to sample the world's cuisines, and, most importantly of all, a valuable way for Mt. Helix Academy students to display what they have learned concerning other cultures. It is one way that the school has fostered multiculturalism to prepare our students for the modern world.

### **Special Performances**

From time to time throughout the school year, students will present musical and/or dramatic performances or visual arts exhibits to display their talents and to entertain

parents and others. The school will inform parents of such performances sufficiently in advance to permit schedule accommodation. Generally, students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade participate in our annual Winter and Spring Concerts. In addition, our after-school Performing Arts program presents an annual musical production each Spring.

### **Student Assemblies**

Throughout the school year, teachers will take many opportunities to publicly praise the achievement and effort of their students. On many of these occasions, the students themselves will laud their fellow students. In this way, each student will receive public praise many times over the years, contributing valuably to his or her self-esteem. In addition, each student will learn the value of contributing to the self esteem of others.

### **Graduation**

Formal commencement exercises, which are held on the last day of the school year, provide an opportunity for the school and the families of the students involved to participate in applauding the achievement and effort of eighth graders graduating from Junior High School. In addition, a Kindergarten graduation ceremony, as well as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade promotion ceremony is held on the last day of school to recognize the accomplishments of our students.

## **Staffing**

### **Teaching Staff**

Mt. Helix Academy provides a teaching staff that is knowledgeable about and is skilled in using methods and materials that have documented evidence of effectiveness. Every member of the teaching staff participates in TIEE's extensive and on-going professional training in-service program.

### **Student-Teacher Ratio**

Young students require lower student to teacher ratios than older students because young children need more frequent and more immediate attention to ensure their future school success. Consequently, students in the Primary Module are provided the lowest average student to teacher ratio at Mt. Helix Academy. Instruction in basic skills is usually conducted in groups of 8 to 10 students. Depending on student need, instruction in certain skills may be conducted with fewer than 6 students per group. On average, however, the instructional ratio for Primary Module students is 8:1 in basic skills classes.

Students in the Elementary Module, particularly those who already have graduated from the Primary Module, are able to maintain high academic achievement with a student to teacher ratio greater than Primary Module students. They are generally taught the basic skills in groups of 8 to 15 students, with an average of 12:1.

Finally, Junior High School Module students, who are capable of high achievement even with comparatively high student to teacher ratios, are taught at an average ratio of 15:1.

# **Partnership in Education**

## **Mutual Educational Goals**

This section of the Mt. Helix Academy Handbook is devoted to those aspects of the child and his/her schooling that depend on the strength of parent-school partnership. The administration and staff will actively seek parent involvement in these areas and, as is discussed at the end of this section, will provide several ways for parents to exercise their involvement, to voice their concerns, and to make their recommendations for an improved Mt. Helix Academy.

A mutually supportive partnership between parents and school is essential to the accelerated, positive development anticipated for Mt. Helix Academy students. This partnership rests, first of all, on agreement concerning the school's goals for its students and on the methods of achieving those goals, both of which are outlined in the previous section of this handbook. The school strives to make parents and students aware of its goals and its teaching methods through this and other documents, through presentations to parents and through conferences with parents. It is assumed by Mt. Helix Academy administration and staff that parents agree to these goals and to the methods of instruction by enrolling their children in the school.

After agreement on goals and methods, it is essential that school and parents alike establish the most favorable conditions for learning and the enjoyment of learning. The teachers at Mt. Helix Academy have a profound obligation to do what is necessary to foster and maintain every student's eagerness to learn all areas of the curriculum. We believe that parents share this obligation. Children will learn best from school when their parents display support for the school, for the teachers, for the subjects taught and for the methods of instruction.

When both teachers and parents show positive interest in a child's education and maintain high expectations for both personal behavior and performance, they promote the positive attitudes that are critical to school achievement. It is for this reason that each party in the Mt. Helix Academy partnership is asked annually to state their commitment in a formal document which is retained in the student's file.

## **Student Wellness**

To learn well, students must have healthy bodies. They require a well-balanced diet, sufficient exercise, ample rest and sleep, and they must be as free as possible from pain, illnesses or ailments that require medical or dental attention. In many ways, the parent-school partnership is well suited to accomplishing these goals for all Mt. Helix Academy students.

**Nutrition**

Mt. Helix Academy teaches its students facts and information about good nutrition and it reinforces healthful dietary behaviors. Parents are encouraged to assist their children in selecting foods that lead to a broad palate and a balanced diet.

**Eating at School**

Students are permitted two eating occasions during regular school hours, morning snack and lunch for students in the Primary and Elementary Modules; lunch and afternoon snack for Junior High School, and all students are permitted a snack during after school program. (Students who, for medically related reasons, require eating more frequently can be permitted to do so by special arrangement with the Director.)

Parents are encouraged to assist their children in choosing, packing and eating a well-balanced diet at school. Fruit or an energy bar make a good snack. Hot drinks or soup may be brought in a thermos bottle, but food that must be heated or refrigerated cannot be accommodated. It is recommended that lunches be packed in a sturdy container with the child's name clearly printed on it. As a matter of student safety, glass containers cannot be permitted at school.

**Exercise**

Mt. Helix Academy teaches its students facts and information about exercise and reinforces healthful exercise behaviors. A vigorous and varied physical education program is an integral part of the Mt. Helix Academy curriculum for all students. (Students who, for medical reasons, require limited physical activity can be accommodated by special arrangement with the Director.)

Parents are encouraged to supplement the physical education program at Mt. Helix Academy with a regular program of exercise for their children after school and on weekends. Such a program could include organized sports activities.

**Rest and Sleep**

Students at Mt. Helix Academy teaches facts about the body's need for rest and sleep. Periods of rest are scheduled each day for Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students. Older students may be taught relaxation strategies if needed. Parents will help their child do well in school by arranging for eight or more hours of sleep each night.

**Student Health and Safety**

TIEE is in compliance with California law in having a formal Illness and Injury Prevention Program (Policy # V. A), a copy of which is in the Mt. Helix Academy administrative office.



Staff, students and parents are encouraged to be pro-actively involved in issues of health and safety. To assist in keeping students and staff healthy and safe, a Safety Committee meets monthly to review all of TIEE's programs and facilities, including Mt. Helix Academy.

The Safety Committee includes representatives from each school site who bring to the committee any issues of compromised health and safety. In addition, each school site is inspected for safety hazards and disaster preparedness quarterly. Concerns meriting immediate attention are dealt with as soon as possible. The Safety Committee oversees any corrective action that may be required and maintains a record of such action.

### **Health and Safety Program**

A primary goal of Mt. Helix Academy is to maintain the safety of all students and staff. To this end, the school maintains a campus environment that is physically safe and programs that are well supervised by staff. On a rare occasion, however, a student will display behaviors that are potentially injurious to himself/herself or to others, or that could cause extensive damage to property. Special procedures and training have been implemented to maintain the personal safety of all students and staff as much as possible. Staff response in such situations will be at the level most appropriate to the danger being generated by the student, ranging from a strong voice command to seeking community resource support by calling 911. Parents and/or guardians will be notified as soon as possible of such incidents.

### **Safety Guidelines and Regulations**

The following guidelines and regulations are specific to the program at Mt. Helix Academy:

#### **Asbestos and Toxic Chemicals**

Mt. Helix Academy is in compliance with the Federal law requiring schools operated by non-profit corporations to be free of friable asbestos. The use of toxic or other hazardous chemicals is generally avoided. Cleaning supplies and janitorial supplies are maintained in closets that are not accessible to students.

#### **Fire, Earthquake and General Safety Program**

The safety of Mt. Helix Academy students is paramount at all times; however, safe behavior during rare and unanticipated events is especially important because of the emotional trauma such events can elicit. Consequently, Mt. Helix Academy students are taught safe practices and safe behavior is encouraged at school and elsewhere.

Fire drills are held monthly at unexpected times so that safe, orderly exit from the facility is well practiced. Similarly, earthquake drills are held at least quarterly and more frequently for the younger students, especially early in the school year. Such drills are prescribed by the school's Injury and Illness Prevention Program and are practiced as part of its plan for Disaster and Mass Casualties.

Students are also taught safe practices in vehicles and during off campus activities. Special safety programs and safety awareness events are held with students and staff throughout the academic year.

### **Flus and Colds**

Flus and colds tend to spread quickly in schools, a fact parents can help prevent by keeping children at home if they have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting and/or they have mucus drainage that is yellow or green in color. Because the school has no facilities for other than routine first aid, a child who arrives at school ill or who becomes ill during the school day must be sent home. Parent(s) will be notified and the child will be made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances until the parent(s) arrives to transport her/ him home. If parents cannot be reached, the school will attempt to contact the person(s) parents have listed to contact in an emergency.

### **Contagious Diseases**

Children cannot attend school if they have a contagious disease, such as Chicken Pox, head lice, Measles or "pinkeye". When a child has been absent because of a contagious disease, her/his return to school is contingent upon a note signed by the child's physician, which indicates that the illness is no longer contagious and that the child is well enough to attend school. A notice is sent home to parents if a child has been potentially exposed to a contagious disease if the school has been notified by a parent or health official.

### **Immunizations Record and Medical Forms**

A new student cannot be admitted to Mt. Helix Academy until all required immunizations have been obtained and all medical forms have been submitted.

### **Injuries at School**

Minor scratches and bruises will be attended to by the student's teacher and/or administrative office staff. In the event that a student receives an injury that requires medical attention, but is not greatly painful and/or life threatening, the school will make every effort to comfort the student, will call the student's parents or other designated party and will have the student treated in keeping with the emergency information given the school by the parent(s).

In the event that the student's injury is very painful, requires immediate medical attention and/or is life threatening, the school will call 9-1-1 for emergency service and will then call the parents in keeping with the emergency information given the school.

### **Medications**

By law, Mt. Helix Academy cannot administer any medication, including prescription medication and "over the counter" medication (e.g., Tylenol), to a student without written parental permission. Permission forms for this purpose are available in the school's administrative office.

The only "over the counter" medication Mt. Helix Academy will administer is Tylenol, and only if the school has signed parental permission.

Prescription medication will be administered only if the school has parental permission and instructions for administration that are signed by the child's physician, who must be licensed in California. Any change in the prescription or the administration schedule will be made only if the school has signed permission and instruction from the physician. Mt. Helix Academy will accept for administration only those medications that are in pill or capsule form and **are in the original physician or pharmacy container.**

### **Release of Students by the School**

For the safety of all students, the administration and staff of Mt. Helix Academy will release students only to their parents or to other adults who have prior written permission from parents to take their children from school.

Should an occasion arise when someone other than the person who regularly picks up a child must do so, the Mt. Helix Academy office must be informed in advance and in writing by a parent or legal guardian. Before the child is released to this person, s/he must report to the office upon arrival at school, must show valid identification and must be at least eighteen years old.

In situations involving court ordered custody and/or visitation arrangements, Mt. Helix Academy is required to respect the order of the court. To fulfill this legal obligation, Mt. Helix Academy must depend on the parties themselves to provide a copy of the written order received from a court having jurisdiction in the matter to the School Director or Assistant Director. Mt. Helix Academy will abide by that order until such time as a copy of a revised order is provided to the school.

## **Attire & Grooming**

### **School Uniform Policy**

The purpose of the Mt. Helix Academy student uniform policy is to promote an effective learning environment for all students. Students are required to wear a designated school uniform to school each day.

Students are also required to wear appropriate uniform attire for all off-campus field trips and other events sponsored by the school, unless specifically notified. If an off-campus event calls for dress that differs from the standard school uniform, parents can expect notice at least 24 hours prior to such an event. The student's homeroom teacher will provide guidelines for such an event.

### **School Spirit Day**

Every Friday will be designated "School Spirit Day". Students are encouraged to wear a top with the Mt. Helix logo. On Fridays only, T-shirts with the Mt. Helix Academy logo and blue jeans may be worn. Jeans must be in good condition and fit appropriately (no sagging or revealing jeans).

### **Items Not Specifically Addressed By the Uniform Policy**

Matters of dress, jewelry, make-up, hair color/style and so on not addressed by the Mt. Helix Academy uniform policy will be permitted or not permitted on campus as decided by the Director of Mt. Helix Academy, based on the degree to which the Director believes that the style or accessory in question is disruptive to student safety or the learning environment at the school. All decisions by the Director are final.

### **Violations of the Uniform Policy**

If a student violates the school's uniform policy or arrives at school in a manner of dress deemed inappropriate by the Director, the parent or guardian will be notified; the student will be required to change attire before being allowed in the classroom; and, if this is not possible, the student will be sent home.

### **School Uniform Guidelines**

#### Tops

- Solid color, short or long-sleeved, collared polo shirts or turtlenecks, with Mt. Helix Academy logo or plain.
- Acceptable colors are burgundy, navy blue, or white.

#### Outerwear

- Navy blue sweaters, with Mt. Helix Academy logo or plain
- Navy blue fleece tops, with Mt. Helix Academy logo or plain
- Navy blue jackets, with Mt. Helix Academy logo or plain
- Mt. Helix Academy logo sweatshirt

#### Bottoms

- Solid color, either khaki, navy blue, or burgundy
- Pants - plain front, pleated front or elastic waist - no overalls, cargo pants or jeans
- Shorts – no shorter than 1 inch above the knee
- Skorts-- no shorter than 1 inch above the knee
- Skirts-- no shorter than 1 inch above the knee
- Solid jumper-navy blue, khaki, or burgandy
- Uniform material (100% cotton, cotton/polyester, corduroy - No denim or windbreaker-type material)

#### Shoes

- Closed toe
- Sneakers
- Loafers or oxford style shoes - no work or combat-style boots, platform or high-heeled shoes

#### Socks/Tights

- Plain, solid color
- Acceptable colors for tights-navy blue or white

#### Hats

- Hats may be worn on the playground, during recess or PE

- Hats may not be worn inside any school building.

## **Student Attitude and Behavior**

To learn well, students must have a positive attitude about school and about learning. The school's role in establishing and maintaining a positive attitude is profound. Lessons that produce high levels of student success, clear expectations for student performance, recognition for effort and continued achievement and an absence of coercion are important elements of schooling at Mt. Helix Academy, and it is our stated goal to produce students who love learning.

Parents can help the process in many ways, particularly by modeling an eagerness to learn, assisting their child in acquiring effective learning strategies and by displaying an excitement for their child's achievements. The parent-school partnership is an ideal way to promote the positive attitudes and behaviors essential to the high achievement expected of Mt. Helix Academy students.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Teachers are expected to maximize the amount of time students are engaged in curriculum related activities throughout the day. Even field trips and assemblies are carefully planned and scheduled in accordance with each module's curriculum. Moreover, the activities are designed to promote love of learning and an excitement about attending school. Parents can contribute to their child's optimum educational growth by ensuring the regular, prompt attendance of their child.

### **In the Event of a Child's Absence**

In the event a child must be absent from school, parents are requested to notify the school office (619-243-1400) or email your child's homeroom teacher prior to 8:00a.m. on the day of absence.

### **In the Event of Prolonged Absence**

Occasionally, it is necessary for a student to be absent from school for several days because of a visit to relatives, a family vacation, or a prolonged illness (e.g., chicken pox or measles). If an absence is expected to last longer than two days and the child is not too incapacitated to perform schoolwork, parents are encouraged to arrange with their child's homeroom teacher for a set of home study assignments to keep their child from falling too far behind. Parents are requested to inform the school of the need for such home study assignments at least 24 hours in advance. It is expected that any work provided will be completed and turned in when the child returns back to school.

### **Punctuality**

Mt. Helix Academy teachers will teach their students how to be ready for class and they will make classes as motivating for students as they can, so that students are inclined to be on time and ready for class to begin. Persistent tardiness will be treated as any other

conduct problem (discussed below). Because of the need to monitor student whereabouts, the student who is late must first report to the office to check in as present for the day and to obtain a tardy slip.

### **Student Conduct and Positive Discipline**

A positive discipline program is not a method of punishing misbehavior. It is a program that teaches and encourages students to enjoy doing the right thing. At Mt. Helix Academy, the positive discipline program is designed to teach and encourage students to come to school, to love learning, and to interact positively with peers, staff and others in the community. The program emphasizes teaching students what is expected and praising them for effort and achievement. Teachers at Mt. Helix Academy will report many achievements of the students to their parents. We recommend that parents praise their children for their achievements, and display excitement that is commensurate with the level of achievement and the age of the child. We also encourage parents to use special treats, prizes or awards only sparingly, if at all, and we recommend strongly against telling children that a special award may be earned by a high level of school achievement. Parents desiring assistance in establishing a positive discipline program for their children or in coordinating the home and school programs should contact the school Director.

### **Mild Punishments and Their Use**

Even with a positive discipline program, students will occasionally misbehave. More often than not, it is best merely to redirect misbehavior to more desirable behavior. For instance, two kindergarteners are discovered in the play corner tossing blocks at one another. The teacher would be wise to say, "Blocks aren't for throwing, they're for building. Let me see you two build a tower with those blocks." However, sometimes the misbehavior is either sufficiently severe, sufficiently persistent, or it does not stop when directed by the teacher. In such cases, it may be important to use a mild punishment to stop the present episode and to reduce the likelihood of future episodes. For example, suppose the students in the example above have now been caught for the third time in two days throwing blocks at one another. The teacher might give both students a "time out" (as described below).

When teachers or parents fail to praise desirable behavior often enough (we recommend four positives for each negative), the punishment may be the child's best means of getting adult attention, so the misbehavior is actually strengthened. Punishment can also cause the child to avoid the person who punishes the child. Because of these dangers associated with the use of punishment, the staff at Mt. Helix Academy will only use brief, mild punishments and these will be used sparingly. Also, punishers that are used will only involve removing privileges; students will never be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or to any form of humiliation for their misbehaviors.

Permission from parents or guardians to use mild punishments is obtained as a condition of enrollment at Mt. Helix Academy. Included among the mild punishments that may be used are:

- o **Penalties or Fines:** Students may receive a penalty or fine for certain misbehaviors including the loss of minutes of choice time or the loss of preferred activities. Penalties or fines may not be carried over beyond the school day in which they occurred.
- o **Reprimands:** Students may be reprimanded but only in a quiet, calm voice. Students may not be yelled at, nor may a reprimand involve humiliation of the student.
- o **Time outs:** Students may be given a time out in the classroom or instructional area, which shall not last more than one minute after the student displays instructional control. Students must be supervised throughout the duration of a time out. A "cool down" procedure, in which the student initiates going to a designated area as a means of regaining self-control is not considered a time out.

### **Documentation**

A record of all mild punishments will be kept to determine whether they are effective in reducing the misbehavior. If they are not, the Director of Mt. Helix Academy will confer with the Module teaching team to determine whether and/or how the program can be changed to have a more desirable effect with the student.

### **Reporting Use of Mild Punishment to Parents**

Generally, the policy of Mt. Helix Academy is to inform parents when their child is doing particularly well. However, depending on the circumstances, parents may receive a phone call or note from the school about a particular mild punishment, the history of such punishments or information concerning specific incidents.

### **"Zero Tolerance" Behaviors**

Although a broad range of student behavior is welcomed at Mt. Helix Academy, the school has zero tolerance for certain behaviors. Students who display any of the following behaviors at school may receive one of the penalties described below or may be expelled at the sole discretion of the Director: (a) any act or activity which is unlawful in the community; (b) carrying a weapon or threatening to use an object as a weapon; (c) using controlled substances without a prescription; (d) possessing alcohol or illegal drugs; (e) physically assaulting or threatening to physically assault a student or staff member; (f) vandalism and other malicious damaging of property; and (g) flagrant disrespect for staff members and others in position of authority; and (h) sexual harassment of students or staff. (See Appendix C)

In the event that one of the behaviors classified above occurs, but in the judgment of the Director of Mt. Helix Academy, expulsion is not a necessary outcome, one of the following penalties may nevertheless be imposed:

**In-School Suspension:** A student may be required to stay in school while not attending classes or participating in any school activities for no more than one school day.

During in-school suspension, the student will be monitored by a staff member at all times. The student's parents or guardians will be informed of the suspension and the reason for it on the day of the misbehavior.

**Out of School Suspension:** In certain cases, a student may be suspended from school for one or more days. Conditions for returning to school may be imposed at the sole discretion of the Director of Mt. Helix Academy, and it is expected that the student will perform all schoolwork assigned during the period of suspension.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The State of California requires that all schools provide staff and students with a personal copy of the school's policy concerning sexual harassment. Mt. Helix Academy's sexual harassment policy has been included in Appendix C for reference. In brief, the long-standing policy of TIEE is that sexual harassment of or by staff or students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Mt. Helix Academy implements this State regulation with its students by accentuating the positive value of respect for all persons and concentrating on developing the display of socially appropriate behaviors by all of our students. In addition, each year, students in the Junior High School Module watch and discuss a video on sexual harassment. Student attention is not otherwise specifically called to the written sexual harassment policy.

## **Property & Materials**

### **Personal Property**

Mt. Helix Academy recommends that all items of student property, including clothing, be marked with the student's name. Clothing can be marked with a permanent marker on the label or on another, unobtrusive place. Items that are lost or misplaced will be returned to the student when found, if they are marked with the student's name. Items found that do not have a student's name on them will be taken to the school's lost & found. Items left unclaimed at the end of each month will be donated to charity.

Certain items are not permitted in school either because of the distraction they may cause other students or the risk of loss. They are:

- Apple Watches, cell phones, and device that has a 2-way communication capability;
- Hand-held video games or game cartridges;
- Rollerskates and skateboards;
- Personal toys
- Expensive jewelry
- Student owned laptop computers, Ipads

When the items listed above are brought to school, they will be confiscated by staff, marked with the students name and taken to the office where parents may pick them up



after school. For students who bring a cell phone to school, the phone must be turned off and given to the child's homeroom teacher at the start of homeroom. At the end of the day, the student will retrieve their phone from their homeroom teacher. Students may not access their cell phone during the before and after-school programs without permission from staff. Any student who violates the cell-phone policy will not be allowed to bring devices on campus and will have their phone confiscated to be picked up by the child's parent or guardian.

### **Textbooks and School Materials**

At the beginning of the school year, students at Mt. Helix Academy are issued textbooks and workbooks, and some students are issued calculators. Students are taught how to use, manage and otherwise care for these items. They are also taught that the items belong to the school and are merely on loan to them for the school year. Workbooks, of course, are used up by the students during the year and are sent home when completed. However, textbooks and other equipment lent to the students for the year are collected at the end of the year for reuse the next year. Recycling of learning materials is one way Mt. Helix Academy can maintain the low cost of its educational program. Parents can help by showing their children how to care for valuable textbooks and other equipment and encouraging them to do so. Parents will be billed for lost textbooks or workbooks.

### **School Owned Electronic Devices**

Students are provided access to school owned electronic devices such as desktop and laptop computers. At the start of each school year, students in the Elementary and Junior High School modules sign a user agreement that outlines expectations and rules for use of school owned computers. Students in grades 1-8 are issued a Chromebook at the start of each school year.

## **School Assignments and Homework**

### **School Assignments**

At Mt. Helix Academy, students are taught the skills and knowledge that are essential to move to the next level. Knowledge acquired is built on systematically lesson after lesson and reviewed cumulatively, so students ultimately learn much more, in more depth. Their errors, ineffective problem-solving strategies and misunderstandings are corrected as soon as possible and they are given practice in solving problems the most efficient and effective way. Finally, children are frequently told they are doing well and they learn to take pride in ever-increasing accomplishment. Part of the process requires students to perform certain school assignments on their own. Many such assignments are conducted in school so that teachers can monitor student progress and correct errors as they occur.

### **Homework**

Some assignments are given as homework, which is assigned primarily for two purposes. If Mt. Helix Academy students are to become successful adults, they must be highly

skilled at solving problems requiring some learning wherever they may be. Homework provides them opportunities to learn to perform learning related tasks away from school. Also, homework is designed to provide students with opportunities to practice or to extend the skills they have already mastered in school. It is not given so that students can acquire new skills. Parents are very likely to notice that they do not have to assist their children in solving homework problems. However, by ensuring that their child has a regular time set aside for homework, a place consistently available in which to do it, and encouragement to begin it and to finish it in a timely manner, parents will be assisting their children in becoming the best students they can be. Parents who find that their child has difficulty with homework or with the process involved in starting and doing it are encouraged to contact their child's teacher.

### **Make up Assignments**

If a student is ill for only one day, it is generally possible to make up the work missed on returning to class. If it appears that a student will be absent for more than one day, it is recommended that parents contact their child's homeroom teacher for make-up assignments that can help assure the child will not fall behind her/his classmates.

## **Parent/Family Participation**

### **Parent Involvement at Mt. Helix Academy**

#### **Volunteering Time and/or Resources**

Formal and informal parent involvement at school can be an important component of schooling for all students, and it is welcomed at Mt. Helix Academy. Formal involvement with the school can occur through volunteering at the school or by participating in the Parent-Teacher Group.

It is recognized that many parents have the desire to volunteer at their child's school, but their other time commitments preclude such activity. Informal involvement can take any of a variety of forms, such as donating money for computers, serving as a "room parent", fundraising to support student activities, donating food for a class party or assisting their child(ren) with homework and other school related tasks.

#### **Participating in The Parent Teacher Group**

The Parent-Teacher Group, "PTG," meets monthly at Mt. Helix Academy, alternating between mornings and afternoons during the ten-month academic year. All parents are welcome to participate and no dues are charged. The PTG elects officers at the end of each academic year and copies of its minutes are posted to the Mt. Helix Academy website ([www.mthelixacademy.org](http://www.mthelixacademy.org).) Meetings are announced in advance via the Mt. Helix Academy website's online calendar as well as in the weekly electronic newsletter, "News from the Backpack"

Throughout the year, the PTG organizes and sponsors events for the enjoyment of the entire Mt. Helix Academy School Family, including a Welcome Back Potluck Ice Cream Social at the start of the school year; a Halloween Carnival in October, a Thanksgiving

“Feast”, a Bingo Night, Book Fairs, and Teacher Appreciation Days. In addition, certain fundraising events are sponsored to support special school and program needs. The PTG also arranges for and coordinates the efforts of the Room Parent Program throughout the school year. An electronic copy of the by-laws for the Mt. Helix Academy PTG is located on the Mt. Helix Academy website under the PTG section.

### **Volunteering at School**

There is always room at Mt. Helix Academy for a parent who has time and talent to share in support of the educational achievement of our students. As with any volunteer effort, consistency and reliability are the keys to success. Parents who have an interest in volunteering on a regularly scheduled basis, are encouraged to make that interest known to their child’s teacher or to the Director. There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer their time for many of our PTG events, as well as serving as a room parent or PTG Board member.

### **Parents as Drivers**

Frequently, parents volunteer to assist in field trips and after school activities by driving. Because of insurance restrictions, parents cannot be permitted to drive school vans, nor can parents transport Mt. Helix Academy students other than their own children to school functions.

## **Parent Communication**

Mt. Helix Academy intends to provide clear and timely communication for parents and students concerning all school related matters. In its attempt to provide as much useful information for parents as possible, Mt. Helix Academy provides several channels of active, open communication, including the Mt. Helix Academy website ([www.mthelixacademy.org](http://www.mthelixacademy.org)), notices and electronic newsletters, conferences and school visitations. The administrative staff of TIEE is always available to respond to inquiry, and the Director of Mt. Helix Academy and the teaching staff of the school are committed to keeping themselves readily accessible to parents and students.

### **Mt. Helix Academy’s Website**

Our school website, [www.mthelixacademy.org](http://www.mthelixacademy.org), provides information about the philosophy, methods, and programs at Mt. Helix Academy. Families can check the calendar of events, download forms, view the online photo gallery, and read the News and Notes section to find out more about the activities of our students. The website is also a great source of information for families to share their school with out of town relatives or potential Mt. Helix Academy families.

### **Notices and Newsletters**

Mt. Helix Academy provides a weekly electronic newsletter, “News from the Backpack”, to keep parents informed of the current Mt. Helix Academy achievements, happenings and activities, which is emailed to each parent’s email address we have on file. In an emergency situation, the School Director will use the OneCallNow system to send voice

and text messages to families and staff. Occasionally, additional notices are sent home highlighting important issues and events beyond those covered in the newsletter. Similarly, matters of TIEE policy or notices of school program changes are communicated to parents by letter from either the Director of Mt. Helix Academy or the Executive Directors of TIEE. The school also maintains a 24-hour voice mail system for evenings and weekends in case parents need to inform the school of issues or events (619-243-1400).

### **Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences are intended to be a valuable part of each student's education, and serve the need parents may have in discovering more about Mt. Helix Academy and its unique program, or in resolving any questions or concerns about a student's program or progress. In addition to the regularly scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences at the end of the first quarter, conferences can be scheduled with a student's homeroom teacher, skill-area teacher or with the school's Director by contacting the school's administrative office. In addition to conferences, which are conducted in private and held in confidence, all parents are invited to our "Back to School Night", held in September. Teachers from each Module take the opportunity to acquaint parents with the materials and teaching methods to be used with students in that Module for the coming year.

### **Visiting the School**

Parents are often interested in visiting their child's classroom while it is in session. They are welcome to do so providing the observation does not create undo disruption of the classroom activities. Observations are limited to twenty minutes and will not normally be scheduled for the same parent more than once a month. Observers are asked to refrain from interacting with the students unless permitted to do so by the classroom teacher, and to refrain from taking the teacher's time away from students and their lessons.

Arrangements for a classroom observation can be made by contacting the School Director or Assistant Director at least twenty-four hours in advance of the desired observation. In all cases, visitors, including parents, must first report to the office, sign in and obtain a Visitor's Pass before going into a classroom, the lunch area or onto the playground.

### **Video Recording Program**

Mt. Helix Academy has a continuing concern about the progress of its students, the best programs for students and the best preparation for teachers. Consequently, video recording will occasionally be made of students to more effectively monitor progress toward a student's educational goals. Such video files often provide excellent opportunities for parents to view their children actively involved in lessons and other activities. They are frequently much superior to actual classroom visits discussed above because students are less distracted and the file can be reviewed numerous times if necessary. In addition, video files may be shown to professionals in training for the purpose of illustrating effective teaching strategies and techniques. In all cases in which video files are shown to individuals other than the student's parents or teachers, the student's anonymity will be safeguarded by TIEE personnel.

## **School Services for Parents**

Mt. Helix Academy recognizes the important role that parents play in the education of their children and the value of a strong partnership between parents and school in maximizing student achievement. It is also recognized that certain school-based services are of great help to some families. Extended day care, after school enrichment activities and a financial assistance program are currently among Mt. Helix Academy's services for parents. The school encourages parents to recommend other services they feel might be helpful.

### **Transportation to and from School**

Mt. Helix Academy is pleased to facilitate car pooling by families who live in the same general vicinity. Families are advised to make their interest known to the school's administrative office. The school does not evaluate or certify parents as drivers; nor does the school determine whether parents carry adequate automobile insurance.

### **Before and After School Program**

The before school program opens at 7:00 a.m. and the after-school program closes at 5 p.m. each weekday, unless advance notice to the contrary has been provided to parents. The service is available at flat rate. Parents are asked to commit to monthly enrollment for the before and after-school program. The before and after school programs provide supervision of students before and/or after school, but it does not offer the directed activities that are available in the after-school clubs and enrichment activities described elsewhere in the Handbook.

### **Tuition Assistance Fund**

For many children, the need for a quality education outside a public school setting is real, but family financial circumstances are such that tuition is only affordable with assistance. It is for such families that TIEE has established a Tuition Assistance Fund. The Tuition Assistance Fund is used exclusively to support families of Mt. Helix Academy students who demonstrate a financial need. Assistance levels are reviewed annually. TIEE's Business Office administers the program. Tax-deductible contributions to this fund are welcomed from individuals and corporations. To apply for Tuition Assistance, please contact the Director or Assistant Director.

# Appendices

Appendix A Mt. Helix Academy and The Institute for Effective Education

Appendix B Sexual Harassment Policy

Appendix C Information for Aim High NPS Students

## Appendix A

### The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE)

#### TIEE History and Programs

The Institute for Effective Education (TIEE) is a California non-profit corporation [501(c)(3)], chartered in 1972, to provide education and other services for individuals with unique learning needs. TIEE has long prided itself in implementing teaching methods and materials that have been demonstrated to result in superior learning outcomes by real students in real classrooms. The organization has taken a leadership role in teaching both public and private school professionals how to implement these practices.

Known originally as the Children's Workshop, TIEE began as a school that provided special education and related therapies for children whose special needs were not adequately served by the public schools in San Diego. Under the direction of Executive Director Ken Traupmann, the organization grew throughout the 1980's and 90's to include three state certified special education schools, Mt. Helix Academy, and programs of exemplary professional training. With its reputation for uncompromising quality of educational programming, its exceptionally talented professional staff and the school sites it owns, TIEE is positioned to be able to provide continued leadership in education and professional training well into the 21st century.

#### Mt. Helix Academy

In the summer of 1993, the Board of Directors of TIEE approved the establishment of a regular education school as part of the long-range strategic plan for the organization. The transfer of Coleman Preparatory School, founded in 1983 by Coleman and Lois Furr, (now Mt. Helix Academy) to TIEE followed a year later at the invitation of the Coleman Foundation. Under the guidance of TIEE, Mt. Helix Academy has since become one of the premier independent preparatory schools in San Diego County.

#### TIEE Schools for Students with Special Needs

TIEE currently operates four San Diego area schools for special needs students between 3 and 22 years of age.

**Children's Workshop**, located at 9524 Kearny Villa Road, provides a program of intensive language, pre-academic and life skills training for young children whose severe problems with communication have been at least partly responsible for the emergence of their equally severe behavior problems.

The **Marjorie Cook Education Center**, located at 2255 Camino Del Rio South, provides a variety of programs for students with special needs. The Secondary Programs serve students who are capable of attaining a high school diploma, but require intensive educational programming to remediate their academic deficits and their frequently severe behavior problems.

The third of TIEE's special education schools is the **Urban Skills Center**, located at 2225 Camino Del Rio South in San Diego. It provides training for young adults appropriate to their transition to independent living, employment and leisure time activities in the community.

The fourth of TIEE's special education schools is **Mission Valley Academy**, located at 4055 Camino del Rio South in San Diego. Mission Valley Academy serves students from TK – 8th grade through the use of ABA and research-based curriculum and methods. Their programs are individualized to address a wide range of skills. Students learn in small groups as well as in 1:1 instruction as needed. MVA offers instruction in pre-academics and academics as well as more applied, functional skills.

Together, the four special education schools contract with 18 to 20 San Diego County school districts annually to serve approximately 200 students, whose combination of learning and behavioral disabilities are so great that programs appropriate to their needs cannot be implemented by the public schools.

TIEE provides job coaching, development of person driven plans, and other support for students through our **Vocational and Adult Services program**. More information about this program is available at [www.tiee.org](http://www.tiee.org)

All of the schools are certified annually by the California State Department of Education and are in compliance with the California Education Code which applies to public school programs, including requirements concerning teacher credentialing.

### **Professional Training Programs**

Professional training has been a hallmark of TIEE since its inception. Beginning in 1989, systematic training opportunities were also provided by TIEE to professionals outside the organization. Regular university-level teaching and conference presentations have been augmented by the Master Workshop Series and other professional training opportunities.

Master Workshops, which are day long or multi-day training workshops on research-validated teaching methods, are provided periodically by a combination of TIEE staff members and research practitioners from across the country.

## **TIEE's Executive Directors & Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors of The Institute for Effective Education serve without compensation. They are elected by the Board members themselves in accordance with applicable Bylaws. All members have been chosen because of their personal commitment to quality education for all and the continued success of TIEE. The Board meets quarterly according to its adopted calendar. Correspondence to the Board may be addressed to the Business Office at 2255 Camino Del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108.

### **TIEE's Executive Director is:**

Hillary Whiteside, M.S., BCBA

### **Members of the Board of Directors are:**

#### **President**

Jonathan Siegel, M.D.

#### **Treasurer**

John Woods, Ph.D.

#### **Secretary**

King Golden, J.D.

Sandra Daley, M.D.

Katharine Wardle, M.B.A

Jose Luis Alvarado, Ph.D.

#### **Member Emeritus**

Richard C. Schnetzer



## **Appendix B**

### **Sexual Harassment**

The State of California requires that all schools provide staff and students with a personal copy of the school's policy concerning sexual harassment. Mt. Helix Academy's sexual harassment policy has been included in Appendix C for reference. In brief, the long-standing policy of TIEE is that sexual harassment of or by staff or students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Mt. Helix Academy implements this State regulation with its students by accentuating the positive value of respect for all persons and concentrating on developing the display of socially appropriate behaviors by all of our students. In addition, each year, students in the Junior High School Module watch and discuss a video on sexual harassment. Student attention is not otherwise specifically called to the written sexual harassment policy.

## Appendix C

### Getting Started at Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High Nonpublic School

#### Enrollment and Enrollment Requirements

Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS will enroll all children, adolescents and young adults whose educational needs can be met safely by the programs available at the time of enrollment, without regard to their sex, race, ethnicity, color, religion, disability, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, ancestry or country of origin.

Students who will not be enrolled. At the discretion of the Executive Director, students may not be enrolled in any TIEE non-public school if they have a history of setting fires, if they have induced serious injury to others either without provocation or planfully based on a long-harbored grudge, if they have brought a firearm to school, if they have committed sexual assault, and/or if they have committed a drug or alcohol offense including possession while in school. TIEE's non-public schools are not staffed to serve students who require 1:1 services for a prolonged period.

**Summary of Enrollment Process.** The following nine steps summarize the enrollment process for students who are referred from public school districts:

1. Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High is referred a prospective student by the student's public school district.
2. Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High conducts a review of the student's file and IEP.
3. Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High conducts a brief assessment of the prospective student and student's parents/guardians visit TIEE.
4. IEP team meeting is held to amend current IEP.
5. Student's parents/guardians submit essential documents.
6. Student is awarded a 30 school-day (i.e., 6-week) provisional enrollment.
7. Student begins to attend a Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High school as soon as transportation is arranged.
8. IEP team meets to review the student's placement and revised goals and benchmarks proposed by Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High.
9. Student continues to attend TIEE school until next IEP team meeting.

#### Changes to enrollment status

At any time while your child is enrolled and you move within the same district or to another district during the school year, you must notify the school districts (new and old) and Mt. Helix Academy.

#### Address Notification

It is the policy of Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS as required by its Master Contract with each student's local school district, to notify the district as soon as becoming aware of a change in a student's address of residence.

Each student's local school district is responsible for the education of all children living in that district and it is not responsible for educating students who live in another school district. When moving to a new school district, the new district has the responsibility to review your child's IEP, including placement. This means that if you do not inform TIEE when you change your child's residence, you could become personally responsible for the cost of your child's education.

A change in residence DOES NOT mean that your child's IEP will change and it does not mean that your child's enrollment in a TIEE non-public school will be changed.

Because it is in your child's best interest to keep school and school district administrations informed, TIEE requests that you notify the School Director, as soon as you become aware of a need to change your child's address. Advance notification in writing is preferred but a telephone call to the School Director is required not later than three working days after a change in address occurs.

### **Student Attendance**

It is the policy of Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS to promote regular attendance at school for all of its students and to follow all laws, regulations and contracts concerning the recording of student attendance and absence.

School attendance is important - it is the law.

Only when students are in school can their IEP Goals and Benchmarks hope to be accomplished. Chronic absenteeism undermines the school's efforts in achieving IEP Goals and Benchmarks and, because teachers cannot educate students who are not in school, Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS may call an IEP meeting to drop a chronically absent student from its roles.

Parents also have a significant responsibility to encourage their minor children to attend school and Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS greatly appreciates the efforts that parents make on behalf of their children. Those parents whose minor children do not attend school regularly must understand that they face risk of arrest and/or of having their children taken from them by the court.

### **Excused absences**

Certain absences from school are regarded as excusable. An absence is excusable if it results from (a) an illness, (b) a medical appointment (including chiropractic, dental and optometry appointments), (c) quarantine by City or County Health officials, (d) a death in the immediate family, (e) a required appearance in court, and (f) religious reasons.

### **What must the parent/guardian do in the event of student absence?**

To verify that a student's absence was excusable, the student's parent/guardian must provide a written excuse for the absence. An acceptable alternative is for the parent to make telephonic or email contact with the student's teacher who will write the reason that

the student was absent and other facts about the communication on TIEE's Absence Confirmation Form.

### **Contract Independent Study**

Sometimes a family vacation or business requires that the student be away from school for several days, perhaps even a week or more. Contract Independent Study provides a way for the student to be with you and still be "in school." Your child's case manager will provide your child with daily assignments, which you agree to see that your child completes. If the work is completed satisfactorily, the school will count your child as present during the time of your trip. In order to do Contract Independent Study, however, it is necessary for you to inform the school of your trip before it happens so the contract and your child's assignments can be arranged before you leave. Some school districts require an IEP team decision to allow contracted independent study.

### **Home-School Transportation**

Home-school transportation for Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS is the responsibility of the school district in which the student lives and transportation is commonly provided by the school district on the district's bus or on a contracted bus. Occasionally, a student may be transported by public transportation or by her/his parent. TIEE does not provide regular home-school transportation and accepts no liability for transportation provided by the school district or other carrier or for incidents that may occur between students riding the bus or between students and the driver or other personnel on the bus.

### **Arranging home-school transportation**

Upon receiving notice that the student has been approved for 30-day Provisional Enrollment in one of TIEE's nonpublic schools, your school district will notify their transportation office to transport your child to and from her/his new school. If, for some reason, you transport your own child, or if your child takes public transportation, the school district will reimburse the cost. However, do not expect reimbursement if district transportation is also available for your child at the same time.

### **On days when your child is absent**

If, on any given day, your child will not be attending school, it is wise to notify the transportation office. It is not uncommon for school districts to terminate transportation services if they are not used for as little as two or three days. Once terminated, you may be required to notify the transportation office to have the service reinstated and it may take more than one week to obtain reinstated transportation.

If you move within the same district during the school year, call the district transportation office as soon as possible, because it may take as much as two to three weeks to begin a new pick-up route.

If you require additional information concerning transportation to and from school for your child, please call your district transportation office or district special education office.

### **School calendar**

Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS operate on a traditional calendar of 180 days plus 30 or more days of extended year as necessary to implement the IEP's of the students who are enrolled. The first day of school is usually the day after Labor Day. The following days are taken as school holidays: Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving (5 days), Winter Holidays (2 weeks), Martin Luther King's Birthday, Presidents' Day, Spring Break (1 week), Memorial Day and Independence Day.

### **School day**

Students enrolled at Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High begin school at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:15 p.m. every day. School district transportation officials are aware of these schedules and will modify drop off times accordingly. If you have any problem with transportation to and from school, please contact your school district's transportation department as soon as possible.

### **Student Suspension from School**

It is the policy of Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS to provide instructional programming for students that is efficient, effective, safe and positive. In the event that such instructional programming is not possible, it is the policy of Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS to suspend students until such time as the possibility is renewed, but, in any case, not longer than specified in law, regulation or contract.

### **Implementing suspension**

Students will be suspended from school at the discretion of the School Director for presenting a clear danger to the health and safety of others. Suspension may also be implemented at the discretion of the Assistant Director if it is clear that attending school is highly positive for the student and suspension contingent on problem behavior would be effective as a time-out procedure.

### **Suspension procedures**

To suspend a student, the student's Case Manager will undertake the following procedures after consulting with and obtaining the approval of the Director:

1. Inform the student's parents/guardians and the student's home school district that the student has been suspended, for what reason, and for how long. It is expected that maximum suspension will not last longer than 48 hours. (If the student is being suspended as a time-out procedure, prior approval for the procedure must be obtained from the student's parents and the procedure should have the desirable effect of improving student performance very quickly. If the data show little or no effect over seven days of implementing the procedure, an alternative procedure(s) must be implemented. Continued use of suspension as time-out is not permitted.)

2. Have the student's parents/guardians transport the student away from school.
3. Write and file an incident report with the Executive Director and with the involved students' contracting school districts.
4. Rescind the suspension as soon as the student no longer presents the danger that resulted in suspension.
5. If the danger that resulted in suspension does not disappear within 48 hours, an IEP meeting will be called at which expulsion of the student from TIEE and recommendation of placement in a more restrictive environment will be considered.

### **Expulsions**

Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS is not permitted to expel its students by contract with referring School Districts. Expulsion, if it occurs, will be based on a Manifestation Hearing and will be the judgment of the student's School District according to Federal regulations.

### **Parent Rights**

It is the policy of Mt. Helix Academy-Aim High NPS to promote an awareness of the rights that students and their parents are guaranteed under California and Federal Law.

Parents/guardians of children with exceptional needs are entitled to the following rights:

1. Participate in the annual review of my child's Individualized Education Program (IEP);
2. Agree to a time and place for my child's IEP meetings;
3. Instruct the local school agency to hold IEP meetings in my primary language and to make special arrangements for any disability(ies) I may have, including deafness, so that I may understand the proceedings;
4. Give my consent before an assessment of my child is conducted, including SAT-10 or other assessments pertinent to my child's achievement and/or eligibility to graduate with a high school diploma;
5. Receive a copy of the report on my child's assessment;
6. Give voluntary written consent to any activities proposed for my child;
7. Seek an independent assessment of my child at public expense if I find that the school's assessment is inappropriate. (The school may request a hearing to decide the appropriateness of its assessment. If the ruling is in the school's favor, I will still have

the right to submit an independent assessment which must be considered but which is conducted at my expense.)

8. Have written notice of any proposed change or the school's refusal to make a change in identification, assessment, placement, or provision of the least restrictive environment to my child;
9. Request a due process hearing on (a) any proposal to initiate or change the identification, assessment, or placement of my child with which I disagree; (b) the provision of a free appropriate public education for my child; or (c) the agency's (school's) refusal to do these things; and, in the event that I disagree with the hearing officer's decision(s), I may appeal the decision(s) in the appropriate court of appeal.
10. Attend and comment at the annual public hearings held prior to adoption of state program plans (Such hearings must be publicized in advance);
11. Receive a full explanation of my rights and a description of any planned action concerning my child and the reason for the action;
12. See, review, and, if necessary, question my child's record in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974;
13. Request a copy of information from my child's record before it is destroyed in compliance with the law (five years after its usefulness ends).

The specific interpretation of these rights changes from time to time as a result of judicial case decisions. If you have any question on how your rights are currently being interpreted, you may wish to consult an attorney or an advocate. However, most questions can be answered by your school district office or by your child's case manager.