



Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Hillsides Education Center. We are excited to have you join our community and look forward to working with you and your student to help create success, achievement, and love of learning. HEC is a small school community that believes in helping each individual student identify strengths and a plan for skill improvement in order to create lasting change and success beyond the doors of Hillsides.

The following is an introduction packet to outline the basic components of the HEC Hawk community. You will see information on our Step Program (GROWTH), our communication logs or point sheets, our basic design and structure, curriculum information, as well as information on some of our policies. If you should have any questions about the materials enclosed in this packet, or any other HEC policy, please do not hesitate to call.

We are excited to have you and your student join our Hawk community. I look forward to a strong partnership to create success within and beyond HEC.

Go Hawks!

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The Hillsides Step System

GROWTH

The Hillsides Education Center believes in creating lasting change. Success within school and the HEC community is wonderful, but we need to strive for more, helping to create opportunity in the lives of our students. All individuals benefit from setting goals, improving and enhancing personal skill areas, and creating habits of self-reflection. HEC strives to create a school culture of learning, growth, reflection, and individual and community improvement. To accomplish this task, HEC utilizes a Step System called GROWTH, which focuses on skill development.

Skill Development:

The philosophy of skill development is based around the idea that all people benefit from setting goals and can work to improve their skill set. We believe that students make rational decisions based on how they perceive the world and utilize the skills they have available. Students generally do not choose to be "bad", but instead work within the skill set they have available. It is our job as educators at HEC to create learning and opportunity in order to expand the skills of our students, preparing them for the world outside of HEC.

Skills can include academic based skills (or hard skills/cognitive skills), such as reading, writing, and math. In addition, HEC believe social-emotional skills are critical for the success of individuals. These skills have been called "soft skills" or "non-cognitive skills". HEC looks to integrate academic and social-emotional skills within our approach.

Our Goal for Our Students:

It is the goal of HEC to create a student that is **Generous**, **Respectful**, and **Optimistic**. HEC wants students who are **Willing** to try, have **Tenacity**, and that are **Honest** with themselves and others.

Skill Areas:

Tenacity:

This is our ability to start and complete a task, whether the task is something we believe we can do, or find difficult and challenging. Tenacity is our ability to persevere and to deal with obstacles and hurdles that come up in life in a productive way. Tenacity is displaying our skills on good days and not so good days.

Problem Solving: Problem solving is our ability to face challenges with the awareness that there are a variety of solutions to assist us in resolving issues. It is our ability to choose appropriate ways to solve problems, stressors, and frustrations that we may encounter on a regular basis. Problem solving is the way we effectively resolve conflicts and our ability to take a step back and appropriately analyze situations prior to reacting.

Social Awareness: Our social awareness is our ability to understand perspectives of others. It is how we develop and maintain relationships, understand our boundaries, and develop empathy for others. This is recognizing and embracing diversity, and developing an understanding of how our actions affect others and our environment.

Personal Awareness:

Our personal awareness is our ability to self-reflect and understand who we are as individuals. It is being here and being present in our various environments. It is our ability to understand our triggers, and to be aware of our strengths and our challenges. Personal awareness is the understanding that we all have areas we can improve upon. It is developing self-control, being able to effectively de-escalate, and having ownership of ourselves, our education and all aspects of our lives.

Approach:

Roster Meetings:

Roster meetings are held 2x monthly. Instructional staff (homeroom team), a school counselor, and a program assistant meet to review the progress of each student in the school. Roster teams brainstorm, problem solve, and set goals for students based on the skills they are displaying and the progress they are making. Students are also integrated into the process, helping develop their goals. One time monthly, the roster team reviews student progress with the School Director and Clinical Director.

Roster meetings are the opportunity for school staff to problem solve, develop instructional plans, and help set goals for students. It is a great opportunity to help create unity within approach and identify skills students may need to work on in order to find success.

Skill Classes:

Skill classes cover the four skill areas explained above. They run 1x weekly for each homeroom. Skill classes are taught by a school counselor and a member of the homeroom instructional team. Each quarter of the school area covers one of the four skill areas.

Individual Student Plans:

Each student has an individual plan based on their skill area needs. Plans are unique to the student and are integrated into the school day. Students are made aware of their plans by their lead staff, and have their goals posted. School staff are also aware of the plans, as they are reviewed in both roster meetings, and program meetings. Plans can be diverse based on student needs. If a student is developing their "social awareness", opportunities for structured activities with peers may be developed

within the classroom and monitored by staff. A student who is working on tenacity may have increasingly difficult (or lengthy task) demands. Students expanding their problem solving skills may engage in a reflective processing activity after displaying inappropriate behavior. Each plan is tailored to the individual student, and each plan is designed so that it can be implemented within the school day. Student plans are practiced throughout the school, including within classrooms, in individual counseling sessions, and when processing with staff.

Lead Staff:

Students are assigned a lead staff member that oversees and monitors the progress of each student on an individual plan. Classrooms have a minimum of 3 staff members (lead teacher, 2 TA's) for a maximum of 12 students. This design enables no staff member to have more than four individual plans that they are monitoring, which enables plans to be consistently followed and implemented. Clinical staff also oversee homerooms and individual student plans. One time a month, each homeroom reviews plans and is given feedback on approaches for students by the school director and clinical director to ensure quality within the approach.

The Steps:

There are 6 steps within GROWTH. Orientation is the entry level. All students begin at orientation. It gives the school staff a chance to learn the student, and the student a chance to learn HEC and our community. Expectations are a basic understanding of the school rules and guidelines. Generally students remain within the orientation phase for two to four weeks.

After orientation students enter Step 1, the first step in their work towards continued growth to Step 5. With each step, expectations rise, and students are expected to display newly targeted goals and skills for longer periods of time. To obtain a step level, students need to demonstrate growth and consistency in their individualized goal area. Once a student has demonstrated success over a period of time in their goal area, they will fill out an application for "step" with the assistance of their lead staff. Once a student earns Step 3; that student will apply in writing, and in person, discussing the progress they have made, and what they feel their next goal or step should include.

Each step level is represented by a color. Students are assigned folders according to their step level. Students also will be awarded T-Shirts within the colors they have obtained, that can be included in the school uniform (in progress, we are still developing shirts).

Orientation—Yellow

Step 1—Purple

Step 2—Red

Step 3—Green

Step 4—Blue

Step 5—Orange

Privileges:

With each step achieved, students unlock privileges. Privileges differ from incentives. Incentives may be associated to individual plans, or a student may earn a small reward upon achieving a step, but essentially with each acquired skill, students become more independent in our community. Students are identified by the colors of their folders. Each step unlocks opportunities for activities on activity days. High step students may be eligible for overnight activities. Volunteer and mentoring are other examples of achieved step privileges.



The Education Center Design, Structure, and Approach

Classroom Design:

The basic classroom design for HEC is 1 lead teacher with 2 teaching assistants for a group of 12 students. HEC classrooms can grow to a size of 14 total students with the same staffing for periods of time with permission from school districts.

Elementary classrooms are generally clustered (so 5th and 6th grade, or 7th and 8th grade) due to the size of our school. Classrooms at this level are also primarily self-contained.

High school students are assigned to homerooms by their grade level (generally). Students then transition classes based on transcripts and graduation needs. Depending on the needs for graduation, a student could have between 1 and 4 teachers throughout their day. High school classes are 50 minutes in length and count towards school district credit for a diploma.

HEC has also adopted APEX learning, an online platform to deliver curriculum. This provides the opportunity to make-up coursework that may have been missed by an accredited online learning platform. HEC teachers monitor and supplement the materials the students are working on.

Staffing:

There is a minimum of three classroom staff for each group of 12 students. In addition there are four school wide program assistants who assist the classrooms, monitor the behavior management system, and facilitate student processing and mediation. HEC also has a clinical team on campus that provides individual, group, and family counseling services. HEC administration (Director and Academic Dean) also assist in the day-to-day activities of the school.

Services:

HEC offers a wide range of services to the students, and is dependent on student IEPs. Transportation is offered to any student living in Pasadena or Glendale. Students also have the ability to have individual, group, and family counseling while attending HEC. Speech and Language services (individual and group) are also available to the students of HEC.

Curriculum:

The Hillsides Education Center implements the Common Core standards. HEC works hard to offer a rigorous and appropriate academic curriculum for its students. This includes following the Common Core, while also adapting those standards to meet the individual needs of the students who attend HEC. This individualization is driven by student IEP teams.

Technology Integration:

HEC has worked to improve and expand technology within the classrooms. This includes Smart Board instruction, integration of Yoga laptop/tablet technology, and classroom computers. Computer technology is utilized within classroom instruction, during projects, and within our Reading Rocks! program.

HEC has introduced a graphic design program within its Vocational Education program. This program features a supercomputer, competitive graphics software, and a 3-D printer. Students work on developing their skills within the graphic arts field, including advertisement design, T-Shirt development, animation projects, and introductory architecture.

Vocational Education:

HEC offers an array of Vocational Education. This includes Trade Science, Auto Mechanics, and Graphic Design.

Communication Logs/Daily Evaluations:

Students at HEC carry a daily evaluation throughout their day. This communication log is sent home daily, giving families a snapshot on how the day was, including the points each student earned, homework the student has for the evening, and an opportunity for families to write to classroom staff. It is a great first line of communication between home and school. As always, we encourage further communication through phone and email, but this does provide a simple and quick way to keep informed about school, and to inform us about the happens outside of school.

Reading Rocks!:

Reading Rocks! is a personalized reading approach which incorporates different reading approaches to meet the needs of learners individually. Some of the students who come to HEC struggle with their reading, and research demonstrates the importance of reading in the development of students and people. Reading Rocks! targets the students with the most significant reading needs within our community and aims to help improve reading skills through individual and small group instruction. Students are assessed early in the year and a reading curriculum is developed by our reading specialist. Students are re-assessed every 2 weeks to 1 month to track progress and adjust programming. Program materials are supplemented outside of the reading intervention by tablet apps, and through classroom instruction.

APEX Learning:

APEX is new to HEC. It is an online learning platform that offers coursework for HEC High School students. Credits earned through APEX count towards HEC credits, and district credits. This is a pilot year for HEC utilizing APEX, so a small number of students will have the opportunity to take APEX courses to evaluate its effectiveness and appropriateness. Our goal is to use APEX as a credit recovery model for students who need it, as well as to provide structure to our independent study program.

Skill Development:

Skill development is the philosophical approach of HEC. GROWTH is the driving force within this approach. Skill development is inclusive of academic, social, and behavioral skills. Students who attend HEC have traditionally encountered road blocks before entering into our community. Skill development is aimed to build skills for each student individually which will help them encounter and overcome the roadblocks that had previously held students back. Our goal is to help build skills within students in order to create opportunity and success beyond the doors of HEC.

Grading Periods/Report Cards/Credits:

HEC is broken into 2 semesters, or 4 quarters. Report cards are sent home on each quarter. The grading periods close on October 17th, December 19th, March 13th, and June 2nd. The semesters finish on December 19th and June 2nd. For our high school students, credits are issued on those dates. Report cards and IEP progress notes are sent home, but generally a week after the close of the reporting period, so they can be reviewed.

HEC issues credits for high school students. These credits count towards a diploma and are honored by our school districts. HEC is in the process of becoming WASC accredited. We have completed our first review. Our full accreditation visit is scheduled for April 2015.



Parent Advisory Meetings

The parent advisory group meets four times a school year. It is an opportunity for the director of the school to give parents information on the state of the school and the school year. It is also opportunity for parents to provide input on how the school is functioning, express concerns, and offer suggestions. This is a wonderful opportunity to build community within HEC, develop partnerships with other parents, and to influence the HEC community in a positive way.

For the 2014-2015 School Year:

10/15/14—5 to 6pm (for first meeting only)

12/17/14

02/18/15

04/15/15

The first meeting will be held from 5 to 6pm. Our families come from a variety of communities, and we understand this time may be very difficult for some. It is our hope to receive feedback on what might be a more ideal time, or alternative attending possibilities to enable as many interested parents as possible to attend. We will discuss this at our first meeting.



Community Involvement

Las Candelas

HEC has had the pleasure of having Las Candelas support us for a long period of time. The wonderful people at Las Candelas run a school store for our elementary program, they design and host wonderful school assemblies, and help us organize a few school-wide field trips throughout the year. Their support really enriches our community and offers several opportunities for our students to increase their experiences, and helps create a positive attitude towards school.

Library Speakers and Guests

Our library is the host to several guest speakers throughout the year. This includes local authors, musicians, and business people. The guest speakers offer insights to their fields and create enrichment for our students. We've hosted civil rights leaders, CEO's of large organizations, Police Chiefs, judges, a LA Times reporter, professional actors and musicians, and local advocates. It is a great way to bring our community together.

Story Tribe

Story Tribe is a journey through self-reflection and expression that our senior class participates. The goal is to teach healthy expression skills through writing and poetry. Students work on individual journeys and pieces, that eventually come together as a group project. This group poetry piece is performed live. The program teaches students writing skills, guides individuals through self-reflective practices, enables and empowers students to express their feelings in positive and safe environments, and creates self-esteem through a shared community coming together to present powerful materials in front of an audience. This is an amazing program that integrates with our senior class.

Young Story Tellers

The Young Story Tellers is something HEC gets the opportunity to participate in from time to time. It involves professional screen writers coming and mentoring students, helping them write their own plays. These plays are developed over a school quarter and performed live at the "Big Show" by professional actors. It is a wonderful opportunity for our students to develop writing skills, to receive mentoring, and to see their ideas come to life on stage. The Big Show is a great event enjoyed by our entire school and community.

Musique:

Musique is a local non-profit group that works in conjunction with our library to bring in musicians. Musicians perform for students and engage in question and answer sessions. The variety of music offered by this amazing program includes classical, jazz, alternative, and interpretive. It is an impressive opportunity our students get to participate in, and at times, they also offer community based activities for our community.

Parents, Districts, local communities, and more!

HEC is a small community that looks to connect with its families, districts, support groups, and other local community providers. We have open doors and encourage everyone to find opportunity to help us enrich our learning environment for our students. HEC has parent advisory, offers parent groups, and conducts several school-wide open houses (including our Science Fair, Academic Fair, Back To School Night, Art Festivals).



HILLSIDES SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Purpose and Goals

Hillsides recognizes that good nutrition and physical activity are essential for students to maximize their full academic potential, reach their physical and mental potentials, and achieve lifelong health and well-being. A responsible approach to nutrition and physical activity promotes healthy weight maintenance and reduces the risk of many chronic diseases, including asthma, hypertension, heart disease, and Type 2 diabetes.

Hillsides' has a responsibility to culture a school environment that helps students learn and maintain lifelong healthy eating and lifestyles habits. Many factors play a role in achieving a healthy school environment, including foods and beverages available to students while at school, nutrition education, opportunities for physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Hillsides has established a Wellness Committee designed to optimize the health and well being of students, and fulfill the requirements of The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

Nutrition Standards for All Foods Available during the Day

The school meal program will operate in accordance with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program standards. Hillsides offers varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet all legal requirements set forth by the government. School meals will be prepared in appealing ways that retain nutritive quality and foster lifelong healthful eating habits. Meals are served in age appropriate quantities, in pleasant surrounding with adequate seating and supervision while providing time to eat, relax, and socialize.

Hillsides contracted food service company (Chartwells) has established and implemented a food safety program for the preparation and service of school meals based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles (HACCP) in accordance with the Reauthorization Act of 2004.

Nutrition Education Goals

Student will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of classroom nutrition education and learning experiences that include the following.

Nutrition knowledge: benefits of eating healthy, nutrients, deficiencies, safe food preparation, and healthy weight management.

Nutrition related skills: planning a healthy meal, using food labels, evaluating food labels.

Assessment of personal eating habits: goals for self-improvement, planning.

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SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Physical Activity Goals

Hillsides students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through P.E. classes, walking programs, and integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum. Students are also given the opportunity for physical activities after school by participation in school sponsored Athletic Teams and in the Day Rehab program. Time allotted for physical activities are consistent with the Reauthorization Act of 2004 regulations meeting the required 60 minutes per day. Hillsides' provides a positive physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students.

Goals for Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Hillsides staff are encouraged to include and support healthy food offerings at school parties and other functions to support a healthy environment. Staff are encouraged to support the nutrition education efforts by considering nutritional quality when selecting any snack for such events.

Goals for Measurement and Evaluation

Hillsides Director of Education/Assistant Director will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy in the school.

Director of Operations along with Chartwells Food Service will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy in the food service department.

The Wellness Committee reviews and oversees the policy and implementation. Periodic reviews include comments and input from teachers, childcare workers, and children



HEC Dress Code and Uniform Policy

HEC students are expected to dress appropriately for school. The following are expectations for student dress code. You'll notice this has been updated from the 2013-14 school year to reflect denim now being allowed. T-Shirt colors have been reduced to 3 (red-black-white), while polos have been expanded. We continue to not allow logos on shirts. As students advance in our GROWTH program, more color options will be available, based on the color of the student step. In addition, students can wear Hillsides or HEC clothing and T-Shirts at any time.

Shirts:

T-Shirts (long sleeved or short sleeved), hoodies, sweaters, and/or sweatshirts must be solid color, white, red, or black with no logos, designs or patterns except for HEC/school logos. Dress shirts, collared shirts, or polos are acceptable in any color or pattern as long as they are worn appropriately.

Pants:

Slacks, jeans, and shorts can be worn to school as pants. No sagging allowed, and pants should be worn appropriately. Pants should not be torn or fitted. Skinny jeans, leggings, jeggings, tights, and yoga pants, may not be worn as pants. Skin tight clothing should not be worn by students and staff will use judgment, as interpreted by administration to determine if pants are appropriate to wear in school. Slacks may be worn as well and are encouraged, in any color. If students are wearing inappropriate pants, they will be asked to wear sweat pants.

Shorts/skirts:

White, black, brown or tan/beige shorts. No sagging allowed, no short-shorts allowed, no mini-skirts allowed. Leggings or tights may be worn under shorts or skirts. All skirts and shorts must be no more than four inches above the knee.



BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

One of the goals of Hillsides Education Center is to foster a safe and positive school environment for its students. Students have a right to participate in school activities in an atmosphere free from Bullying and Sexual Harassment. Students also have a responsibility to treat everyone in their community with respect and to not engage in harassing behaviors that are unwelcome or offensive to others. Any form of bullying, sexual harassment or sexual violence will not be tolerated in HEC.

Any unwanted or unwelcome attention in school or at school-related activities can be considered bullying. Behavior may be considered harassment if the other person feels uncomfortable or threatened or if the person tells the harasser to stop the behavior and the harassment continues. Bullying and sexual harassment can take many forms. It may be:

- **Physical.** For example:
 - Standing in someone's way or standing too close or impeding their freedom of movement
 - Bumping into someone or brushing against the person on purpose
 - Hitting, kicking, biting or other threatening physical contact
 - Patting, hugging or kissing
 - Grabbing, touching, or pinching

- **Social Media.** For example:
 - Threatening, insulting, or inappropriate comments regarding other students and staff via social media
 - Sexual jokes or comments regarding or to other students (current or former) within the school
 - HEC reserves the right to consider social media harassment as a school based issue if it is regarding a HEC staff or student

- **Verbal.** For example
 - Threats or insults
 - Comments about person's body
 - Sexual jokes, suggestions, or remarks
 - Sexual stories or rumors
 - Pressure to go out on a date
 - Whistle or rude noise

- **Nonverbal.** For example
 - Staring at someone's body
 - Notes, letter or graffiti
 - Sexual pictures/photographs, drawing, poster or offensive notes
 - Mimicking or pantomiming in a insulting way or of a sexual nature

- Mimicking or pantomiming in a threatening way.
- Gesture or looks such as winking or making suggestive body movements

Any student who believes that he or she is the victim of bullying or sexual harassment should report the incident to school authorities as soon as possible. Since sexual harassment is unacceptable and illegal, students engaged in such acts of misconduct will be disciplined and may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement official for further investigation and/ or legal action.

The range of consequences and/or corrective measures which may be used by school officials for students engaged in bullying or sexual harassment includes but is not limited to:

- An apology to the victim (written or verbal)
- Barred from participating or attending extracurricular activities
- Counseling
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Out-of school suspension
- Parent conference
- Referral to school police liaison officer (Child Services and School District)

On a student's first instance of bullying, he/she will meet with the principal or designee and review the situation, develop a plan to not have the situation repeat, parents/caregivers will be notified, and the student will be informed to cease all bullying behaviors.

On a second instance, the student can be suspended from class (in-school) for one day and parents/caregivers may be asked to attend a meeting with the principal or designee, and the classroom teacher. Potentially an IEP meeting may need to occur and the district will be informed. At that time a comprehensive plan will be developed to stop the behaviors.

If a third instance arises, the student may be suspended from class for two days, parents/caregivers and the school district will need to meet with the principal or designee. Potentially an IEP meeting will need to be held.