

Mountain Avenue Elementary School

Parent Handbook

(2026–2027)



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Topics below are organized alphabetically for easy reference.

Academic Standards / Common Core State Standards. In addition to providing opportunities for our students to develop 21st century skills (Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity/Innovation), Common Core State Standards (CCSS) also affect the way students learn in the classroom. Our school follows all CCSS in Math and English Language Arts.

Key shifts called for by the Common Core in English Language Arts:

- Regular practice with complex texts and their academic language.
- Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational.
- Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

Key shifts called for by the Common Core in Math: greater focus on fewer topics; coherence (linking topics and thinking across grades); and rigor - pursuing conceptual understanding, procedural skills and fluency, and application with equal intensity.

Attendance. Regular attendance is essential to student success. Students are expected to attend school every day, arrive on time, and remain for the full instructional day. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school of absences and ensuring that absences meet the criteria established by California Education Code. While some absences may be considered excused, **all absences (excused or otherwise) result in missed instruction and count toward a student's total days absent.** Excessive absences or tardies may result in intervention through the school's attendance process (GUSD BP/AR 5113).

- **Explanation of Absences:** All absences must be verified by a parent/guardian. You can either fill out [this](#) form, email the front office or the health nurse and state the date and reason for the absence. Absences not cleared within **three** days automatically become **truancies**. Parents must notify the school before a student returns if the student has had a

communicable disease, a fracture, or has been under a doctor's care for a prolonged illness of five or more days; in these cases a doctor's note releasing the student is required. Under state law, the only excused absences are illness, bereavement of an immediate family member, religious holiday, and court appearances. The principal may consider other absences justifiable when requested in writing in advance, for a maximum of three days (GUSD Administrative Regulation 5113).

- **Tardies:** Students are considered "late" if they are not in their classrooms, prepared to learn, by the 8:20 A.M. bell. After that time, students must sign in and pick up a late slip from the office prior to entering the classroom. Students 30 minutes or longer late to school are considered "tardy." Late and tardy slips are filled out and given to the classroom teacher.
- **Leaving School Grounds:** A sign-out sheet is in the main office for students who need to leave for dental, medical, or other personal appointments. A parent must sign the student out. The office requires an official excuse note from the doctor's or dentist's office for the absence.

Bicycles. Students in grades 3–6 may ride bicycles to/from school and must park and lock them at the bike racks. Helmets are required; a bike may be held until a helmet is worn or a parent picks it up. Bicycle security is the student's responsibility.

Care of School Property. Students are responsible for textbooks, library books, P.E. equipment, other school property, and personal belongings; students and parents may be held financially responsible for lost or damaged items.

Cell Phones. May be brought for use before/after school only in front of the school or in the park (not on the patio or in classrooms), and must be off during school hours. Phones used at the wrong time or place will be confiscated and returned at day's end; security of the phone is the student's responsibility. Smartwatches with text/call capability must be in airplane mode during school hours. **Telephone Usage and Messages:** Student telephone use is limited to urgent, school-related matters. Please arrange after-school pick-up plans

before the school day begins. Calls are not connected to classrooms during class time; messages for a child must go through the main office before lunchtime.

Child Development Child Care (CDCC) - For Child Care Program information, call (818) 247-0775. This program is non-subsidized, funded entirely by parent fees, and open to children enrolled at Mountain Avenue from Transitional Kindergarten through sixth grade. Registration is ongoing. The supervised before- and after-school program offers extended learning opportunities using grade-level standards and student interests, with an emphasis on language arts and mathematics. Homework assistance and a daily snack are provided.

Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 6:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. Closed on all government holidays and one week at winter break; open during all other school holidays and staff development days.

Civility Policy. The GUSD Board of Education is committed to keeping schools and District sites free from disruption and free from unauthorized persons. Staff will address colleagues, students, parents, and the public with respect and expect the same in return. The District will not tolerate rude, uncaring, abrupt, insensitive, volatile, hostile, or aggressive behavior, or loud, obscene, or offensive language (Board Policy 1312.5).

Classroom Interruptions. Instructional time will not be disrupted to call students from class to retrieve forgotten lunches, homework, projects, instruments, etc. We make every effort to get student items to them by recess, but there is no guarantee. Students will **not** be called out of class, and parents may not enter a classroom during instructional time to deliver items.

Combination Classes. Formulating classroom assignments is a complex process involving input from the principal and each child's prior classroom teacher, along with multiple measures of assessment data to develop educationally sound, balanced groupings. Social, academic, and emotional needs of every child are evaluated prior to

assignment. Students placed in a combination class are not randomly assigned - staff select students who are current Mountain Avenue students, independent and self-motivated workers with a positive attitude, and above average academically in core subjects, so that each child has a successful experience.

Students in combination classes retain their grade-level assignments and curricula; teachers create small groups around overlapping standards, and GUSD's curriculum pacing plans and benchmark assessments ensure that all students in combination classes are meeting the grade level expectations. All Mountain Avenue staff have experience teaching combination classes and are trained in differentiated instruction. Grade levels work together to support the combination teacher to ensure continuity. Your child's teacher will explain specifics and how to support your child at home during Back-to-School Night.

Daily Schedule. Found on the school website. Click [HERE](#).

Donations. Students enrolled at Mountain Avenue are not required to pay any fee, deposit, or other charge for participation in an educational activity offered by the school or District, except as authorized by law. Donations are sought and accepted for various activities and supplies and are, at times, critical to the continued success of classes and activities, but donations are voluntary.

Dress Code. Clothing must conform to standards of safety and modesty and must not disrupt learning:

- Shoes must have a safe sole at all times — no flip-flops, open-toe shoes, Crocs, or shoes without back support.
- Oversized clothing is a safety hazard during physical activity; pants/shorts must fit properly and be worn at the waist, with correctly sized belts.
- Clothing may not be offensive or depict violence, obscenity, or references to alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances.
- Students must be modestly dressed - bottoms should reach the fingertips, tops should cover the midriff, and straps must be at least two inches wide.

- Hats may not be worn indoors, but may be worn outdoors for P.E. and recess.

Drop Off & Pick Up.

- **Before School:** Supervision begins at 7:30 A.M. for all students. Students should not arrive before supervision begins unless enrolled in childcare. *(Call the CDCC office at (818) 241-7562 if childcare is needed.)* Once the first bell rings, students line up on the patio by class, are dismissed to classrooms at 8:15, and instruction begins at 8:20.
- **After School:** Parents are responsible for picking up children promptly at dismissal. For safety, students may not be picked up from or play in the parking lots or in front of the school, and must leave campus immediately after dismissal (no waiting for friends or siblings). Students not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal will be sent to the office to call home. If a student has not been picked up by 4:00 P.M., when the office closes, the Sheriff's Department will be contacted.
- **Drop Off/Pick Up at Ocean View Blvd.:** Enter the driveway from the north entrance. There is no supervision of students here, so children must be picked up immediately after dismissal and may not wait unsupervised.
- **ALL STUDENTS** must follow school rules at the Ocean View location during school hours both before and after school. Climbing trees or entering private yards is strictly prohibited during school hours and while there is school provided supervision, regardless of parent/caregiver presence.

Field Trips. Parent permission is required for any field trip. Field trips are a privilege, and students unable to follow Education Code standards of conduct may be excluded.

Health Services. A Health Clerk/LVN is available five days a week during school hours; a nurse is on campus approximately once a week.

Homework Policy. Homework helps establish essential study habits and is a cooperative effort between home and school. Mountain Avenue's Homework Policy aligns with GUSD Board Policy AR 6154. Supplemental Programs such as GATE and SAI-CORE may have differentiated homework. Suggested homework times per GUSD Board Policy AR 6154:

- Transitional Kindergarten: No homework
- Kindergarten: Up to 10 minutes daily
- Grades 1–3: 10 to 40 minutes daily
- Grades 4–6: 30 to 60 minutes daily

Illness. Students with a temperature over 100°F must stay home for 24 hours after becoming fever-free without medication. Students who have vomited two or more times in 24 hours must be vomit-free for 24 hours before returning. Parents must notify the health clerk of a communicable disease (including lice), a fracture, or a prolonged illness of five or more days under a doctor's care; in these cases a doctor's note releasing the student to return is required.

Injuries. Students requiring crutches, casts, or other appliances need a note from the attending physician authorizing their use, including physical limitations and duration, on the first day the appliance is used. An authorization notice will be issued by the office upon receipt of the physician's note.

Items Prohibited at School. Skateboards and scooters; Cellphones, Smart watches or glasses; cameras, electronics & toys and personal playground equipment (balls, gloves, jump ropes, etc) unless teacher-authorized and these items are not to be used during recess/lunch. Prohibited items will be confiscated and parent may retrieve the item from the front office or teacher..

Lunch and the Cafeteria. Students may bring lunch from home or receive one in the cafeteria. Glass containers, candy, and soda/energy drinks are not permitted. All students receive a free breakfast and lunch daily; breakfast may be eaten before school **or** during recess. Food sharing is prohibited due to student allergies and dietary restrictions.

Mountain Avenue Committed to Kids (M.A.C.K. Foundation). A non-profit organization of parents, teachers, and staff promoting quality education by raising money and funding grant requests from teachers and staff. It was founded in 1992 by Grace Chase, a PTA parent, because National PTA by-laws prevent expenditures in some areas of need. An annual M.A.C.K. meeting is held in October to share plans for the school year. More information is available on the M.A.C.K. pages of the school website, which is updated regularly with events and links.

Medication Taken at School. A medical release form, available in the office, must be signed by both a doctor and the parents before medication can be given during school hours. Students may not bring over-the-counter medicine (cough drops, aspirin, vitamins, etc.) without the appropriate completed form.

No Smoking Policy. Smoking/vaping is prohibited at all times, everywhere on campus and at any school-related function, including field trips.

Parent Involvement Policy. Any type of parent involvement is considered volunteering, and all volunteers must now apply online at gusd.net/volunteer.

Mountain Avenue is a partnership of parents, teachers, and students. In the fall, parents attend Back-to-School Night to learn grade-level standards and expectations, and sign the School-Parent-Student Compact on the first day of school. Throughout the year, families are kept informed of student progress and school events (translated as needed) via the Thursday folder, and teachers initiate conferences as needed.

Parent Connect & Parent Square:

- **Parent Connect/Portal:** gives parents online access to their child's student information, including who their child's teacher is. Using a confidential PIN and password, parents can view Progress Reports, Attendance, Class Schedule, and update Emergency Contact Information. Contact the Mountain Avenue office for login information; if you forget your password, use the

"Need your Login Information" link on the Parent Connection website — a new password will be emailed to the address on file.

- **Parent Square:** is the app GUSD uses to communicate with parents, offering teacher/classroom communication, two-way translated direct messaging, online forms and permission slips, appointment sign-ups (conferences, technology pick-ups), and volunteering/supply sign-ups. It's available as a free mobile app (iOS or Android) or at www.parentsquare.com. Every family is encouraged to join and engage with the school community.

Parties. Two classroom parties are permitted per year, usually in December and at the end of the year; a room parent coordinates them via volunteer sign-up at Back-to-School Night. Individual birthday parties or treats, and the distribution of party invitations at school, are not permitted.

Pets and Animals on Campus (Dogs). For the safety and comfort of all students and staff, pet dogs and other personal animals are not permitted on campus during the school day, including during arrival, dismissal, and during the day. Families and visitors are asked to leave pet dogs at home when arriving on campus. Exceptions for service animals, service animals in training, or approved classroom animals require prior coordination with the school office.

PTA. The National PTA, the oldest and largest volunteer association working exclusively on behalf of children and families, aims to promote children's welfare at home, school, and in the community; raise standards of home life; secure protective laws for children; bring home and school into closer partnership; and unite educators and the public around children's advantage in physical, mental, social, and spiritual development.

Mountain Avenue's PTA was founded when the school opened in 1967. It is a community of students, teachers, staff, parents, officials, and businesses supporting programs including the Visual Arts Education Program, Tech Program, Science Fair, Book Fair,

Reflections, Variety Show, Field Day, Carnival, enrichment assemblies, and room parent volunteers.

- **Meetings:** Association meetings are held monthly; check the Thursday Updates or online calendar for dates and times.
- **Fundraising:** PTA's main focus is ensuring every child has a voice and a well-rounded education, rather than fundraising itself. Financial support is sought through a membership drive and typically one annual fundraiser held in the fall.

A full list of Executive Officers is posted on the school website. **Safety Policies & Emergency Preparedness.** Our primary responsibility is the safety of all Mountain Avenue students and staff. To help maintain a safe campus:

- No adult may enter the school without signing in at the main office through the Raptor Management System. Parents and visitors must wear their visitor sticker at all times.
- Students are not permitted on campus without supervision. Yard Duty assistants supervise from 7:30 A.M.
- **Emergency Information:** Parents should keep contact information current via Parent Connect or the main office, so the school can reach a parent or designated adult without delay if a child becomes ill or injured. In a major fire, earthquake, or other disaster during school hours, children are kept at school in a safe area until an authorized adult arrives.
- **Evacuation:** Emergency evacuation drills are held at least monthly. Students and staff report to assigned evacuation locations and remain on the playground until buildings and surroundings are safe to re-enter.
- **Student Release (after an evacuation):** No cars are permitted on school grounds - please park on the street. Walk up the west ramp to the Playground/Release Gate, where students are released to an authorized adult.
- **Emergency I.D. Tag:** Students are released only to those listed on their Emergency I.D. Tag, unless a parent has indicated the child may be released to another recognized adult. Keep this information current with the school office.

- **Communication:** During a District-wide emergency, updated information will be available, if possible, by calling (818) 241-3111, on the District website (www.gusd.net) emergency page.
- **Emergency Preparedness Plan (Parent and Guardian Information):** The school's Emergency Disaster Plan, updated annually by the Safety Committee, identifies disaster team members and their responsibilities. Per GUSD policy for releasing students during an emergency:

Please keep family emergency information current at all times and notify the office immediately of any change of address or phone number.

In the event of an earthquake or other natural disaster, students and staff will evacuate to designated assembly areas when it is safe to do so. Teachers will account for all students, report any missing or injured individuals to the Command Center, and supervise students until they are released to an authorized adult. Parents will be notified through the school's automated messaging system as soon as possible.

During a lockdown, all doors and gates are secured, students shelter in the nearest classroom, and no one may enter or leave campus until law enforcement or school officials issue an "all clear." Parents will be notified through the automated messaging system as soon as possible.

To ensure everyone is prepared, we regularly practice earthquake, fire, and lockdown drills throughout the school year. Any volunteer on campus during these drills will be expected to participate in the drill. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during any emergency.

Student Behavior/Discipline

The legal authority for school discipline is designated by state law to the Board of Trustees. Standards of conduct are a condition of attending Mountain Avenue and apply to all students; penalties

increase with the severity or frequency of infractions, with expulsion the most serious sanction. **Standards of Conduct:** Students will accept and respect direction from all school employees; respect the rights and property of others; respect and care for school property and equipment; conduct themselves in an orderly manner at school and en route; and observe school rules at all times.

Bullying (GUSD BP 5131.2). Bullying is any severe or pervasive physical, verbal, written, visual, or electronic act (including cyberbullying) that causes or is likely to cause physical or emotional harm, creates a hostile educational environment, substantially interferes with a student's education, or disrupts school operations. Bullying includes harassment, intimidation, threats, retaliation, and certain off-campus or online behavior that impacts the school environment. Reports are investigated promptly, and disciplinary action may result in accordance with Glendale Unified School District Board Policy 5131.2 and California Education

Fighting. Physical attacks or verbal threats are unacceptable; students are expected to resolve conflicts peacefully, and rough play (pushing, wrestling, "pretend fighting") is not allowed. Fighting on school grounds is dealt with seriously, including possible suspension.

School Safety/Weapons at School. Students may be suspended or expelled for possessing, selling, or furnishing any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object, including toys or replicas resembling weapons. Laser pointers are also prohibited; possession may be grounds for expulsion. Law enforcement must be contacted whenever there is a weapon threat.

Sexual Harassment. The Board of Education prohibits sexual harassment of any student by another student, employee, or other person. Students in grades 4–12 who engage in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action up to expulsion.

Threats to Self and/or Others (GUSD BP 5144.1; BP 5145.9; BP 5141.52). The safety and well-being of all students and staff is our highest priority. Any statement, behavior, written communication, drawing, social media post, or electronic communication that suggests

a threat of harm to oneself or others will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The school will assess the situation, notify parents/guardians as appropriate, and may involve district personnel and/or law enforcement when necessary. Students may be subject to disciplinary action, a threat assessment, mental health intervention, or other safety measures in accordance with Glendale Unified School District policies and California law. Every reported threat is investigated to determine the appropriate response and to ensure the safety of our school community. All threats are taken seriously. Statements made "as a joke," "just kidding," or without intent to act will still be investigated and addressed in accordance with district procedures.

PBIS. Mountain Avenue participates in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Statement of Purpose: "We are a school community that champions diversity and creativity within a kind, safe, responsible and respectful environment." All students (B.E.A.R.S.) are expected to Be kind, be Encouraging, Accept responsibility, Respect others, and be Safe (Stay Safe). Students following these expectations may receive a yellow B.E.A.R.S. ticket (BEAR Buck) from any faculty member; students write their name and room number on the back and can redeem tickets at the Student Store on certain Fridays during recess, facilitated by Student Council. Expected behavior for each campus area is detailed in the Behavior Expectations Matrix below.

Mountain Avenue Student Behavior Expectations Matrix

The matrix outlines expected behavior for each B.E.A.R.S. value (Be kind, Encouraging, Accept responsibility, Respect others and be Safe) across each area of campus - Learning Areas, Restrooms, Office, Cafeteria and Lunch Benches, Playgrounds, Patio, Ramps/Stairwells/Hallways, and Auditorium. Highlights include:

Mountain Avenue Student Behavior Expectations Matrix

	Learning Areas	Restrooms	Office	Cafe/ Benches	Playgrounds	Patio	Ramp, Stairwells / Hallways	Auditorium
B Be Kind	• Share class materials. • Help others. • Listen to one another. • Use kind words.	•Wait your turn patiently and quietly.	•Face the person you are talking to. •Say, "Please," "Thank you," "Good morning." •Use inside voice.	•Say, "Please," and "Thank you," to Ms. Margrit, custodian, and noon aides.	• Use polite words. •Join students on the Buddy Bench. •Include everyone. •Apologize if you do something accidentally.	•Make space for others to sit and see clearly during flag ceremonies.	•Help others who drop belongings. •Say, "Excuse me," if you bump into someone.	•Show appreciation to all presenters. • Share floor space.
E Encouraging	•Be supportive of all student efforts and answers. •Offer praise and compliments.	•Remind others to use the restroom properly.	•Remind others to be patient while waiting to enter campus.	•Encourage others to pick up trash in your area. •Be a role model for others.	• Say, "Great try", "Way to go." •Be a problem solver. •Be a positive role model for younger students.	•Use appropriate applause. •Be supportive of presenters.	•Remind others to stay to the right.	•Use appropriate applause.
A Accept Responsibility	• Return materials to their place. •Accept consequences graciously.	•Clean up after yourself. •Use supplies sparingly. •Report problems to an adult.	•Respond to adults when spoken to.	•Clean up your trash. •Check your area for cleanliness. •Wait to be dismissed before getting up.	•Follow school rules for games. •Freeze at 1st bell. •WALK to line after the whistle blows. •Return equipment.	•Throw away any trash you see. •Put games away neatly.	•Be polite, stay to the right.	•Listen attentively and follow guidelines/rules properly.
R Respect others	• Use an inside voice. •Keep hands to yourself. •Listen when others speak •Use school property.	•Respect privacy of others. •Return to class promptly. •Use indoor voice.	•Be patient and wait to be helped. •Keep voices to a whisper. •Address adults properly with their title (Mr., Mrs...).	•Be patient in line. •Use a talking voice. •Follow all instructions from adults.	•Use equipment appropriately. •Be respectful and polite to all adults on supervision. •Respect the play space of others.	•Speak with a quiet voice.	•Remain silent during class times. • Carry rolling backpacks up/ down the stairs. •Keep your backpack close to your body.	•Remain silent during assemblies, unless asked to participate. •Keep hands/feet to yourself when seated.
S and be Safe	•Follow all staff directions the first time. •Keep all 4 chair legs on the floor. •Only walking is allowed.	•Wash your hands. •Notify an adult if the restroom needs something fixed/cleaned up. •Walk carefully. •Horseplay is not permitted.	•Keep doorways and areas inside yellow half circles clear. •Always use the main office side door, unless you need to visit the Health Office.	•Always walk. •Use utensils appropriately. • Max. of 6 upper grade students per bench. •Sit down and stay seated until dismissed.	•Tell an adult when you see someone making an unsafe choice. •Walk on playground mats. •Chasing is not permitted.	•Always walk. •Keep off of brick planters. •Benches are for sitting only.	•Hold on to the rail on stairs. •Use one step at a time. •Keep all belongings on hooks/against building for a clear walkway.	•Enter/exit carefully and quietly.

Behavior Expectations and Consequences:

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful, responsible, and safe behavior at all times. When behavioral concerns arise, staff work with students to address and correct the behavior while maintaining a positive learning environment.

The school utilizes progressive discipline practices when appropriate, taking into consideration the student's age, the nature and severity of the behavior, prior incidents, and individual circumstances.

Consequences may include verbal reminders, loss of privileges, restorative conversations, parent communication, detention, ATS (Alternate to Suspension - Saturday School), behavior contracts, administrative conferences, suspension, or other appropriate interventions.

Behavior occurring in the classroom or on campus may result in disciplinary action. Serious offenses may warrant immediate administrative involvement and consequences without prior warnings. Our goal is to help students learn from their mistakes, make positive choices, and contribute to a safe and supportive school community.

Suspension may result from violations of school rules and California Education Code Section 48900, including: severe disruption of school activities; continual disruption or willful defiance of school personnel's authority; causing, threatening, or attempting physical injury to another; possession of a weapon or dangerous object; theft or willful damage of school or private property; committing an obscene act (verbal or written, including profanity); or engaging in sexual harassment.

The Mountain Avenue School Discipline Policy was developed with teachers, parents, and other school staff, and is enforced by all school personnel.

School Site Council (SSC). State law requires each school to form a School Site Council - an advisory committee of parents, teachers, staff, and the principal responsible for developing the school plan. The SSC reviews and updates the plan and budget annually and makes recommendations on categorical fund expenditures (it is not a fundraising body). SSC meets at least four times a year, elects a chairperson and secretary annually, and reserves one parent seat for a representative of the English language learner population. Meetings are open to all parents.

Supplemental Programs. Please contact your child's teacher for more information on any of the programs below.

- **Student Success Team (SST):** The school's vehicle for initially addressing the needs of any student exhibiting difficulties with learning and/or behavior.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** An individualized program for students with special needs, designed to develop and meet appropriate educational goals.
- **Specialized Academic Instruction – Core (SAI-CORE):** Provides specialized assistance to students with exceptional needs; the SAI-CORE teacher coordinates services with the regular classroom program.
- **Gifted and Talented Education (GATE):** Provides differentiated instruction or alternative learning opportunities for identified gifted students.
- **English Language Development (ELD):** Develops fluency in English for limited-English-proficient students while promoting cross-cultural understanding and equal opportunity for academic achievement.
- **Independent Study Process:** For students who will be absent one or more consecutive days; a contract between student, teacher, and parent assigns comparable work for the absence.

period. Arrange with the teacher at least two weeks before a planned trip.

- **Intervention in Reading and Math:** Intensive support for students not yet proficient, based on state and classroom assessments, for those at risk of being far below grade-level standards.

Uniform Complaint Procedures. A Uniform Complaint Procedure (UCP) complaint is a written, signed statement by an individual, public agency, or organization alleging a violation of federal or state law governing certain educational programs. The UCP covers alleged violations by local educational agencies (school districts, county offices of education) and local agencies receiving state funding for school programs or services, including charter schools that receive federal funds.

- **Programs and services covered by the UCP** include: Adult Education; After School Education and Safety; Agricultural Vocational Education; American Indian Education Centers and Childhood Education Program Assessments; Career Technical Education; Child Care and Development; Child Nutrition; discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, student lactation accommodations, and LGBTQ resources; Foster and Homeless Students; Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP); No Child Left Behind/ESSA programs (Title I–VII), including academic achievement, compensatory education, English learner programs, and migrant education; Physical Education instructional minutes; pupil instruction course requirements; Regional Occupational Centers and Programs; Special Education; Tobacco-Use Prevention Education; and unlawful pupil fees.
- **Issues not covered by the UCP** are generally the District's responsibility, including classroom assignments, grades, graduation requirements, staff hiring/evaluation, homework policy, core curricula, public meeting laws (e.g., the Brown Act), student advancement/retention, discipline, and student

records — though the District may use its own local procedures for these. Certain complaints are instead referred elsewhere: child abuse allegations go to County Departments of Social Services or law enforcement; health/safety complaints about a Child Development Program go to the Department of Social Services or the appropriate regional licensing administrator; employment complaints go to the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing; and fraud allegations go to the relevant Division Director at the California Department of Education (CDE).

- **Filing and processing a complaint:** The District's UCP policies and procedures, provided free of charge, explain how to file. The District notifies students, employees, parents/guardians, advisory committees, private school officials, and other interested parties of these procedures annually, including the right to appeal to the CDE.
- *Complainant responsibilities:* Review the District's UCP procedures; file a written complaint following those steps; cooperate with the investigation; if dissatisfied, file a written appeal to the CDE within 15 calendar days of the District's decision, specifying the basis for appeal (incorrect facts and/or misapplied law) and including copies of the original complaint and the District's decision; and, if applicable, request reconsideration from the CDE's Superintendent of Public Schools within 35 calendar days of the CDE's decision.
- *District responsibilities:* Ensure compliance with applicable law; adopt UCP policies consistent with California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4600–4687; have the Superintendent or designee investigate and resolve complaints; give the complainant a chance to present evidence; protect complainants from retaliation; resolve complaints and issue a written report within 60 calendar days (unless extended by written agreement); and advise complainants of the right to appeal to the CDE within 15 calendar days.
- *CDE responsibilities:* Process appeals of District decisions or, in specified situations, intervene directly; review and provide

technical assistance on District UCP policies; refer complaints to the District when appropriate; consider alternatives when the District fails to act within 60 days, when a District decision is appealed, or when direct intervention is requested; require corrective action for noncompliance; monitor resolution; and, where applicable, notify parties of the right to request reconsideration (within 35 days) or to appeal to the U.S. Secretary of Education for federally governed programs.

Williams Complaints. Concern instructional materials, urgent facility conditions posing a health/safety threat, or teacher vacancy/misassignment, and may be filed anonymously; a complaint form must be available but is not required. Notices must be posted in every classroom explaining how to file. A Williams complaint is resolved by the school principal, Superintendent, or designee; a dissatisfied complainant may address the local governing board at a regular meeting, but generally has no right to appeal to the CDE — except for complaints about an emergency or urgent facility condition, which may be appealed to the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the CDE within 15 calendar days of the District's decision.

Volunteer Policy

All volunteer guidelines for the school district have changed. Even if you were previously cleared to volunteer, you must go through the new process. Please find all of the details and steps here at gusd.net/volunteer. All Tier 2 clearance (we rarely have anyone who would be a Tier 1 volunteer) is done through the school district office and may take several weeks to complete, so please get started now if you plan to help on campus, be a field trip chaperone, support a class event, etc. Mountain Avenue **cannot** clear volunteers, there are no exceptions under the new policy. Once you receive the email from GUSD that you are cleared, please forward it to our administrative secretary, Shoghag Tomassian, at stomassian@gusd.net so the school has a record.

This handbook has been reorganized alphabetically by topic for ease of reference. Section headers and this year's calendars have been removed from this version; please contact the school office for current calendar dates.