

December 1, 2022

To: **Asheville City Schools Board of Education Members**

From: **Jim Causby, Interim Superintendent**

Re: **Request for use of Asheville Primary School as Winter Safe Shelter Site**

We have received a request from Counterflow Asheville that they be allowed to use space at Asheville Primary School for the purpose of a Winter Safe Shelter site during the months of December 2022 and January 2023. Winter Safe Shelter is a collaborative effort of Trinity United Methodist Church, Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Grace Episcopal Church, and Counterflow Asheville LLC with support from WNC Healing Collaborative.

This group is composed of faith leaders who have come together to offer a unique shelter option for **intact families, and LGBTQ+ and BIPOC**. Most shelters operate as men/women's dormitories, meaning if a husband, wife and child seek shelter they have to separate in order to receive shelter. This is also typically the case for a mother and son if her son is over 13 years of age. This initiative will allow families to shelter together and give space to those who have had challenges in larger shelters. They aim to shelter around 50 people, serving 10 at a time. Much of their motivation comes from the past success of the **Room of the Inn** program and Trinity United Methodist Church's (UMC) experience during the previous winter season.

Guests will enter the shelter by **referral only**. This group will work with other shelters and service agencies to accept referrals. Each church will offer **10 bed spaces**, one church each month, for families and especially vulnerable populations nightly from **January 1st until March 31, 2023**. Each church will have allotted space for those utilizing the shelter to sleep on a mattress every night and store their belongings during the day. They chose 10 bed spaces, realizing the need for stability and drawing upon their experiences with Trinity United Methodist's Winter Shelter, Jubilee's Micro Shelter, and Room in the Inn. The hope is to connect the shelter guests to more permanent housing through linking them to peer support staff, volunteers and other resources.

The three churches are set to host for 3 months: Jan 1 -March 31, 2023. They are requesting the Asheville City School Board to allow use of a portion of the former Asheville Primary School building for the shelter, so it could open in mid-December.

To gather information for your consideration of this request we asked Counterflow Asheville to respond to specific questions about their proposal. Those questions and answers are listed below.

Questions Answered for MOU

1. Please provide an executive summary of how you intend to use the facility including the number of beds, maximum occupancy, provision of food and water, etc.

Winter Safe Shelter is a collaborative effort from faith leaders from Trinity United Methodist Church, Grace Covenant Presbyterian, and Grace Episcopal, along with support from Counterflow Asheville and other local churches. We have come together to offer a unique shelter option for unhoused intact families, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC who don't fit well into a traditional male/female dormitory space. Guests can access the shelter by referral only. We will work in coordination with other shelters and service providers to receive referrals. If the Asheville City School Board approves, we would like to use 4 rooms in 1 wing of the former Asheville Primary School (APS) building on the second floor, with access to hall, hall bathrooms, upstairs kitchen and courtyard. One room will be a common space for all and the other rooms will be used for sleeping on mattresses and storing belongings. Access to other areas of the building will not be necessary or permitted. We will offer 10 beds and shelter for up to 10 guests. Maximum occupancy would be 20 people, including program leaders, paid staff, volunteers and guests. We plan on providing snacks and sandwiches to guests in the evening and coffee and granola bars in the morning. Drinking water will be provided at all times if the APS water is not potable.

2. Time frame for use:
 - a. Desired start and end date? **December 16th - 1 Jan 2023 at minimum. Or mid Dec - 31 March, 2023 if possible.**
 - b. Days during the week? **Open seven nights a week.**
 - c. Hours of operation during the day? **Open daily from 6:30pm - 8:30am.**
 - d. Will child care be provided for times when the parents may be off-site or must parents remain with minors at all times? **Parents/guardians must assume responsibility for their minors at all times while at the Winter Safe Shelter.**
3. Area to be used:
 - a. Number of classrooms? **4 rooms all on the same wing.**
 - b. Other areas needed? **Access to hall, hall bathrooms, upstairs kitchen and courtyard.**
4. Facility care:
 - a. Who will clean up / remove trash? **Guests, staff and volunteers will work together to clean up the space and remove trash daily.**
 - b. Are there funds to pay an ACS custodian? **Yes, this is a possibility but we don't think it will be necessary.**
5. Supervision and security:

- a. How many individuals will remain on site at all times? **We will have up to 10 guests and have between 2 - 10 staff/volunteers present at all times.**
 - b. Can guests have visitors? **No guest visitors are permitted, however we can make arrangements to accommodate a parent/guardian staying at the shelter who has shared custody of their child.**
6. Legal liability:
- a. Will the entity signing the MOU have \$1 million in liability insurance as is usually required by ACS? **Yes.**
 - b. Any issue with agreeing to indemnify, defend and hold ACS harmless as is usually required by ACS? **None.**
7. Here are the policy “rules for use” normally applicable. Any issues complying with any of these? **No.**

Rules for Facilities Use – Organization Level Concerns

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- a. Users must comply with all federal, state and local laws and rules established by the Board, the Superintendent or designee, and the principal.
- b. Users must comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (particularly Subchapter III pertaining to Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities) and the federal regulations that have been adopted for the implementation of the ADA.
- c. Users must not make any modifications, improvements, or alterations to school facilities without the prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee.
- d. Users must not display or distribute materials that are vulgar, indecent, or obscene language while on school grounds.
- e. Users are responsible for supervising their activity and the people present.
- f. Users are responsible for maintaining order and safety.
- g. Upon departure, users must remove any materials or equipment they brought onto school grounds.
- h. Use is restricted to space designated in the agreement.
- i. Damages to the facility beyond normal wear will be paid for by the user.
- j. User will be responsible for payment of rental fees for additional time/equipment.
- k. User will be responsible for strict supervision and security at all times.

Rules for Facilities Use – Individuals

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- l. Users must comply with all federal, state and local laws and all rules established by the Board, the Superintendent or designee, and the principal.

- m. Users must comply with Board policy and legal requirements forbidding the use of tobacco products in school facilities and on school grounds.
- n. Users must not consume or possess alcohol or drugs on school grounds.
- o. Users must not possess weapons or explosives while on school grounds.