

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD CAPITAL GUARDIAN YOUTH CHALLENGE ACADEMY



PARENT HANDBOOK

“EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE”



District of Columbia National Guard Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy! The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information and to familiarize you with the rules, policies, and procedures of the Academy. Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy has dedicated its most experienced and qualified members to provide extensive support to your son or daughter and families for over Twelve years. Your son or daughter will be well cared for through the extended efforts of the “CGYCA Team” which is composed of experienced Cadre, Staff, Counselors, and Teachers. We will do everything in our power to elevate your son’s or daughter’s academic level, improve self-esteem, and continue your efforts in teaching them the basic skills essential for a productive life. The Academy has been in existence for over 12 years and successfully graduated over 650 Cadets.

Please take the time to read the Parent Handbook and feel free to contact the Academy if you have any questions regarding the Cadet tenure. I fully recognize that family members are all important participants and the more you understand how the Academy works and what to expect, the better your son’s or daughter’s chances will be for success.

Thank you for entrusting your son or daughter to Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy for the next several months during this period of challenge and change.

Raynald A. Blackwell

Program Director

Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy

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CGYCA MISSION AND VISION

MISSION STATEMENT: To intervene in and reclaim the lives of at-risk, disengaged, high school students, and produce program graduates with the values, skills, education, and self-discipline necessary to succeed as adults.

VISION STATEMENT: To be recognized as a premier voluntary program for 16-18 year old at-risk, high school students, serving the District of Columbia youth and families.

SECTION I FINANCIAL AND GENERAL GUIDANCE

1. **FUNDS:** Parents are NOT required to pay any tuition or other costs associated with the ChalleNGe operations. The program is FREE to those who are accepted.
2. **RECREATION/WEEKEND ACTIVITIES:** Most weekends include group activities and field trips. The staff plans and conducts these activities based on availability of transportation, equipment and funds. Such activity may include: military type training (rope, confidence, obstacle courses, rappelling), bowling, amusement park visits, swimming, roller skating, field trips, sporting events, etc. Privileges can be withheld due to poor cadet performance.
3. **HOMESICKNESS:** This may be a problem for some cadets. Parents/guardians should be positive prior to the class start date and upon arrival for In-processing. Good-byes should be as brief as possible, yet provide cadets with the knowledge that their families care about them. Parents/guardians should write friendly encouraging letters at least every week. **We also ask that you write a letter while you are waiting for your son/daughter to complete In-processing.**
4. **VOLUNTARY DISENROLLMENT:**
 - a. Cadets will be counseled by their chain of supervision before being allowed to make a dis-enrollment decision. Parents/guardians will be contacted prior to dis-enrolling a cadet.
 - b. Cadets waiting to be out-processed will be separated from the other cadets.

SECTION II HEALTHCARE

1. We have a Medical Staff on site at Capital Guardian Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. to treat minor illnesses and injuries. Medical problems that require additional attention or occur after normal duty hours are referred to the local contract medical clinic with more serious problems being referred to a local hospital. Emergency services are provided by the Rescue Squad.
2. While treatment provided by our Medical Staff is at no cost to you, Capital Guardian

will not pay for other health care services to include charges for doctor or hospital visits, clinical testing, or medication. Parents or guardians must provide their own health care insurance or guarantee payments. They are also responsible for co-payment costs or expenses not covered by their health insurance.

3. We encourage parental involvement when a medical problem arises. You will be informed of your cadet's medical condition after a visit with our Medical Staff, **if warranted**. Please be aware that **Cadet absences for any appointments are strictly controlled and must be coordinated and approved by Medical at ChalleNGe**. If you must take your child to your regular physician, at that time, you must make the appointment and provide the transportation. For medical situations that arise where your child needs to be taken for immediate medical attention, our Medical Staff or cadre will notify you and tell you where the child is being taken for medical attention. For other medical appointments, notify the Medical Staff at least one day prior to picking up your child. Elective treatment and non-emergency dental care are not recognized by Challenge as necessary to remove your Cadet from daily participation. You may contact our Medical Staff 202-730-1601 or Commandant of Cadets 202-997-3824 with questions and concerns.
4. All prescription medications must be provided by parents or guardians. Cadets must turn in all prescription and over-the-counter medicine to the Medical Staff during In-processing at Capital Guardian. Only the Medical Staff or a trained cadre member are allowed to dispense medications to cadets. If a prescription is ordered as the result of treatment at our contract clinic or a local hospital, our Medical Staff can coordinate pick-up at a local Pharmacy. Payment may be accomplished by credit card to the local Pharmacy. Contact our Medical Staff for further details.
5. **IMMUNIZATIONS:** Parents must provide their cadet's immunization records. These forms must be submitted prior to or during In-processing at Capital Guardian. A current immunization for tetanus/diphtheria and TB skin test is required. Cadets will **not be enrolled without** these records.
6. **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:** Each cadet is required to present a copy of his/her Social Security Card or Resident Number for proper enrollment.

SECTION III VISITATION / LEAVE

2. **VISITATION:** General visitation is not normally allowed. Special family day/open house weekend activities will be scheduled and parents/guardians notified well in advance. Family members are encouraged to arrange their visits to coincide with our Family Day/Open House. **Special passes** (such as reunions, birthday parties, weddings, family member in town, births, etc. **will not be authorized for cadets.**

3. **CADET PASSES: Due to the COVID 19 no home passes will be authorized until further notice.** During each class one weekend usually in conjunction with some state holiday will be designated as a potential pass weekend. On this pass cadets must be picked up only by the parent or guardian. Contact the Capital Guardian Commandant if you have question(s) about passes. **Parents/guardians will be told of the pick-up and return time.** All cadets must be signed out prior to their departure and signed in upon returning to Challenge. **CADETS CANNOT DEPART PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED PICK-UP TIME.**

SECTION IV COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

The Counseling Department is responsible for assisting the Cadets with adapting to a new residential and academic environment. The counselors provide personal counseling to Cadets with processing personal issues to meet goals, which includes retention counseling and administration. The counselors conduct extensive evaluations of Cadet's progress and adjustment toward family, work and environment in order to determine potential areas to provide guidance services. General guidance is the only type of counseling available. The Academy is not a therapeutic setting that provides therapy or psychological counseling. The Counselors and Case Managers provide training and instruction in life coping and job skills during the twenty-two weeks.

Mental Health-Psychological/Psychiatric Appointments

All mental health appointments outside of CGYCA will be coordinated with the Counseling Department staff for approval by the Program Director. If it becomes apparent that there is a therapeutic need, then the parents/guardians will be notified with further instructions.

SECTION V CONDUCT AND OPERATION

1. **CONDUCT:** Capital Guardian is a school with a distinctly military look and feel. As such, it uses a fairly strict code of conduct to enforce policy and discipline. Violations of this code will result in punitive action however; ChalleNGe observes a hands-off policy, and corporal punishment (striking, paddling, slapping, etc.) will not be used. Serious incidents of cadet misconduct may result in dismissal from the program. Serious offenses include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Use/possession of drugs/alcohol
 - b. Use/possession of weapons or explosives
 - c. Presence of a cadet in the room/barracks of opposite sex
 - d. Any sexual activity between cadets
 - e. Deliberate destruction, abuse, or misuse of program property or the property of others
 - f. Acts or threats of aggressive/violent behavior or abusive language to cadets or staff
 - g. Creating unsafe environment (escalating negative behavior, starting a fire within or around any building etc.)
 - h. Unauthorized visit to a home, hotel, motel or other non-public place

2. **PARENTAL QUESTIONS:** The Capital Guardian Commandant is responsible for all aspects of cadre operations which impact cadet life. Parents should direct questions regarding their cadets to the Capital Guardian Program Commandant. If the ChalleNGe Commandant is unable to answer a question, he/she will ensure another

staff or cadre member will provide a timely response to parents/guardians. The ChalleNGe Commandant can be reached at 202-734-0490.

3. **HOURS OF OPERATIONS:** Normal administrative duty hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Cadre coverage will be scheduled around the clock, seven days per week. After normal duty hours you may call the Team Leader at (202-730-1602).

4. MAILING ADDRESS: Mail for cadets should be addressed as follows:

Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy
Cadet _____ Plt. _____
3201 Oak Hill Drive
Laurel, Maryland 20724

SECTION VI CURRICULUM

1. The Academy is based on Eight Core Components, which comprise the curriculum. Cadets must successfully meet the Academy standards on **ALL** eight of the components to receive a completion certificate. The Eight Core Components are as follows:
 - a. Academic Excellence
 - b. Physical Fitness
 - c. Citizenship
 - d. Health and Hygiene
 - e. Job Skills
 - f. Leadership/Followership
 - g. Service to Community
 - h. Life Coping Skills

SECTION VII MISCELLANEOUS

1. **TELEPHONE CALLS:** Upon completion of acclimation, cadets will be restricted to two 5-minute telephone calls per week.
 - a. In the case of a family emergency, parents/guardians or family members should call the Capital Guardian Counselor 202-730-1545 or if unavailable a representative of the Cadre department 202-730-1602. Please contact the ChalleNGe Counselor before notifying your cadet. We consider it important that a staff member be present when a cadet is informed of sad or unexpected bad news.
2. **PERSONAL ITEMS:** Electrical appliances, stereos, , MP3 Players, iPods, radios, CD players, video games, cellular phones, playing cards, food, posters, knives, guns, expensive jewelry, etc., are prohibited. Capital Guardian staff members will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. Cadets will be held responsible for any lost items of clothing or equipment issued to them by the Capital Guardian Academy.
3. **AUTOMOBILES:** Cadets are not authorized to have a private vehicle at Capital Guardian.
4. **HAIR:** Cadets hair (male and female) will be neat and trim and conform to the ChalleNGe standards. Radical styles/color is prohibited. Facial hair, mustaches, beards, goatees, etc. are also prohibited.
5. **JEWELRY:** Cadets may wear a black digital watch. No other jewelry is authorized.
6. **TOBACCO:** Capital Guardian has a no tobacco use or possession policy for cadets.
7. **RELIGIOUS SERVICES:** Non-denominational religious services will usually be held each week, on Sunday. Attendance is voluntary.
8. **MENTORS:** All applicants to the Capital Guardian Academy are required to have a screened and trained mentor to enter the program. The mentor commits to support the

Cadet for the 22 weeks of the residential phase and for the 12 months of the post residential phase. Mentors are the integral link between the cadet and the ChalleNGe staff and mentors are the prime source of information regarding cadet progress during the 12 month post residential period. The mentor is also a resource for the graduate and provides advice and counsel regarding school, job, or other areas that help cadets reach their post-residential goals. Therefore, we ask parents to work closely with the cadet, mentor, and post-residential staff in developing a "Post Residential Action Plan" to assist cadets in reaching their goals.

9. **STAFF ASSISTANCE:** All ChalleNGe staff will assist you and answer questions you may have about the ChalleNGe Academy. Do not hesitate to call or ask.

SECTION VIII POINTS OF CONTACT

Commandant	202-734-0490
Deputy Commandant	202- 730-1602
Lead Educator	202-730-1625
Lead Counselor	202-730-1545
Main Number	202-730-1533
Cadre Dept./ After Hours Cell Number	202-730-1602
Fax Number	202-730-1532

ChalleNGe Web Site: www.cgyca.org

To send a general message to your Cadet via email: cadetmail@cgyca.org

****Normal administrative duty hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.**