



## **Education For Homeless Children Board Policy**

Board Approved: 1/28/2020

The Board of Trustees desires to ensure that homeless learners have access to the same free and appropriate public education provided to other learners. The school shall provide homeless learners with access to education and other services necessary for these learners to meet the same challenging academic standards as other learners.

Homeless learners shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way.

The School Director or designee shall ensure that placement decisions for homeless learners are based on the learner's best interest as defined in law.

### **Transportation**

The school shall provide transportation for a homeless learner to and from his/her school of origin and the parent/guardian requests that such transportation be provided. If the learner continues to attend his/her school of origin within another district or school, the School Director or designee shall consult with the District Superintendent of the district or the school leader in which the learner is now residing to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

### **Definitions**

Homeless means learners who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement

Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings

Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in conditions described in (1)-(3) above

School of origin means the school that the learner attended when permanently housed or the school in which the learner was last enrolled.

Best interest means, to the extent feasible, continuing a learner's enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of his/her homelessness, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of his/her parent/guardian.

Unaccompanied youth means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

School Liaison:

School Director  
3720 Sierra Highway, Suite A  
Acton, CA 93510  
800-925-1502

The school's liaison for homeless learners shall ensure that:

Homeless learners are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies

Homeless learners enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school

Homeless families and learners receive educational services for which they are eligible

Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children

Notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters, and soup kitchens

Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law and Board Policy

Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services

## Enrollment

Placement decisions for homeless learners shall be based on the learner's best interest. In determining a learner's best interest, a homeless learner shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her school of origin, unless his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise.

When making a placement decision, the School Director or designee may consider the age of the learner, the distance of the commute and the impact it may have on the learner's education, personal safety issues, the learner's need for special instruction, the length of anticipated stay in the temporary shelter or other temporary location, likely area of future housing, school placement of siblings, and the time remaining in the school year.

The learner may continue attending his/her school of origin for the duration of the homelessness and until the end of any academic year in which he/she moves into permanent housing.

In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the school's homeless liaison shall assist in placement or enrollment decisions, consider the views of the learner, and provide notice to the learner of his/her appeal rights.

If the learner is placed at a school other than his/her school of origin or the school requested by his/her parent/guardian, the School Director or designee shall provide the parent/guardian with a written explanation of the decision along with a statement regarding the parent/guardian's right to appeal the placement decision.

Once a placement decision has been made, the School Director or designee shall immediately enroll the learner in the school of choice, even if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment.

The School Director or designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the learner to obtain the relevant records. If the learner needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the School Director or designee shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the learner.

## Enrollment Dispute Resolution Process

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a particular school, the learner shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute.

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the placement decision, including an explanation of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision. He/she shall also be referred to the school liaison.

The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated and provided in language that the parent/guardian or learner can understand. The explanation may include contact information for the school liaison, a description of the school's decision, notice of the right to enroll in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute, notice that enrollment includes full participation in all school activities, and notice of the right to appeal the decision to the County Office of Education and, if the dispute remains unresolved, to the California Department of Education.

The school liaison shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

The liaison shall provide the parent/guardian a copy of the school's decision, dispute form, and a copy of the outcome of the dispute.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the liaison's enrollment decision, he/she may appeal the decision to the School Director or Board of Trustees. The Board shall make a determination within five working days.

If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the school's placement decision, the school liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the county office of education.

## SCHOOL EXPLANATION OF ENROLLMENT DECISION

Instructions: The following form is to be used when the school has denied a parent/guardian's enrollment request.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with federal law, this notification is being provided to:

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of learner(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school requested: \_\_\_\_\_

School's placement decision (name of school): \_\_\_\_\_

After reviewing your request to enroll your child in the school listed above, your enrollment request has been denied. This determination was based upon:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

You have the right to appeal this decision to the school liaison or Board of Trustees. If you are not satisfied with the Board of Trustees' decision, you may appeal to the Los Angeles County Office of Education. If you are not satisfied with the county office's decision, you may then appeal to the California Department of Education. The school's homeless liaison can assist you with this appeal.

You also have the following rights:

\* Pending resolution of this dispute, your child has the right to immediately enroll in the school you requested and to participate in school activities at that school.

\* You may provide written or verbal documentation to support your position. You may use the school's dispute resolution form. A copy of the dispute resolution form can be obtained from the school's liaison for homeless learners.

\* You may seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys to help you with this appeal.

## ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM

Instructions: This form is to be completed by a parent/guardian or learner when a dispute regarding enrollment has arisen. As an alternative to completing this form, the information on this form may be shared verbally with the school's liaison for homeless learners.

Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Learner's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to learner: \_\_\_\_\_

I may be contacted at the following:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school requested: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by:

School liaison     Board of Trustees     County liaison

Reason for the appeal: You may include an explanation to support your appeal in this space or provide your explanation verbally.

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I have been provided with:

- A written explanation of the school's decision
- Contact information for the school's homeless liaison
- Contact information for the county office of education's homeless liaison