



Education For Homeless Children

Board Approved: September 7, 2023

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

Homeless students 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 students are based on their best interest as defined in law.

Definitions

Homeless students means students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes: (Education Code 48859; 42 USC 11434a)

1. Students 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; or are abandoned in hospitals
2. Students 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
3. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in conditions described in items #1-3 above

Unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. (Education Code 48859; 42 USC 11434a)

School of origin means the school that the homeless student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. If the school the homeless student attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which the student was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the student attended within the preceding 15 months and with which the student is connected, the school liaison for homeless students shall determine, in consultation with and with the agreement of the homeless



student and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and in the best interests of the homeless student, which school shall be deemed the school of origin. (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

Best interest means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a homeless student, consideration is given to, among other factors, educational stability, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress, and the student's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students. (Education Code 48850, 48853; 42 USC 11432)

School Liaison

The school director or designee will carry out the duties of the school liaison for homeless students: (42 USC11432)

School Director

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

The school liaison for homeless students shall: (Education Code 48851.5, 48852.5; 42 USC 11432)

1. Ensure that homeless students are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies
2. Ensure that homeless students are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
3. Ensure that homeless families and children and youth have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start and Early Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the school
4. Ensure that homeless families and students receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services
5. Inform parents/guardians of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and ensure that they are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children



6. Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youth and by unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and hunger relief agencies (soup kitchens). The rights shall be presented in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless students and unaccompanied youth.
7. Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with law and the section "Resolving Enrollment Disputes" below
8. Fully inform parents/guardians of homeless students and unaccompanied youth of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and assist them in accessing transportation to the school of choice
9. Ensure that school personnel providing services to homeless students, including principals and other school leaders, attendance supervisors, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel, receive professional development and other support
10. Ensure that unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students under 20 USC 1087vv and that they may receive assistance from the school liaison to receive verification of their independent student status for purposes of applying for federal student aid pursuant to 20 USC 1090
11. Coordinate and collaborate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless students, including the collection and provision of comprehensive data to the state coordinator as required by law

In addition, when notified pursuant to Education Code 48918.1 , the school homeless liaison shall assist, facilitate, or represent a homeless student who is undergoing a disciplinary proceeding that could result in the student's expulsion. When notified pursuant to Education Code 48915.5 , the school liaison shall participate in an individualized education program (IEP) team meeting to make a manifestation determination regarding the behavior of a student with a disability.

The school director or designee shall inform homeless children and youth, their parents/guardians, school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the school liaison. The school director or designee shall also provide the name and contact information of the district's liaison to the California Department of Education (CDE) for publishing on CDE's web site. (42 USC 11432)



Enrollment

The school shall make placement decisions for homeless students based on the student's best interest. (42 USC 11432)

In determining the best interest of the student, the school shall consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety, giving priority to the request of the student's parent/guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth. (42 USC 11432)

Such factors may include, but are not limited to, the age of the student, the distance of the commute and the impact it may have on the student's education, personal safety issues, the student'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.

However, placement decisions shall not be based on whether a homeless student lives with the student's homeless parent/guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere. (42 USC 11432)

In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the school homeless liaison shall assist in placement or enrollment decisions, give priority to the views of the student, and provide notice to the student of the right to appeal. (42 USC 11432)

In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in the school of origin, unless the student's parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth requests otherwise. (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

Once a placement decision has been made, the site director or designee shall immediately enroll the student in the school of choice. The student shall be enrolled even if the student: (Education Code 48850, 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

1. Has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended
2. Does not have clothing normally required by the school, such as school uniforms
3. Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, and records of immunization and other required health records
4. Has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other required health records, the site director or designee shall immediately refer the



parent/guardian to the school liaison for homeless students. The school liaison shall assist the parent/guardian, or the student if the student is an unaccompanied youth, in obtaining the necessary immunizations, screenings, or records for the student. (42 USC 11432)

If the student is placed at a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the student's parent/guardian or the student, if an unaccompanied youth, the school director or designee shall provide the parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for the decision, including why placement in the student's school of origin or requested school is not in the student's best interest, along with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision. The written explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to such parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth. (42 USC 11432)

At the point of any change or subsequent change in the residence of a homeless student, the student may continue attending the student's school of origin for the duration of the homelessness. (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

To ensure that the homeless student has the benefit of matriculating with the student's peers in accordance with the established feeder patterns, the following shall apply: (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

1. If the student is transitioning between grade levels, the student shall be allowed to continue in the same attendance area.
2. If the student is transitioning to a middle school or high school, and the school designated for matriculation is in another school district, the student shall be allowed to continue to the school designated for matriculation in that district.

If the student's status changes before the end of the school year so that the student is no longer homeless, the student shall be allowed to stay in the school of origin: (Education Code 48852.7)

1. Through the duration of the school year if the student is in grades K-8
2. Through graduation if the student is in high school

Resolving Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over student eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a particular school, the matter shall be referred to the school director or designee, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. (42 USC 11432)



The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to eligibility, school selection, or enrollment and of the right of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions. (42 USC 11432)

The written explanation shall include:

1. A description of the action proposed or refused by the district
2. An explanation of why the action is proposed or refused
3. A description of any other options the district considered and the reasons that any other options were rejected
4. A description of any other factors relevant to the district's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination including the facts, witnesses, and evidence relied upon and their sources
5. Appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are not missed
6. Contact information for the county liaison and state coordinator, and a brief description of those roles

The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in language that the parent/guardian or student can understand.

The school liaison may use an informal process as an alternative to formal dispute resolution procedures, provided that the parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth have access to the more formal process if informal resolution is not successful in resolving the matter.

In working with a student's parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth to resolve an enrollment dispute, the school liaison shall:

1. Inform them that they may provide written and/or oral documentation to support their position
2. Inform them that they may seek the assistance of social services,
3. Provide them a simple form that they may use and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute resolution process
4. Provide them a copy of the dispute form they submit for their records
5. Provide them the outcome of the dispute for their records



When a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth involved in the enrollment dispute is an English learner, Items #1-5 shall be provided either in the native language of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth or through an interpreter, and any additional support needed because of a disability of that parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be made available without a charge.

If a parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the school liaison's enrollment decision, the decision may be appealed to the School Board or designee. The School Board or designee shall make a determination within five working days.

If the parent/guardian chooses to appeal the school's placement decision, the School Board or designee shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the liaison for homeless students at the county office of education.

Pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought and shall be allowed to attend classes and participate fully in school activities. (42 USC 11432, 11434a)

Transfer of Coursework and Credits

When a homeless student transfers into a school, the school shall accept and issue full credit for any coursework that the student has satisfactorily completed while attending another public school, a juvenile court school, a charter school, a school in a country other than the United States, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school and shall not require the student to retake the course. (Education Code 51225.2)

If the homeless student did not complete the entire course, the student shall be issued partial credit for the coursework completed and shall be required to take the portion of the course that the student did not complete at the previous school. However, the school may require the student to retake the portion of the course completed if, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, the district finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. Whenever partial credit is issued to a homeless student in any particular course, the student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course. (Education Code 51225.2)

Partial credits shall be awarded on the basis of 0.5 credits for every seven class periods attended per subject. If the school is on a block schedule, each block schedule class period attended shall be equal to two regular class periods per subject. Partial credits and grades earned by a student shall be included on the student's official transcript within two business days of the district's notification of the student's transfer, as required under Education Code 49069.5.



In no event shall the school prevent a homeless student from taking or retaking a course to meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the California State University or the University of California. (Education Code 51225.2)

Applicability of Graduation Requirements

To obtain a high school diploma, a homeless student shall complete all courses required by Education Code 51225.3 and fulfill any additional graduation requirements established by the Governing Board.

However, when a homeless student who has completed the second year of high school transfers into the school from another school district, the student shall be exempted from all school-adopted coursework and other school-established graduation requirements, unless the school makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the fourth year of high school. Within 30 calendar days of the homeless student's transfer, the school director or designee shall notify the student, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and the school liaison for homeless students of the availability of the exemption and whether the student qualifies for it. If the school director or designee fails to provide this notification, the student shall be eligible for the exemption once notified, even if the notification occurs after the student is no longer homeless. Despite these exemptions, students who are granted them will still receive the same diploma as their peers without exemptions. (Education Code 51225.1)

To determine whether a homeless student is in the third or fourth year of high school, the school shall use either the number of credits the student has earned as of the date of the transfer or the length of the student's school enrollment, whichever qualifies the student for the exemption. (Education Code 51225.1)

The school director or designee shall notify any homeless student who is granted an exemption and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student how any requirements that are waived will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and shall provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges. (Education Code 51225.1)

The school shall not require or request a homeless student to transfer schools in order to qualify for an exemption and no request for a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption shall be made by a homeless student, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, or the district liaison on behalf of the student. (Education Code 51225.1)



If a homeless student is exempted from local graduation requirements, the exemption shall continue to apply after the student is no longer homeless or if the student transfers to another school, including a charter school, or school district. (Education Code 51225.1)

If information regarding the educational rights of homeless students, as specified in Education Code 51225.1 and 51225.2, shall be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed to students, parents/guardians, employees, and other interested parties pursuant to 5 CCR 4622. (Education Code 51225.1, 51225.2) the school director or designee determines that a homeless student is reasonably able to complete district graduation requirements within the fifth year of high school, the

School director or designee shall:

1. Inform the student and, if under 18 years of age, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, of the option available to the student to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the district's graduation requirements and how that will affect the ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution
2. Provide information to the homeless student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges
3. Upon agreement with the homeless student or with the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student if under 18 years of age, permit the student to stay in school for a fifth year to complete the district's graduation requirements

Transportation

The school shall provide transportation for a homeless student to and from the student's school of origin when the student is enrolled within the school and the parent/guardian, or the school liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, requests that such transportation be provided. If the student moves outside of school boundaries, but continues to attend the student's school of origin, the school director or designee shall consult with the liaison of the district in which the student is now residing to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation. (42 USC 11432)

The school shall not be obligated to provide transportation to students who continue attending their school of origin after they cease to be homeless, unless the formerly homeless student has an IEP that includes transportation as a necessary related service for the student. (Education Code 48852.7)



Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A homeless student who enrolls in school shall have access to extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students, including but not limited to, interscholastic sports administered by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). CIF eligibility rule states that a student who first enters the ninth grade of any school following the student's completion of the eighth grade in any school may be eligible for athletic competition during a maximum period of time that is not to exceed eight consecutive semesters following the initial enrollment in the ninth grade of any school. Said eligibility must be used during the student's first eight consecutive semesters of enrollment at that school or any other school. (Education Code 48850)

Notification, Complaints, and Posting Requirements

Information regarding the educational rights of homeless students, as specified in Education Code 51225.1 and 51225.2, shall be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed to students, parents/guardians, employees, and other interested parties pursuant to 5 CCR 4622. (Education Code 51225.1, 51225.2)

Any complaint that the school has not complied with requirements regarding the education of homeless students, as specified in Education Code 51225.1 or 51225.2, may be filed in accordance with the Board's procedures in AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures.

The school director or designee shall ensure that a list of the school's liaison(s) and the contact information for such liaison(s), as well as specific information on homelessness, including, but not limited to, information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness, are posted on the school's web site. (Education Code 48852.6)



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: _____

Student Name(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 Trustee's 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: _____

Student's name(s): _____

Relation to student(s): _____

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.

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