



Foster Youth Policy

Board Approved: December 12, 2023

The Governing Board of iLEAD Lancaster Charter School (the “Charter School”) desires to ensure that foster children are provided equal access to the same free, appropriate public education provided to other children and youth. Foster learners will be given access to the education and other services that such learners need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State learner academic achievement standards to which all learners are held. Foster learners will not be stigmatized or segregated in a separate school or program based on the learner’s status as foster youth.

I. Definitions

- ☐ Foster child/learner/youth means a child who has been removed from his or her home pursuant to Welfare and Institutions (“W&I”) Code section 309, is the subject of a petition filed under W&I sections 300 or 602, or has been removed from his or her home and is the subject of a petition filed under W&I Code sections 300 or 602.
- ☐ The Charter School is the school of origin when the learner attended the Charter School when permanently housed or was last admitted at the initial detention or placement or subsequent change in placement of a foster child. If the school the foster child attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which the foster child was last admitted, or if there is some other school that the foster child attended with which the foster child is connected and that the foster child attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, the foster child liaison, in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the foster child and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster child, shall determine, in the best interests of the foster child, the school that shall be deemed the school of origin.

II. Foster Child Liaison

The School’s foster child liaison is the CEO or designee, contact director@ileadlancaster.org. The School’s foster child liaison is required to do all of the following:

- ☐ Ensure and facilitate the proper educational placement, admission in school and checkout from school of foster children.

- Assist foster children when transferring from one school to another school in ensuring proper transfer of credits, records and grades.
- The foster child liaison, in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the foster child and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster child, may recommend, in accordance with the foster child's best interests, that the foster child's right to attend the school of origin be waived and the foster child be admitted in a public school that learners living in the attendance area in which the foster child resides are eligible to attend.
- Before making a recommendation to move a foster child from his or her school of origin, the foster liaison shall provide the foster child and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster child with a written explanation stating the basis for the recommendation and how the recommendation serves the foster child's best interest.
- If the foster child liaison, in consultation with the foster child and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster child, agrees that the best interests of the foster child would best be served by his or her transfer to a school other than the school of origin, the foster child shall immediately be admitted in the new school.

III. Admission

All foster learners are required to follow the school's process for admitting learners, including filling out and submitting the school's admissions packet on time. As with all learners, admission depends upon availability. In the event of an oversubscription in a grade, foster learners will participate in the lottery as with any other learner.

If the foster child seeking admission has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks or other items or moneys due to the school last attended or is unable to produce clothing or records normally required for admission, such as previous academic records, medical records, including, but not limited to, records or other proof of immunization history, proof of residency, other documentation or school uniforms, this will not serve as a basis for non-admission. Within two days of admission of the foster child, the foster child liaison will contact the school last attended by the foster child to obtain all academic and other records.

If a dispute arises regarding the request of a foster child to remain in iLEAD Lancaster Charter School as the school of origin, the foster child has the right to remain in iLEAD Lancaster Charter School pending resolution of the dispute. The dispute shall be resolved in accordance with the Uniform Complaint Procedures adopted by the School.

Admission in iLEAD Lancaster Charter School as the school of origin will be allowed, unless a determination is made that it is not in the best interest of the foster child to attend iLEAD Lancaster Charter School. Best interest factors include, but are not limited to, appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity to the school in which the child is admitted at the time of placement.

IV. Former Foster Children

If the jurisdiction of the court is terminated before the end of an academic year, the iLEAD Lancaster Charter School shall allow a former foster child who is in kindergarten or any of

grades 1 to 8, inclusive, to continue his or her education as the school of origin through the duration of the academic school year.

V. Transportation

If the foster learner requires transportation to continue to attend the Charter School as the school of origin, the Charter School will ensure that the foster child receives transportation in a cost effective manner.

VI. Records

A foster family agency with jurisdiction over a currently admitted or former learner, a short-term residential treatment program staff responsible for the education or case management of a learner, and a caregiver who has direct responsibility for the care of the learner, including a certified or licensed foster parent, an approved relative or non related extended family member, or a resource family (as defined below), may access the current or most recent records of grades, transcripts, attendance, discipline and online communication on platforms established by schools for learners and parents, and any individualized education programs (IEPs) that may have been developed, or any plan adopted pursuant to Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 of a currently admitted or former foster learner.

A foster family agency, short-term residential treatment program, or caregiver may review and receive learner records pursuant to subdivision (a) for purposes of monitoring the learner's educational progress, updating and maintaining the learner's education records as required by Section 16010 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and ensuring the learner has access to educational services, supports, and activities. These purposes include, but are not limited to, admitting the learner in school, assisting the learner with homework, class assignments, and college and scholarship applications, and admitting the learner in extracurricular activities, tutoring, and other afterschool and summer enrichment programs.

A “resource family” means an individual or family that has successfully met both the home environment assessment and the permanency assessment criteria necessary for providing care for a child placed by a public or private placement agency by court order, or voluntarily placed by a parent or guardian.