

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

Definitions

Homeless students means students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes: (Education Code 48852.7; 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

(cf. 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth)

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 the children are living in conditions described in items #1-3 above

Unaccompanied youth includes youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. (20 USC 11434a)

School of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled, including a preschool. If the school the homeless student attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that he/she attended within the preceding 15 months and with which he/she is connected, the district liaison 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 district students. (Education Code 48850, 48853; 42 USC 11432)

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District Liaison

The Superintendent designates the following staff person as the district liaison for homeless students: (42 USC 11432)

Director of Student Support Services OR Homeless/Foster Youth Liaison
24930 Avenue Stanford
Santa Clarita, CA 91355
661-294-5300

The district's liaison for homeless students shall ensure that: (Education Code 48852.5; 42 USC 11432)

1. Ensure that homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies

(cf. 1400 - Relations between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)
(cf. 3553 - Free and Reduced-Price Meals)

2. Ensure that homeless students are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, district schools
3. Ensure that homeless families and children 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 district

(cf. 5148.3 - Preschool/Early Childhood Education)

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

(cf. 5141.6 - School Health 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

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

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6. Disseminate notice of the educational rights of homeless students in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youth by unaccompanied youth, including schools, family 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

(cf. 3541 - Transportation Routes and Services)

9. Ensure that school personnel providing services to homeless students receive professional development and other support

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

10. 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 provision of comprehensive data to the state coordinator as required by law

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

(cf. 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)

(cf. 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities))

(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

The Superintendent 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 district's liaison. He/she shall also provide the name and contact information of the district's liaison to the California Department of Education (CDE) for publishing on the CDE's web site. (42 USC 11432)

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Enrollment

The district shall make placement decisions for homeless students shall be based on the student's best interest. (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 his/her homeless parent/guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere. (42 USC 11432)

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

In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her 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 principal or designee shall immediately enroll the student in the school of choice. The student shall be enrolled even if he/she: (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

1. Has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended

(cf. 5125.2 - Withholding Grades, Diploma or Transcripts)

2. Does not have clothing normally required by the school, such as school uniforms

(cf. 5132 - Dress and Grooming)

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

(cf. 5111 - Admission)

(cf. 5111.1 - District Residency)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

(cf. 5141.26 - Tuberculosis Testing)

(cf. 5141.31 - Immunizations)

(cf. 5141.32 - Health Screening for School Entry)

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4. Has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness

The principal or designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other required health records, the principal or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the district's liaison for homeless students. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian, or the student if he/she 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 his/her school of origin or the school requested by his/her parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision along with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision. (42 USC 11432)

The student may continue attending his/her 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 his/her 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, he/she 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, he/she 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 he/she is no longer homeless, he/she shall be allowed to stay in the school of origin through the duration of the school year if he/she is in grades K-8. (Education Code 48852.7)

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 district liaison, 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)

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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 district liaison and state coordinator, and a brief description of their 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 district 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 district 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, advocates, and/or service providers in having the dispute resolved
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

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If a parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with the liaison's enrollment decision, he/she may appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall make a determination within five working days.

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

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for a homeless student to and from his/her school of origin when the student is residing within the district and the parent/guardian, or the district liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, requests that such transportation be provided. If the student moves outside of district boundaries, but continues to attend his/her school of origin within this district, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the superintendent 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)

(cf. 3250 - Transportation Fees)

(cf. 3541 - Transportation Routes and Services)

The district 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 individualized education program 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 any district school shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in other extracurricular activities. (Education Code 48850)

(cf. 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)

(cf. 6145.2 - Athletic Competition)

Notification and Complaints

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)

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Any complaint that the district 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 district's procedures in AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures.

(cf. 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures)

Regulation
approved: March 4, 2008
Revised: December 6, 2016
GAMUT UPDATE: October, 2016

SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Santa Clarita, California