

Board Policy- Students #519



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY

The Board of Executive Director or designees of University Preparation School desire to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational program, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state of California academic standards, are provided a free and appropriate public education, are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence ~~and due to economic hardship. It~~ includes children and youths who (42 USC §11434(a)):

~~1. 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; or are awaiting foster care placement;~~

1.

2. 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. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or

~~4. Runaway children or children who are abandoned; and~~

5.4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of “homeless.”

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Board Policy- Students #519

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the School Liaison.

School of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. (42 USC 11432)

Best interest means, to the extent feasible, continuing a student's enrollment in the school of origin for the duration of his/her homelessness, except when doing so in contrary to the wishes of his/her parent/guardian. (42 USC 11432)

School Liaison

The Executive Director or designee designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 USC 11432(g)(1)(J) & (e)(3)(C)(iv).):

Executive Director or designee
1099 Bedford Drive
Camarillo, CA 93010

The School Liaison shall ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled by the Charter School (42 USC §11432(g)):

1. Homeless students are identified by Charter School personnel ~~and~~ through coordination activities with other entities and agencies and through the annual housing questionnaire administered by the Charter School.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at the Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act; early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"); any other preschool programs administered by UPCS, if any; and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services. ~~Head Start and Even Start programs.~~
4. 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.
5. Notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of where children receive services, such youth and unaccompanied youth including ~~as~~ schools, shelters, and soup kitchens and in a manner

Commented [CLF1]: See detailed description under the Housing Questionnaire section below. If the Charter School will not administer the questionnaire, this reference can be removed.

Commented [CLF2]: As most charter schools do not offer preschool programs, it is likely that these referrals would be to other programs within the area of the charter school.

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Board Policy- Students #519

and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.

6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, the University Preparation Charter School, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services as applicable.
8. Charter School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support
9. The School Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students and that the youths may obtain assistance from the School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The California Department of Education (“CDE”) publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>

Enrollment

UPCS shall immediately admit/enroll the student for which the Charter School is a School of Origin. “School of Origin” means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

UPCS shall also immediately enroll a homeless youth who seeks to enroll in the Charter School, if the youth would otherwise be eligible to attend and subject to the Charter School’s capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the UPCS charter and Board policy. A homeless youth who is enrolled will have the right to attend classes and participate fully in school activities, including extracurricular activities.

The youth shall be immediately enrolled even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunizations, other required health records, proof of residency) or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C); Education Code Section 48850(a)(3)(A).)

If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Executive Director or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the Charter School

Adopted/Ratified: 5/6/2013

Revision: 5/13/15, 12/9/16

Revision Date: 3/23/2018, 7/31/2020

Board Policy- Students #519

Liaison. The Charter School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

A homeless youth may remain in the student's school of origin for the entire period for which the youth is homeless. If a youth obtains permanent housing during an academic year, the youth will be permitted to remain in the school of origin through the end of the academic year. The Charter School shall immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to the school's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the University Preparation School Board policy), even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(C).)

If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Executive Director or designee or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the School Liaison. The School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(C).)

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the student shall be immediately admitted, (subject to Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School charter and Board policy), pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(E).)

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the admission/enrollment decision, including an explanation of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision. He/sheThe parent/guardian shall also be referred to the School Liaison. (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(E).)

The School Liaison shall carry out the Board-adopted dispute resolution and complaint process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 USC §11432(g)(3)(E).)

Housing Questionnaire

UPCS shall administer a housing questionnaire for purposes of identifying homeless children and youth. UPCS shall ensure that the housing questionnaire is based on the best practices developed by the CDE. UPCS shall annually provide the housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians of students and to all unaccompanied youths at UPCS. The housing questionnaire shall include an explanation of the rights and protections a student has as a homeless child or youth or as an unaccompanied youth. The housing questionnaire shall be available in paper form. The housing questionnaire shall be available in the primary language other than English spoken by fifteen (15) percent or more of the students enrolled at UPCS and shall be translated into other languages upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. UPCS shall collect the completed housing questionnaires and annually report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled. (Education Code Section 48851.)Written Notice

Commented [CLF3]: The U.S. Department of Education urges charter schools to anticipate leaving space for homeless students and/or increasing capacity to accommodate a homeless student.

Commented [CLF4]: AB 27 added Ed. Code 48851 which requires all LEAs that receive funding from the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth Fund to administer a housing questionnaire to all students/families beginning in the 2021-22 school year. Although schools that don't receive this funding aren't required to administer this questionnaire, it is recommended as a best practice to ensure the identification of all students eligible under McKinney Vento. The CDE's Model Housing Questionnaire is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cv/documents/housingquestionnaire.pdf>

If the Charter School does not wish to administer the housing questionnaire, this section can be removed. However, the Charter School is still required to identify all homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled at the school per EC 48851(a) even if it does not use the questionnaire.

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Revision: 5/13/15, 12/9/16

Revision Date: 3/23/2018, 7/31/2020

Board Policy- Students #519

~~The Charter School shall provide written notice, at the time any child or youth seeks enrollment in the School, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled in the School, to the parent or guardian of the child or youth (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) that:~~

- ~~1. Shall be signed by the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth);~~
- ~~2. Sets forth the general rights provided in this policy;~~
- ~~3. Specifically states:
 - ~~a. The choice of schools homeless children and youths are eligible to attend, as provided in 42 U.S.C section 11432(g)(3)(A);~~
 - ~~b. That no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;~~
 - ~~c. That homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services described in this policy, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs; and~~
 - ~~d. That homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel; and~~~~
- ~~4. Provides contact information for the School Liaison and the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.~~

~~Such notice shall be provided to the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) in a manner and form understandable to such parent or guardian (or youth), including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in the native language of such parent or guardian (or youth).~~

Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall promptly be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the Charter School such as:

- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for students with disabilities and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency~~ELD or special education programs~~
- Programs in vocational and technical educationfor “at risk” students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- Charter School nutrition programs

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Revision: 5/13/15, 12/9/16

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Board Policy- Students #519

Transportation

In the event that UPCS provides transportation services to all UPCS students, UPCS shall provide comparable transportation services to each homeless child or youth attending UPCS, as noted above. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4).)

If the UPCS does not otherwise provide transportation services to all UPCS students, UPCS shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from UPCS, at the request of the parent or guardian (or School Liaison), if UPCS is the student's school of origin. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J).) Transportation provided by UPCS will be adequate and appropriate for the student's situation, but UPCS does not commit to any one method of transportation for all youth. The Charter School shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from the School, at the request of the parent or guardian (or liaison). (42 USC §11432(g)(1)(J))

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A homeless child or youth shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities.

Waiver of Fees for Afterschool Programs

The Charter School shall not charge any student who is a homeless youth any family fees associated with an After-School Education and Safety ("ASES") Program operated by the Charter School.

Professional Development

All administrators, teachers and employees of the Charter School, including the School Liaison, will be provided professional development on the identification, services, and sensitivity necessary when dealing with homeless children and youth. The School Liaison will send verification that the Charter School is providing the required training to school personnel providing services to youth experiencing homelessness at least annually. (Education Code Section 48852.5(c)(2).) ~~All identified or suspected homeless children and youth will be referred to the School Liaison.~~

Notice

For any homeless student who seeks enrollment at the Charter School, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrollment.

Annual Policy Review

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Commented [CLF5]: The requirement under the McKinney Vento Act is to provide transportation upon request to and from the school of origin. The term "school of origin" means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, as described in clause (i), the term "school of origin" shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Commented [CLF6]: Options for transportation may include, but are not limited to, gas vouchers, public transportation vouchers, or mileage reimbursement to parents. The method of transportation must not interfere with the student's ability to access education.

Commented [CLF7]: This section can be removed if the school does not have a ASES afterschool program or does not require residency for extracurricular activities,

Board Policy- Students #519

The Charter School shall annually review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the identification of homeless children and youths or the enrollment of homeless children and youths at the Charter School. In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the identification, enrollment, and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

School Website Posting

UPCS shall ensure that the following information is posted, and updated as necessary, on its internet website:

- The name and contact information of the School Liaison(s) for homeless children and youths.
- The contact information of any employee or contractor that assists the School Liaison in completing the liaison's duties.
- Specific information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

Commented [CLF8]: We recommend that this policy review be undertaken annually. Although 42 USC § 11431 et seq. does not explicitly call for this review to be done annually, the Act requires this review for any LEA receiving assistance under the Act and funding determinations are made on an annual basis.

Commented [CLF9]: Per EC 48852.6 (AB 27), the Charter School must post the Charter School Liaison's contact information on the school website (and the contact information of any employees/contractors whose duties include assisting the liaison in completing the liaison's duties under 42 USC 11432(g)(6).

The school website must also include specific information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

Commented [CLF10]: While not required to be included in the Policy, the Charter School may want to keep this section here to remind itself of the required website postings related to this Policy.

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