

GRANADA HILLS CHARTER

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Policy

The Granada Hills Charter ("GHC," "Charter School" or "School") Governing Board desires to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness:

- are provided with equal access to its educational program
- have an opportunity to meet the same challenging California academic standards
- are provided a free and appropriate public education
- are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless
- are protected homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youth" is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who (42USC 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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
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;
4. Runaway children or children who are abandoned; and 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."

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 Liaison

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

Sandy Mejia
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Granada Hills, CA 91344
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In accordance with federal law and best practices, GHC will ensure that the School Liaison shall receive training at least annually, and the training should include the definition of homelessness, signs of homelessness, the impact of homelessness on youth, and the steps an LEA should take once school staff has identified a youth as possibly experiencing homelessness.

The School Liaison shall ensure that (42 USC 11432(g)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at GHC.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible.
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. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters, and meal centers.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, the GHC charter, and GHC Governing Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services.
8. 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.

Annual Training of All School Staff Members: Youths Experiencing Homelessness

In accordance with federal law and best practices, GHC will ensure that all staff members including certificated and classified shall receive training at least annually concerning youth experiencing homelessness. The training should include the definition of homelessness, the signs of homelessness, the impact of homelessness on youth, and the steps an LEA should take once a school staff member has identified a youth as possibly experiencing homelessness.

Enrollment

Granada Hills Charter shall immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to the Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the GHC charter and Board policy), even if the student lacks school records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 USC 11432(g)(3)(C).)

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If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent 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, pending resolution of the dispute. (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/she 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).)

Written Notice

Granada Hills Charter shall provide written notice, at the time any child or youth seeks enrollment in GHC, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled in GHC, 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.

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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 enrolled in Granada Hills Charter such as:

- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as ESL or special education programs
- Programs for "at risk" students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- Title I services
- School nutrition programs

Transportation

Granada Hills Charter 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)(l)(J))

Approved by the Granada Hills Charter Governing Board on _____

David Bensinger, Board Secretary