Education For Homeless Children

Definitions

Homeless students or students experiencing homelessness 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 student experiencing homelessness attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. If the school the student experiencing homelessness 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 district liaison for homeless students, in consultation with and with the agreement of the student experiencing homelessness and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, shall determine which school is, in the best interests of the student experiencing homelessness, 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 student experiencing homelessness, 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)

District Liaison

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

Cheryl Camany

Homeless & Foster Youth Liaison

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The district's liaison for homeless students shall: (Education Code 48851.3, 48851.5, 48852.5; 42 USC 11432)

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

2. Ensure that students experiencing homelessness are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, district schools

3. Ensure that families and students experiencing homelessness 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

4. Ensure that families and students experiencing homelessness 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 students experiencing homelessness in locations frequented by parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness 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 students experiencing homelessness 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. Offer annual training related to the district's homeless education program to school personnel who provide services to students experiencing homelessness, including principals and other school leaders, attendance officers , teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel, to ensure that such employees are informed of available training, professional development, and other support, and the services provided by the district liaison for homeless students.

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 district 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 students experiencing homelessness, including the collection and provision of comprehensive data to the state coordinator as required by law

Additionally, when notified pursuant to Education Code 48918.1, the district liaison shall assist, facilitate, or represent a student experiencing homelessness who is undergoing a disciplinary proceeding that could result in the student's expulsion. When notified pursuant to Education Code 48915.5, the district 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 Superintendent or designee shall inform students experiencing homelessness, their parents/guardians, school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the district's liaison. Additionally, the Superintendent 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 the CDE's web site. (42 USC 11432)

Enrollment

The district shall make placement decisions for students experiencing homelessness based on the student's best interest. (Education Code 48850; 42 USC 11432)

In determining a student's best interest, a student experiencing homelessness, 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

When determining the best interest of any student experiencing homelessness, the district shall give priority to the request of the student's parent/guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the request of the student.Additionally the student's educational stability and opportunity to be educated in

the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve progress and other student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on the student's achievement, education, health, and safety, shall also be considered. (Education Code 48850; 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 student experiencing homelessness 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 district 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)

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 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 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 immediately refer the parent/guardian to the district liaison for homeless students. The district 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 his/her school of origin or the school requested by the student's parent/guardian or the student, if an unaccompanied youth, the Superintendent 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 student experiencing homelessness, 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 student experiencing homelessness 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.

If the student's status changes before the end of the school year so that the student is no longer experiencing homelessness, 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 TK-6

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)

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 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 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 the student’s parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth that written and/or oral documentation to support their position may be provided.

2. Inform the student’s parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth that they may seek the assistance of social services, advocates, and/or service providers in having the dispute resolved

3. Provide 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. 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 liaison's enrollment decision, the decision he/she may be appealed 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.

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)

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for a student experiencing homelessness to and from the student's 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 the student's 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)

Any fees that the district charges for home-to-school transportation and other transportation as expressly provided by law shall be waived for students experiencing homelessness. (Education Code 39807.5)

The district shall not be obligated to provide transportation to students who continue attending their school of origin after they secure permanent housing, 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 student experiencing homelessness who enrolls in any district school shall have access to extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students in the school, including but not limited to, interscholastic sports administered by the California Interscholastic Federation. (Education Code 48850)

Notification and Posting Requirements

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a list of the district'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 students experiencing homelessness, are posted on the district's web site.
(Education Code 48852.6)

Additionally,each district school that has a website shall ~~also~~ post the contact information for the district liaison and the name and contact information of any employee or other person under contract with the school who assists the district liaison in completing the liaison's duties pursuant to 42 USC 11432.
(Education Code 48852.6)

State	Description
5 CCR 4600-4670	Uniform complaint procedures
Ed. Code 39807.5	Payment of transportation costs by parents
Ed. Code 48850	Academic achievement of students in foster care and homeless children
Ed. Code 48850-48859	Education of foster youth and homeless students
Ed. Code 48851	Identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths; housing questionnaire
Ed. Code 48851.3	Homeless education program policies; liaison responsibilities
Ed. Code 48851.5	Local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths
Ed. Code 48852.3	Monitoring for compliance with chapter

Ed. Code 48852.5	Notice of educational rights of homeless students
Ed. Code 48852.6	Information regarding homelessness
Ed. Code 48852.7	Education of homeless students; immediate enrollment
Ed. Code 48859	Definitions
Ed. Code 48915.5	Recommended expulsion; foster youth with disabilities
Ed. Code 48918.1	Notice of recommended expulsion
Ed. Code 48985	Notices to parents/guardians in language other than English
Ed. Code 51225.1-51225.3	Graduation requirements
Ed. Code 52052	Accountability; numerically significant student subgroups
Ed. Code 52060-52077	Local control and accountability plan