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Administrative Regulation

Education For Homeless Children

AR 6173
Instruction

***Note: The following administrative regulation is mandated pursuant to 42 USC 11432; see section on "Transportation" below. ***

Definitions

***Note: The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11431-11435) defines "homeless students" as provided below. This law applies to foster youth in certain circumstances (i.e., when they are living in emergency or transitional shelters and when they are awaiting foster care placement); see BP/AR 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth for state law regarding foster children. ***

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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement

(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 they are living in conditions described in items #1-3 above

5. Unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

***Note: Education Code 48852.7, as added by SB 445 (Ch. 289, Statutes of 2015), adds the following definition of "school of origin" which exceeds the definition in 42 USC 11432 and is consistent with the state definition of "school of origin" that applies to foster youth. ***

School of origin means the school that the homeless student attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. 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)

***Note: Education Code 48850 expresses legislative intent that the "best interest" of a homeless student or foster youth includes educational stability as well as placement in the least restrictive educational program, as provided below. Education Code 48853 further provides that the placement of a foster youth should consider the student's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities. For consistency with the definition of "best interest" applicable to foster youth (see AR 6173.1 - Education for Foster Youth), the following definition also reflects Education Code 48853. ***

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)

District Liaison

***Note: Pursuant to 42 USC 11432, districts are required to designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other federal programs, as a district liaison for homeless students. ***

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

Associate Superintendent
(title or position)
375 Reina del Mar, Pacifica, CA 94044
(address)
650-738-6600
(phone number)
ravila@pacificasd.org
(email)

***Note: The duties of the district liaison for homeless students are listed in 42 USC 11432 and are specified below. In its July 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) gives some specific examples

of activities that the liaison could perform in furtherance of these duties, such as assisting homeless children in enrolling in school and accessing school activities; obtaining immunization or medical records; informing parents/guardians, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children; working with school staff to make sure that homeless children are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes; and helping to coordinate transportation services. In addition, the Guidance recommends that the district's liaison refer to the Homeless Liaison Toolkit developed by the National Center for Homeless Education. ***

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

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

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

(cf. 3553 - Free and Reduced-Price Meals)

(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)

2. Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, district schools

3. Ensure that homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible

4. 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)

5. Disseminate notice of the educational rights of homeless students in district schools that provide services to homeless children and at places where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and hunger relief agencies (soup kitchens)

6. Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with law, Board policy, and administrative regulation

7. Fully inform parents/guardians of all transportation services

(cf. 3250 - Transportation Fees)

(cf. 3541 - Transportation Routes and Services)

***Note: Pursuant to Education Code 48918.1, the district liaison must be notified before the expulsion hearing for a homeless student, when the student's alleged violation does not require a mandatory recommendation for expulsion; see AR 5144.1 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process. When so notified, the district liaison is expected to assist the student and, as necessary,

advocate on the student's behalf. ***

8. When notified pursuant to Education Code 48918.1, assist, facilitate, or represent a homeless student who is undergoing a disciplinary proceeding that could result in his/her expulsion

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

***Note: Pursuant to Education Code 48915.5, if the homeless student has also been identified as an individual with a disability and the district has proposed a change of placement due to an act for which decision to recommend expulsion is discretionary, the district liaison must be invited to participate in the individualized education program team meeting that makes a manifestation determination pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC 1415(k)). ***

9. When notified pursuant to Education Code 48915.5, participate in an individualized education program team meeting to make a manifestation determination regarding the behavior of a student with a disability

(cf. 5144.2 - Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process (Students with Disabilities))
(cf. 6159 - Individualized Education Program)

10. Assist a homeless student to obtain records necessary for his/her enrollment into or transfer out of district schools, including immunization, medical, and academic records

Enrollment

The district shall make placement decisions for homeless students based on the student's best interest. (42 USC 11432)

***Note: In its Non-Regulatory Guidance Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the USDOE recommends that the placement determination be student-centered and individualized. The Guidance lists the following factors for the district to consider when making a determination of a student's "best interest." The following paragraph is optional and should be revised to include any other factors used by the district in making this determination. ***

When making a placement decision for a homeless student, the Superintendent or designee may consider 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, consider 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 his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise. (Education Code 48852.7; 42 USC 11432)

***Note: Education Code 48852.7, as added by SB 445 (Ch. 289, Statutes of 2015), and 42 USC 11432 require schools to immediately enroll homeless students as specified below. In its Non-Regulatory Guidance Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the USDOE recommends that the district take steps to facilitate immediate enrollment such as accepting school records directly from families, establishing school-based immunization clinics, and training staff on the legal requirements for immediate enrollment. See AR 5111.1 - District Residency. ***

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 medical records, including, but not limited to, records or other proof of immunization history

(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)

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 medical records, the principal or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the district liaison for homeless students. The district liaison shall assist the parent/guardian, or the student if he/she is an unaccompanied youth, in obtaining the necessary immunizations 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, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the parent/guardian with a written explanation of the decision along with a statement regarding the parent/guardian's 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)

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.

***Note: Education Code 48852.7, as added by SB 445 (Ch. 289, Statutes of 2015), allows homeless students to remain in the school of origin, or matriculate to a feeder school, even if the student is no longer homeless. The district may revise the following list to reflect the grade levels and feeder school patterns in the 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: (Education Code 48852.7)

1. Through the duration of the school year if he/she is in grades K-8
2. Through graduation if he/she is in high school

Resolving Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a particular school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. (42 USC 11432)

***Note: Pursuant to 42 USC 11432, when a dispute over school selection or enrollment exists between the district and a parent/guardian, the district must provide written explanation of its decision. In its Non-Regulatory Guidance Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the USDOE recommends that the written decision contain the elements specified below. The following optional paragraph should be modified to reflect district practice. See the accompanying Exhibit for a sample explanation and appeal form. ***

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the placement decision, which shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in language that the parent/guardian or student can understand. The written explanation shall include:

1. The district liaison's contact information
2. A description of the district's placement decision
3. Notice of the student's right to enroll in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute, including the right to fully participate in all school activities
4. Notice of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision to the county office of education and, if the dispute remains unresolved, to the California Department of Education

The district liaison shall work to resolve an enrollment dispute as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 USC 11432)

***Note: The following optional paragraph is recommended by the California Department of Education (CDE). ***

In working with a student's parents/guardians 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

If a parent/guardian 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.

***Note: In its January 30, 2007 letter to districts, the CDE describes the process for appealing a district's enrollment decision to the county office of education and the CDE. Upon receipt of materials describing the dispute from the district, the county office liaison will determine the school selection or enrollment decision within five working days. If the dispute remains

unresolved or is appealed, the county office liaison will forward the documentation to the state homeless coordinator who will notify the parent/guardian of the final school selection or enrollment decision within five working days. ***

***Note: The CDE's letter does not specify a timeline for the district liaison to make a determination of the enrollment decision, nor does it specify a hearing process at the district level. The following optional paragraph should be revised to reflect district practice. ***

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

***Note: 42 USC 11432 mandates that districts adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided to homeless students, at the request of their parent/guardian, to and from their school of origin as specified below. ***

***Note: In its Non-Regulatory Guidance Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, the USDOE states that the law imposes an affirmative obligation to transport homeless students, even if transportation is not provided to other students. The Guidance clarifies that, because the State of California receives funds under McKinney-Vento, all districts in California are subject to this requirement. ***

***Note: Federal law does not address the authorization provided by Education Code 39807.5 for the district to charge for the cost of home-to-school transportation. However, it is likely that most homeless students would be identified as indigent and would therefore be exempt from transportation costs. See AR 3250 - Transportation Fees. ***

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 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)

***Note: Education Code 48852.7, as added by SB 445 (Ch. 289, Statutes of 2015), requires that the district provide transportation to a formerly homeless student with an individualized education program that provides for transportation as a related service. Education Code 48852.7 does not supersede or exceed other laws governing special education services for eligible homeless students.

The following paragraph may be revised if the district chooses to provide transportation to other formerly homeless students attending their school of origin. ***

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

***Note: The following paragraph is required pursuant to Education Code 48850. See BP 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities for additional eligibility requirements. ***

A homeless student who enrolls in any district school shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities. (Education Code 48850)

(cf. 6145 - Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities)
(cf. 6145.2 - Athletic Competition)

Notification and Complaints

***Note: Education Code 51225.1 and 51225.2, as amended by AB 379 (Ch. 772, Statutes of 2015), require that specified educational rights of homeless students be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed pursuant to 5 CCR 4622. ***

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)

***Note: AB 379 (Ch. 772, Statutes of 2015) amended Education Code 51225.1 and 51225.2 to provide that complaints of noncompliance with specified requirements related to the educational rights of homeless students may be filed in accordance with the uniform complaint procedures specified in 5 CCR 4600-4687. As with other complaints covered under the uniform complaint procedures, a complainant may appeal the district's decision to the CDE and, if the district or CDE finds any merit in the complaint, the district must provide a remedy to the affected student. See BP/AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. ***

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)

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