HOMELESS YOUTH

Intent of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate, public education as provided to other children and youths.

Removing Barriers to Identification and Enrollment

1. The District will identify various professionals that have experience in homeless youth issues in order to:

    a. Develop policies and practices to identify and support homeless children and youth.

    b. Identify policies and practices that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths and provide methods to address these barriers.

    c. Present such policies and practices to the District to be considered for implementation or dissemination as appropriate.

    d. Provide training to school personnel, including, but not limited to, principals, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and student services, to heighten the awareness of the specific needs of homeless youth.

2. The District will ensure that child abuse and neglect reporting requirements do not create barriers to enrollment and attendance of homeless children or youths, including, but not limited to, ensuring that a homeless student is not reported to law enforcement by school personnel if the sole reason for the report is the student's homelessness.

3. The District will ensure that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless.

4. The District will establish relationships with community-based, state, and local organizations that serve homeless youth and collaborate with these entities to help identify and provide services to homeless youth, including access to mental health services, participation in state or local food programs, access to housing services, and access to other social services. These agencies may include, but are not limited to, domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youth.

5. The District will provide activities and services to homeless children and youths that enable such children and youth to enroll, attend, and succeed in school.

6. The District will ensure that the parents or guardians of homeless children or youth are provided with information regarding the educational services available to these children in a manner and form understandable to such parent or guardian, including, to the extent feasible, in the native language of the parent or guardian.

Increasing Enrollment and Retention

1. The District will designate a District staff person to serve as the Educational Liaison for homeless youth within the District.

2. The Educational Liaison will engage in activities to increase the enrollment and retention of homeless youth, including, but not limited to:

    a. Implementing strategies to identify and provide services to homeless children and youth.

    b. Ensuring and facilitating the proper educational placement and enrollment of homeless children and youth.

    c. Assisting homeless children and youth when transferring from one school to another, or from the District to another school district, to ensure the proper transfer of credits, records, and grades.

    d. Ensuring that homeless children and youth are provided with the necessary services to allow such children to attend their "school of origin," as defined below.

3. The District has the discretion to provide services to homeless children or youth, which include, but are not limited to:

    a. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, or enriched educational services.

    b. Education and training to the parents of homeless children and youth regarding the rights of, and resources available to, such children and youths.

    c. The provision of student services, including, but not limited to, counseling, or referrals for such services.

    d. Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youths.

    e. The provision of school supplies.

    f. The provision of services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youth in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children and youth.

g. Any other service the District deems appropriate and beneficial to homeless children and youth.

School Enrollment Policies

1. The District will immediately enroll a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin.

2. The District will ensure that a homeless child or youth who enrolls in a school within the District is immediately deemed to satisfy all residency requirements for participation in activities, services, and other programs.

3. The District will allow homeless children or youth to enroll in his or her "school of origin," which can be:

    a. The school the homeless child was enrolled in prior to becoming homeless.

    b. The school the homeless child most recently attended.

    c. Any school the homeless youth attended in the last fifteen (15) months to which the student feels connected.

4. The District will allow a homeless child or youth to remain enrolled in his or her school of origin in any case where:

    a. A family becomes homeless between academic years or during the academic year.

    b. For the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, including when the child or youth has been temporarily placed elsewhere separate from his or her homeless parents or guardian.

4. The District will immediately enroll the homeless child or youth in a school within the District even if the homeless child or youth has outstanding fines, fees, textbooks, or other items or moneys due to the school last attended, or is unable to produce clothing or records normally required for enrollment, including, but not limited to, academic records, medical records, birth certificates, school uniforms or dress code requirements, or records regarding residency requirements.

5. The District will ensure that homeless children or youth have the benefit of matriculating with their peers in accordance with established feeder patterns of the District.

6. The Educational Liaison for the District will contact the school last attended by the homeless child or youth, within 3 days of the child or youth attempting to enroll in a school within the District, to obtain all academic and other records.
7. When a homeless youth or child is leaving a school within the District, the District will provide all required records to the new school, regardless of outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or moneys owed to the last school attended. The District will provide all records to the new school within two (2) business days of receiving the request.

8. The District will allow a homeless youth to participate in extracurricular activities at their new school even if they miss a tryout or sign-up deadline.

Discipline Policy

Homeless children and youth are equally subject to the District's discipline policies and procedures with the following addition: written notice of an expulsion hearing shall also be provided to the District's Educational Liaison for homeless children and youth at least ten (10) calendar days before the hearing.
(Ed. Code § 48918.1(b).)

Definition

The term homeless children and youth means:

1. Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

2. Children and youth 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

3. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings

4. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

5. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in (1) - (4)