

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Definitions

Homeless students are defined as students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and include: [42 USC 11434(a)]

1. 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.
2. Children and youth 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. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who move from one location to another while living in conditions described in the previous examples.

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 is contrary to the wishes of his/her parent/guardian. [42 USC 11432]

Unaccompanied youth means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. [42 USC 11432]

Homeless Liaison

The Monterey County Superintendent of Schools (County Superintendent) designates the Educational Administrator of Special Projects as the Monterey County Office of Education's (MCOE) Homeless Liaison for homeless students. He/she maybe contacted at the Monterey County Office of Education, 901 Blanco Cir. Salinas, CA 93901; telephone (831) 784-4155.

The Homeless Liaison for homeless students shall ensure that: [42 USC 11432]

J

1. Homeless students are identified by MCOE personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in MCOE schools and programs.
3. Homeless families and students 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. Notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places where children receive services, such as schools, shelters, and soup kitchens.
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law, Board policies and administrative regulations.
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services.

Enrollment

Placement decisions for homeless students shall be based on the student's best interest. In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his or her school of origin, unless his or her parent or guardian requests otherwise. [42 USC 11432]

When making a placement decision, the program director 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.

The student may continue attending his or her school of origin for the duration of the homelessness and until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing. If the homeless student's status changes before the end of the academic year so that he or she is no longer homeless, that student shall be allowed to continue his or her education in school of origin through the duration of the academic school year. [42 USC 11432; Education Code 48852.7]

If the student is placed at a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian, the program director 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] In the case of an unaccompanied youth (without a legal guardian), the Homeless Liaison shall assist in placement or enrollment decisions, consider the views of the student and provide notice to the student of his or her appeal rights.

Once a placement decision has been made, the principal or designee shall immediately enroll the student in the school of choice, even if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment.

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 Homeless Liaison for homeless students. The Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student

Enrollment Dispute Resolution Process

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 114321]

For a student to be placed in a MCOE Special Education program, that placement must occur through the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process involving the district of residence.

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the placement decision, including an explanation of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision. He/she shall also be referred to the MCOE Homeless Liaison. [42 USC 11432]

The written explanation and description of MCOE's decision shall be complete, simply stated and provided in language that the parent/guardian or student can understand. The explanation may include contact information for the MCOE Homeless Liaison, notice of the right to enroll in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute, notice that enrollment includes full participation in all school activities, and notice of the right to appeal the decision to the California Department of Education.

The Homeless Liaison shall carryout the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. [42 USC 11432]

The Homeless Liaison shall provide the parent/guardian a copy of MCOE's decision, dispute form, and a copy of the outcome of the dispute.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the Homeless Liaison's enrollment decision, he/she may appeal the decision to the County Superintendent. The County Superintendent shall make a determination within five working days.

If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the County Superintendent's placement decision, the County Superintendent shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the California Department of Education's homeless coordinator.

Approved: 10/28/15