

SEBASTOPOL INDEPENDENT CHARTER SCHOOL

Homeless/Foster Youth Policy

BP 6173

Sebastopol Independent Charter School complies with all applicable state law regarding homeless and foster youth, including but not limited to the provisions of AB 379 (22015) and Chapter 5.5 (commencing with Section 48850) of Part 27 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, as amended from time to time.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. It includes children and youths who:

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; and
4. 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.”

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the Executive Director will determine homeless status. However, generally, homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. When homeless status is determined, the following procedures will commence:

1. Charter School will immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to the Charter School’s capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School charter and Board policy), even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment;
2. Records will be requested from the previous school upon student’s enrollment;
3. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunizations or other medical records, the Executive Director shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations for records for the student. Immunization records are **NOT** required for enrollment;
4. Parent/guardian will complete the “Student Residency Questionnaire”; and
5. Parent/guardian will complete the online enrollment form for the student.

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the student shall be immediately admitted, pending resolution of the dispute.

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 Executive Director.

The Executive Director shall carry out the Board-adopted dispute resolution and complaint process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

Written Notice

The Charter School shall provide written notice, at the time any child or youth seeks enrollment in the Charter School, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled in the Charter School, 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. That no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;
 - b. 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
 - c. That homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel; and
4. Provides contact information for the Executive Director and the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.

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 in Charter School

Charter School shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from Charter School, at the request of the parent or guardian (or liaison).

School Liaison

The Student Support Services Director is the School Liaison for homeless/Foster students.

The School Liaison shall ensure that:

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 Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
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 soup kitchens.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, the Charter School charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
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.

FOSTER STUDENTS

A student in Foster Care will either reside in a local group home or with a local resident family. The guardian will always have a “placement” letter from the court appointing the legal guardian. The legal guardian shall follow the procedures listed below for enrollment of the student:

1. Verify that the group home address or the Foster family’s address lies within the residential boundary.
2. Complete the online enrollment form for the student.
3. Provide any school records or immunization records available. However, these records are **NOT** required for enrollment.

After the student is enrolled, Office staff will follow up with the previous school to request all available records.