
EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY

Sage Oak Charter Schools (“SOCS” or the “Charter School”) adopt this Education for Homeless Children and Youth Policy to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational program, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic standards, are provided a free and appropriate public education, are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

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 youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
2. Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters
4. Are abandoned in hospitals
5. 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
6. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
7. Are 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.”

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the School Liaison.

School Liaison

The Executive Director designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) & (e)(3)(C)(i)(IV)):

Jamee Block
Director of Education Services
jblock@sageoak.education

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The School Liaison shall ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled by the School (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at SOCS.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible including: services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act; early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”); any other preschool programs administered by SOCS, if any; and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services
4. Parents/guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their students and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents/guardians of such youth, and unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with the law, SOCS charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. 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 youth.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as the state establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students and that the youths may obtain assistance from the School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Enrollment

SOCS shall immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to SOCS’ capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the SOCS charter and Board policy), even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunizations, other required health records, proof of residency) or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C); Education Code Section 48850(a)(3)(A).)

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If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Executive Director or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the School Liaison. The School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the student shall be immediately admitted (subject to school's capacity) and pursuant to the procedures stated in the school charter and Board policy), pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

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. The parent/guardian shall also be referred to the School Liaison. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

The School Liaison shall carry out the board-adopted dispute resolution and complaint process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall promptly be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in SOCS such as (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4)):

1. Transportation services
2. Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for students with disabilities and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
3. Programs in vocational and technical education
4. Programs for gifted and talented students
5. School nutrition programs

Transportation

In the event that SOCS provides transportation services to all SOCS students, SOCS shall provide comparable transportation services to each homeless child or youth attending SOCS, as noted above. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4).)

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If SOCS does not otherwise provide transportation services to all SOCS students, SOCS shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from SOCS, at the request of the parent or guardian (or School Liaison). (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J).)

Professional Development

All administrators, teachers, and employees of SOCS will be provided professional development on the identification, services, and sensitivity necessary when dealing with homeless students. (42 U.S.C. § 11433(d)(3).) All identified or suspected homeless students will be referred to the School Liaison.

Notice

For any homeless student who seeks enrollment at the Charter School, a written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrollment and at least twice annually while the student is enrolled at the School in alignment with the law. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(e)(3)(C).)

The notice shall be signed by the parent/guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) and notify them of their rights pursuant to this policy. Specifically, the notice shall state that no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths; that homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services as described above, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs; and that homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by School personnel; and provides contact information for the School Liaison and the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.

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