



POLICY ON EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Board of Directors of Westlake Charter School (“Charter School”) desire 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 of California 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 due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who (42 USC 11434(a)):

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;
4. Runaway children or children who are abandoned; and 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 Directors or designee designates the following staff person(s) as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 USC 11432(g)(1)(J) & (e)(3)(C)(iv).):

Principal
Grades K-4
Westlake Charter School
3800 Del Paso Road
Sacramento, CA 95834

Principal
Grades 5-8
Westlake Charter Middle School
1985 Jefferson Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

The School Liaison shall ensure that the following occur (42 USC 11432(g)):

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 the Charter School.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, (where applicable).
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's charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services.
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.



Enrollment

The Charter School shall immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to the school's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy), even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 USC 11432(g)(3)(C).)

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 USC 11432(g)(3)(C).)

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the student shall be immediately admitted, pending resolution of the dispute. (42 USC 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. He/she shall also be referred to the School Liaison. (42 USC 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 USC 11432(g)(3)(E).)

Written Notice

The Charter School shall provide written notice, at the time any child or youth seeks enrollment in the School, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled in the 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. The choice of schools homeless children and youths are eligible to attend, as provided in 42 U.S.C Section 11432(g)(3)(A);
 - b. That no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;
 - c. 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



d. That homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel; and

4. Provides contact information for the School Liaison 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 the Charter School such as:

- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as ESL or special education programs
- Programs for “at risk” students
- School nutrition programs