



## SOLEIL ACADEMY EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY

The Governing Board of Soleil Academy Charter School ("Soleil Academy") desires 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. It includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

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."

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 following staff person(s) are designated the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) & (e)(3)(C)(i)(IV).):

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The School Liaison shall ensure that (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by Soleil Academy personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed as students at Soleil Academy.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs, if administered by Soleil Academy, and 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 Soleil Academy 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 Soleil Academy personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

#### Enrollment

Soleil Academy shall immediately admit/enroll the student (subject to the school's capacity and pursuant to the enrollment procedures stated in the school's charter and Soleil Academy Board policy), even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C); Education Code § 48850(a)(3)(A).)

If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Executive Director or administrative designee shall refer the parent or guardian to the school Liaison. The school Liaison shall assist the parent or 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, pending resolution of the dispute. (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. He/she 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).)

#### Written Notice

Soleil Academy 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 (42 U.S.C. § 11432(e)(3)(C)):

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 youth;
  - c. That homeless children and youth 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 youth 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 Youth.

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 Soleil Academy such as (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4)):

- Transportation services
- 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

- Programs in vocational and technical education
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- Title I services
- School nutrition programs

#### Transportation

Soleil Academy shall not be responsible for providing transportation to allow a homeless student to attend school unless required under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or other federal law and at the request of the parent or guardian (or school Liaison). (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J).) Soleil Academy may provide transportation, at its discretion, to allow a homeless youth to attend school.

#### Professional Development

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