

Liberty Union High School Homeless and Foster Youth Guidelines

Homeless Students

In accordance to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and California law, all school sites must ensure the educational rights and protections for students who experience homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act defines Homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes: (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 a regular sleeping accommodation 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;* and (4) *Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition.* (McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program)

All site staff must adhere to the following key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

- Homeless students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing
- All schools will immediately enroll homeless students, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents. The term “enroll” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities
- Enrolling schools will obtain school records from the previous school, and the homeless student will be enrolled in school while records are obtained
- If a student does not have immunizations or medical records, please contact Dr. Cynthia Cabello-Zelada, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative/Student Services. Dr. Cabello will immediately assist in obtaining the records. The student must be enrolled in school in the interim
- The school shall maintain educational records for students who are homeless so they are available quickly
- At a parent’s or guardian’s request, homeless students must be provided or assisted in arranging transportation to and from their school of origin. Please contact the Dr. Cabello if/or when a request for assistance with transportation is initiated or needed for a homeless student.
- For unaccompanied youth, transportation to and from the school of origin must be offered.
- All homeless students must be appropriately entered/tagged as a Homeless student in Aeries

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Foster Youths*

Multiple laws passed within the past decade imposed duties and rights related to the education of dependents and wards in foster care. The key provisions of the most current law, AB 490, are as follows:

- Ensures that foster youth have access to the same opportunities to meet academic achievement standards to which all students are held
- Creates school stability by allowing foster children to remain in their school of origin for the duration of the school year when their placement changes
- All schools shall immediately enroll foster students, even if they do not have the required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents. The term “enroll” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- Requires the District to designate a staff person as a foster care education liaison to ensure proper placement, transfer, and enrollment in school for foster youth (for LUHSD, that person is Dr. Cynthia Cabello-Zelada, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative/Student Services)
- Makes school staff and social workers and/or probation officers jointly responsible for timely transfer of students and their records, and immediate enrollment into a new school even though immunization and school records may not be available
- Requires the District to calculate and accept credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a public school, juvenile court school, or non-public, non-sectarian school
- Provides that a foster child has the right to remain enrolled in and attend his/her school of origin pending resolution of school placement disputes
- Authorizes the release of educational records of foster youth to the county placing agency to assist with transfer or enrollment
- Ensures that foster youth will not be penalized for absences due to placement changes, court appearances, or related court-ordered activities

**Note: A foster youth may also be on probation if they were removed from their home to a petition under Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 300, 309, or 602 (for the purpose of these guidelines—foster youth and foster youth on probation are synonymous.)*

Graduation Requirements

AB 167/216/1806/2306 exempts **foster, a probation youth who was a former juvenile court school student** and/or **homeless** youth students from school district graduation requirements that exceed state graduation requirements if the student transfers to the district, or transfers from one high school to after his/her second year of high school if the student would not be reasonably able to complete the additional district requirements. (E.C. 51225.1 & 51225.2)

The state requirements include:

- a. Three courses of English;
- b. Two courses in mathematics (including one year of Algebra I (or equivalent) unless previously completed);

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- c. Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences;
- d. Three courses in social studies, including U.S. History, World History, a one-semester course in American Government, and a one-semester course in economics;
- e. One course in visual or performing arts or foreign language; and
- f. Two courses in physical education, unless the student has been exempted.

The foster, a former juvenile court school student and/or homeless youth student has a right to remain in high school for a fifth year if they can reasonably complete all local graduation requirements by the end of the fifth year. In making the determination, the appropriate school site staff shall confer with Dr. Cynthia Cabello-Zelada, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative/Student Services in making a collaborative decision with the youth's caregiver, educational right's holder (in many cases this will be the biological parent), the youth's social welfare worker or probation officer, and anyone else familiar with the foster youth while reviewing relevant educational records and history.

Within **30 (thirty)** calendar days after the date of enrollment, the student's counselor shall notify a foster/homeless youth who either qualifies for the exemption from the district's graduation requirements or a fifth year of high school; the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and the student's social worker or probation officer (if foster youth) of the availability of the exemption. During the notification of the exemption qualification, the counselor shall inform the above referenced parties how the waived course requirements will impact the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and collaboratively develop a graduation plan which best meets the needs of the student and his/her future aspirations.

Furthermore, ***All Foster/Homeless Youth students must be appropriately entered/tagged as a Foster or Homeless Youth in Aeries.***

References:

The following document is provided by the Fresno County Office of Education and provides the recipient staff person with timelines and other guidelines regarding developing a high school graduation plan for a foster/homeless youth who is eligible for the AB1806 graduation waiver:

[EC 51225.1 High School Graduation Requirements for Homeless Youth.pdf](#)

The following is an electronic worksheet a high school counselor may use to develop an appropriate high school graduation plan for a foster/homeless youth eligible for the AB1806 graduation waiver:

[LCHSD AB1806 Graduation Waiver Worksheet](#)

If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding Foster/Homeless Youth students, please contact, Dr. Cynthia Cabello-Zelada, Assistant Superintendent, Administrative/Student Services.