

## Chief Tahgee Elementary Academy No. 483

### STUDENTS

3060

#### Education of Homeless Children

It is the policy of the Charter School to ensure that:

1. Each child of a homeless individual and each unaccompanied homeless child has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other students;
2. Homelessness does not in any way separate homeless students from the mainstream school environment; and
3. Homeless children and youth have access to the education and other services that such children and youth need to ensure that such children and youth have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all students are held.

The Board of Directors directs the Charter School to admit children who are homeless regardless of residence and irrespective of whether the homeless child is able to produce records normally required for enrollment.

All schools and employees of the Charter School shall work to ensure that children and youth who are homeless are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. The Charter School will also strive to prevent stigma against students who are homeless.

#### Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply.

The terms *enroll* and *enrollment* include official registration of a child or youth for the purposes of school attendance and full participation in classes and all school activities.

The terms *homeless*, *homeless individual* and *homeless person* include:

1. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, unavailability of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, camping grounds, or other temporary housing due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations (as defined by the local community); are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned.
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 other non-housing locations.
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this policy because the children are living in circumstances described in items one (1) through three (3) above; and
5. An unaccompanied student and homeless families with children and youth are also defined as homeless if they:
  - A. Have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing;
  - B. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period, and
  - C. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.

*Children and youth in transition* are defined as children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This situation also includes, but is not limited to, children who are deemed wards of the tribal court or who are placed in an out-of-the-home placement.

*Unaccompanied youth* is defined as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian who is in transition as defined above.

The term *school of origin* is defined as the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. When a student completes the final grade level served by the student's school of origin, he or she shall progress to the designated receiving school at the next grade level, the same as for all students progressing to the next grade level in the Charter School.

### In General

The Charter School shall ensure the following is provided according to the homeless student's best interest:

1. That the homeless student's education continues in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and/or the school year:
  - A. In any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and

- B. If the student becomes permanently housed or establishes residency elsewhere during an academic year; or
2. That the homeless student is eligible to enroll in the same schools as non-homeless students who live in the same attendance area where the homeless student is actually living.

### Charter School Liaison

For purposes of this policy, the Director of School Programs shall designate a Charter School employee to serve as its liaison to serve homeless students in accordance with the following provisions that follow. The liaison for homeless students as designated by the Director of School Programs shall ensure that:

1. All homeless students in and out of school are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
2. The Charter School tracks academic and enrollment data on homeless students;
3. All homeless students are enrolled in the Charter School and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed the same as non-homeless students ~~enrolled in the Charter School~~;
4. Homeless families and homeless students have access to and receive educational services for which such families and students are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the Charter School;
5. All homeless families and homeless students receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services including employment placement or preparation services, education resources, etc.;
6. The parents or guardians of homeless students 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;
7. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such students as well as unaccompanied students, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, etc. The public notice shall be written in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless students as well as to unaccompanied students;
8. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Disputes section of this policy;

9. The parent or guardian of a homeless student and any unaccompanied student are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the student's school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation to the student's assigned school;
10. School personnel receive annual professional development and other support in working with homeless students; and
11. Unaccompanied homeless students:
  - A. Are enrolled in school;
  - B. Have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as the state establishes for other students; and
  - C. Are informed of their status as independent students under 20 USC § 1087 vv(d), and may obtain assistance from the charter school liaison.

### School Stability

In determining the best interest of the homeless student, the Charter School shall:

1. Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent/guardian or the student (in the case of an unaccompanied youth);
2. Consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or the student (in the case of an unaccompanied youth);
3. Determine whether or not it is in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent, guardian, or the student (in the case of an unaccompanied student) on consideration of the above presumptions. If the Principal determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested, the student's parent/guardian or the unaccompanied student shall be provided with a written explanation of the reasons for the recommendation.
4. Ensure that the Charter School's liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions, gives priority to the views of such unaccompanied student, and provides notice to such student of the right to appeal under the Disputes section, below.

### Immediate Enrollment:

1. In general. The school selected in accordance with this policy shall immediately enroll the homeless student, even if the student:

- A. Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation; or
  - B. Has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness; or
  - C. Has outstanding fees or fines, including fees associated with extracurricular activities.
2. Relevant academic records. The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.
  3. Relevant health records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations or other required health records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent/guardian of the student or the unaccompanied student to the Charter School's liaison designated under Charter School Liaison below. The liaison shall assist in obtaining all necessary immunizations and/or screenings, or other required health records, in accordance with the Records section, below.

### Records

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless student shall be maintained:

1. So records involved are available, in a timely fashion, when the homeless student enters a new school or school district; and
2. In a manner consistent with Family Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA), applicable Idaho law, and Charter School policy.

### Disputes

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, enrollment in the school, or any other issue addressed in this policy:

1. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute and including all available appeals;
2. The parent or guardian of the student or the unaccompanied student shall be provided with a written explanation identifying the basis for any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the Charter School or other entity, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied student to appeal such decisions;
3. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied student shall be referred to the local educational agency liaison. Upon being informed of the dispute, the liaison shall, as expeditiously as

possible, initiate an appeal with the school and, if unsuccessful, to the state coordinator of the dispute regarding the educational placement of the homeless student; and

4. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in the school in which the student seeks enrollment pending resolution of the student's dispute.

### Placement Choice

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

### Privacy

Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be disclosable directory information under FERPA.

### Contact Information

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the Charter School and/or the enrolling school from requiring the parent or guardian of a homeless student to submit contact information.

### Comparable Services

Each homeless student in the Charter School shall be provided services comparable to services provided to other students in the school and includes the following:

1. Transportation services;
2. Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, or similar State or Charter School sponsored programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for English Learners;
3. Programs in career and technical education;
4. Programs for gifted and talented students; and
5. School nutrition programs. Upon enrollment, the student's name shall immediately be submitted to the district's nutrition services department as eligible for free meals.

## Tribal and State Coordination

The Charter School's liaison(s) for homeless students shall, as a part of their duties, coordinate and collaborate with the Idaho State Office of the Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths, as well as with community and school personnel who are responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless students. Specifically, contacts shall include tribal, public, and private agencies, Tribal Transportation Services, the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and others. Such coordination shall include collecting and providing to the state coordinator the reliable, valid, and comprehensive data needed to meet the requirements of 42 USC § 11432(f)(1) and (3).

## Homeless Status

Charter school liaisons, who have received training provided by the Idaho State Office of the Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth, may authorize an unaccompanied homeless student and/or the immediate family of such student for Federal Housing Assistance (see 42 USC §§ 11360 *et. seq.*) on behalf of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This authorization may be made without prior approval or other agency action on behalf of an unaccompanied student and/or the immediate family of said student provided the student is participating in the Charter School and the student or family otherwise meet eligibility requirements.

Locally, the Charter School liaison will also coordinate with the Tribal Social Services/Child Welfare Program (TSS/CWP), as appropriate.

## Title 1, Part A

Any student who is homeless and attends the Charter School is eligible for Title 1, Part A services. The Charter School shall set aside funding to provide homeless students who attend schools that do not participate in Title 1, Part A with services comparable to those provided by participating schools.

Cross Reference: 3210  
4160

Uniform Grievance Procedure  
Parents Right-to-Know Notices

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 11301, *et seq.*  
20 U.S.C. § 6311, *et seq.*

20 U.S.C. § 1400

42 U.S.C. § 1758

42 U.S.C. § 9801-642A

I.C. § 33-1404

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act  
Title 1, Part A, of the Elementary and  
Secondary Education Act as amended by  
ESSA of 2015

Individuals with Disabilities Education  
Improvement Act of 2006

Child Nutrition and WIC Act of 2004

Improving Head Start for School Readiness  
Act of 2007

Charter Schools to Receive Pupils

Policy History:

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