

### Homeless Education Policy

Walden Academy agrees to implement the following policy to ensure that all children and youth who are homeless receive a free appropriate public education and are given opportunity to succeed in school, consistent with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and requirements of submitting the Consolidated Application for accessing federal categorical funding.

Walden Academy District will ensure that children and youth who are homeless are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment.

Information regarding this policy, including the educational rights of children and youth identified as homeless will be distributed to all students upon enrollment and once during the school year, provided to students who seek to withdraw from Walden Academy, as well as other places where children, youth, and families who are homeless receive services, including family and youth shelters, motels, campgrounds, welfare departments, health departments, and other social service agencies. This policy is also available at [www.waldenacademy.org](http://www.waldenacademy.org) or by request in the school office.

#### **Definitions**

Children and youth experiencing homelessness means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- 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, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting placement in foster care.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
- Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

A child or youth will be considered to be homeless for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above.

*Unaccompanied youth* means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who meets the definition of homeless as defined above. The more general term youth also includes unaccompanied youth.

*Enroll* and *enrollment* means attending school and participating fully in all school activities.

*Immediate* means without delay.

*Parent* means a person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

*Local liaison* is the staff person designated by Walden Academy as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the local homeless education liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

### **Identification**

Children and youth who qualify as homeless in Walden Academy will be identified. Data will be collected on the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness in Walden Academy ; where they are living; their academic achievement (including state and local assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays or interruptions in their education.

### **School Selection**

Each child and youth enrolled at Walden Academy identified as homeless has the right to remain enrolled. Services that are required to be provided, including transportation to and from the Walden Academy and services under federal and other programs, will not be considered in determining feasibility.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment to the appropriate classroom, according to Walden Academy's enrollment policy may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records Walden Academy must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records. Initial placement of students whose records are not immediately available can be made based on the student's age and information gathered from the student, parent, and previous schools or teachers.
- Immunizations or immunization/health/medical/physical records (If necessary, the school must refer students to the local liaison to assist with obtaining immunizations and/or immunization and other medical records.)
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of clothing that conforms to dress code
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Unaccompanied youth must be enrolled immediately in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison.

### **Transportation**

If transportation is offered at Walden Academy, parents and unaccompanied youth will be informed of their right to transportation before they are enrolled. At a parent's or

unaccompanied youth's request, said transportation if offered will be provided for the entire time the child or youth attends Walden Academy, including during pending disputes.

### **Services**

Children and youth experiencing homelessness will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in Walden Academy, including:

- Transportation
- Title I, Part A services - Children and youth identified as homeless are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- Before- and after-school programs
- Free meals - On the day a child or youth identified as homeless enrolls in school, Walden Academy must submit the student's name to its food service program coordinator for immediate eligibility.

When applying any standing policy regarding tardiness or absences, any tardiness or absence related to a child or youth's living situation will be excused.

### **Disputes**

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth experiencing homelessness will be admitted immediately to the appropriate classroom, according to Walden Academy's enrollment policy pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student who is homeless to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I, Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

Walden Academy will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will refer the parent or youth to the local liaison immediately. The local liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled at Walden Academy and is receiving other services to which he or she is entitled and will resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The local liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues or schools are repeatedly delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth identified as homeless. The parent, unaccompanied youth, or school district may appeal the Walden Academy's decision as provided in Walden Academy's formal dispute resolution process.

See Exhibit 1 and 2 attached

### **Training**

The local liaison will conduct training regarding Title X requirements and sensitivity/awareness activities for all staff of Walden Academy.

**Coordination**

The local liaison will coordinate with and seek support from the local district and county coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, public and private service providers in the community, housing and placement agencies, local liaisons in neighboring districts, and other organizations and agencies. Coordination will include conducting outreach and training through those agencies. Both public and private agencies will be encouraged to support the local liaison and Walden Academy in implementing this policy.

**Liaison**

The School Director designates the Dean of Students and Receptionist/Registrar as the liaison for homeless students. The Dean of Students and Receptionist/Registrar shall:

1. Ensure that homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at Walden Academy.
3. Ensure that homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible.

Exhibit 1

DISTRICT EXPLANATION OF ENROLLMENT DECISION

Instructions: The following form is to be used when the district has denied a parent/guardian's enrollment request.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of person completing form:

Title: Phone number:

In accordance with federal law (42 USC [11432](#)), this notification is being provided to:

Name of parent/guardian:

Name of student(s):

District's placement decision (name of school): \_\_\_\_\_

After reviewing your request to enroll your child in the school listed above, your enrollment request has been denied. This determination was based upon:

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Walden Academy Policy and Procedure Manual  
Chapter 6000, Instruction  
Section 173, Homeless Education Policy  
Responsible Department: Administration and Office  
Date Adopted: July 10, 2013 Amended: October 24, 2022

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If you are not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, you may appeal to the \_\_\_\_\_ (county name) \_\_\_\_\_ County Office of Education. If you are not satisfied with the county office's decision, you may then appeal to the California Department of Education. The district's homeless liaison can assist you with this appeal.

Name of district's homeless liaison:

Address:

Phone number:

Name of County Office of Education homeless liaison:

Address:

Phone number:

You also have the following rights:

\* Pending resolution of this dispute, your child has the right to immediately enroll in the district school and to participate in school activities at the school.

\* You may provide written or verbal documentation to support your position. You may use the district's dispute resolution form. A copy of the dispute resolution form can be obtained from the district's liaison for homeless students.

\* You may seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys to help you with this appeal.

Exhibit 2

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM

Instructions: This form is to be completed by a parent/guardian or student when a dispute regarding enrollment has arisen. As an alternative to completing this form, the information on this form may be shared verbally with the district's liaison for homeless students.

Date submitted:

Name of person completing form:

Student's name:

Relation to student:

I may be contacted at the following:

Walden Academy Policy and Procedure Manual  
Chapter 6000, Instruction  
Section 173, Homeless Education Policy  
Responsible Department: Administration and Office  
Date Adopted: July 10, 2013 Amended: October 24, 2022

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Address:

Phone number:

Name of school requested:

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by:

District liaison  County liaison

Reason for the appeal: You may include an explanation to support your appeal in this space or provide your explanation verbally.

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I have been provided with:

A written explanation of the district's decision

Contact information for the district's homeless liaison

Contact information for the county office of education's homeless liaison