

## Northcoast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy

### Board Policy: Education for Homeless Children and Youth

#### Purpose & Philosophy

The Governing Board of Northcoast Preparatory and Performing Arts Academy recognizes that homelessness creates unique barriers to education. The Charter School is committed to ensuring that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education and the same challenging state academic standards as their permanently housed peers.

The Charter School will identify, enroll, and support homeless students to ensure they are not stigmatized, segregated, or discriminated against on the basis of their housing status.

#### 1. Key Definitions

Term	Definition under Federal & State Law
<b>Homeless Children and Youth</b>	Individuals who lack a <b>fixed, regular, and adequate</b> nighttime residence.
<b>Unaccompanied Youth</b>	A homeless youth who is <b>not in the physical custody</b> of a parent or guardian.
<b>School of Origin</b>	The school the student attended when permanently housed, the school in which the student was last enrolled, or any school attended within the preceding 15 months with which the student has a connection.
<b>Immediate Enrollment</b>	Admission and full participation in school activities <b>even if</b> the student lacks standard records (immunizations, residency proof, academic transcripts) or missed deadlines.

#### Examples of Homeless Situations include:

- Sharing housing due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or a similar reason ("couch surfing" or "doubled-up").

- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campground sites due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus/train stations.

## **2. Designation of Homeless Liaison**

The Executive Director/Principal shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve as the **Charter School Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth**.

- **Name/Title of Current Liaison:** Adam Hess, Charter Director
- **Contact Information:** 707-822-0861, ahess@northcoastprep.org

The Liaison's duties include, but are not limited to, ensuring that:

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have full, equal opportunity to succeed in the Charter School.
3. Families and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (Part C of IDEA), and referrals to healthcare, dental, mental health, and housing services.
4. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless youth is disseminated at the school site and places in the community frequented by families experiencing housing instability.
5. School personnel receive annual professional development regarding the needs and rights of homeless students.

## **3. Enrollment and School Stability**

### **Immediate Enrollment**

The Charter School shall immediately enroll a homeless youth who seeks enrollment, subject to the school's capacity and the procedures stated in its approved charter.

- Enrollment cannot be delayed or denied because the student is unable to produce standard documentation (e.g., immunizations, health check-ups, proof of residency, academic or disciplinary records, guardianship paperwork).
- Enrollment cannot be denied because the student missed an application or lottery deadline during any period of homelessness.

## School of Origin Continuity

To promote educational stability, the Charter School will presume that keeping a homeless student in their school of origin is in their best interest, unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

- **Duration:** A homeless student may remain in the Charter School (if it is their school of origin) for the **entire duration of their homelessness**.
- **Transition to Permanent Housing:** If a student obtains permanent housing during the school year, the Charter School shall allow the student to remain enrolled until the end of the current academic year (or, if the student is in high school, through graduation).

## 4. Dispute Resolution Process

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the following procedures must be followed strictly:

[Dispute Initiated] → [Immediate Enrollment/Retention] → [Written Notice within 1 Business Day] → [Liaison Review & Formal Resolution]

1. **Immediate Enrollment Pending Resolution:** The Charter School shall immediately enroll the student or continue the student's enrollment in the school, and permit full participation in all school activities, pending the final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
2. **Written Notice:** The Charter School will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth a written explanation of its decision in a manner and form understandable to them. The notice will explicitly detail the right to appeal to the County Office of Education (COE) and the California Department of Education (CDE).
3. **Liaison Assistance:** The Charter School Liaison will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible and assist the parent, guardian, or youth in filing an appeal.

## 5. Comparable Services & Transportation

The Charter School shall provide homeless students with services comparable to those offered to other students, including but not limited to:

- Transportation services (coordinated to ensure access to the school of origin).
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria (e.g., Title I, Special Education, English Learner support).
- Programs in career and technical education, and gifted and talented programs.

- **School Nutrition:** Homeless students are automatically eligible for free breakfast and lunch programs without requiring standard applications or verification.

## **6. Coursework, Partial Credits, and Graduation Requirements**

Pursuant to **California Education Code Section 51225.2 and 51225.3**, the Charter School will implement practices to remove institutional barriers to graduation:

- **Partial Credits:** The Charter School will accept and issue full or partial credit for all coursework satisfactorily completed by a homeless student while attending another public school, charter school, juvenile court school, or nonpublic school. The school will not require the student to retake any portion of a course they have already completed.
- **Exemption from Local Graduation Requirements:** A homeless student who transfers to the Charter School any time after completing their second year of high school will be exempt from any local graduation requirements that exceed the minimum California state graduation requirements, unless the school finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate by the end of their fourth year of high school.
- **Retroactive Exemptions:** If a student qualifies for the exemption, it will continue to apply even if their housing status changes or if they transfer out of the Charter School.

## **7. Protection from Involuntary Removal**

The Charter School shall not involuntarily remove, suspend, or expel a homeless student without adhering to strict due process. The Charter School Liaison must be notified immediately of any disciplinary hearings, manifestation determinations, or suspension/expulsion proceedings involving a student identified as homeless, to ensure their rights under federal and state law are fully protected.

**Approved by the Governing Board on:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Effective Date:** June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026