

AR 6173.1 Education for Foster Youth

Foster youth, foster child, or student in foster care means any of the following: (Education Code 42238.01, 48853.5)

1. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 300, whether or not the child has been removed from the child's home by the juvenile court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 319 or 361.
2. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 602, whether or not the child has been removed from the child's home.
3. A child who is the subject of a petition filed pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 602, has been removed from the child's home by the juvenile court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 727, and is in foster care as defined by Welfare and Institutions Code 727.4(d).
4. A nonminor who is under the transition jurisdiction of a juvenile court, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code 450, and satisfies the criteria specified in Education Code 42238.01.
5. A child who has been removed from the youth's home pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 309.
6. A dependent child of the court of an Indian tribe, consortium of tribes, or tribal organization who is the subject of a petition filed in the tribal court pursuant to the court's jurisdiction in accordance with the tribe's law.
7. A child who is the subject of a voluntary placement agreement, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code 11400(p).

Person holding the right to make educational decisions means a responsible adult appointed by a court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code 361 or 726.

School of origin means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the preceding 15 months and with which the youth is connected, the district liaison shall, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, determine, in the best interests of the foster youth, which school is the school of origin. This determination shall be made in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, and shall be based on the best interests of the foster youth. (Education Code 48853.5)

Best interests means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, the proximity to the school at the time of placement, appropriateness of the educational setting, educational stability, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress, and the foster youth's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all district students. (Education Code 48850, 48853)

District Liaison

The Superintendent designates the following position as the district liaison for foster youth: (Education Code 48853.5)

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Director of Pupil Services

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The district's liaison for foster youth shall:

1. Ensure and facilitate the proper educational placement, enrollment in school, and checkout from school of students in foster care. (Education Code 48853.5)
2. Ensure proper transfer of credits, records, and grades when students in foster care transfer from one school to another or from one district to another. (Education Code 48853.5, 48645.5)

When a student in foster care is enrolling in a district school, the liaison shall contact the school last attended by the student to obtain, within two business days, all academic and other records. When a foster youth is transferring to a new school, the liaison shall provide the student's records to the new school within two business days of receiving the new school's request. (Education Code 48853.5)

3. Notify a foster youth's educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker when a foster youth is undergoing any expulsion or other disciplinary proceeding including a manifestation determination for a foster youth who is a student with a disability, prior to a change in the foster youth's placement. (Education Code 48853.5, 48911, 48915.5, 48918.1)
4. As needed, make appropriate referrals to ensure that students in foster care receive necessary special education services and services under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
5. Ensure that students in foster care receive appropriate school-based services, such as supplemental instruction, counseling, or after-school services.
6. Develop protocols and procedures so that district staff, including principals, school registrars, and attendance clerks, are aware of the requirements for the proper enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth.
7. Collaborate with the county placing agency, social services, probation officers, juvenile court officers, and other appropriate agencies to help coordinate services for the district's foster youth.
8. Monitor the educational progress of foster youth and provide reports to the Superintendent or designee and the Governing Board based on indicators identified in the district's local control and accountability plan.

The Superintendent or designee shall regularly monitor the caseload of the district liaison, as well as his/her additional duties outside of the foster youth program, to determine whether adequate time and resources are available to meet the needs of foster youth in the district.

Enrollment

A foster youth placed in a licensed children's institution or foster family home within the district shall attend programs operated by the district unless one of the following circumstances applies: (Education Code

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48853, 48853.5)

1. The student has an individualized education program requiring placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency or in another local educational agency.
2. The parent/guardian or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be placed in another educational program and submits a written statement to the district indicating that determination and that he/she is aware of the following:
 - a. The student has a right to attend a regular public school in the least restrictive environment.
 - b. The alternate educational program is a special education program, if applicable.
 - c. The decision to unilaterally remove the student from the district school and to place him/her in an alternate education program may not be financed by the district.
 - d. Any attempt to seek reimbursement for the alternate education program may be at the expense of the parent/guardian or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student.
3. At the initial placement or any subsequent change in placement, the student exercises the right to continue in the school of origin, as defined above. In any such circumstance, the following shall apply:
 - a. The student may continue in the school of origin for the duration of the court's jurisdiction.
 - b. If the court's jurisdiction over a grade K-8 student is terminated prior to the end of a school year, the student may continue in his/her school of origin for the remainder of the school year.
 - c. If the student is transitioning between school grade levels, he/she shall be allowed to continue in the district of origin in the same attendance area to provide him/her the benefit of matriculating with his/her peers in accordance with the established feeder patterns of school districts. A student who is transitioning to a middle school or high school shall be allowed to enroll in the school designated for matriculation in another school district.

The district liaison may, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, recommend that the youth's right to attend the school of origin be waived and the foster youth be enrolled in any school that students living in the attendance area in which the foster youth resides are eligible to attend. All decisions shall be made in accordance with the foster youth's best interests. (Education Code 48853.5)

Prior to making any recommendation to move a foster youth from his/her school of origin, the liaison shall provide the youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth with a written explanation of the basis for the recommendation and how this recommendation serves the youth's best interests. (Education Code 48853.5)

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The role of the liaison shall be advisory with respect to placement decisions and determination of the school of origin. (Education Code 48853.5)

If the liaison, in consultation with the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, agrees that the best interests of the youth would be served by a transfer to a school other than the school of origin, the principal or designee of the new school shall immediately enroll the foster youth. The youth shall be immediately enrolled regardless of whether the foster youth: (Education Code 48853.5)

1. Has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended;
2. Does not have clothing normally required by the school, such as school uniforms; and
3. Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, and medical records, including, but not limited to, immunization records or other documentation.

If a person with the right to make educational decisions for a foster youth or the foster youth disagrees with the liaison's enrollment recommendation, an appeal may be filed with the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall make a determination within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. Within 30 calendar days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth or foster youth may appeal that decision to the Board. The Board shall consider the issue at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Board's decision shall be final.

If any dispute arises regarding the request of a foster youth to remain in the school of origin, the youth has the right to remain in the school of origin pending resolution of the dispute. (Education Code 48853.5)

Transportation

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with the local child welfare agency to determine how transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded in a cost-effective manner to enable foster youth to remain in their school of origin, for the duration of their time in foster care, when it is in their best interest to do so. Such transportation costs may be paid by either the child welfare agency or the district, or shared by both. (20 USC 6312)

Any fees that the district charges for home-to-school transportation and other transportation as expressly provided by law shall be waived for foster youth. (Education Code 39807.5)

Effect of Absences on Grades

The grades of a student in foster care shall not be lowered for any absence from school that is due to either of the following circumstances: (Education Code 49069.5)

1. A decision by a court or placement agency to change the student's placement, in which case the student's grades shall be calculated as of the date the student left school.
2. A verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity.

Transfer of Coursework and Credits

When a foster youth transfers into a district school, the district shall accept and issue full credit for any

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coursework that the foster youth has satisfactorily completed while attending another public school, a juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency and shall not require the foster youth to retake the course. (Education Code 51225.2)

If the foster youth did not complete the entire course, the foster youth shall be issued partial credit for the coursework completed and shall be required to take the portion of the course that the foster youth did not complete at their previous school. However, the district may require the foster youth to retake the portion of the course completed if, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the foster youth, the district finds that the foster youth is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. Whenever partial credit is issued to a foster youth in any particular course, the foster youth shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the foster youth may continue and complete the entire course. (Education Code 51225.2)

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A foster youth who changes residences pursuant to a court order or decision of a child welfare worker shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities. (Education Code 48850)

Notification and Complaints

Information regarding the educational rights of foster youth shall be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed to students, parents/guardians, employees, and other interested parties pursuant to 5 CCR 4622. (Education Code 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2)

Any complaint alleging that the district has not complied with requirements regarding the education of foster youth may be filed in accordance with the district's procedures in AR 1312.3 - Uniform Complaint Procedures. If the district finds merit in a complaint, the district shall provide a remedy to the affected student. A complainant not satisfied with the district's decision may appeal the decision to the California Department of Education (CDE) and shall receive a written decision regarding the appeal within 60 days of CDE's receipt of the appeal. If the CDE finds merit in an appeal, the district shall provide a remedy to the affected student. (Education Code 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2)

Board Approved:

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