

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Shanél Valley Academy (“SVA” or the “Charter School”) Board of Directors desires to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational program, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards, are provided a free and appropriate public education, are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who (42 U.S.C. § 11434a):

1. 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; or are abandoned in hospitals;
2. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
3. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and/or
4. Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition of “homeless.”

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent or guardian. In the case of unaccompanied youth, status is determined by the School Liaison.

School Liaison

The Board of Directors designates the following staff person as the School Liaison for homeless students (42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)):

Julie Alvarez | McKinney-Vento Liaison
1 Ralph Bettcher Drive
Hopland, CA 95449
707-744-1485
julie@shanelvalleyacademy.com

The School Liaison shall ensure that the following requirements are fulfilled by the Charter School (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)):

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies, and through the annual housing questionnaire administered by the Charter

Commented [MB1]: Client Note: See detailed description under the Housing Questionnaire section below.

School.

2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at SVA.
3. Homeless students and families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including: services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Head Start Act; early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”); any other preschool programs administered by SVA if any; and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
4. Parents/guardians 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.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated at places frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth.
6. Enrollment/admissions disputes are mediated in accordance with law, SVA charter, and Board policy.
7. Parents/guardians and any unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, as applicable.
8. School personnel providing services receive professional development and other support.
9. The School Liaison collaborates with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.
10. Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school; have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth; and are informed of their status as independent students and that the youths may obtain assistance from the School Liaison to receive verification of such status for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The California Department of Education publishes a list of the contact information for the Homeless Education Liaisons in the state, which is available at:
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>

Enrollment

The Charter School will work with homeless students and their parent/guardian to ensure that each student is placed in the least restrictive educational programs, and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all students, including, but not necessarily limited to, interscholastic sports. All decisions regarding a homeless student’s education and placement will be based on the best interest of the child and shall consider, among other factors, educational stability and the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress.

SVA shall immediately admit/enroll the students for which the Charter School is a School of

Origin. "School of Origin" means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. SVA shall also immediately enroll a homeless youth who seeks to enroll in the Charter School, if the youth would otherwise be eligible to attend and subject to SVA's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the SVA charter and Board policy. A homeless youth who is enrolled will have the right to attend classes and participate fully in school activities, including extracurricular activities.

The youth shall be immediately enrolled even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunizations, other required health records, proof of residency) or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C); Education Code Section 48850(a)(3)(A).)

If the student needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Principal or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the School Liaison. The School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the students. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

A homeless youth may remain in the student's school of origin for the entire period for which the youth is homeless. Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the child's status as a homeless student as follows:

1. For students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, inclusive, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through the duration of the academic year in which the student's status changed.
2. For students enrolled in high school, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through graduation.

If the Charter School operates an intersession program, Charter School shall grant priority access to homeless students. Notwithstanding any other law, if the homeless student will be moving during an intersession period, the pupil's parent, guardian, educational rights holder ("ERH"), Indian custodian¹ in the case of an Indian child, or, if none of the preceding are applicable, an accompanied homeless student themselves shall determine which school the pupil attends for the intersession period, if applicable. "Intersession program" means an expanded learning program offered by the Charter School on nonschooldays, including, but not limited to, summer school. "Indian custodian" is as the term is defined in Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code.

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over admissions/enrollment, the students shall be immediately admitted (subject to Charter School's capacity and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School charter and Board policy), pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.

The parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the admission/enrollment

¹ "Indian custodian" means any Indian person who has legal custody of an Indian child under tribal law or custom or under State law or to whom temporary physical care, custody, and control has been transferred by the parent of such child. *Section 1903 of Title 25 of the United States Code*

decision, including an explanation of the parent/guardian's right to appeal the decision. The parent/guardian shall also be referred to the School Liaison.

The School Liaison shall carry out the Board-adopted dispute resolution and complaint process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).)

Housing Questionnaire

SVA shall administer a housing questionnaire for purposes of identifying homeless children and youth. SVA shall ensure that the housing questionnaire is based on the best practices developed by the CDE. SVA shall annually provide the housing questionnaire to all parents/guardians of students and to all unaccompanied youths at SVA. The housing questionnaire shall include an explanation of the rights and protections a student has as a homeless child or youth or as an unaccompanied youth. The housing questionnaire shall be available in paper form. The housing questionnaire shall be available in the primary language other than English spoken by fifteen (15) percent or more of the students enrolled at SVA and shall be translated into other languages upon request of a student's parent/guardian or an unaccompanied youth. SVA shall collect the completed housing questionnaires and annually report to the CDE the number of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths enrolled. (Education Code Section 48851.)

Commented [MB2]: Client note: AB 27 added Ed. Code 48851 which requires [SB 125](#) to administer a housing questionnaire to all students/families beginning no later than the end of the 2021-22 school year. The CDE's Model Housing Questionnaire is available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/housingquestionnaire.pdf>

Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall promptly be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in SVA such as (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4)):

- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for students with disabilities and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- Charter School nutrition programs
- Expanded Learning Programs

Transportation

In the event that SVA provides transportation services to all SVA students, SVA shall provide comparable transportation services to each homeless child or youth attending SVA, as noted above. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(4).)

If SVA does not otherwise provide transportation services to all SVA students, SVA shall ensure that transportation is provided for homeless students to and from SVA, at the request of the parent or guardian (or School Liaison) if SVA is the student's school of origin. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J).) Transportation provided by SVA will be adequate and appropriate for the

Student's situation, but SVA does not commit to any one method of transportation for all youth.

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A homeless child or youth shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities.

Waiver of Fees for Afterschool Programs

The Charter School shall not charge any student who is a homeless youth any family fees associated with an After-School Education and Safety ("ASES") Program operated by the Charter School.

Commented [MB3]: Client Note: This section can be removed if the school does not have a ASES afterschool program or does not require residency for extracurricular activities.

Acceptance of Coursework

The Charter School will accept coursework satisfactorily completed by the homeless child while attending another public school, a juvenile court school, a charter school, a school in a country other than the United States, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency even if the pupil did not complete the entire course and shall issue that pupil full or partial credit for coursework completed. If the student did not complete the entire , the Charter School shall not require the student to retake the portion of the course the student completed unless the Charter School, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. When partial credit is awarded in a particular course, the homeless student shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the student may continue and complete the entire course.

Professional Development

All administrators, teachers and employees of SVA, including the Charter School Liaison, will be provided professional development on the identification, services, and sensitivity necessary when dealing with homeless children and youth. The Charter School Liaison will verify that the Charter School is providing the required training to school personnel providing services to youth experiencing homelessness at least annually through the CDE's verification system. (Education Code Section 48852.5(c)(2).)

Commented [MB4]: NEW Client Note: Please note that this section is optional for school staff that do not provide services to students experiencing homelessness. Accordingly, you may delete this section if so desired.

However, please note that professional development for the School Liaison is not optional and is required. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(f)(6)):

provide professional development opportunities for local educational agency personnel and the local educational agency liaison designated under subsection (g)(1)(J)(ii) to assist such personnel and liaison in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless children and youths, and provide training on the definitions of terms related to homelessness specified in sections 11302, 11360, and 11434a of this title to the liaison.

Also, professional development for those staff members who do provide services to students experiencing homeless is legally required, pursuant to the below paragraph.

Commented [MB5]: NEW Comment to Client: This requirement is effective January 1, 2022, pursuant to EC 48852.5(c)(2).

The Charter School Liaison shall offer training to SVA certificated and classified employees providing services to students experiencing homelessness, including, but not limited to, teachers, support staff, and other school staff who work with pupils, at least annually relating to:

- (1) SVA's homeless education program policies; and
- (2) Recognition of signs that pupils are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

The Charter School Liaison shall inform such employees of the availability of training and the services the Charter School Liaison provides to aid in the identification and provision of services to students who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

Commented [MB6]: NEW Comment to Client: Training for the school personnel identified here is required pursuant to Ed Code section 48851.3(c) [AB 408]

Notice

For any homeless students who seeks enrollment at the Charter School, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian at the time of enrollment and at least twice annually while the students is enrolled at the School in alignment with the law. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(e)(3)(C).)

Annual Policy Review

The Charter School shall annually review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the identification of homeless children and youths or the enrollment of homeless children and youths at the Charter School. In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the identification, enrollment, and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school. SVA's review of its homeless education program policies shall use resources developed by the CDE and posted on the CDE's internet website and resources developed by homeless education technical assistance centers established using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

School Website Posting

SVA shall ensure that the following information is posted, and updated as necessary, on its internet website:

- The name and contact information of the Charter School Liaison(s) for homeless children and youths.
- The contact information of any employee or contractor that assists the Charter School Liaison in completing the Liaison's duties.
- Specific information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

Complaints of Noncompliance

A complaint of noncompliance with any of the requirements outlined above may be filed through the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available upon request at the main office.

Adopted: 9/6/21

Amended: 6/27/24

Commented [MB7]: Client Note: Per EC 48852.6 (AB 27), the Charter School must post the Charter School Liaison's contact information on the school website (and the contact information of any employees/contractors whose duties include assisting the liaison in completing the liaison's duties under 42 USC 11432(g)(6).

The school website must also include specific information regarding the educational rights and resources available to persons experiencing homelessness.

Commented [MB8]: Client Note: While not required to be included in the Policy, the Charter School may want to keep this section here to remind itself of the required website postings related to this Policy, per Ed Code section 48852.6

Commented [MB9]: Please ensure the School has a UCP policy and that it is located in the main office. If it is located elsewhere (e.g., the School website), please revise the reference here to reflect where the UCP policy is located. If the School does not have a UCP policy, please let us know and we would be happy to draft a UCP policy for the School.