

Support for Homeless and Foster Students

California Virtual Academies and IQ Academy @ Los Angeles are committed to supporting the unique educational, emotional, and social needs of all students, including those who are in foster care or are experiencing homelessness. These hardships often cause additional stress and anxiety that affect a child's capacity to focus in school. Through a collaborative effort between the Compass Program, school administration, teachers, and families, we strive to create a system of support for each student and family.

Foster Youth

A child in foster care is defined as any child who has been removed from the custody of their parent(s)/guardian(s) by the juvenile court and placed in a group home or foster home. The child is under the direct supervision of a county probation officer or social worker. Foster Youth can also include children who are receiving family maintenance services; they may be living in the home and still receiving court-appointed support from a social worker. In these instances, custody has not been returned to parents and the child remains a Foster Youth.

Educational Rights of Foster Youth

In accordance with AB 490 foster youth have the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin for the duration of the school year.
- Immediately enroll in school even if they are missing records normally needed for school enrollment.
- Attend a regular, mainstream school unless they have an IEP requiring a different educational placement, or the person with educational rights determines that it is in the child's best interest to attend a different educational program or remain in his/her school of origin.
- Have their school records transferred in a timely manner.
- Have their grades protected. A youth's grades cannot be lowered due to absences caused by a change in placement, attendance at a court hearing, or court-ordered activity.
- Receive partial credits. Schools must award foster students credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at another public school, a juvenile court school, or a non-public, non-sectarian school.

Homeless Youth

A student that is defined as homeless is a child without a regular, fixed, and adequate nighttime residence. The child may live in a shelter, a temporary home, a motel, a car, a campground, or on the street. Homeless children may also be living temporarily with relatives or friends because of the loss of permanent housing.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate educational programs as other children and youth. This federal law mandates the elimination of educational barriers facing homeless children and youth, to increase school stability and protect students from discrimination. Under this legislation, homeless children and youth are entitled to have access to the same educational experience and resources as all students.

Educational Rights of Homeless Youth:

- Immediate enrollment in school even if they are unable to provide records - such as proof of residence, immunizations, birth certificate, or school transcripts and other school records. After

enrollment, our schools will work with you to collect necessary documents or provide alternate documentation as appropriate.

- The ability to continue in the school that the student attended before becoming homeless (school of origin).
- The ability to attend the same local public schools that any other student living in the same area is entitled to attend.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of required school records or documents.
- Enroll and attend classes even while the school and parent/student seek to resolve a dispute over enrollment.
- Participate in all school-related activities and support services.

Homeless & Foster Youth Liaison

For questions about supports for Homeless or Foster Youth, please reach out to:

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