

Masada Charter School
365 W. Cannon Avenue
Centennial Park, AZ 86021

Homeless Education Policy and Procedures

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Masada to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to educational programs, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State of Arizona and Masada Charter School academic standards, are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship.

It includes children and youths who:

- Are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Are living in emergency shelters
- Are abandoned in hospital; or are awaiting foster care placement
- Have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Runaway children or children who are abandoned

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.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents or in the case of unaccompanied youth the local educational agency liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of Masada Charter School forms and/or through direct contact with Masada Charter School staff.

Procedure

School Selection

Placement in a school shall be according to the child's best interest,

- Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- Enroll the child or youth in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- Parents/guardians may request their child attend any public school in the Colorado City/Centennial Park area and to the extent feasible Masada School will try to comply with these requests.

In determining the best interests of the child or youth to the extent feasible the child or youth will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, for the duration of homelessness.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

The 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.

Enrollment

The school shall immediately enroll the child/youth, according to the enrollment policy even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school.

The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

Residency

A homeless child or youth is a resident if the child is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently.

The child or youth shall be considered a resident when living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis not solely for school purposes or for participation in extra curricular activities.

Homeless students who do not live with their parents or guardians may enroll themselves in school.

The address listed on the enrollment forms becomes proof of residency.

Transportation

Masada will ensure homeless students have access to the same transportation services as other students have access to, and that homeless students are provided with transportation opportunities.

Guardianship

For the purposes of placement, any parent, guardian or person in loco parentis who has legal or physical custody of a homeless child or youth shall enroll that child or youth directly in Masada Charter School.

Once a child or youth is enrolled in and attending school, Masada Charter School Guardian Responsibilities Form must be completed within a reasonable period of time for those children or youth who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as

- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria such as ESL or special education programs
- Programs for “At Risk” students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs
- Title I services
- After School programs

Local Educational Agency Liaison

The School Administrator will be the Local Educational Agency Liaison for homeless children and youths.

The Local Educational Agency Liaison or designee shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youths are voluntarily identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies
- Homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the district.

- Homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services.
- The parents or guardians of a homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless youth is informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the child/youth.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in such public places as schools, churches, and other locations frequented by low income families.
- Compliance with all policies and procedures and mediate enrollment disputes.
- The parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of the school's transportation services.
- Coordination of services between Masada Charter School and other homeless family service providers.
- Assistance is provided to children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Programs for homeless students are coordinated with other federal and local programs.

Disputes

The Local Educational Liaison shall carry out the dispute process as expeditiously as possible after receiving the notice of the dispute. Appeals will go to the appropriate Administration. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the Arizona Department of Education.