
EDUCATION FOR FOSTER AND MOBILE YOUTH POLICY

Excel Academy Charter Schools (“EACS” or the “Charter School”) recognizes that Foster and Mobile Youth may face significant barriers to achieving academic success due to their family circumstances, disruption to their educational program, and their emotional, social, and other health needs. To enable such students to achieve state and charter school academic standards, the Charter School shall provide them with full access to the Charter School’s educational program and implement strategies identified as required by law and necessary for the improvement of the academic achievement of foster youth in the Charter School’s local control and accountability plan (“LCAP”).

Definitions

1. **Foster youth:** Foster youth means a child who has been removed from the child’s home pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code section 309 and/or is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 300 or 602. This includes children who are the subject of cases in dependency court and juvenile justice court.
2. **Former juvenile court school pupil:** means a pupil who, upon completion of the pupil’s second year of high school, transfers from a juvenile court school to the Charter School.
3. **Child of a military family:** refers to a student who resides in the household of an active duty military member.
4. **Currently Migratory Child:** refers to a child who, within the last 12-months, has moved with a parent, guardian, or other person having custody to the Charter School from another Local Educational Agency (“LEA”), either within California or from another state, so that the child or a member of the child’s immediate family might secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity, and whose parents or guardians have been informed of the child’s eligibility for migrant education services. “Currently Migratory Child” includes a child who, without the parent/guardian, has continued to migrate annually to secure temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity.
5. **Educational Rights Holder (“ERH”):** means a parent, guardian, responsible adult appointed by a court to make educational decisions for a minor pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 319, 361 or 726, or a person holding the right to make educational decisions for the pupil pursuant to Education Code section 56055.
6. **School of origin:** School of origin means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the foster youth was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which the foster youth was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, the Charter School liaison for foster youth, in

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consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the ERH for the foster youth, shall determine, in the best interests of the foster youth the school that shall be deemed the school of origin.

7. **Best interest:** Best interest means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for foster youth, consideration is given to, among other factors, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational program and the foster youth's access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all Charter School students.
8. **Pupil participating in a newcomer program:** means a pupil who is participating in a program designed to meet the academic and transitional needs of newly arrived immigrant pupils that has as a primary objective the development of English language proficiency.

Within this Policy, foster/juvenile court youth, former juvenile court school pupils, a child of a military family, a currently migratory child, and a pupil participating in the newcomer program will be referred to collectively as “Foster and Mobile Youth.”

CHARTER SCHOOL LIAISON

In order to help facilitate the enrollment, placement, and transfer of Foster and Mobile Youth to the Charter School, the Governing Board shall designate a Charter School Foster and Mobile Youth liaison. The Board of Directors designates the following positions as the Charter School’s liaison for Foster and Mobile Youth:

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Title I Coordinator
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The Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison shall be responsible for the following:

1. Ensure and facilitate the proper educational placement, enrollment in the Charter School, and checkout from the Charter School of foster youth.
2. Ensure proper transfer of credits, records, and grades when students in foster care transfer to or from the Charter School.
3. When a foster youth is enrolling in the Charter School, the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison shall contact the school last attended by the student, within two (2) business days to obtain all academic and other records. The last school attended by the foster youth shall provide all required records to the new school regardless of any outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies owed to the school last attended. When a foster

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youth is transferring to a new school, the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison shall provide the student's records to the new school within two (2) business days of receiving the new school's request, regardless of any outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or moneys owed to the Charter School.

4. When required by law, notify the foster youth's attorney and the appropriate representative of the county child welfare agency at least ten (10) calendar days preceding the date of the following:
 - a. An expulsion hearing for a discretionary act under the Charter School's charter.
 - b. Any meeting to extend a suspension until an expulsion decision is rendered if the decision to recommend expulsion is a discretionary act under the Charter School's charter. The foster youth's attorney and the agency representative will be invited to participate.
 - c. A manifestation determination meeting prior to a change in the foster youth's placement if the change in placement is due to an act for which the recommendation for expulsion is discretionary and the student is a student with a disability under state and federal special education laws. The foster youth's attorney and the agency representative will be invited to participate.
5. 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.
6. As needed, ensure that students in foster care receive appropriate school-based services.
7. Develop protocols and procedures for creating awareness for Charter School staff of the requirements for the proper enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth.
8. Collaborate with the county placing agency, social services, probation officers, juvenile court officers, and other appropriate agencies to help coordinate services for the Charter School's foster youth.
9. Monitor the educational progress of foster youth and provide reports to the Director or designee and the Board of Directors based on indicators identified in the Charter School's local control and accountability plan.

This Policy does not grant the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison authority that supersedes the authority granted under state and federal law to a parent or legal guardian retaining educational rights, a responsible person appointed by the court to represent the child pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 319, 361 or 726, a surrogate parent, or a foster parent exercising authority under Education Code section 56055. The role of the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison is advisory with respect to placement options and determination of the school of origin.

School Stability and Enrollment

1. The Charter School will work with foster youth and their ERH to ensure that each foster youth is placed in the least restrictive educational programs and has access to the academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are

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available to all students. All decisions regarding a foster youth'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.

2. Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest. The Charter School will immediately enroll a foster youth, a currently migratory child, or child of a military family seeking re-enrollment in the Charter School as their school of origin (subject to the Charter School's capacity, if the Charter School is not the student's school of origin, and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy).
3. A foster youth, currently migratory child, or child of a military family who seeks to transfer to the Charter School will be immediately enrolled (subject to the Charter School's capacity, if the Charter School is not the student's school of origin, and pursuant to the procedures stated in the Charter School's charter and Board policy) even if the student has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended or is unable to meet normal enrollment documentation (e.g. producing medical records or academic records from a previous school).
4. At the initial detention or placement, or any subsequent change in placement, a foster youth may continue in their school of origin for the duration of the court's jurisdiction. A currently migratory child or child of a military family may continue in their school of origin as long as the student meets the definition of a currently migratory child or child of a military family as described above. Foster youth, currently migratory children, and children of military families have the right to remain in their school of origin following the termination of the court's jurisdiction or termination of the child's status as a currently migratory child or child of a military family, as follows:
 - a. 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.
 - b. For students enrolled in high school, the student will be allowed to continue in the school of origin through graduation.
5. If the foster youth, currently migratory child or child of a military family is transitioning between school grade levels, the student shall be allowed to continue in the district of origin in the same attendance area to provide the student the benefit of matriculating with the student's 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.
6. The Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison may, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the ERH for the foster youth, recommend that the foster youth's right to attend the school of origin be waived and the foster youth be enrolled in any district school that the student would otherwise be eligible to attend as a resident of the school district or in the Charter School consistent with current enrollment procedures. All

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decisions shall be made in accordance with the foster youth's best interests.

7. Prior to making any recommendation to move a foster youth from the youth's school of origin, the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison shall provide the foster youth and the foster youth's ERH with a written explanation of the basis for the recommendation and how the recommendation serves the foster youth's best interests.
8. If any dispute arises regarding a foster youth's request to remain in the Charter School as the foster youth's school of origin, the foster youth has the right to remain in the Charter School pending resolution of the dispute. The dispute shall be resolved in accordance with the existing Charter School dispute resolution process.

Transportation

The Charter School shall not be responsible for providing transportation to allow a foster youth to attend school, unless there is an agreement with a local child welfare agency that the Charter School assumes part or all of the transportation costs in accordance with Section 6312(c)(5) of Title 20 of the United States Code, or unless required by federal law. The Charter School is not prohibited from providing transportation, at its discretion, to allow a foster youth to attend school.

In accordance with Section 6312(c)(5) of Title 20 of the United States Code, Charter School shall collaborate with local child welfare agencies to develop and implement clear written procedures to address the transportation needs of foster youth to maintain them in their school of origin, when it is in the best interest of the foster youth.

For any student who has an individualized education program ("IEP"), the student's IEP team will determine if the student requires special education transportation as a related service regardless of the student's status.

Effect of Absences on Grades

The grades of foster youth shall not be lowered for any absence from the Charter School that is due to either of the following circumstances:

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

The Charter School shall accept coursework satisfactorily completed by a Foster and Mobile Youth 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

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even if the student did not complete the entire course and shall issue that student full or partial credit for the coursework completed.

If the Foster and Mobile Youth did not complete the entire course, the youth shall be issued partial credit for the coursework completed and shall not be required to retake the portion of the course that the youth completed at another school unless the Charter School in consultation with the student's ERH, 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 and Mobile Youth in any particular course, the youth shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that the youth may continue and complete the entire course.

In no event shall the Charter School prevent a Foster and Mobile Youth from taking or retaking a course to meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the California State University or the University of California.

** For purposes of coursework completed by a student who is a child of a military family, "public school" includes schools operated by the United States Department of Defense.

Applicability of Graduation Requirements:

To obtain a high school diploma from the Charter School, a student must complete all courses required by the Charter School and fulfill any additional graduation requirements prescribed by the Board.

However, Foster and Mobile Youth who transfer to the Charter School any time after the completion of their second year of high school, and pupils participating in a newcomer program who are in their third or fourth year of high school, shall be exempt from any of the Charter School's graduation requirements that are in excess of the California minimum graduation requirements specified in Education Code section 51225.3 ("additional graduation requirements") unless the Charter School makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the Charter School's graduation requirements by the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

To determine whether a Foster and Mobile Youth is in their third or fourth year of high school, either the number of credits the student has earned to the date of transfer or the length of the student's school enrollment may be used, whichever will qualify the student for the exemption. For a pupil participating in a newcomer program, enrollment in grade 11 or 12 may be used to determine whether the student is in his or her third or fourth year of high school.

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Within 30 calendar days of the date that a student who may qualify for exemption under the above requirements transfers into the Charter School, the Charter School shall notify the student, the ERH, and where applicable, the student's social worker or probation officer, of the availability of the exemption and whether the foster youth qualifies for the exemption. If the Charter School fails to provide timely notice of the availability of the exemption, the Foster and Mobile Youth shall be eligible for the exemption from the additional graduation requirements once notified, even if that notification occurs after the termination of the court's jurisdiction over the student, if the foster youth otherwise qualifies for the exemption.

If a foster youth is exempted from the Charter School's additional graduation requirements pursuant to this Policy and completes the statewide coursework requirements specified in Educational Code section 51225.3 before the end of the student's fourth year of high school and that student would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the Charter School, the Charter School shall not require or request that the student graduate before the end of the student's fourth year of high school.

The Director or designee shall notify a Foster and Mobile Youth and their ERH if the Charter School grants an exemption from the additional graduation requirements, how any requirements that are waived will affect the foster youth's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and shall provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.

A Foster and Mobile Youth who would otherwise be entitled to remain in attendance at the Charter School shall not be required to accept the exemption from additional graduation requirements or be denied enrollment in, or the ability to complete, courses for which the student is otherwise eligible, including courses necessary to attend an institution of higher education, regardless of whether those courses are required for statewide graduation requirements.

If an eligible student is not exempted from additional graduation requirements or has previously declined the exemption pursuant to this policy, the Charter School shall exempt the student at any time if an exemption is requested by the foster youth and the foster youth qualifies for the exemption. Likewise, if the foster youth is exempted, the Charter School may not revoke the exemption.

If a Foster and Mobile Youth is exempted from additional graduation requirements pursuant to this section, the exemption shall continue to apply after the termination of the court's jurisdiction over the student or after the termination of circumstances which make the Student eligible while the student is enrolled in school or if the student transfers to another school, including a charter school, or school district.

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The Charter School shall not require or request a Foster and Mobile Youth to transfer schools in order to qualify for an exemption from additional graduation requirements, and no Foster and Mobile Youth or any person acting on behalf of a Foster and Mobile Youth may request a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption from the Charter School's additional graduation requirements.

Upon making a finding that a Foster and Mobile Youth is reasonably able to complete the Charter School's graduation requirements within the student's fifth year of high school, the Director or designee shall:

1. Inform the foster youth and the student's ERH of the foster youth's option to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the Charter School's graduation requirements, consistent with the laws regarding continuous enrollment and satisfactory progress for Charter School students over age 19.
2. Inform the foster youth and the student's ERH how remaining in school for a fifth year will affect the foster youth's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution.
3. Provide information to the foster youth about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges.
4. Upon agreement with the foster youth or, if the foster youth is under 18 years of age, the ERH permits the foster youth to stay in school for a fifth year to complete the Charter School's graduation requirements.

If a juvenile court youth satisfies the requirements for high school graduation while enrolled at a juvenile court school but has elected to decline the issuance of the diploma for the purpose of taking additional coursework, the Charter School will not prevent the juvenile court youth from enrolling in the Charter School and pursuing additional coursework if requested by the youth or by the youth's ERH.

Eligibility For Extracurricular Activities

A student who is in foster care whose residence changes 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.

Student Records

When the Charter School receives a transfer request and/or student records request for the educational information and records of a foster youth from a new LEA, the Charter School shall provide these student records within two (2) business days. The Charter School shall compile the complete educational record of the student, including but not limited to a determination of

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seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, immunization and other records, and, if applicable, a copy of the student's special education records including assessments, IEPs, and/or 504 plans. All requests for student records will be shared with the Foster and Mobile Youth Liaison, who shall be aware of the specific educational record keeping needs of Foster and Mobile Youth.

In accordance with the Charter School's Educational Records and Student Information Policy, under limited circumstances, the Charter School may disclose student records or personally identifiable information contained in those records to certain requesting parties including but not limited to a foster family agency and state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, without parental consent.

Complaints of Noncompliance

Complaints of noncompliance with this Policy shall be governed by the Charter School's Uniform Complaint Procedures. A copy of the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures is available upon request at the main office.