America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

2026-2027 America's Finest Charter School
Homeless Education Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose and Commitment
2. Legal Authority
3. Definitions
4. Identification of Qualified Students
5. Enrollment and Non-Discrimination
6. Transportation Services and Notification
7. Designation of the Homeless Liaison
8. Duties of the Homeless Liaison
9. LEA Responsibilities
10. Student and Family Rights, Supports, and Resources
    - 10.1 Homeless Student Educational Rights
    - 10.2 Foster Youth Policy and Resources
    - 10.3 McKinney-Vento Information and Educational Resources
    - 10.4 Student Support Services
    - 10.5 Community Resources for Families
    - 10.6 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Resources
    - 10.7 Resource Directory and Accessibility
11. Data Collection and Reporting
12. Review and Revision
13. Board Approval and Adoption

America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

1. Purpose and Commitment

America's Finest Charter School (AFCS), located in San Diego, California 92102, is committed to ensuring that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.

This policy is established to comply with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11301 et seq.), subsequent reauthorizations under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and California law, including California Education Code (Cal. Educ. Code) §§ 48850–48852.5 and Assembly Bills 408 and 2375 (2022).

AFCS shall ensure that students experiencing homelessness are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment and are provided a free and appropriate public education.

This policy establishes AFCS's framework for:

- Identification of students experiencing homelessness;
- Immediate enrollment;
- School stability;
- Transportation;
- Educational support;
- Family and student rights;
- Community and school-based resources; and
- The duties and responsibilities of the AFCS Homeless Education Liaison.

AFCS is also committed to ensuring that students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, unaccompanied homeless youth, and their families have access to appropriate educational rights, school-based supports, and community resources.

AFCS will provide information in a manner accessible to students and families and, when appropriate, in the family's preferred language. AFCS will protect student and family privacy and will not publicly identify a student as experiencing homelessness or as a foster youth.

2. Legal Authority

This policy is established pursuant to the following federal and California authorities:

- The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle VII-B (42 U.S.C. §§ 11431–11435).
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.
- California Education Code §§ 48850–48852.5, including § 48851.3 (AB 408) and § 48851(b) (AB 2375).
- California Assembly Bill 408 (2022), including the mandatory three-year policy update cycle and annual staff training requirements.
- California Assembly Bill 2375 (2022), including the annual housing questionnaire for families and unaccompanied youth.
- California Assembly Bill 181 (2022), establishing the Home-to-School Transportation Reimbursement Program.
- Guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE).

3. Definitions

3.1 Homeless Children and Youths

As defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, children and youth experiencing homelessness are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

This includes individuals who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds because adequate alternative accommodations are unavailable;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, including cars, parks, bus or train stations, and abandoned buildings;
- Migratory children living in any of the circumstances described above; and
- Unaccompanied homeless youth.

3.2 School of Origin

The school of origin is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool.

The school of origin also includes a school that the homeless child or youth feels connected to and attended within the immediately preceding 15 months.

3.3 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

An unaccompanied homeless youth is a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

3.4 Student Experiencing Homelessness

AFCS shall use person-first language in all communications and documents, referring to "students experiencing homelessness" rather than "homeless students," to avoid stigmatizing language.

4. Identification of Qualified Students

AFCS shall identify children and youth experiencing homelessness through the following methods, as required by applicable California law.

4.1 Annual Housing Questionnaire

The Homeless Education Liaison shall administer a housing questionnaire at least annually to all parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth to identify students experiencing homelessness.

The questionnaire shall be based on the model developed by the California Department of Education and is required regardless of whether AFCS receives federal funds.

Information collected through the questionnaire shall be reported annually to the CDE through CALPADS.

4.2 School Personnel Referrals

All school personnel shall be trained to identify potential signs of homelessness and shall refer students who may be experiencing homelessness to the Homeless Education Liaison.

4.3 Community Coordination

The Homeless Education Liaison shall coordinate with community agencies, shelters, and service providers to identify families and youth experiencing homelessness.

4.4 Public Notice

Public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness shall be disseminated at school and posted in community locations where families and youth experiencing homelessness are likely to see it, including, when appropriate:

- Shelters;
- Libraries;
- Soup kitchens; and
- Other appropriate community locations.

5. Enrollment and Non-Discrimination

AFCS shall not discriminate against, segregate, harass, or stigmatize a student because of housing status.

5.1 Immediate Enrollment

No student shall be denied enrollment at AFCS because of homelessness or because required documentation is unavailable.

AFCS shall immediately enroll a student experiencing homelessness even if the student cannot produce records normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency;
- Immunization records or other required health records;
- Academic records;
- Documentation normally required because of missed application or enrollment deadlines; or

- Payment of fees or fines.

5.2 Educational Rights Notification

Upon identification or enrollment, the Homeless Education Liaison shall ensure that parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth are informed of their educational rights, including:

- Immediate enrollment;
- School stability;
- The right to remain in the school of origin when appropriate and in the student's best interest;
- Transportation services;
- Participation in school programs and activities;
- Comparable educational services;
- Assistance from the Homeless Education Liaison; and
- Dispute-resolution procedures.

Students experiencing homelessness shall have access to school without discrimination, segregation, harassment, or stigmatization based on housing status.

6. Transportation Services and Notification

In accordance with McKinney-Vento requirements and AB 181, AFCS shall provide or arrange transportation to and from the school of origin for eligible students experiencing homelessness.

Transportation shall be provided at the request of:

- The parent or guardian; or
- The Homeless Education Liaison in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth.

AFCS shall develop and adopt an annual transportation plan as required by Education Code § 39800.1 to receive state reimbursement funding under the Home-to-School Transportation Reimbursement Program established by AB 181 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2022).

Before a student is enrolled, AFCS shall inform the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth of the student's right to transportation services and shall document that notification.

AFCS shall provide transportation as required and shall ensure that transportation responsibilities are included in the school's annual transportation planning process.

7. Designation of the Homeless Education Liaison

AFCS shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve as the Local Educational Agency (LEA) Homeless Education Liaison.

The Homeless Education Liaison shall be provided with sufficient time and resources to fulfill the duties of the position effectively.

The liaison's contact information shall be submitted to the California Department of Education and updated as necessary.

AFCS shall make the liaison's contact information available to students, families, staff, and appropriate community partners.

8. Duties of the Homeless Education Liaison

The Homeless Education Liaison shall:

8.1 Identification and Outreach

- Ensure students experiencing homelessness are identified.
- Ensure public notice of their educational rights is disseminated.
- Coordinate with school personnel and community organizations to identify students and families who may need assistance.

8.2 Enrollment and School Stability

- Ensure immediate enrollment.
- Remove barriers to enrollment.
- Facilitate school stability.

- Allow students to remain in their school of origin when remaining in the school of origin is in the student's best interest.

8.3 Educational Rights and Support

- Inform families and youth of educational opportunities and rights.
- Assist unaccompanied homeless youth with enrollment.
- Assist unaccompanied homeless youth in addressing missing immunization and other educational records.
- Provide information regarding available educational and community support.

8.4 Coordination and Collaboration

Coordinate with:

- AFCS departments;
- School personnel;
- Community agencies;
- Shelters;
- Service providers;
- San Diego County Office of Education; and
- Other appropriate organizations.

8.5 Annual Staff Training

The Homeless Education Liaison shall provide training at least annually to all certificated and classified employees who work with pupils.

Training shall address:

- The definition of homelessness;
- Signs of homelessness;
- Educational rights of students experiencing homelessness;
- Specific duties of the Homeless Education Liaison; and
- Procedures for referring students to the Homeless Education Liaison.

The liaison shall also inform all staff of the availability of the training and the services provided by the liaison.

8.6 Dispute Resolution

The Homeless Education Liaison shall implement the LEA's dispute-resolution process and ensure that students remain enrolled while disputes are being resolved.

9. LEA Responsibilities

AFCS shall:

- Ensure students experiencing homelessness are not stigmatized or segregated.
- Provide transportation as required.
- Develop an annual transportation plan.
- Reserve Title I, Part A funds as necessary to provide comparable services to students experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure the Homeless Education Liaison participates in appropriate professional development.
- Maintain appropriate educational support and resources for eligible students.
- Coordinate with appropriate community and county resources.
- Protect the confidentiality and privacy of students and families.
- Ensure information is accessible to families and, when appropriate, available in the family's preferred language.

10. Student and Family Rights, Supports, and Resources

AFCS shall maintain information and resources to support students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, unaccompanied homeless youth, and families experiencing housing instability.

The information shall be made available through appropriate school and community communication methods, including the AFCS website, school office, enrollment materials, and other appropriate locations.

10.1 Homeless Student Educational Rights

AFCS shall ensure eligible students and their families are informed of their educational rights under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

These rights include:

- Immediate enrollment, even when normally required records or documentation are unavailable;
- Remaining in the school of origin when appropriate and in the student's best interest;
- Transportation to and from the school of origin when eligible and requested;
- Full participation in school programs and activities;
- Services comparable to those provided to other students;
- Assistance from the AFCS Homeless Education Liaison;
- Information regarding dispute-resolution procedures; and
- Attendance at school without discrimination, segregation, harassment, or stigmatization because of housing status.

AFCS shall provide information regarding these rights to students, parents/guardians, and unaccompanied youth.

California Department of Education and San Diego County Office of Education resources may also be provided to families requiring additional assistance.

10.2 Foster Youth Policy and Resources

AFCS recognizes that students in foster care may experience changes in placement, school, caregivers, transportation, and educational records.

AFCS shall support foster youth by:

- Maintaining appropriate educational records and supporting timely access to records;
- Supporting school stability and continuity of education;
- Coordinating with appropriate education and child-welfare personnel when necessary and permitted;
- Providing appropriate academic support and referrals;
- Supporting access to tutoring;
- Supporting access to counseling;
- Supporting access to mentoring;
- Supporting college and career planning;
- Providing access to other available educational services;

- Ensuring foster youth are not denied educational opportunities because of circumstances related to foster care placement; and
- Connecting students and caregivers with appropriate county and community resources.

The San Diego County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program provides resources and coordination for students in foster care, including educational support, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, records coordination, and other services.

AFCS may refer students and families to SDCOE Foster Youth Services and other appropriate community providers when additional assistance is needed.

10.3 McKinney-Vento Information and Educational Resources

AFCS shall provide information about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to students, parents/guardians, unaccompanied youth, and staff.

McKinney-Vento protects children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Circumstances may include sharing housing because of loss of housing or economic hardship, living in shelters, motels, hotels, vehicles, public spaces, or other locations that are not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations.

AFCS shall make information available concerning:

- The definition of homelessness;
- School of origin rights;
- Immediate enrollment rights;
- Transportation rights;
- Rights of unaccompanied homeless youth;
- Dispute-resolution procedures;
- Contact information for the AFCS Homeless Education Liaison;
- California Department of Education homeless education resources; and
- San Diego County Office of Education homeless education resources.

The San Diego County Office of Education provides McKinney-Vento technical assistance, training, resources, and support to school districts and charter schools throughout San Diego County.

10.4 Student Support Services

AFCS shall connect students experiencing homelessness and other students in need with available school-based and community support services.

Depending on the student's individual needs and available programs, support may include:

- Academic assistance and intervention;
- School enrollment assistance;
- School records assistance;
- Transportation coordination;
- Attendance support;
- Counseling or referrals to counseling services;
- Social-emotional support;
- School supplies and basic educational materials, when available;
- Connections to food resources;
- Connections to housing and shelter resources;
- Connections to health and mental-health resources;
- Connections to community agencies;
- Support for unaccompanied homeless youth;
- Referrals for foster youth services; and
- Assistance identifying additional educational or community supports.

The Homeless Education Liaison shall coordinate with appropriate school personnel and community partners while maintaining student confidentiality and following applicable laws and AFCS policies.

10.5 Community Resources for Families

AFCS shall maintain information regarding community resources available to students and families in San Diego County.

Because community programs, eligibility requirements, telephone numbers, locations, and available services may change, AFCS shall encourage families to confirm current information directly with the service provider.

10.5.1 211 San Diego

211 San Diego is a free and confidential community information and referral service available 24 hours a day.

Families may receive information regarding:

- Housing;
- Shelter;
- Food;
- Health care;
- Transportation;
- Public benefits;
- Employment;
- Mental health; and
- Other community services.

Families may:

- Call 2-1-1;
- Search the 211 San Diego resource database; or
- Request assistance identifying appropriate local services.

10.5.2 Housing and Homelessness Resources

Families experiencing homelessness or housing instability may be referred to 211 San Diego and the City of San Diego homelessness resource system.

Available services may include:

- Shelter referrals;
- Outreach;
- Housing resources; and
- Connections to other supportive services.

10.5.3 Food and Basic Needs Resources

AFCS may provide or refer families to resources for:

- Food assistance;
- CalFresh;
- WIC;
- School meals;
- Clothing;
- Hygiene supplies;

- Diaper assistance;
- Utility assistance; and
- Other basic needs.

211 San Diego may provide referrals for food, health care, housing, public benefits, transportation, and other family needs.

10.5.4 San Diego County Family Resource Centers

Families may also be referred to San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency Family Resource Centers.

The County operates Family Resource Centers at multiple locations and provides information regarding available services by ZIP code.

For families living in or near San Diego, CA 92102, AFCS staff should use current County resource information or 211 San Diego to identify the appropriate Family Resource Center and available services.

10.5.5 San Diego County Office of Education

AFCS may refer families and staff to the San Diego County Office of Education for additional homeless education and foster youth resources.

SDCOE resources include assistance related to:

- Students experiencing homelessness;
- Unaccompanied homeless youth;
- Foster youth;
- Educational stability;
- Transportation;
- Enrollment;
- Dispute resolution;
- Staff training;
- Community coordination; and
- Foster youth educational services.

10.6 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Resources

AFCS shall provide appropriate support to unaccompanied homeless youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who meet the applicable definition of homelessness.

The Homeless Education Liaison shall assist unaccompanied homeless youth with:

- Immediate enrollment;
- Understanding educational rights;
- Obtaining or addressing missing records;
- School stability;
- Transportation when applicable;
- Access to school programs and services;
- Referrals to appropriate community resources;
- Postsecondary planning; and
- Available financial-aid resources.

SDCOE provides specific resources for unaccompanied homeless youth, including information concerning FAFSA status, educational records, work permits, and other educational support.

10.7 Resource Directory and Accessibility

AFCS shall maintain a current resource directory for students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, unaccompanied youth, and families experiencing housing instability.

The resource directory shall be reviewed at least annually and updated when AFCS becomes aware that a telephone number, website, program, eligibility requirement, or service location has changed.

The directory may include:

1. AFCS Homeless Education Liaison contact information;
2. San Diego County Office of Education Homeless Education Services;
3. San Diego County Office of Education Foster Youth Services;
4. 211 San Diego;
5. Housing and shelter resources;
6. Food and nutrition resources;
7. Health and mental-health resources;

8. Transportation resources;
9. Family Resource Centers;
10. Legal and advocacy resources;
11. Youth and family services; and
12. Emergency services.

AFCS shall make the resource directory available on the school website and may provide printed copies through the school office and other appropriate school locations.

Information concerning homeless student rights shall also be available through:

- The AFCS website;
- The school office;
- Enrollment materials; and
- Other appropriate communication methods.

11. Data Collection and Reporting

AFCS shall annually report the number of students experiencing homelessness to the California Department of Education through CALPADS, as required.

The Annual Housing Questionnaire data shall be incorporated into the applicable reporting process.

Student records shall be maintained and updated in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements.

AFCS shall ensure that information collected through the identification process is handled appropriately and that student and family privacy is protected.

12. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in:

- Federal law;
- California law;
- California Department of Education guidance;
- San Diego County resources; and
- AFCS procedures.

AFCS shall update this policy at least every three years as required by applicable law.

The school shall use current California Department of Education and San Diego County Office of Education homeless education resources when reviewing and revising the policy.

The resource directory shall also be reviewed at least annually to maintain current information for families and students.

13. Board Approval and Adoption

BOARD ADOPTION

This policy shall become effective upon approval by the America's Finest Charter School Board of Directors.

Date of Adoption: October 19, 2026

Secretary of the Board: Regina Jone

Board Meeting Date: October 19, 2026