Adopted/Ratified: _____
Revision Date: _____

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD CHARTER SCHOOLS LOS ANGELES
EDUCATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH POLICY

Introduction

The Governing Board of Citizens of the World Charter Schools Los Angeles ("CWC LA") recognizes that foster 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 CWC LA academic standards, CWC LA shall provide them with full access to CWC LA's educational program and implement strategies identified as necessary for the improvement of the academic achievement of foster youth in CWC LA's local control and accountability plan (LCAP).

Definitions

"*Foster youth*" means a child who has been removed from his/her home pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code section 309, is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code sections 300 or 602, or has been removed from his/her home and is the subject of a petition filed under Welfare and Institutions Code 300 or 602.

"*Person holding the right to make educational decisions*" means a parent, guardian, or responsible person appointed by a court to make educational decisions pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 361 or 726, or Education Code 56055.

"*School of origin*" means the school that the foster youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. If the school the foster youth attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that the foster youth attended within the immediately preceding 15 months, the school Liaison for Foster Youth, as defined further below, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, shall determine, in the best interests of the foster youth, the school that shall be deemed the school of origin.

"*Best interests*" means that, in making educational and school placement decisions for a 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 of the school's students.

Foster Youth Liaison

In order to help facilitate the enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth to CWC LA, each school Principal shall designate a school foster youth liaison. Each Principal designates the following positions as each CWC LA school liaison for foster youth:

Silver Lake K-5
Marisol Porras, marisol.porras@cwcsilverlake.org, 323-462-2840

Silver Lake 6-8
Cassia Sonderleiter, cassia.sonderleiter@cwcsilverlake.org, 213-760-8934

Mar Vista
Jennifer Mansfield, jennifer.mansfield@cwcmarvista.org, 424-248-0544

Hollywood
Marissa Berman, mberman@cwchollywood.org, 323-464-4292

The Liaison for Foster Youth shall:

1. Ensure and facilitate the proper educational placement, enrollment in each CWC LA school, and checkout from each CWC LA school of students in foster care.

2. Ensure proper transfer of credits, records, and grades when students in foster care transfer to or from a CWC LA school.

   When a student in foster care is enrolling in a CWC LA school, the school Liaison shall contact the school last attended by the student to obtain, to the extent feasible, within two (2) business days, all academic and other records. When a foster youth is transferring to a new school, the school Liaison shall provide the student's records to the new school within two (2) business days of receiving the new school's request.

3. When required by law, notify the foster youth's attorney and the appropriate representative of the county child welfare agency of pending expulsion proceedings if the decision to recommend expulsion is a discretionary act under the charter of each CWC LA school; pending proceedings to extend a suspension until an expulsion decision is rendered if the decision to recommend expulsion is a discretionary act under the charter; and, a manifestation determination prior to a change in the foster youth's placement, when he/she is a student with a disability under state and federal special education laws.

4. 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.

5. As needed, ensure that students in foster care receive appropriate school-based services, such as counseling and health services, supplemental instruction, and after-school services.

6. Develop protocols and procedures for creating awareness for CWC LA staff, including but not limited to administrators, teachers and office staff, of the requirements for the proper enrollment, placement, and transfer of foster youth.

7. Collaborate with the county placing agency, social services, probation officers, juvenile court officers, and other appropriate agencies to help coordinate services for foster youth.

8. Monitor the educational progress of foster youth and provide reports to the Executive Director or designee and the Board based on indicators such as those identified in the local control and accountability plan.

9. This Policy does not grant the school 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 361 or 726, a surrogate parent, or a foster parent exercising authority under the Education Code. The role of the school Liaison is advisory with respect to placement options and determination of the school of origin.

Enrollment

A student placed in a licensed children's institution or foster family home shall attend programs operated by CWC LA unless one of the following circumstances applies: (Education Code § § 48853 and 48853.5)

1. The student has an individualized education program requiring placement in a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency, or in another local educational agency.

2. The parent/guardian or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student determines that it is in the best interest of the student to be placed in another educational program and submits a written statement to CWC LA indicating that determination and that he/she is aware of the following:

    a. The student has a right to attend a regular public school in the least restrictive environment.

    b. The alternate educational program is a special education program, if applicable.

c. The decision to unilaterally remove the student from CWC LA and to place him/her in an alternate education program may not be financed by CWC LA.

d. Any attempt to seek reimbursement for the alternate education program may be at the expense of the parent/guardian or other person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student.

3. At the initial placement or any subsequent change in placement, the student exercises his/her right to continue in his/her school of origin, as defined above.

   a. The student may continue in the school of origin for the duration of the court's jurisdiction.

   b. If the court's jurisdiction over a grade K-8 student is terminated prior to the end of a school year, the student may continue in his/her school of origin for the remainder of the academic school year.

   c. If the court's jurisdiction is terminated while the student is in high school, the student may continue in his/her school of origin until he/she graduates.

   d. If the student is transitioning between school grade levels, he/she shall be allowed to continue in the district of origin in the same attendance area to provide him/her the benefit of matriculating with his/her peers in accordance with the established feeder patterns of school districts. If the student is transitioning to a middle school or high school, and the school designated for matriculation is in another school district, the student shall be allowed to enroll in the school designated for matriculation in that school district.

The school Liaison may, in consultation with and with the agreement of the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth, recommend that the youth's right to attend the school of origin be waived and he/she be enrolled in any school that students living in the attendance area of the school district in which the foster youth resides are eligible to attend and enroll in a CWC LA school consistent with current enrollment procedures. All decisions shall be made in accordance with the foster youth's best interests.

Prior to making any recommendation to move a foster youth from his/her school of origin, the Liaison shall provide the youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the youth with a written explanation of the basis for the recommendation and how the recommendation serves the youth's best interests.

If the Liaison, in consultation with the foster youth and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the foster youth, agrees that the best interests of

the youth would be served by his/her transfer to a school other than the school of origin and that school is a CWC LA school to which the foster youth has been accepted consistent with current enrollment procedures, the CWC LA school Principal or administrative designee shall immediately enroll the foster youth, consistent with any enrollment procedures. The foster youth shall be immediately enrolled even if he/she:

1. Has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended

2. Does not have clothing normally required by the school, such as school uniforms

3. Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, and medical records, including, but not limited to, immunization records or other documentation.

If any dispute arises regarding the request of a foster youth to remain in the school of origin, the youth has the right to remain in the school of origin pending resolution of the dispute. The dispute shall be resolved in accordance with the existing CWC LA dispute resolution process.

Transportation

CWC LA shall not be responsible for providing transportation to allow a foster child to attend school, unless required by federal law. CWC LA may provide transportation, at its discretion, to allow a foster child to attend school.

Effect of Absences on Grades

The grades of a student in foster care shall not be lowered for any absence from 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 he/she left school.

2. A verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity.

Transfer of Coursework and Credits

When a foster youth transfers into CWC LA, CWC LA shall accept and issue full credit for any coursework that the foster youth has satisfactorily completed while attending another public school, a juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency and shall not require the foster youth to retake the course.

If the foster youth did not complete the entire course, he/she shall be issued partial credit for the coursework completed and shall not be required to retake the portion of the course that he/she completed at his/her previous school. However, CWC LA may require the foster youth to retake the portion of the course completed if, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the foster youth, CWC LA 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 youth in any particular course, he/she shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that he/she may continue and complete the entire course.

Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A foster youth 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.

Complaints of Noncompliance

Complaints of noncompliance with this policy shall be governed by CWC LA's Uniform Complaint Procedures policy.