

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment and eliminate existing barriers to their identification, enrollment, attendance or success in school which may exist in District practices. The Board will provide that homeless children attending the District's schools access to the same free and appropriate public education and other school programs and activities, including publically funded preschool education, as other children.

A homeless child is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime location in a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. This definition also includes a child who shares the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; lives in a car, park, public space or abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting; has been abandoned in a hospital; or is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless. An unaccompanied youth is a homeless child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

To assist in determine eligibility for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the District shall use a housing questionnaire for all enrolling students, and those reporting a change of address, which asks for a description of the student's current living arrangements.

A homeless child or youth has the right to attend his/her school of origin, or any school that permanently housed students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend. For homeless students, a school of origin can be:

1. the public school where he/she attended when permanently housed (i.e., before becoming homeless); or
2. the public school where he/she was last enrolled, or
3. the public school he/she was entitled or eligible to enroll in when the child became homeless, if that child became homeless after such child was eligible to apply, register, or enroll in a public preschool or kindergarten, or he/she is living with a school-age sibling who attends school in the district; or
4. the designated receiving school at the next grade level for any feeder school, where the child has completed the final grade in the feeder school.

Such schools include publicly-funded preschools administered by the district or the State Education Department (SED).

The homeless child is entitled to attend the designated school on a tuition-free basis for the duration of his or her homelessness. If the child becomes permanently housed, the child is entitled to continue attendance in the same school building until the end of the school year and for one additional year if that year constitutes the child's terminal year in such building. If a homeless child completes the final grade level in his/her school of origin, the child may also attend the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop procedures necessary to expedite the homeless child's access to the designated school. Such procedures shall include:

1. *Admission and Participation:* Upon designation, the District shall immediately admit the homeless child to school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical or immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation and even if there is a dispute with the child's parents regarding school selection or enrollment.

Homeless children will have the same opportunity as other children to enroll in and succeed in the District's schools, including extracurricular activities and summer school programs available to district students. They will not be placed in separate schools or programs based on their status as homeless. The District shall eliminate barriers to identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees, fines or absences.

2. *Transportation:* The District shall provide transportation for homeless students currently residing within the District as required by applicable law.
3. *School Records:* For homeless students attending school out of the District, the District shall, within five days of receipt of a request for records, forward a complete copy of the homeless child's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records and guardianship paper, if applicable.
4. *Coordination:* The District shall coordinate with local social services agencies and other entities providing services to homeless children and their families for the provision of services to homeless children, and shall coordinate with other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transportation, transfer of records, and other inter-district activities. This shall include ensuring the provision of appropriate services to homeless students with disabilities who are eligible for services under either Section 504 or IDEA.

Information about a homeless child's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information under FERPA.

The Superintendent shall also designate a liaison for homeless children and ensure that this person is aware of, and is able to carry out, his or her responsibilities under the law. The Superintendent shall ensure that the liaison receives appropriate professional development on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students, including the definitions of terms related to homelessness. The liaison's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ensuring that:

1. parents of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them, including transportation;
 2. enrollment disputes involving homeless children are promptly mediated and resolved;
 3. school personnel, through outreach and in coordination with shelters and social service agencies and other appropriate entities identify homeless children, including homeless preschoolers; and
 4. homeless children receive educational services, including but not limited to Head Start and preschool services to which they are eligible, as well as referrals to health care and other appropriate services for homeless children and their families;
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5. public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated in locations frequented by homeless unaccompanied youth and parents/guardians of homeless children, in a manner and form understandable to them;
 6. staff who provide services to homeless students receive required professional development and support on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students;
 7. homeless unaccompanied youth are informed of their rights, are enrolled in school, and have opportunities to meet the same state standards set for all students, including receiving credit for full or partial coursework earned in a prior school pursuant to Commissioner's regulations.

In accordance with Commissioner's regulations, the district shall collect and transmit to the Commissioner information necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children within the State. A student shall be entitled to continued enrollment in the district's schools, and transportation, pending resolution of the dispute and all available appeals.

Ref: 20 USC § 6313(c)
42 USC §§11431, et seq.
McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, 81 Fed. Reg. 14432-14436 (3/17/16)
U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, Non-Regulatory Guidance (7/27/16),
Education Law §§207; 305; 3202; 3205; 3209
Executive Law §§532-b; 532-e
Social Services Law §§17; 62; 397
8 NYCRR §§100.2; 175.6

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