

Homeless Students

The Board of Education shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and youths within the district, encourage their enrollment in school and eliminate existing barriers to their education, which may exist in district policies or practices, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws. Further, it is the policy of the Board of Education that no child or youth shall be discriminated against or stigmatized in this school district because of homelessness. Homeless students, as defined by federal and state statutes, residing within the district or residing in temporary shelters in the district are entitled to free school privileges.

Homeless students shall not be separated from the mainstream school environment on the basis of their homelessness. Such students shall have access to education and other services they need to meet the challenging State academic standards to which all students are held.

- I. PLACEMENT** – To the extent feasible, a homeless child or youth within the district not placed in a shelter remains the district’s responsibility to provide continued educational services. Such services for the child or youth may be continued in the school (“school of origin”) that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian. If placement in the school of origin is not feasible, the homeless child or youth must be placed in the school that is attended by other students living in the same attendance area in which the homeless child or youth lives.

The district will provide a written explanation, including the right to appeal, whenever the district sends a homeless child or youth to a school other than the school of origin, a school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

- A.** If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he/she is entitled to stay in the school of origin until the end of the school year.
 - B.** A child or youth who becomes homeless in between academic years is entitled to attend his/her school of origin for the following school year.
 - C.** The district must provide written explanation, including the right to appeal, whenever the district sends a homeless child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian.
 - D.** Homeless children and youth may be segregated for short periods of time only for health and safety emergencies or to provide temporary, special, or supplemental services.
- II. REFERRAL TO DCF** - The Superintendent of Schools shall refer identified homeless children under the age of eighteen who may reside within the school district, unless such children are emancipated minors, to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

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III. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO HOMELESS STUDENTS

- A. Educational services** provided to homeless children or youth must be comparable to those received by other students enrolled in the district, including but not limited to Title I, transportation services, compensatory educational programs, state/local remedial programs, special education, limited English proficiency, vocational education, gifted and talented, health services and school nutrition programs, and preschools operated by the district, if they meet the established criteria for these services.
- B. Transportation services** must be comparable to those other students in the selected school. Homeless children and youths must be provided transportation to the school of origin in compliance with federal and state regulations, if requested by the parent/guardian, if the school is within the school district. If the school of origin is in a different school district from where the homeless child or youth is currently living, both school districts shall agree on a method for sharing the responsibility and costs, or share the costs equally.

IV. BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - The district administration shall attempt to remove existing barriers to school attendance by homeless emancipated minors and youth eighteen years of age.

- A. Records** - The selected school for the homeless child or youth shall enroll the child or youth, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. The last school in which the child or youth was enrolled shall be contacted to obtain records.
- B. Other enrollment requirements** that may constitute a barrier to the education of the homeless child or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- C. Grade Level Placement** - If the district is unable to determine the child or youth's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize other reasonable means to determine the appropriate grade level for the child or youth.
- D. Fees and charges**, which may present a barrier to the enrollment or transfer of a homeless child or youth, may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.

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IV. BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (continued)

E. Official school records, policies, and regulations shall be waived at the discretion of the superintendent, in compliance with federal statutes. The district will treat information about a homeless child or youth's living situation as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Such information shall not be deemed to be directory information. The Board will provide any homeless child or youth, who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, full access to his/her educational records, including medical records, in the Board's possession.

F. Immunization Records - The district shall make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from information available. The district's liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations and records. The district shall arrange for students to receive immunizations through health agencies and at district expense if no other recourse is available. Immunizations may, however, be waived for homeless children and youth only in accordance with provisions of Board of Education policy on immunizations.

G. Other barriers to school attendance by homeless children or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

V. DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL LIAISON FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS: The superintendent shall appoint a district educational liaison for homeless children or youth. The liaison must assist homeless children and "unaccompanied youth" in the placement/enrollment decisions, considering the youth's wishes, and provide notice of appeal under the Act's enrollment disputes provision. The liaison shall also participate in State provided professional development programs for local liaisons.

VI. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS: Students residing in a temporary shelter are entitled to free school privileges from the district in which the shelter is located or from the school district where they would otherwise reside if not for the placement in the temporary shelter. The district in which the temporary shelter is located shall notify the district where the student would otherwise be attending. The district so notified may choose to either:

1. Continue to provide educational services, including transportation between the temporary shelter and the school in the home district; or
2. Pay tuition to the district in which the temporary shelter is located.

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Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-253(e) School privileges for children in certain placements, non resident children and children in temporary shelters. (as amended by PA 17-194)
- 17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surrounding without court order.
- 17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.
- 17a-103 Reports by others.
- 17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
- 46b-120 Definitions.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (PL 107-110-Sec 1032)

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