STUDENTS

Series 500

Policy Title: Homeless Children and Youth
Code Number: AR504.9

Definitions:

Homeless children and youth means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (unaccompanied youth).

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”);
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - Abandoned in hospitals.

- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

- Children and youth who are living in a cars, parks, public spaces, abandon buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

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Legal Reference:
42 U.S.C. §§ 11431 et. seq.
281 I.A.C. 33.
Identification:

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the local liaison will identify homeless children and youth in the District, both in and out of school. The local liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying homeless families and youth, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison.

The local liaison will keep data on the number of homeless children and youth in the District; where they are living; their academic achievement (including performance on state and District wide assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

School Selection:

Each homeless child and youth has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend any school that housed students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

When selecting a school, homeless children and youth will remain at their schools origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent or youth’s wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing between academic years.

Enrollment:

The school selected for enrollment must enroll any homeless child or youth immediately. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Any other document requirements
- Unpaid school fees or fines
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to dress code

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Any factor related to the student’s living situation

Unaccompanied youth must also be enrolled immediately in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison.

**Transportation:**

Transportation will be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school, as defined above, including during pending disputes. The local liaison will request transportation to and from the school of origin for unaccompanied youth. Parents and unaccompanied youth must be informed of this right to transportation before they select a school for attendance.

The local liaison will contact the District Transportation Department to process transportation requests. Requests will be processed and transportation arranged without delay. It is this District’s policy that inter-District disputes will not result in a student in transition missing school. If such a dispute arises, this District will arrange transportation and immediately bring the matter to the attention of the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

**Services:**

Homeless children and youth will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the selected school, including:

- Transportation (as described above)
- Title I, Part A, services (as described below)
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners.
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- Before and after school programs.

**Free Meals:**

On the day a homeless child or youth enrolls in school, the enrolling school must submit the student’s name to the District nutrition office for immediate processing.
Title I Part A

Homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, regardless of what school they attend. The District will reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to Title I students to children and youth in transition attending non-participating schools. The amount reserved will be determined by a formula based upon the per-pupil Title I, Part A, expenditure and developed jointly by the local liaison and the Title I Director.

Our District’s Title I plan will be coordinated with our McKinney-Vento services, through collaboration between the Title I Director and the local liaison. Homeless children and youth will be assessed, reported on, and included in accountability systems, as required by federal law and U.S. Department of Education Regulations and Policy Guidance.

Training:

The local liaison will conduct training and sensitivity/awareness activities for the LEA and school staff so staff may help identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth.

Coordination:

The local liaison will coordinate with and seek support from the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, public and private service providers in the community, housing and placement agencies, the pupil transportation department, local liaisons in neighboring districts, and other organizations and agencies. Coordination will include conducting outreach and training to those agencies and participating in the local continuum of care, homeless coalition, homeless steering committee, and other relevant groups. Both public and private agencies will be encouraged to support the local liaison and our schools in implementing this policy.

Preschool:

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Our District will ensure that homeless children receive priority enrollment in preschool programs operated by the District, including exempting homeless children from waiting lists.

Disputes:

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the homeless child or youth will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I, Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

This process is to be used in the event when families and youth have a dispute over enrollment and provision of services to a child or youth experiencing homelessness.

- Upon receiving the WRITTEN NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT DENIAL DECISION, parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth shall be able to initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school in which they are requesting enrollment, as well as the District McKinney Vento Liaison’s office.

- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth must complete and submit the Appeal of Enrollment Decision form via fax, mail, email or hand deliver to the District Homeless Liaison at the address listed below. This information may be shared verbally with the District Homeless Liaison as an alternative to completing the form.

According to State of Iowa Code, Chapter 33

Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g)(3)(E), which requires the following:

a. The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;

b. The parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided a written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision;

c. The child, youth, parent or guardian shall be referred to the local educational agency liaison designated under this sub rule, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process;
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- In case of an unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute;
- Ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or the unaccompanied youth, is full informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school of enrollment;
- Coordinate and collaborate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for provision of the education and related services to homeless children and youth.

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Homeless Children and Youth Liaison
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