



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Homeless Students
Code	251
Status	Final Reading and Adoption
Adopted	April 18, 2005
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Authority

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other District students. The Board shall identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive policies, procedures, and administrative regulations that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability, and success in school of homeless children and youth.[\[3\]](#)

Definitions

Enroll or **enrollment** is attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[\[5\]](#)

Homeless children and youths are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who:[\[5\]](#)

1. Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
2. Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Live in emergency, transitional, run-away, or domestic violence shelters;
4. Have been abandoned in hospitals;
5. Await foster care placement;
6. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings;

8. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because they live in conditions described in this policy;
9. Have been abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers; and
10. Are school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin - the school the homeless child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including preschool. When the homeless child or youth completes the final grade level in the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.[6]

Unaccompanied youth - a homeless child or youth not in the custody of a parent or guardian.[5]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Director of Student Supports and Pupil Services to serve as the District's liaison for homeless children, youths, and families.[6]

The District's liaison shall coordinate with: [6]

1. Local service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless children, youth, and families;
2. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification of homeless children and youths, records transfer, and transportation, and other applicable inter-district activities;
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies; and
4. District staff responsible for the provision of services pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[7]

The District's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students within the District in places frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth, for example, public libraries, shelters, schools, and food banks. The notice must be provided in a manner and form that is understandable to parents/guardians of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth.[6]

The District's liaison shall assist parents/guardians of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth who need to obtain immunizations or health records in obtaining the necessary immunizations or screenings or the necessary records of immunizations or screenings usually required for school enrollment.[6][8][9]

The District's liaison shall provide reliable, valid, and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program in accordance with federal and state law.[6]

In accordance with applicable law, the District's liaison shall coordinate with building administrators to provide annual professional development for District staff on the signs of youth homelessness and steps that District staff should take should they suspect that a student is experiencing homelessness.

Guidelines

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on their status as homeless children or youth or unaccompanied youth.[6][10]

Placement/Enrollment

Best Interest Determination -

In determining the best interest of the homeless child or youth, the District shall:

1. Presume that keeping the homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parents/guardians of the child or youth, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth; and[6]
2. Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of the homeless child or youth, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parents/guardians, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth.[6]

Placement -

To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless child or youth may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living. If a student is an unaccompanied youth, the District liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.[6]

If, after conducting a best interest analysis, the District determines that it is not in the best interest of the homeless child or youth to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth, the District shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for the District's determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including information on the right to appeal the decision and the procedures to use for the appeal.[6]

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the homeless child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute through all available appeals. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the District's liaison, who will issue a written decision of the dispute as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be informed in writing that they may appeal the District's written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.[6]

Enrollment -

The selected school shall enroll the homeless child or youth and begin instruction, even if the homeless child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to District policies, or if the deadline for application or enrollment passed during any period of homelessness. The selected school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless child or youth to request academic and other records. The District may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. [3][8][9][11][12][13][14]

If the District is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the District shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement within the school.[6][15]

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.[14]

Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other District students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; and educational services for which students meet

eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar state or local programs, English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.[\[1\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)[\[18\]](#)[\[19\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)[\[22\]](#)

Transportation

The District shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they attend within the School District.[\[1\]](#)[\[6\]](#)[\[21\]](#)

If the school of origin is outside District boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this District, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.[\[6\]](#)

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1306
2. 22 PA Code 11.18
3. 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq
4. 34 CFR 299.19
5. 42 U.S.C. 11434a
6. 42 U.S.C. 11432
7. Pol. 113
8. Pol. 203
9. Pol. 209
10. 42 U.S.C. 11431
11. Pol. 200
12. Pol. 201
13. Pol. 204
14. Pol. 216
15. Pol. 206
16. Pol. 114
17. Pol. 115
18. Pol. 138
19. Pol. 146
20. Pol. 808
21. Pol. 810
22. Pol. 918
- 20 U.S.C. 1232g
- 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq
- 34 CFR Part 99
- 67 Fed. Reg. 10698
- PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan