

Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special effort will be given to enrolling homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual and migrant education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

The superintendent designates the director of central registration as the staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

1. Definition

Homeless students are defined as those students lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- 1.1 sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- 1.2 living in motels, hotels, transient trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- 1.3 living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- 1.4 having been abandoned in hospitals;
- 1.5 awaiting foster care placement;
- 1.6 living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- 1.7 living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; or
- 1.8 living as migratory children in conditions described in the previous examples.

2. Enrollment

Because it is in the child's or youth's best interest, homeless students may remain enrolled for the academic year in their year's original school while they remain homeless. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the district; see policy and procedure 3131.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which the enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Appeal can be made to the director of central registration. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies.

3. School Records

Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address or other documentation. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception.

Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the director of central registration is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Copies of these records will be made available to the parent and student.

4. Emergency Information

Emergency contact information cannot be demanded in a form or manner that constructs a barrier to enrollment and/or attendance at school.

5. Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their year's original school or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student or will divide the costs equally.

6. Collaboration

The director of central registration, on behalf of homeless students and their families, shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families, other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers, and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens.

The superintendent will develop procedures to implement homeless policy. The director of central registration will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Cross References:

- (cf.: 3121 – Enrollment and Attendance Records)
- (cf.: 3131 – District Enrollment and Effects)
- (cf.: 3418 – Life-Threatening Conditions)
- (cf.: 3600 – Student Records)
- (cf.: 6600 – Transportation of Pupils)

Legal References:

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| RCW 28A.225.215 | Enrollment of Children Without Legal Residences |
| Title I, Part C | No Child Left Behind Act, 2002 |
| 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. | McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act |

Management Resources:

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| <i>Policy News</i> , October 2002 | NCLB Addresses Homeless Students |
| <i>Policy News</i> , October 2004 | Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services Update |

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