

**Policy 0546: HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**Status:** ADOPTED

**Original Adopted Date:** 02/24/2014 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/26/2018

**Responsibility.** The District shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and youth within the District, shall encourage their enrollment in school, shall eliminate existing barriers in District policies and procedures which may serve as barriers to their enrollment, and shall ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free public education, including public preschool education, as is provided to other children and youth.

**Definitions.**

*"Homeless children and youth"* means individuals from age 3 through age 21 who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- awaiting foster care placement;
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition.

Incarcerated children and youth and children and youth in foster care are not considered homeless.

*"School of origin"* means the school that the homeless child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the homeless child or youth was last enrolled.

*"Unaccompanied youth"* means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, including youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing, youth denied housing by their families, and school-age unwed mothers, living in homes for unwed mothers, who have no other housing available.

**Liaison.** The Director of Student Services shall serve as the District's liaison for homeless children and youth. The liaison shall ensure that:

- homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- homeless children and youth enroll in school and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school;
- homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and preschool programs administered by the District, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
- parents and guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of available educational and related opportunities provided to their children and of the opportunities for the parents and guardians to participate in the education of their children;
- the District disseminates public notices in places in which homeless children and youth receive services of their educational rights;
- the District informs parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth of transportation services, including to and from the school of origin, and provides assistance in accessing the transportation to school; enrollment disputes are properly mediated.

The liaison shall also assist parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth in enrolling in school and accessing school services, obtaining student records, arranging for immunizations, and shall help to coordinate transportation services.

**No Segregation.** Homeless children and youth shall not be separated from the mainstream school environment on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless children and youth may be segregated from other students only for short periods of time as necessary for health or safety reasons or to provide temporary, special and supplemental

services to meet the unique needs of homeless students. Homeless children and youth shall not be stigmatized or isolated on the basis of their status as homeless. Records indicating their status as homeless shall be maintained in accordance with confidentiality requirements.

**Immunization Records.** A homeless child or youth will not be denied enrollment for lack of immunization records if the child is transferring from another school and the school confirms the presence of the immunization record. The District liaison will make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from the information provided or will arrange for the student to receive immunizations.

**Student Records.** Homeless children and youth transferring into the District may provide student records directly to the District. The District will not require that the records be forwarded from another district or school before the child may enroll. The District will then request the student's records from the previous district or school attended by the student. Homeless children and youth transferring out of the District may be provided directly copies of student records to take with them.

**Waiver of School Fees.** School fees shall be waived in accordance with the District's policy on waiver of fees or if necessary for the homeless child or youth to obtain equal access to a free public education. The District liaison shall also assist students in accessing resources for appropriate school clothing.

**Free and Reduced-Price Meals.** The application process for free and reduced price meals shall be expedited for homeless children and youth. The District may determine if a student is homeless and requires free meals without completing the full application process.

**School Placement.** School placement determinations for homeless children and youth shall be made on the basis of the best interests of the homeless child or youth. The District will, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, unless the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth requests another school and the District concurs in attendance at the preferred school. If 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, or unaccompanied youth, the District will provide a written explanation of its decision with notice of the right to appeal the decision pursuant to State appeal procedures.

The placement determination shall be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors to be considered may include the age of the student, the distance of the commute and the impact on the student's education, personal safety issues, the student's need for special education and related services, the length of the anticipated stay in temporary shelter or other temporary location, and the time remaining in the school year. Homeless children and youth may be assigned to other schools if necessary to receive a free and appropriate public education in accordance with a special education IEP.

**Transportation.** If a homeless child or youth continues to live in the District but in a different attendance area than the school the student was previously attending in the District, the District, at the request of the parent, guardian, or at the request of the District liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth, shall provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school previously attended. If the homeless child or youth is no longer living in the District, but is continuing his or her education in the District, the District will apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation with the district where the child is currently living.

**Conflicts With Other Policies.** Provisions in this policy shall supersede any conflicting provisions in other District policies, regulations or procedures.

**Date of Revision: February 24, 2014**

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.; 67 Fed. Reg. 46 (3/8/2002); 281 I.A.C. Chapter 33

---