

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 262
Section: STUDENTS
Title: STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOUSELESSNESS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTABILITY
Date Adopted: 11/20/17
Date Revised: 2/18/25; 10/21/24

262 STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOUSELESSNESS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTABILITY

Authority

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that students experiencing houselessness and other students experiencing educational instability have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other District students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to 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.

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of students experiencing houselessness, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent or designee.

Definitions

Students experiencing houselessness¹ are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Using public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings, as a primary nighttime residence.
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
7. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
8. Living as unaccompanied youth experiencing houselessness (i.e. a youth experiencing houselessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian). This category of

¹ “Houseless” is used in this Policy as a more person-centered term than the “homeless” but is interchangeable with the term “homeless” from a legal standpoint as that term is used in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

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students could include youths who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, or been abandoned by parents, guardians or caretakers.

9. Living as school age parents/guardians in houses for school age parents/guardians if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

Students experiencing educational instability are students who have one or more changes in school entity enrollment during a single school year due to homelessness, involvement in child protective services or the juvenile justice system, or due to their placement in foster care.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Home and School Visitor/School Social Worker to serve as the District's liaison for students experiencing houselessness and families.

The specific responsibilities of the Home and School Visitor/School Social Worker with respect to students experiencing houselessness, other students experiencing educational instability, and their families shall be detailed in the accompanying Administrative Regulations developed by the Superintendent and shall be consistent with federal and state law, as well as guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on their status as students experiencing educational instability.

References:

Education For Homeless Children and Youths – 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 et seq. Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular – Education of Homeless Youth

Act 1 of 2022 - 24 P.S. § 13-1331.1 Pennsylvania Department of Education Basic Education Circular – Act 1 of 2022: Supporting Graduation for Students Experiencing Educational Instability

Elementary and Secondary Education Act - 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. (reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act in December, 2015)

Board Policies – 200, 201, 205, 207, 209