



Book	Policy Manual
Section	200 Pupils
Title	Homeless Students
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Authority

The Woodland Hills School District 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.

The Woodland Hills School Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same free and appropriate educational programs and services provided to other district students.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent. It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.

Definition

Enroll or Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

Homeless children and youth means students who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes (42 USC 11435)

Children and youths who are:

- a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters
- d. Abandoned at hospitals
- e. Living in public or private places not designated for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations
- f. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings
- g. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
- h. Living as run-away children

- a. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers
- j. Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or your completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes you who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board and Superintendent designate a Home and School Visitor to serve as the district's liaison for homeless students and families.

42 U.S.C. Sec 11432

The districts liaison shall ensure that:

1. Homeless students are identified by school, personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies
2. Homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools
3. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool and other available supplemental programs, referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, social services and appropriate services
4. Parents/guardians of homeless students in informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated at places where homeless students receive, such as schools, shelters and soup kitchens
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law, board policy
7. Parents/guardians are fully informed of all transportation services and are assisted in gaining access to transportation to and from the school mf origin or the current attendance area
8. Children and youth who do not have immunizations or medical records are assisted to obtain necessary immunizations or medical records
9. Collaboration and coordination with state coordinators and community and school personnel occurs In order to provide education and related services to homeless children and youth
10. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation
11. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies

The district's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.

The district's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

Guidelines

42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless.

Enrollment/Placement

Best Interest Determination

In determining the best interest of a child or youth, the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so in contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth
2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety, giving priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
3. If, after such consideration, the district determines that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall include information regarding the right to appeal.

Placement

In accordance with the child's or youth's best interest, the Woodland Hills School District shall continue to enroll a homeless student in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing.

Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools.

The district's liaison shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions giving priority to the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.

The district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of
School/Health Records.

The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunizations with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The instructional program should begin without delay after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed.

The enrolling district's liaison will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Enrollment

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction even if:

1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment
2. The application or enrollment deadline has passed during any period of homelessness

The district's liaison shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.

The district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises over eligibility, enrollment or school selection:

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied you shall be referred to the district's liaison who shall assist in the dispute resolution process
2. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals
3. The district's liaison shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.

A parent/guardian or unaccompanied you may appeal a district's written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homeless Program.

Education Records

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.

Comparable Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to:

1. Transportation services
2. School nutrition programs
3. Vocational programs and technical education
4. Educational programs for which the homeless student meets the eligibility criteria, such as :
 - a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs'
 - b. Programs for English Language Learners
 - c. Programs for students with disabilities
 - d. Programs for gifted and talented student

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they attend within the school district.

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 transportation.

Training

The district's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

The district's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation
3. Heighten awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.