

**Woodland Hills School District**  
**Homeless Determination Process and Best Interest Procedures**

Process for District Staff:

1. If it is suspected that a student is experiencing homelessness, immediately report any information to your building social worker.
2. The building social worker will then contact the district's homeless liaison (Kellie Irwin) and provide the information available.
3. The building social worker and/or homeless liaison will reach out to the family for additional information, and will speak to other teachers, staff, or administrators as needed.
4. After all information is collected, the homeless liaison makes determination of homelessness.
5. The homeless liaison consults with ECYEH regional coordinator, Nicole Anderson, as needed.

Ways district works to identify students experiencing homelessness:

- Homeless liaison maintains frequent communication with the transportation department, building secretaries, school social workers, principals and PIMS/Child Accounting department.
- Families complete a residency questionnaire at time of enrollment, where homelessness can be identified.
- Families and/or community members report concerns to district personnel.
- Teachers report irregularities in student behavior, including tardiness or absences that have a pattern, to their building social worker. Parents are contacted to discuss and troubleshoot.

In the case of homelessness:

- a. The homeless liaison identifies and links families with support services.
  - Woodland Hills School District has clothing closets and hygiene supplies in all buildings, where students can go to pick out needed items.
  - Social workers have backpacks and school supplies available.
  - Woodland Hills School District Title 1 funds are used when needed to provide students with additional supplies.
  - Families experiencing homelessness can sign up for the district's backpack food program. Students can pick up a backpack filled with food on the last day of school each week, during the school year.
  - Parents/guardians are linked to local/community resources based on need.
- b. Each social worker completes McKinney-Vento change of address and transportation requests for the homeless students in their building. Transportation can then be set up from the family's current address.
- c. If student is in need of additional supplies, the homeless liaison works to procure them.
  - a. The district has clothing and supplies closets in all buildings
  - b. Staff and community members regularly donate clothing, shoes, coats, brand new socks, undergarments, and school supplies.

- d. The homeless liaison adds student demographics to the monthly homeless report, providing all required information.
- e. The homeless liaison checks in with families regarding homeless status and their needs (once in the spring, and once in August prior to start of school; in addition contact is made as needed).
  - a. The building social workers are also involved in this process.
- f. The homeless liaison shares updates with appropriate staff.
- g. The homeless liaison removes/updates student demographics from monthly homeless report when the family is no longer homeless.
- h. Best Interest Determinations occur in collaboration with parents and students, as well as other school districts, when homelessness prompts school choice.
- i. Unaccompanied Youth: The Woodland Hills School District will immediately enroll unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The homeless liaison will work with that student to connect with local agencies to assist with housing, food, and to remove any barriers that are student-specific. All homeless procedures will be followed.

If it is determined that student/family is NOT homeless, the homeless liaison:

- a. Calls the parents/guardians to inform them that they are not considered homeless and are provided with an explanation of the reasoning behind the finding. They are also provided with a letter explaining the determination and reasoning.
- b. Sends parents/guardians the Dispute Resolution Form and they have the opportunity to have their case further investigated by the Regional Homeless Coordinator/AIU Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY).
  - a. Dispute Resolution process is followed. The student is allowed to continue to attend WHSD until dispute process is finished.
- c. During the initial conversation, if a family indicates they are struggling, but NOT homeless, resources are offered to them based on their needs.
  - a. The district has clothing and supplies closets in all buildings

Supports Offered Regardless of Homeless Status/Best Interest Procedures:

- Work with district specialists based on student need.
- All students have access to the clothing closets located in all buildings for clothing, shoes, coats, backpacks, school supplies.
- Backpack food program is offered.
- Families are offered to receive a food basket from a local church for the holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter) if they are in need.