

Parents

Helping Your Child Succeed in School, Even When Dealing with Homelessness

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is committed to providing support for our students who are experiencing homelessness. We understand the challenges facing these students and have programs in place to make certain that they have the resources necessary to succeed.

ACPS has a homeless liaison responsible for ensuring that homeless children are identified, enrolled, and receive equitable access to high quality education and support services. Parents should contact the homeless liaison, Arnecia Moody at (703) 619-8156 for assistance.

Anyone, due to a lack of housing, can be considered homeless if he or she lives in inadequate or temporary settings such as: emergency or transitional shelters; motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, are abandoned in hospitals, living in cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, or abandoned buildings; are doubled up with relatives or friends; or those living in these conditions and are migratory children or youth.

What Families Experiencing Homelessness Need to Know

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have a right to attend school.
- You do not need a permanent address to enroll your child in school.
- Children and youth experiencing homelessness can stay in their original school or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, according to their best interest.
- Schools must provide you with a written explanation if a placement dispute occurs, and you may appeal their decision. (Contact the homeless liaison.)
- Your child cannot be denied school enrollment if school enrollment documentation is not immediately available.
- Your child may have the right to transportation services to and from the school of origin.
- Your child has the right to participate in extracurricular activities and all federal, state, or local programs for which he or she is eligible. Transportation may be available for these activities.
- Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness have these same rights. (Contact the homeless liaison.)

Contact Information

Arnecia Moody, LCSW-C, LICSW, LCSW, Homeless Education Liaison (703) 619-8156 or arnecia.moody@acps.k12.va.us

Free and Reduced Lunch Procedures

Homeless students are entitled to Free and Reduced Breakfast and Lunch and DO NOT need to fill out the regular application. To obtain meals, please contact the Homeless Education Liaison at Arnecia.Moody@acps.k12.va.us. The Homeless Education Liaison will review the request and if approved process it with Food Services.

Transportation Procedures

ACPS will provide transportation assistance for students experiencing homelessness so that the student may remain at his or her school of origin. This transportation is arranged through the homeless liaison's office and may be by school bus, public transportation, cab, fare cards or gas assistance for parents or guardians. It takes three to five working days for transportation arrangements to be put in place. Once transportation is set up, the parent and/or guardian is called and advised of the start date and time of the transportation.

To obtain transportation assistance, please e-mail or call Arnecia Moody at Arnecia.Moody@acps.k12.va.us:

Who are "Homeless Unaccompanied Youth"?

Students who meet the homeless definition and who are not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian including:

- Young people who have run away from home.
- Young people who have been forced to leave their homes.
- Their possible living situations include:
 - Living with friends (couch surfing).
 - Living in shelters.
 - Living in cars, at campgrounds, in abandoned buildings or on streets.

School may be the only safe, stable environment for unaccompanied youth. Schools can provide the necessary support(s) to ensure continued academic success for these vulnerable students. In addition to academics, schools can offer adult and peer support, meals, referrals to medical and mental health services, sports, clubs, and other activities. Schools should also connect these young people to other resources and supports available in the community.