

POST FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 273

Series 500: Student Policy: Attendance

Policy No: 501.5

Policy Title: Education of Homeless Children

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Education of Homeless Children

The Board is committed to maintaining an educational environment that protects and promotes dignity, individual worth, and mutual respect for each individual, and is free from harassment. Each student deserves the opportunity to participate in a safe, supportive atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities, free from all forms of discrimination.

The Board recognizes the right of all students, including those students experiencing homelessness to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education;
- Have meaningful opportunities to succeed in school;
- Participate fully in school activities; and
- Have equal access to all educational programs and services for which they are eligible.

Role of the Liaison

For the purposes of this policy, the Superintendent shall designate a district employee to serve as its liaison to serve homeless students. The liaison for homeless students shall:

- Coordinate with other services, public and private agencies, transportation department, state coordinator and others.
- Attend regional McKinney-Vento training sessions.
- Provide a training with all staff at least one time per year
- Identify students in transition and keep data and records up to date.
- Distribute and post public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens.

Identification

The McKinney-Vento Liaison will support all schools in Homeless Education identification to include:

- Dissemination of the nighttime residency form at the beginning of each school year.
- Another form of identification conducted mid-year.
- Training to include staff referrals
- Coordination with other entities and agencies.

Services

Homeless students shall have access to services comparable to services offered to other students, including but not limited to:

1. Transportation services
2. Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as Title I
3. Educational programs for children with disabilities and limited English proficiency
4. Other academic and extracurricular activities including summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, and/or online learning. The school nutrition program.
5. Preschool when applicable

Enrollment

The principal or designee is legally required to enroll and have in attendance students experiencing homelessness within one full day of an attempt to enroll. The Board of Trustees may not require an out-of-District attendance agreement and tuition for a homeless child.

Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records (The enrolling school must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records. Initial placement of students whose records are not immediately available can be made based on the student's age and information gathered from the student, parent, and previous schools or teachers.)
 - Students will be granted appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school or transferring to a new school.
- Any record ordinarily kept by the school regarding each homeless child shall be maintained so they are available in a timely fashion, when the student enters a new school or district and in a manner consistent with FERPA, applicable Idaho law and district policy.
- Immunizations or immunization/health/medical/physical records (If necessary, the school must refer students to the local liaison to assist with obtaining immunizations and/or immunization and other medical records.)
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Unpaid school fees
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Unaccompanied youth must be enrolled immediately in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison. They are informed of their status as independent students for the FAFSA, receive verification of that status and are provided with college / career counseling.

School Selection Determination

School selection for students experiencing homelessness should:

- Be based on the "best interest" of the student;
- Be based on the wishes of the parent/guardian/liaison;
- Keep the student in the school of origin, to the extent feasible;
- Be made on a case-by-case basis; and
- Before the duration of the current school year.

Transportation

The District shall provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation services in accordance with Federal and State laws. Transportation will be provided for the entire time the student has a right to attend that school, including during pending disputes. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth will be informed of their right to transportation before school selection is determined.

Free Meals

Once a student is verified as homeless, the student shall be expeditiously enrolled for free access to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.

Disputes

In compliance with Federal and State law, the Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to resolve disputes regarding the rights and services of students experiencing homelessness. If the dispute is not resolved through the District's procedures, the grievant has the right to appeal to the Idaho State Department of Education Homeless coordinator who has the final decision. The child or youth experiencing homelessness will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution; have a written explanation of decision and the right to appeal; parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute and also have the rights of a student who is homeless to all appropriated education services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1, Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

DEFINITIONS

Liaison: the staff person designated by the school district as the person responsible for homeless education, rights and services.

Students Experiencing Homelessness: students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who:

- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardships, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or abandoned in hospitals..
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
- Are migratory and living in a situation described above.

Unaccompanied Youth: a student not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is homeless as defined above.

School of Origin: the school the student attended when *the student was permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled*.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 11431, et seq. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
I.C. § 33-1404 Districts to Receive Pupils

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