



Central Islip Union Free School District

Board of Education & School District Policy Book

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Section	Section Title	Type
5000	Student Policies	Local
Policy	Policy Title	
5151	Homeless Children	

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility under federal (McKinney-Vento) and state laws and regulations to identify homeless children within the district and community, encourage their enrollment and eliminate existing barriers to their identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school. The Board will provide homeless children attending the district's schools with access to the same free and appropriate public education and other non-tuition, no cost school programs and activities, including publicly funded preschool education, as other children.

A homeless child is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime location in a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. This definition also includes a child who shares the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; lives in a car, park, public space or abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting; has been abandoned in a hospital; or is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless. An unaccompanied youth is a homeless child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

To assist in determining eligibility for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the district shall use a housing questionnaire for all enrolling students, and those reporting a change of address, which asks for a description of the student's current living arrangements.

A homeless child or youth has the right to attend his/her school of origin, or any school that permanently housed students who live in the attendance area in

which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend. For homeless students, a school of origin can be:

1. the public school where he/she attended when permanently housed (i.e., before becoming homeless); or
2. the public school where he/she was last enrolled, or
3. the public school he/she was entitled or eligible to enroll in when the child became homeless, if that child became homeless after such child was eligible to apply, register, or enroll in a public preschool or kindergarten, or he/she is living with a school-age sibling who attends school in the district; or
4. the designated receiving school at the next grade level for any feeder school, where the child has completed the final grade in the feeder school.

Such schools include publicly-funded preschools administered by the district or the State Education Department (SED).

A homeless child has the right to attend school in either the district of origin (i.e., where he/she resided before becoming homeless), the district of current location, or a district participating in a regional placement plan. The homeless child is entitled to attend the designated school district on a tuition-free basis for the duration of his or her homelessness. If the homeless child becomes permanently housed, the child may continue to attend in the same school building until the end of the school year and for one additional year if that year constitutes the child's terminal year in such building. If a homeless child completes the final grade level in the school of origin, the child may also attend the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop procedures necessary to expedite the homeless child's access to the designated school. Such procedures shall include:

1. **Admission:** Upon designation, the district shall immediately admit the homeless child to school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation and even if there is a dispute with the child's parents regarding school selection or enrollment. The district may temporarily exclude a child from attendance if there are actual symptoms of a communicable disease that poses a significant risk of transmission to others.

Homeless children will have the same opportunity as other children to

enroll in and succeed in the district's schools, including extracurricular activities and summer school program available to district students. They will not be placed in separate schools or programs based on their status as homeless. The district will eliminate barriers to identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children; including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees, fines or absences.

In accordance with law and regulation, the district will offer a prompt dispute resolution process. A student shall be entitled to continued enrollment in the district's schools, and transportation, pending resolution of the dispute and all available appeals.

2. **Dispute Resolution:** The district will ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated promptly. If a dispute arises between the district and parent about school selection or enrollment, the district will immediately enroll or maintain the enrollment of the student in the requested school and provide transportation, pending resolution of the dispute. If the district makes a final determination that a student is not homeless, it must provide the student's parent or guardian, or the unaccompanied youth with written notice that the student is not entitled to attend its schools. This written notice will:
 - a. Provide the rationale/basis for the district's determination;
 - b. Give the date as of which the student will be excluded from the district's schools;
 - c. State that the district's final determination may be appealed to the commissioner of Education (Commissioner);
 - d. Provide the name and contact information for the district's homeless liaison;
 - e. Inform the student's parent or guardian of the unaccompanied student that the district's homeless liaison is required to assist him/her in filing such an appeal; and
 - f. Contain the form petition needed to file an appeal to the Commissioner.

The Superintendent will ensure that the district's final decision is delivered to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth in a timely manner.

The student will remain enrolled and provided with transportation (if requested) until the district makes a final determination and for a minimum of 30 days after the determination to give the student's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth the opportunity to appeal to the Commissioner.

In the event that homeless status is denied, the parent will be provided with the Dispute Resolution Application for submission to the Commissioner of NYS Education Department and assistance will be provided if needed by the LEA Homeless Liaison who will guide and assist the parent, guardian or youth through the 310 Appeals Process.

3. **Transportation:** The district will promptly provide transportation to homeless students identified through the registration process and coordinate transportation with the county's Department of Social Services for those students placed outside the district through their agency. Transportation services will be comparable to those of other students. Also, individual accommodations will be considered. In general, the district shall ensure that transportation is provided to homeless students enrolled in the district who attend a school of origin, including a publicly funded preschool administered by the district or SED, even if the student lives outside the district's boundaries. Transportation shall be provided for the duration of homelessness, through the remainder of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed, and one additional year if that is the student's final year in the school. Transportation is provided to the school of origin up to 50 miles each way, even if such services are not available to students who are permanently housed. Transportation will be provided to students who are homeless in order to participate in extracurricular activities and summer school, if the lack of transportation poses a barrier to academic success.
4. **School Records:** For homeless students attending school out of the district, the district shall, within five days of receipt of a request for records, forward a complete copy of the homeless child's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records and guardianship paper, if applicable. For homeless students attending school in the district, the district will request the student's records (academic, medical, etc.) from the school the student last attended.
5. **Coordination:** The district shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other entities providing service to homeless children and their families for the provision of services to homeless children, and shall coordinate with other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transportation, transfer of records, and other inter-district activities. This shall include ensuring the provision of appropriate services to homeless students with disabilities who are eligible for services under either Section 504 or IDEA.

A portion of the district's Title I, Part A funds shall be set aside for homeless children and youth to provide educationally related support services and services not ordinarily provided to other students.

Information about a homeless child's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be considered directory information under FERPA. See policy 5500, Student Records, for more information.

The Superintendent shall also designate a McKinney-Vento liaison for homeless children and ensure that this person is aware of, and able to carry out, his or her responsibilities under the law. The liaison's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ensuring that:

1. parents or guardians of homeless children are 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;
2. parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services available to them, and are assisted in accessing them;
3. enrollment disputes involving homeless children are promptly mediated and resolved;
4. school personnel in coordination with shelters and social service agencies and other appropriate entities identify homeless children, including homeless preschoolers;
5. homeless children receive educational services, including but not limited to Head Start and preschool services to which they are eligible, as well as referrals to health care and other appropriate services;
6. public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated in locations frequented by homeless unaccompanied youth and parents/guardians of homeless children, in a manner and form understandable to them;
7. staff who provide services to homeless students receive required professional development and support on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students; and
8. homeless unaccompanied youth are informed of their rights, are enrolled in school, and have opportunities to meet the same state standards set for all students, including receiving credit for full or partial coursework earned in a prior school pursuant to Commissioner's regulations.

In accordance with Commissioner's regulations, the district shall collect and transmit to the Commissioner information necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children within the State.

Adoption date: June 8, 2009

Revision date: June 12, 2023

Cross Reference:

5150, School Admissions

5420, Student Health Services

5500, Student Records

Reference:

20 USC § 6313(c)

42 USC §§11431, et seq.

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs, 81 Fed. Reg. 14432-14436 (3/17/16)

U.S. Department of Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

Non-Regulatory Guidance (7/27/16).

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>

Education Law §§207; 305; 3202; 3205; 3209

Executive Law §§532-b; 532-e

Social Services Law §§17; 62; 397

8 NYCRR §§100.2; 175.6