

STUDENTS

Students Experiencing Homelessness – Enrollment Rights and Services

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with students and families experiencing homelessness to provide students with equal access to the same free, appropriate public education (including public preschool education) and services provided to other students. Special attention will be given to ensuring the identification, enrollment and attendance of students experiencing homelessness not currently attending school, as well as mitigating educational barriers to their academic success. Additionally, the district will take reasonable steps to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are not stigmatized or segregated in a separate school or in a separate program within a school on the basis of their status as experiencing homelessness.

Students experiencing homelessness will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, multilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented /highly capable programs, and school nutrition programs.

Students experiencing homelessness are defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those students who are:

- A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation;
- F. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings; or
- G. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The superintendent or designee shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's McKinney-Vento liaison for students experiencing homelessness and their families. The liaison may simultaneously serve as a coordinator for other federal programs, provided that they are able to carry out the duties listed in the procedure that accompany this policy.

If the district has identified more than ten unaccompanied youth, meaning youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and including youth living on their own in any of the situations described in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, the principal of each middle and high school building will establish a point of contact for such youth. The

point of contact is responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youth and connecting them with the district's McKinney-Vento liaison. The district's McKinney-Vento liaison is responsible for training the building points of contact.

Best Interest Determination

In determining which school is in the student's best interest to attend, the district will presume that it is in the student's best interest to remain enrolled in their school of origin unless such enrollment is against the wishes of a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

Attendance options will be made available to families experiencing homelessness on the same terms as families resident in the district, including attendance rights acquired by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, and intra and inter-district choice options.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian will be informed of the district's decision and the reasons therefore, (or informed if the student does not qualify for McKinney-Vento, if applicable) and their appeal rights in writing and in language they can understand. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state policy. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. However, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address or other documentation. Additionally, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to missed application deadlines or fees, fines, or absences at a previous school.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's Address Confidentiality Program when necessary. However, the district cannot demand emergency contact information in a form or manner that creates a barrier to enrollment and/or attendance at school.

Students experiencing homelessness are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a student is living in another district but will attend the school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

The district's McKinney-Vento liaison shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The notice must be disseminated in a manner and form that parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth receiving such services can understand, including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in their native language. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of students and will participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities, as determined by the state-level Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) coordinator for homeless children and youth programs.

The superintendent or designee will:

- A. Strongly encourage district staff, including substitute and regular bus drivers, to annually review the video posted on the OSPI website on identification of student homelessness;
- B. Strongly encourage every district-designated homeless student liaison to attend trainings provided by the state on identification and serving homeless youth.
- C. Ensure that the district includes, in materials provided to all students at the beginning of the school year or at enrollment, information about services and support for homeless students (i.e., the brochure posted on the OSPI website.)
- D. Use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness (e.g., distributing and collecting an annual housing intake survey, providing parent brochures directly to students and families, announcing the information at school-wide assemblies, and posting information on the district's website).

Facilitating On-time Grade Level Progression

The district will: 1) waive specific courses required for graduation for students experiencing homelessness if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district; or 2) provide reasonable justification for denial of the waiver. In the event the district denies a waiver and the student would have qualified to graduate from their sending school district, the district will provide an alternative process of obtaining required coursework so that the student may graduate on time.

The district will consolidate partial credit, unresolved, or incomplete coursework and will provide students experiencing homelessness with opportunities to accrue credit in a manner that eliminates academic and non-academic barriers for the student.

For students who have been unable to complete an academic course and receive full credit due to

withdrawal or transfer, the district will grant partial credit for coursework completed before the date of the withdrawal or transfer. When the district receives a transfer student in these circumstances, it will accept the student's partial credits, apply them to the student's academic progress or graduation, or both, and allow the student to earn credits regardless of the student's date of enrollment in the district.

In the event a student is transferring at the beginning of or during their junior or senior year of high school and is ineligible to graduate after all alternatives have been considered, the district will work with the sending district to ensure the awarding of a diploma from the sending district if the student meets the graduation requirements of the sending district.

In the event a student enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student, has met state requirements, has transferred to the district, but is ineligible to graduate from the district after all alternatives have been considered, the district will waive its local requirements and ensure that the student receives a diploma.

Informed Consent for Healthcare

Informed consent for healthcare on behalf of the student experiencing homelessness may be obtained from a school nurse, school counselor or homeless student liaison when:

- A. Consent is necessary for non-emergency, outpatient, primary care services, including physical examination, vision examinations and eyeglasses, dental examinations hearing examination and hearing aids, immunizations, treatments for illnesses and conditions and routine follow-up care customarily provided by a healthcare provider in an outpatient setting, excluding elective surgeries;
- B. The student meets the definition of a "homeless child or youth" under the federal McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance improvements act of 2001; and
- C. The student is not under the supervision or control of a parent, custodian, or legal guardian, and is not in the care and custody of the department of social and health services.

Upon the request by a healthcare facility or a healthcare provider, a district employee authorized to consent to care must provide to the person rendering care a signed copy or dated declaration stating under penalty of perjury that the employee is a school nurse, school counselor or homeless student liaison and, that the minor patient meets the requirements of [RCW 7.70.065](#) (2) (b) listed above in this policy.

The district and the district employee authorized to consent to care under this policy are not subject to administrative sanctions or civil damages resulting from the consent or non-consent for care or payment for care. Any declaration required by a healthcare facility or a healthcare provider described in the above paragraph must include written notice that the district employee is exempt from administration sanctions and civil liability resulting from the consent or non-consent for care or payment for care.

Policy No. 3115

Students Experiencing Homelessness – Enrollment Rights and Services – Continued

Legal References: RCW [28A.320.142](#) Unaccompanied and homeless youth – Building point of contact – Duty of district liaison for students experiencing homelessness.
 RCW [28A.225.215](#) Enrollment of children without legal residences.
 RCW [28A.320.145](#) Homeless students.
 [20 U.S.C. 6301](#) et seq. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]
 [42 U.S.C. 11431](#) et seq. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 [Chapter 28A.320](#) RCW Provisions applicable to all districts

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