

## Students

### Homeless Students

The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the district, encourage their enrollment and eliminate existing barriers to their education, which may exist in district policies or practices, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws.

Further, it is the policy of the Board of Education that no child or youth shall be discriminated against or stigmatized in this school district because of homelessness. Homeless students, as defined by federal and state statutes, residing within the district or residing in temporary shelters in the district are entitled to free school privileges.

Homeless students within the district not placed in a shelter remain the district's responsibility to provide continued educational services. Such services for the child may be:

Continued in the school ("school of origin") that the student attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment; or provided in the school that is attended by other students living in the same attendance area where the homeless child lives.

To the extent feasible, a homeless child will be kept in the school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian.

Homeless children shall be provided educational services that are comparable to those provided to other students enrolled in the district, including but not limited to, Title I, transportation services, compensatory educational programs, gifted and talented, special education, ELL, health services and food and nutrition programs.

The Superintendent of Schools shall refer identified homeless children under the age of eighteen who may reside within the school district, unless such children are emancipated minors, to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

The district administration shall attempt to remove existing barriers to school attendance by homeless emancipated minors:

1. The selected school for the homeless child shall enroll the child, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. The last school enrolled shall be contacted to obtain records.
2. Other enrollment requirements that may constitute a barrier to the education of the homeless child or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent. If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize other reasonable means to determine the appropriate grade level for the child.
3. Fees and charges, which may present a barrier to the enrollment or transfer of a homeless child or youth, may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.

4. Transportation services must be comparable to those provided other students in the selected school. Transportation shall be provided to the student's school of origin in compliance with federal and state regulations.
5. Official school records policies and regulations shall be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent, in compliance with federal statutes.
6. The district shall make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from information available. The District's liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations and records. The District shall arrange for students to receive immunizations through health agencies and at District expense if no other recourse is available. Immunizations may, however, be waived for homeless youth only in accordance with provisions of Board of Education policy on immunizations.
7. Other barriers to school attendance by homeless children or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

**8. The District will treat information about a homeless child or youth's living situation as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Such information shall not be deemed to be directory information.**

The District's educational liaison for homeless children is the Director of Special Services.

Students residing in a temporary shelter are entitled to free school privileges from the district in which the shelter is located or from the school district where they would otherwise reside if not for the placement in the temporary shelter. The district in which the temporary shelter is located shall notify the district where the student would otherwise be attending. The district so notified may choose to either:

1. Continue to provide educational services, including transportation between the temporary shelter and the school in the home district; or
2. Pay tuition to the district in which the temporary shelter is located.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative regulations, to ensure compliance with applicable statutes in the implementation of this policy.

(cf. 5143 Student Health Assessments and Immunizations)

(cf. 5146 Child Abuse and Neglect)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-253\(d\)](#) School privileges for children residing permanently with relatives or non-relatives.

[10-253\(e\)](#) School privileges for children in certain placements, non-resident children and children in temporary shelters **(as amended by PA 17-194)**.

17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surrounding without court order.

[17a-102](#) Report of danger of abuse.

[17a-103](#) Reports by others.

[17a-106](#) Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

**PA 17-194 An Act Concerning Access to Student Records for Certain Unaccompanied Youths.**

[46b-120](#) Definitions.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (PL 107-110-Sec 1032)

**Policy adopted: March 17, 2014**

WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Woodbridge, Connecticut

**5118.1**

**Students**

**Homeless Students - Guidelines**

In order to implement the policy pertaining to homelessness, the following guidelines are established:

**Definitions:**

Homeless students are federally defined as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This definition includes the following types of students who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Residing at nighttime in a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
8. Migratory children living in the above described circumstances.

### **District Obligations Regarding Placement of Homeless Students:**

1. The District must continue the student's education in the "school of origin" which is the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment, or
2. The District must enroll the homeless student in any public school that non-homeless students, regardless of the area where the child is actually living, are eligible to attend.
3. The District is required, "to the extent feasible" to keep the homeless child in the school of origin unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian.
4. The homeless child's right to attend the school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness.
5. If a child becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he/she is entitled to stay in the school of origin until the end of the school year.
6. A child who becomes homeless in between academic years is entitled to attend his/her school of origin in the following academic year.
7. The District must provide written explanation, including the right to appeal, whenever the school district sends the homeless child to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian.
8. With an "unaccompanied youth," the District's homeless liaison must assist in the placement/enrollment decisions while considering the youth's wishes, and provide notice of appeal under the Act's enrollment dispute provision. (See below.)
9. Identified homeless children who may reside in the District, and who are under eighteen years of age and not emancipated, shall be referred to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

### **Appeal Procedure**

1. C.G.S. [10-186](#) currently defines the process for resolving issues involving homeless students.
2. Federal law requires school districts to allow homeless students to "stay put." The child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

3. The District's homeless liaison shall carry out the dispute resolution process expeditiously and in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.

### **Educational Services to be Provided to Homeless Students**

1. Educational services are to be comparable to those received by other student in the school.
2. Such students may be entitled to such services as Title 1, state/local remedial programs, special education, limited English proficiency, vocational education, gifted/talented and school nutrition programs.
3. Homelessness alone is not to be considered a sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.
4. Homeless students may be segregated for short periods of time only for health and safety emergencies to provide temporary, special, or supplemental services.

### **Transportation Obligations of the School District for Homeless Students**

1. Services must be comparable to those provided other students in the selected school.
2. Homeless students must be provided transportation to the school of origin, if requested by the parent/guardian, if the school is within the school district.
3. If the school of origin is in a different school district from where the child is currently living, both districts are to agree on a method for sharing the responsibility and costs or share the costs equally.

### **Enrollment Requests from Homeless Parents**

1. The selected school is required to immediately enroll the child, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. Parents/guardians may be required to submit contact information.
2. The last school attended must be contacted to obtain records.
3. If the child lacks immunizations or immunization/medical records, the enrolling school MUST refer the parent/guardian to the liaison in order to get help obtaining immunizations and records.

### **District Liaison for Homeless Students**

The District's liaison for homeless students is the Director of Special Services.

The duties of the local liaison are to ensure that:

1. Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies and entities.
2. Homeless children enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in the school district's schools.
3. Homeless families and children have access to educational services and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services for which they are eligible.
4. Parents/guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated where such children require services. (For example, family shelters, soup kitchens, and schools.)
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated.

Parent/guardian is fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and assisted in accessing those services.

Unaccompanied youth are assisted in placement/enrollment decisions, including considering the wishes in those decision, and providing notice to the youth of the right to appeal such decisions.

Children, who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, are assisted in obtaining the necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-253\(e\)](#) School privileges for children in certain placements non-resident children and children in temporary shelters.

[17a-101](#) Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surrounding without court order.

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[17a-106](#) Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

[46b-120](#) Definition.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (PL 107-110-Sec 1032) 42

U.S.C. §11431-11435

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