

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:

1. continued in the school ("school of origin") that the student attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment; or
2. 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.

Students who are homeless 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, ESL, 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 and youth eighteen years of age:

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.

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Homeless Students (continued)

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.

The District's central office liaison for homeless children is the Superintendent of Schools.

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 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)

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Homeless Students (continued)

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.

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.

46b-120 Definitions.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, (PL 107-110-Sec 1032) 42 U.S.C. §11431-11435

Policy adopted: May 24,2004
Policy revised: May 9, 2011

STAFFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Stafford Springs, Connecticut

Students

Homeless Students

When a staff member becomes aware that a student might be homeless, federally defined as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence", that staff member must notify the school social worker who will investigate the student's residency status. Likewise, a parent/guardian could make the school aware of the student's homelessness. The school social worker will work with the family to provide information of related services. Regardless of the form of notification, a determination will be made by school administration.

Should the student be determined to be homeless, the District will comply with the following provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

- a. 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**
- b. The District must enroll the student in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the area where the student is actually living are eligible to attend.
- c. The District is required "to the extent feasible" to keep the student in the school of origin unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian.
- d. The student's right to attend the school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness.
- e. If a student 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.
- f. A student who becomes homeless in between academic years is entitled to attend his/her school of origin for the following academic year.
- g. The District must provide written explanation, including the right to appeal, whenever the school district sends the student who is homeless to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian.
- h. With an "unaccompanied youth", the District's homeless liaison, or designee within the school, must assist in the placement/enrollment decisions, considering the youth's wishes, and provide notice of appeal under the Act's enrollment disputes provision.

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Homeless Students (continued)

Educational services to be provided to students who are homeless are to be comparable to those received by other students in the schools. Moreover, homelessness alone is not to be considered a sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

Transportation Obligations of the School District for Students who are Homeless:

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

The District liaison for students who are homeless is the Superintendent of Schools. The duties of the District liaison are:

- a. . Ensure students who are homeless are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies and entities.
- b. Ensure these students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in the school district's schools.
- c. Ensure that issues regarding the students are resolved.
- d. Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to students who are homeless.

Each school building will have a liaison that is the social worker. The duties of the building based liaison are:

- a. Ensure that families and students who are homeless receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, preschool programs, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
- b. Ensure that 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.

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- c. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of these students are disseminated where such students receive services. (For example, family shelters, soup kitchens, and schools.)
- d. Ensure that the parent/guardian is fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing those services.
- e. Assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions, including considering the youth's wishes in those decisions, and providing notice to the youth of the right to appeal such decisions.
- £ Assist students who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Appeal Procedures:

- a. C.G.S. 10-186 currently defines the process for resolving issues involving students who are homeless. The State is required to establish an appeal process.
- b. Federal law requires school districts to allow these students to "stay put", i.e. "the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute".
- c. The District's liaison for students who are homeless 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.