

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

This School District will comply with the federal and state law related to homeless students.

A “homeless children” for purposes of this Policy is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as defined by applicable federal and state law related to homeless students. An “unaccompanied youth” is a child who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

1. Homeless Coordinator: The District’s designated Homeless Coordinator is the Superintendent. The Homeless Coordinator may delegate the specified duties as the Homeless Coordinator determines to be appropriate. The Homeless Coordinator shall serve as the school liaison for homeless children and youth.
 - a. Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Homeless Coordinator are to assist with identification, enrollment, and placement of homeless children and to provide staff development activities to all school personnel regarding the educational rights and needs of homeless children and youth. The Homeless Coordinator shall ensure that:
 - i. homeless children are identified by school personnel;
 - ii. homeless children enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school;
 - iii. homeless children and their families receive educational service for which they are eligible and referrals to health, dental, and mental health services and other appropriate services;
 - iv. the 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;
 - v. public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated where such children receive services under the federal homeless children laws, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
 - vi. enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law; and
 - vii. the parents or guardians of homeless children, and any unaccompanied youth, are fully informed of transportation services available under law.
 - b. Coordination. The Homeless Coordinator shall coordinate with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provisions of education and related services to homeless children. Coordination activities with area shelters and other homeless service providers are to be established by the Homeless Coordinator.

- c. Financial. The Homeless Coordinator shall ensure that financial records are maintained to show expenditures are for authorized activities. Title I, Part A homeless set-aside funds are also to be used for services for homeless children. Materials and equipment purchased with grant funds are properly identified and inventoried.
 - d. Program Activities. The Homeless Coordinator shall design program activities to meet the greatest need as determined by the District and homeless service providers.
 - e. Documentation. The Homeless Coordinator shall document the number of homeless children and youth receiving services.
 - f. Student Records. The Homeless Coordinator shall ensure that any record ordinarily kept related to students, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, are be maintained so that the records of a homeless child are available, in a timely fashion, when the child enters a new school or school district and in a manner consistent with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act.
2. Enrollment and Placement of Homeless Children: The enrollment and placement of homeless children shall be in compliance with federal and state law.
- a. Enrollment. A homeless child shall be immediately enrolled even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. Lack of previous school records, immunization and medical records, birth certificate, or other documentation from the previous school will not delay the enrollment of a homeless child or youth. Guardianship issues, uniform or dress code requirements, and residency requirements will not be obstacles to delay or deny enrollment. The District may nonetheless require the parent or guardian of the homeless child to submit contact information.
 - b. Obtaining Records. The District shall immediately contact the school last attended by the homeless child to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the homeless child needs to obtain immunizations or medical records, the District shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the homeless child to the Homeless Coordinator, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records.
 - c. Placement. Placement decisions for a homeless child shall be made according to the District's determination of the child's best interests.
 - i. The placement shall be at either:

1. The child's "school of origin," which is the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled; or
 2. The school of the attendance area in which the child is actually living.
 - ii. If placed in the school of origin, the placement shall continue for the duration of the child's homelessness. If the child becomes permanently housed (no longer homeless) during the school year the placement in the school of origin will be continued for the remainder of that school year.
 - iii. To the extent feasible the placement shall be in the school of origin except when such is contrary to the wishes of the homeless child's parent or legal guardian. If the placement is not in the school of origin or a school requested by the homeless child's parent or legal guardian, the District shall provide a written explanation of the placement decision and a statement of appeal rights to the parent or guardian.
 - iv. If the homeless child is an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Coordinator shall assist in the placement decision, consider the views of the unaccompanied youth, and provide the unaccompanied youth with notice of the right to appeal.
 - v. The grade placement for the homeless child will be the appropriate grade level as determined by the building principal or designee using the same procedures that are used for placing non-homeless children attending that school.
3. Educational Services and Stigmatization or Segregation: It is the District's policy that homeless children not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless children will be provided the same free, appropriate public education as other students. Homeless students will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the homeless child has been placed, including the following: transportation services, educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency, programs in vocational and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition programs.
4. Transportation: Transportation will be provided to homeless students to the extent required by law.
- a. Comparable Service. Transportation will be provided to a homeless student comparable to that provided to students who are not homeless.
 - b. School of Origin. When the homeless student attends the school of origin, transportation will be provided to and from the school of origin upon request of the parent or guardian of the homeless child, or upon request of

the Homeless Coordinator in the case of an unaccompanied youth. If the homeless child relocates out of the District but continues to be enrolled in this School District based on it being the school of origin, this School District will negotiate with the school district in which the child is residing to develop a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If agreement is not reached, the responsibility and cost for transportation shall be shared equally.

- c. Eliminate Barriers. Transportation will be provided when necessary to eliminate barriers to school enrollment and the retention of students experiencing homelessness.
5. Dispute Resolution. The process to resolve disputes concerning the enrollment or placement of a homeless child is as follows:
- a. The homeless child and the parent, guardian or other person having legal or actual charge or control of the homeless child shall be referred to the Homeless Coordinator. The Homeless Coordinator shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. The dispute resolution process is as follows:
 - i. The homeless child and parent/guardian will submit a written dispute statement to the Homeless Coordinator. The District's Dispute Resolution Form shall be used if such is available.
 - ii. When it is determined that additional information would be helpful, the Homeless Coordinator will schedule a meeting within 10 days, or such time as practicable, at which the homeless child and parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to provide information in support of their position.
 - iii. The Homeless Coordinator will contact school officials and others as determined appropriate to obtain information to corroborate the information provided in support of the positions of the homeless child and parent/guardian and the District.
 - iv. The Homeless Coordinator will provide a written response and explanation of a decision regarding the dispute within 30 calendar days after receiving the dispute statement.
 - v. The written response and explanation of the decision will include a notice of the right appeal using the appeal process provided for in Nebraska Department of Education Rules 19.
 - b. In the event of an enrollment dispute, the homeless child's placement shall be at the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute in accordance with the dispute resolution process. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-215
Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,
42 USC §§11431, et seq.

Cross Reference: 503.01 Compulsory Attendance

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