

## **Homeless Children and Youth**

The District believes all students should have access to a free, appropriate public education. The District will ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth.

**Responsibility.** The District shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and youth within the District, will encourage their enrollment in school, will work to eliminate existing barriers in District policies and procedures which may serve as barriers to their enrollment, and will ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free public education, including public preschool education, as is provided to other children and youth.

**Definitions.** “Homeless children and youth” means individuals from age three through age 21 who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”);
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- Includes youth who have run away or youth forced to leave home.

Incarcerated children and youth and children and youth in foster care are not considered homeless.

“School of origin” means the school that the homeless child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the homeless child or youth was last enrolled.

“Unaccompanied youth” means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, including youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing, youth denied housing by their families, and school-age unwed mothers, living in homes for unwed mothers, who have no other housing available.

To help ensure that homeless children and youth have a full opportunity to enroll, attend, and succeed at school, the Board will designate a local homeless children and youth liaison. The liaison will work to:

- Ensure homeless children are identified by school staff through outreach and coordination with other agencies and entities.
- Provide training opportunities for staff so staff may help identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Remove barriers, including those associated with fees, fines, and absences, to the identification, enrollment, retention, attendance and/or success in school for homeless children and youth;
- Provide supports for equitable access to educational resources;
- Ensure collaboration and coordination with other service providers;
- Ensure transportation is provided in accordance with legal requirements;
- Provide school stability in school assignment according to the child’s best interests;
- Ensure the privacy of student records, as provided by applicable law, including information about a homeless child or youth’s living situation;
- Engage in the dispute resolution process for decisions relating to the educational placement of homeless children and youth as provided by applicable law; and
- Prohibit the segregation of a homeless child or youth from other students enrolled in the District.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42  
U.S.C. §11431 et seq.; 67 Fed. Reg. 46

Iowa Administrative Code: Chapter 33

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