

Homeless Education Program Policy

Students of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) residing in the District shall have equal access to the same free appropriate public education including comparable services, as provided to other students and youth who reside in the District. Homeless students and youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless students and shall not be stigmatized by school personnel.

Definition of Homeless Students and Unaccompanied Youths

The term “homeless students and unaccompanied youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes students and youths who are:

- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camp grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
- “Doubled up” living with friends or family due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.

Migratory students and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition. Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of South Shore School District (SSSD) forms such as the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction PI-Q03-8/05 or through direct contact with SSSD staff. The South Shore School District does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental emotional or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

Procedure

School Selection

Placement in a school shall be in the student’s best interest.

- The student’s education may continue in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and/or in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of

- the academic year, if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- The student may enroll in a school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

The school of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled. In determining the best interests of the student to the extent feasible, the student will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian, for the duration of the homelessness. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

Enrollment

The school shall immediately enroll the student/youth, even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school. The term "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

Residency

A homeless student is a resident if the student is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently. The student shall be considered a resident when living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis not solely for school purposes or for participation in extra curricular activities. Homeless students who do not live with their parents or guardians may enroll themselves in school. The address listed on the enrollment forms becomes proof of residency. If residency is questioned by the LEA, immediate enrollment will occur with homeless liaison following up to determine residency.

Comparable Services

Each homeless student or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected.

Transportation

At the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local agency liaison or designee, transportation will be provided for homeless students to the school of origin for the duration of the homeless status. Once permanent housing is found, the family has a choice to stay in the school they are attending, school of origin or attend the school where they found housing. If a family chooses to stay in the school of origin, transportation will be discontinued.

Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Disputes should be resolved as expeditiously as possible. Appeals will go to the District Administrator or his/her designee. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the South Shore School District Homeless Liaison shall also ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

CROSS REF.: 411 Equal Educational Opportunities
 420 School Admissions

LEGAL REF.: Section 118.13 Wisconsin Statutes
 PI-9, Wisconsin Administrative Code
 Title IX, Education Amendment of 1972
 Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
 Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 American with Disabilities Act of 1990
 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
 Civil Rights Act of 1991
 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
 Assistance Act

APPROVED: January 15, 2014