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| Book         | Policy Manual      |
| Section      | 200 Pupils         |
| Title        | Homeless Students  |
| Code         | 251                |
| Status       | Active             |
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| Last Revised | March 16, 2018     |

### **Authority**

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the district, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations. [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent.

### **Definitions**

**Homeless students** are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, adequate, regular and nighttime residence, which include children and youth who are: [\[4\]](#)

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship or a similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
7. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
8. Living as run-away children.
9. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.
10. Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

**School of origin** is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. When the child completes the final grade level served by school of origin, the

school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Board designates the Superintendent to serve as the district's liaison for homeless students and families.

The district's liaison shall coordinate with: [\[5\]](#)

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.
4. District staff responsible for the provision of services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

The district's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

The District's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with Federal and state laws and regulations.

### **Guidelines**

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless. [\[6\]](#)

### **Enrollment/Placement**

To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless student shall continue to be enrolled in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the district liaison will consider the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled. [\[5\]](#)

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies. However, the district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The district liaison may contact the previous school for oral confirmation of immunizations, and the school shall request records from the previous district, pursuant to Board policy. [\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)

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 appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parents/guardians shall be provided with a written explanation of the district's decision, their right to appeal and the procedures to use for the appeal.

### **Services**

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English as a second language, and gifted and talented students. [\[5\]](#)[\[2\]](#)

### **Transportation**

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district. [\[5\]](#)[\[2\]](#)

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

### Training

The District's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

The District's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.

School Personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

### Legal

1. [42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq](#)
2. [24 P.S. 1306](#)
3. [22 PA Code 11.18](#)
4. [42 U.S.C. 11434a](#)
5. [42 U.S.C. 11432](#)
6. [42 U.S.C. 11431](#)
7. Pol. 200
8. Pol. 201
9. Pol. 203
10. Pol. 204
11. Pol. 209
12. Pol. 216