

HOMELESS CHILDREN

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to identify homeless children within the District, encourage their enrollment and eliminate existing barriers to their education which may exist in District practices. The Board will provide homeless children access to the same free and appropriate public education, including preschool education, as other children.

A homeless child is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime location in a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. This definition also includes a child who shares the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; lives in a car, park, public space or abandoned building, bus or train station or similar setting; has been abandoned in a hospital or is awaiting foster care placement; or is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless.

A homeless child has the right to attend school in one of the following three districts:

1. The district of origin (i.e., where they resided before becoming homeless),
2. The district of current location (i.e. where they are currently temporarily housed), or
3. The previous district of current location (i.e. the district the student last attended, while temporarily housed, after having left the district of origin and before having arrived in the district of current location)

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop procedures necessary to expedite the homeless child's access to the designated school. Such procedures shall include:

1. Admission: Upon designation or claimed eligibility, the District shall immediately admit the homeless child to school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation and even if there is a dispute with an unaccompanied youth's parents regarding school selection or enrollment.

Homeless children will have the same opportunity as other children to enroll in and succeed in the District's schools. They will not be placed in separate schools or programs based on their status as homeless.

2. Transportation: The District shall provide transportation for homeless students in accordance with the following:

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- a. If the District is the student's district of current location: Transportation shall be provided to the extent such services would be available to a permanently housed student residing at that same address;
 - b. If the District is the student's district of origin / previous district of current location: Transportation will be arranged for students located up to 50 miles away from the District
3. School Records: For homeless students attending school out of the District, the District shall, within five days of receipt of a request for records, forward a complete copy of the homeless child's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records and guardianship paper, if applicable.

The Superintendent shall maintain a liaison for homeless children and ensure that this person is aware of his responsibilities under the law. The liaison's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ensuring that:

1. parents of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them, including transportation;
2. enrollment disputes involving homeless children are promptly mediated and resolved;
3. school personnel in coordination with shelters and social service agencies and other appropriate entities identify homeless children, including homeless preschoolers;
4. homeless children receive educational services, including Head Start and preschool services to which they are eligible, as well as referrals to health care and other appropriate services;

In accordance with Commissioner's regulations, the District shall collect and transmit to the Commissioner information necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children within the State.

Ref: 42 USC §§11431, et seq.
School Enrollment Guidelines on the McKinney-Vento Act, 67 Fed. Reg. 10,697-10,701 (March 8, 2002)
Education Law §§207; 305; 3202; 3205; 3209
Executive Law §§532-b; 532-e
Social Services Law §§17; 62; 397
8 NYCRR §§100.2; 175.6

Adopted: June 21, 2006

Revised: December 15, 2010

Reaffirmed: February 4, 2015

Reaffirmed: February 14, 2018