

Homeless Student Written Policy

Students of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) residing in the **Waukomis Public School District** shall have equal access to the public school educational programs. Extracurricular activities and services, which allows them to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all students are held. Homeless students and youth are not required to attend a separate school or program for homeless students and will not be stigmatized by school personnel.

Definition of Homeless Students and Unaccompanied Youths

The term "homeless students and unaccompanied youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. It includes students and youths (preschool-grade 12) who are:

- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in cars, parks, public or private spaces not designed for humans to live, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus stations, train stations, or similar settings; • "Doubled up" by living with friends or family; or
- Living in unsuitable conditions, such as lack of utilities, mold, infestations, or dangers.

Migratory students and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent/guardian, or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison (LEA).

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 the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool and the designated receiving school at the next grade level for feeder schools.

In determining the best interests of the student, the student will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent/guardian, for the duration of the homelessness. Student-centered factors will be considered, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the LEA liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

If the district determines it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or youth, the district must provide a written explanation of the reason(s) for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent/guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal.

Enrollment

The school will immediately enroll the student/youth, even if the student lacks required documents, has missed application or enrollment deadlines, has outstanding fees, fines, or absences, or applies without a parent/guardian.

The term "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined as attending school and participating fully in school activities.

All homeless students will be provided free breakfast and lunch upon enrollment. The same meals provided to non-homeless students.

Comparable Services

Each homeless student or youth will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as:

- Preschool programs
- Transportation services to and from school as provided to other students, including transportation to the school of origin
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as ELL or special education programs
- Programs for at-risk students
- Programs and courses for talented and gifted students
- School nutrition programs
- Title I services
- Before and after-school programs
- Tutoring programs
- Summer school programs, career and technical programs
- Online learning
- Extracurricular activities, advanced placement, on-line learning

Homeless students are allowed to participate in all academic school activities including extracurricular activities. HL students will have access to the same transportation to and from these extracurricular activities provided to non-homeless students. Our district supports activities for all students because extracurricular activities are an extension of a good educational program. Students who participate in activity programs tend to have higher grade-point averages, better attendance records, lower dropout rates and fewer discipline problems than students generally. Through participation in activity programs, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. These are qualities students need if they are to become responsible adults, productive citizens and skilled professionals.

Transportation and School Meals

At the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, transportation will be provided by the district for the homeless student(s) to and from the school of origin until the end of the school year, even if permanent housing is found.

Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals for the remainder of that given school year.

Homeless Liaison

The district will designate a McKinney-Vento liaison. The homeless liaison or designee will ensure:

- Homeless students are voluntarily identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies. School staff are trained by the homeless liaison every fall.
- Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the district.
- Homeless families/students receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services.
- The parent/guardian of homeless students and any unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to them and provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the student/youth.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in such public places as schools, meal sites, shelters and other locations frequented by low-income families.
- There is compliance with all policies and procedures and mediate enrollment disputes.
- The parent/guardian of homeless students or youth and unaccompanied youth are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.
- Ensures the coordination of services between the district and other homeless family service providers.
- Assistance is provided to students who do not have immunizations or immunization medical records.
- Students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Programs for homeless students are coordinated with other federal and local programs.
- There is support for academic success, including credit accrual and transition to higher education.

Homeless Liaison trains all school staff at the beginning of each school year.

Disputes

If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disputes the school assignment determined by the district, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Disputes shall be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Appeals will go to the district superintendent or his/her designee. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth will be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection/enrollment, including the rights of the parent/guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the State Homeless Program Administrator at OSDE.

Level 1: District Liaison

Level 2: District Superintendent

Level 3: State Coordinator (all decisions final)

Adoption Date:

Amended Date: