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**5014**  
**Homeless Students**

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**1. General Policy.** The District will provide tuition free education for homeless children and youth who are in the district and accord them the educational rights and legal protections provided by state and federal law. Homeless children and youth shall not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and shall have access to the same services offered to other students. It is the intent of this policy to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in the District.

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**2. Homeless Liaison.** The District’s homeless liaison is the Superintendent. Students in homeless situations who require assistance should contact the liaison at (402)376-1780 or in person at 431 N Green St, Valentine NE. The liaison’s responsibilities include:

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- a. Ensuring homeless children and youth are identified through coordination with the Nebraska Department of Education, community groups, and other school personnel;
  - b. Receiving training regarding state and federal law governing homeless children and youth;
  - c. Ensuring homeless children and youth and their families are referred to appropriate health care, housing, and other relevant service providers and programs available in the community;
  - d. Assisting other District personnel to work with homeless children and youth and their families on regular attendance, participation in programs and activities of the District, and completing academic work to meet academic standards of the District;
  - e. Assisting homeless children and youth and working with other District employees to prepare for and improve college readiness, including assistance with applications, selection, financial aid, and status verification for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and
  - f. Carrying out other aspects of this policy.

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**3. Definitions**

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- a. “Homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:
    - i. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a

- 44 similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or  
45 camping grounds due to the lack of alternative  
46 accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional  
47 shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;  
48 ii. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime  
49 residence that is a public or private place not designed for  
50 or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for  
51 human beings;  
52 iii. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public  
53 spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or  
54 train stations, or similar settings; and  
55 iv. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the  
56 purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in  
57 circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).  
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59 b. The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include  
60 any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained by an act of  
61 Congress or by state law.  
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63 c. "Child" and "youth" refers to persons who, if they were children  
64 of residents of the District, would be entitled to a free education.  
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66 d. The term "unaccompanied youth" shall mean a homeless child or  
67 youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.  
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69 e. "School of origin" means the school that the child or youth  
70 attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the  
71 child or youth was last enrolled.

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73 **4. School Stability and Enrollment.** Generally, the District presumes  
74 that keeping a homeless child or youth in their school of origin is in the  
75 child's best interest unless it is contrary to a request of the child's  
76 parent, guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the  
77 youth. The District will also consider factors including, but not limited  
78 to: the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and  
79 safety of the child.

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81 **5. Strategies to Address Enrollment Delays.** In order to address  
82 enrollment delays resulting from homelessness, the school district  
83 shall immediately enroll homeless students even if they are unable to  
84 produce records normally required for enrollment such as  
85 immunization and medical records, residency documents, birth  
86 certificates, school records, or other documentation, or guardianship

87 documents. The school district shall immediately contact the school  
88 last attended by the student to obtain academic and other records.  
89 The school district's homeless liaison shall assist in obtaining  
90 necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.  
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93 **6. Transportation.** Transportation shall be provided to homeless  
94 students to the extent required by law and comparable to that  
95 provided to students who are not homeless. At the request of the  
96 parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the  
97 liaison), transportation shall be provided to and from the school of  
98 origin as follows:  
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100 a. If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area  
101 served by the school district, the child's or youth's transportation  
102 to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by  
103 the school district.  
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105 b. If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area  
106 served by the school district terminate and the child or youth,  
107 though continuing his or her education in the school district,  
108 begins living in an area served by another school district, the  
109 school district and the new school district in which the homeless  
110 child or youth is living shall negotiate to agree upon a method to  
111 apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with  
112 transportation to and from the school district. If the districts are  
113 unable to agree, the responsibility and cost for transportation  
114 shall be shared equally.  
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116 **7. Records.** The District will maintain and respond to requests for  
117 enrollment records for homeless children or youth consistent with its  
118 record policies and state and federal record laws. Any information  
119 about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as  
120 a confidential education record and shall not be deemed directory  
121 information.  
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123 **8. Dispute Process.** If a dispute arises over school selection or  
124 enrollment in a school:  
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126 a. The child or youth shall be admitted immediately to the school in  
127 which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;  
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129 b. The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the

130 district's homeless liaison who shall carry out the dispute  
131 resolution process within (30) thirty calendar days after  
132 receiving notice of the dispute;

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- 134 c. The parent or guardian of the child or youth or, in the case of an  
135 unaccompanied youth, the youth, shall be provided with a  
136 written explanation of the school's decision regarding school  
137 selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent,  
138 guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal the decision within  
139 (30) thirty calendar days of the time such complaint or dispute is  
140 brought.
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- 142 d. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison  
143 shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school  
144 in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute.
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146 **9. Appeal Process**

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- 148 a. **Nebraska Department of Education.** If the Complainant is  
149 not satisfied with the written decision of the District after the  
150 dispute resolution process, the Complainant may appeal the  
151 decision of the District to the Commissioner of the Nebraska  
152 Department of Education within (30) thirty calendar days of  
153 receipt of the decision from the District, pursuant to Nebraska  
154 Department of Education Rule 19.
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- 156 b. **State Board of Education.** If the Complainant is not satisfied  
157 with the decision of the Commissioner, the Complainant may file  
158 a Petition with the State Board of Education within (30) thirty  
159 calendar days of the receipt of the decision of the Commissioner  
160 pursuant to Nebraska Department of Education Rule 19.
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163 Adopted on: November 14, 2006  
164 Reviewed on: September 12, 2006; August 11, 2015; July 13, 2017  
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166 2017; December 12, 2017