

HOMELESS STUDENTS

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility, under Federal (McKinney-Vento) and New York State laws and regulations, to identify homeless students within the District, encourage their enrollment and eliminate existing barriers to their identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school that may exist in District practices. The Board will provide homeless students attending the District's schools with access to the same free and appropriate public education and other school programs and activities, including publically funded preschool education, as other students.

A homeless student has the right to attend public preschool or school in either the district of origin (i.e., where he/she resided before becoming homeless), the district of current location, or a district participating in a regional placement plan. The homeless student is entitled to attend the designated school district on a tuition-free basis for the duration of his or her homelessness. If the student becomes permanently housed, the student is entitled to continued attendance in the same school building until the end of the school year, and for one additional year if that year constitutes the student's terminal year in such building. If a homeless student completes the final grade level in his/her school of origin, the students may also attend the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools for that one year.

The District shall coordinate with social services agencies and other entities providing services to homeless students and their families for the provision of services to homeless students and shall coordinate with other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transportation, transfer of records and other inter-district activities. This shall include ensuring the provision of appropriate services to homeless students with disabilities who are eligible for services under either Section 504 or IDEA.

A portion of the District's Title 1, Part A funds shall be set aside for homeless students and youth to provide educationally related support services and services not ordinarily provided to other students.

Definition of Homeless Child Students and Unaccompanied Youth

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (42 USC § 11434a [2]) (McKinney-Vento) and New York State Education Law § 3209 (1) (a), a homeless student is defined as a student who does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or whose primary nighttime location is in a public or private shelter designated to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings. This definition includes a student who is:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason (sometimes referred to as double-up).
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- A migratory student who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in circumstances described above.

An unaccompanied youth is a homeless student for whom no parent or person is parental relation is available (8 NYCRR §100.2[x] [1] [vi]). The term unaccompanied youth shall not include a student or youth who is residing with someone other than a parent or legal guardian for the sole reason of taking advantage of the schools of the District.

Identification of Homeless Students

The Great Neck Public Schools shall determine whether there are homeless students within the Great Neck School District. It shall do so by all means available, including, but not limited to contacting:

- Nassau County Department of Social Services.
- Any local runaway and homeless youth shelter (as listed at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/Youth/rhydirectory.asp>).
- Any other shelters located in the district.

The District will have a student residency questionnaire that asks for a description of the current living arrangements of the students or youth in order to determine whether the child or youth meets the definition of a homeless students under McKinney-Vento and New York State Education Law §3209 (1) (a). This questionnaire will be distributed to every family upon registration for school and those reporting a change of address. For immediate enrollment, parents/guardians of homeless students are not required to provide proof of residency or any other documentation ordinarily required. Information about a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) in accordance with *Policy 5500 Student Records*.

Duties of the Mandated Local Liaison for Homeless Students and Youth

Every Local Education Agency (LEA), regardless of whether it receives a McKinney-Vento sub-grant, is required to designate a local liaison for homeless students and youth (Homeless Liaison), and ensure that this person is aware of, and able to carry out his or her responsibilities under the law. The Homeless Liaison at the LEA serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, District personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers.

The Homeless Liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless students and youth enroll in school, and have the opportunity to succeed academically. The liaison shall receive appropriate professional development on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students, including the definitions of terms related to homelessness.

The LEA understands that its Homeless Liaison must ensure that:

- Homeless students and youth are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- School personnel providing services under the McKinney Vento Act receive professional development and other support.
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA.
- Homeless students and youth and their families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including but not limited to Head Start, Even Start and preschool programs administered by the LEA, as well as referrals to health care, and other appropriate services for homeless students and their families.
- Parents or guardians of homeless students and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their students, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students.
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school district of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services.
- Disputes regarding school selection, enrollment or transportation are promptly mediated and resolved in accordance with the requirements of McKinney-Vento. The District must continue enrollment and transportation during any dispute involving eligibility, school selection, enrollment or transportation pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
- Assistance in commencing an appeal pursuant to Education Law §310 of a final determination regarding enrollment, school selection and/or transportation is provided to the homeless student's or youth's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth in accordance with the provisions of 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(7)(iii).

5151/5

- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is posted in locations where such students receive services frequented by homeless unaccompanied youth and parents/guardians of homeless students in a manner and form that is understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths.
- A record is maintained of all appeals of enrollment, school selection and transportation.
- School personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families are informed of the duties of the Homeless Liaison and receive required professional development and support on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students. *42 USC §11432(g)(6)(A); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(7)(iii).*
- Homeless unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. section 1087 (vv)) and their right to receive verification of this status from the local educational agency McKinney-Vento liaison, are enrolled in school, and have opportunities to meet the same state standards set for all students, including receiving credit for full or partial coursework earned in a prior school pursuant to Commissioner's regulations.
- Students identified as homeless receive free school meals.
- 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 student's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records and guardianship paper, if applicable. For homeless students attending school in the District, the District shall request the student's records from the school the student last attended.

Transportation Responsibilities

The District shall promptly provide transportation for homeless students currently attending District schools as required by applicable law. In general, the District shall ensure that transportation is provided to homeless students enrolled in the District who attend a school of origin, including a publicly funded preschool administered by the District or the New York State Department of Education (SED), even if the student lives outside of the district's boundaries. Transportation shall be provided for the duration of homelessness through the remainder of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed, and one additional year if that is the student's final year in the school.

- A Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) is responsible for providing transportation to homeless students who are eligible for benefits under New York State Social Services Law §350-j and placed in temporary housing arrangements outside their designated districts.
- To the extent funds are provided for such purpose, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) must provide transportation for each homeless student who lives in a residential program for runaway youth and homeless youth located outside of the designated school district. The LDSS or OCFS may contract with a school district or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to provide such transportation. The costs for transportation will be reimbursed by the LDSS with the submission of a Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Transportation Program Form, which is available from the Homeless Education Program Office (518-473-0295).
- Any homeless student not entitled to receive transportation from the LDSS or OCFS must be transported by the designated school district. *New York State Education Law §3209(4); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(6)*.
- When the school district of the current location is designated as the school district the homeless student will attend, that school district must provide transportation to the homeless student on the same basis as it is provided to resident students. *New York State Education Law §3209(4)(d); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(6)(iii)*.

5151/7

- If the homeless student designates the school district of origin or a school district participating in a regional placement plan, then that school district must provide transportation to and from the homeless student's temporary housing and school. Such transportation cannot exceed 50 miles one way, unless the Commissioner determines that it is in the best interest of the student. *New York State Education Law §3209(4)(c); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(6)(ii)*.
- Homeless students are entitled to transportation during any disputes regarding school selection and enrollment. *8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(7)(ii)(c)*.
- Transportation for Summer School is required if the designated school district of attendance has recommended that the student who is homeless attend a summer educational program and the lack of transportation poses a barrier to participation. The school district or social services district must provide transportation to extracurricular or academic activities if the student participates or would like to participate in the activity, meets relevant criteria for the activity and the lack of transportation presents a barrier to the student's participation.

Great Neck Public Schools

Adopted: 12/15/14

Amended: 11/14/16; 2/12/18