

STUDENTS

Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services

As required by RCW 28A.225.215, the District will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided District services for which they are eligible. The District shall not require proof of residency or any other information regarding an address for any child who is eligible by reason of age for the services of the District if the child does not have a legal address.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
- B. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- C. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Are abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Awaiting foster care placement;
- F. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
- G. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings.
- H. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The District will work to avoid homeless children and youths being stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. The District maintains and makes available in a timely fashion, any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth.

According to the child's or youth's best interest, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in which attendance area the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-District choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the District.3115

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian will be informed of the District's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The District's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state policy. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school will immediately enroll the student, pursuant to District policies. However, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address, or other documentation. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student will be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the District liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school will be requested from the previous school pursuant to District policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with District policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary. However, emergency contact information cannot be demanded in a form or manner that creates a barrier to enrollment and/or attendance at school.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different District, or a homeless student is living in another District but will attend his or her school of origin in this District, the Districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

The superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the District's liaison for homeless students and their families and will establish enrollment guidelines designed to accommodate homeless students as directed by state and federal law.

The District's liaison for homeless students and their families will coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The District's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to District policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Cross References:

cf. 3120 Enrollment
cf. 3141 Nonresident Students
cf. 3231 Student Records
cf. 3413 Student Immunization and Life-Threatening Conditions

Legal References:

RCW 28A.225.215 Enrollment of children without legal residences
Title X, Part C No Child Left Behind Act, 2002
42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

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