

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The School District of New Berlin (District) seeks to ensure that each homeless student has equal access to the same free, appropriate education as provided to other District students.

Identification of Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless students as those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes children and youth who:

1. Share the housing of other persons because of the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
2. Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds because of the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Live in emergency or transitional shelters.
4. Are abandoned in hospitals.
5. Are awaiting foster care placement.
6. Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
7. Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
8. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances set forth in 1, 2, or 3 above.

The parent/guardian of a student who is living in a homeless situation will be given the "Homeless Child/Unaccompanied Youth Information Form" to complete and submit to any staff member who will forward that information to the Director of Student Services.

School Selection

Enrollment Options:

1. Students identified as homeless may enroll in the school serving the attendance area where the student resides or continue enrollment in the school of origin (the "school of origin" is the school the student attended when last permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled).
2. Determining which school the student attends will be based upon the student's what is determined to be appropriate to the child. Effort will be made, to the extent feasible, to keep the student in the school of origin unless doing so is against the preferences of the parent/guardian. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the District will assist in the enrollment decisions.
3. A homeless student who attends the school of origin may attend that school for the duration of homelessness, stay in that school for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year, or attend the school of origin for the duration of homelessness if the student becomes homeless between academic years.

Transportation to School of Origin

(Note: If the student is residing in the District, and the student is enrolled in the attendance-area school no formal process is required other than normal notification to establish the student on a bus route.)

In cases where the student continues in the school of origin and that school is not within the attendance-area of residency, parents (or unaccompanied youth) will be asked if transportation is needed.

In the case where the school of origin and current residence are in different school districts, the two districts will agree on a method for transportation and shared costs.

Dispute Resolution

If the District denies the school of origin request, the parent/guardian will be provided with a written explanation of the District's decision, including the right to appeal. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Director of Student Services will provide notification to such youth including the right to appeal. The "Written Notification and Dispute Resolution Form" will be used for the purposes of documentation.

If the District's decision is disputed, the process to be followed includes:

1. The student will be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is being sought, pending the resolution of the dispute.
2. The dispute will be referred to the Director of Student Services who will consult with policies, administrative staff, and legal counsel within seven school days of receipt of the "Dispute Resolution Form."
3. If the dispute is not resolved as per 2 above, the Chief Academic Officer in consultation with the Superintendent will issue the District's decision within ten school days of receiving notification of the continued dispute.
4. If the dispute is not resolved as per 3 above, the parent/guardian will be notified of their right to appeal to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. To facilitate that contact, the parent/guardian will be provided specific contact information.

Enrollment/Withdrawal of Homeless Students

A homeless student is to be enrolled immediately even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment.

The principal will notify the Director of Student Services when a homeless student is identified.

The school will provide parents/guardians with the "Information for Parents" materials.

If a homeless student arrives at school without a parent/guardian, the unaccompanied youth will be enrolled immediately and the Director of Student Services notified. The District will make attempts to contact the youth's parent(s); however, enrollment will not be contingent upon parental involvement. Students must meet the District's age eligibility criteria for enrollment.

Homeless students qualify for free meals. That process will be completed by the building principal.

When students enroll without records (e.g., transcript, report card, birth certificate, or immunization/health records) the principal will contact the former school to request student records

In cases where the student leaves a school without official withdrawal and the District is contacted by another school for the student's records, requested information (to the extent available) will be sent within five days of such request.

Role of the Homeless Liaison

The role of homeless liaison is subsumed under the responsibilities of the Director of Student Services. Responsibilities include the following:

1. Identify homeless students and unaccompanied youth residing within the District and ensure they are enrolled and have equal opportunity to succeed in school.
2. Ensure that students receive educational services, including special education and transportation services, for which they are eligible.
3. Provide information to parents/guardians of homeless students about educational options and the opportunity to participate in their children's education.
4. Distribute public notices of the educational rights of homeless students.
5. Mediate enrollment disputes.
6. Collaborate and coordinate with state and local agencies.

Legal References:

Section 118.13 Wisconsin Statutes
PI 1, Wisconsin Administrative Code
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. ss11431-11436
20 U.S.C ss6311-6311
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

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2/25/13
5/13/13