

INSERT DISTRICT LOGO

**INSERT DISTRICT NAME**  
**Homeless Education Program Policy**

Students of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) residing in the **(District Name)** Public School District shall have equal access to the public-school educational programs 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 Homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]:**

The term “*homeless children and youths*”

(A) Means individuals who lack a

*fixed* (stationary, permanent, not subject to change),  
*regular* (used on a nightly basis), and  
*adequate* (sufficient for meeting the physical, psychological and safety needs typically met in a home environment) nighttime residence; AND

(B) Includes -

(i) Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;

are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campus grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

are living in emergency or transitional shelters;

are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(iii) Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). Because a child is migrant does not make them homeless.

- Typically, if a child or youth lack one of the three conditions (fixed, regular or adequate) in a living situation, s/he is considered homeless.
- The McKinney-Vento Act no longer includes children and youth who are awaiting foster care placement in the definition of “homeless children and youth.”

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

**Definition of Unaccompanied Youth experiencing homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act [42 U.S.C. § 11434a]:**

The term “*unaccompanied youth*” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

To be eligible for McKinney-Vento services, an unaccompanied youth MUST ALSO FIT the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act.

### **School Selection**

Placement in a school shall be in the student's best interest. LEA Liaisons must keep the homeless student in the school of origin, to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth.

- 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.
- The student's education may continue in the school of origin for (a) the duration of homelessness, (b) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, (c) during an academic year, or (d) for the duration of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- The student has the right to enroll in any public school that non-homeless student who live in the attendance area are able to attend, so long as the student is actually living in the attendance area (local attendance area school).

In determining the best interests of the student or unaccompanied youth, student-centered factors will be considered, including but not limited to 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 requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied 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 or unaccompanied youth, even if they lack 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.

### **Comparable Services**

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

- Preschool programs
- Transportation services
- 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

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- Before and after-school programs
- Tutoring programs
- Summer school programs
- Online learning
- Extracurricular activities

### **Transportation and School Meals**

At the request of the parent/guardian, transportation will be provided by the district for the homeless student 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.
- Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school, which includes academic success, credit accrual assistance and transitioning to higher education/workforce.
- 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 (including name, phone number of district liaison and name, phone number of state administrator) 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 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 provided to students who do not have immunizations or immunization medical records.
- Students are not segregated based on 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.

### **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 designee). The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth will be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school

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selection/enrollment, including the rights of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth to appeal the decision to the Homeless Education Program State Coordinator at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI).

**Level 1:** District Liaison

**Level 2:** District Superintendent

**Level 3:** NDDPI State Coordinator (all decisions final)

**Adoption Date:**

**Amended Date:**