

HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY

Students of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) residing in the Appleton Area School District (AASD) shall have equal access to the public school educational programs and services that allow them to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all students are held. Homeless students and youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless students and shall not be stigmatized by school personnel.

Definition of Homeless Students and Unaccompanied Youths

The term “homeless students and unaccompanied youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. It includes students and youths (preschool-grade 12) who are:

- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, public or private spaces not designed for humans to live, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
- “Doubled up” by living with friends or family.
- Unsuitable living conditions, such as lack of utilities, mold, infestations, or dangers.

Migratory students and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with the parent/guardian or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or through direct contact with AASD staff. Homeless status is documented in the AASD student information system.

The Appleton Area School District does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or physical, cognitive, emotional or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

Cross Reference: Student Nondiscrimination, 411.2 and 411.2 Rule
School Admissions, 420 and 420 Rule

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statute 118.13
PI9, Wisconsin Administrative Code
Title IX, Education Amendment of 1972
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
American with Disabilities Act of 1990
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
Civil Rights Act of 1991
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Adoption Date: **February 23, 2009**

Amended Date: **January 23, 2017; April 11, 2022**

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Procedure

School Selection

Placement in a school shall be in the student's best interest.

- The student's education may continue in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and/or in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of the academic year, if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- The student may enroll in a school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

The school of origin means the school that the student attended when last permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled and attending, including a preschool and including the designated receiving school at the next grade level for feeder schools.

In determining the best interests of the student to the extent feasible, the student will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent/guardian, for the duration of the homelessness. Student-centered factors will be considered, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

If the District determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or youth, the District shall 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 shall immediately enroll the student/youth, even if the student lacks 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 to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

A school chosen on the basis of a best interest determination must immediately enroll the homeless student, even if the student does not have the documentation typically necessary for enrollment, such as immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificate or previous academic records.

Residency

A homeless student is a resident if the student is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently. The student shall be considered a resident when living with a parent/guardian, or person in loco parentis not

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solely for school purposes or for participation in extracurricular activities. Homeless students who do not live with their parent/guardian may enroll themselves in school.

The address listed on the enrollment forms becomes documentation of residency. If residency is questioned by the District, immediate enrollment will occur with follow up to clarify residency.

Comparable Services

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

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

Transportation and School Meals

Transportation support needs will be assessed by the Homeless Liaison and provided by the District to ensure that transportation needs are not a barrier to attending school. Parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth requests and/or student best interest will be considered. Transportation will be provided by the District for the homeless student(s) to and from the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child, youth, or unaccompanied homeless youth becomes permanently housed. The LEA providing transportation will ensure homeless students are receiving transportation comparable to non-homeless peers.

Once permanent housing is found, the family has a choice to stay in the school of origin or attend the school in the attendance area where they found housing. If a family chooses to stay in the school of origin, transportation will be provided until the end of that given school year.

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

Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals for the remainder of that given school year.

Homeless Liaison or Designee

The District will designate a McKinney-Vento liaison. The homeless liaison or designee shall ensure that:

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- 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 schools in the district.
- 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 the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the student/youth.
- Public notice 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 mediates enrollment disputes.
- The parent/guardian of homeless students or youth and unaccompanied youth 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 is provided to students who do not have immunizations or immunization medical records to obtain them.
- Students are not segregated on the basis of 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.

Dispute Resolution

Homeless Liaison will assist the family in the dispute resolution process. Appeals will go first to the Homeless Director and then to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection/enrollment, including the rights of the parent/guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth have the right to dispute:

- School selection
- Eligibility
- Enrollment

The school assignment at the time of school enrollment is determined by the District, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute (including all appeals). Disputes should not delay the immediate enrollment in school and disputes shall be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Cross Reference: Student Nondiscrimination, 411.2 and 411.2-Rule
School Admissions, 420 and 420-Rule

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statute 118.13
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