

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

5.021 – Homeless Students

POLICY:

1. Homeless children and youth who live within the county (or school district) who experience homelessness, including those not currently enrolled due to homelessness will have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths and other services needed to ensure an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held and to fully participate in the district's academic and extracurricular activities and not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
2. Definitions
 - A. Homeless children and youths

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes: children and youths who

 1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
 2. Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals;
 4. Have a primary nighttime residence that is
 - a. A public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 5. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
 6. Are migratory children who are living in circumstances described above.
 - B. Unaccompanied Youth – A homeless child or youth that is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
 - C. School of Origin – The school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool.

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- D. Enroll and Enrollment – Attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
 - E. Eligible School-the school of origin, the school zoned for the address where the student is temporarily residing, or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend.
 - F. Designated receiving school-includes the next level school, elementary from prekindergarten, middle from elementary, high from middle, that a homeless child or youth, whose homelessness continues into the next school year, may attend when that next level school is the district designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.
- 3. The District shall designate an appropriate staff person able to carry out the duties described in the McKinney- Vento Act, as the district's liaison for homeless children and youth.
 - 4. The District shall seek to remove barriers to:
 - a. Identifying homeless children and youth
 - b. Enrolling and retaining of homeless children and youth in school
 - c. Provide access to homeless children to public preschool programs administered by the district
 - d. Provide appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior school
 - e. Provide access for homeless children and youth to academic and extracurricular activities
 - f. Immediately enroll homeless children and youth to a qualified school
 - 5. The District shall coordinate district programs and collaborate with other school districts, community service providers and organizations, including:
 - a. Local social services and other community agencies to provide support to homeless students and their families,

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- b. Other school districts regarding homeless student- related transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities, as needed,
 - c. Housing authorities, and
 - d. Exceptional student education.
6. The District shall ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless students.
- a. A homeless child or youth may continue their education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year.
 - b. Keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is presumed to be in the child's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
 - c. When considering placement in a school other than the child's or youth's school of origin, the district will consider student-centered factors to determine a placement that is in the student's best interest.
 - d. The eligible school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness.
 - e. When a school other than the school of origin is selected, the district will remove barriers to enrollment and enroll homeless children and youths immediately, even if they cannot produce records or otherwise meet enrollments, including:
 - 1) Previous academic records
 - 2) Immunizations or other health records
 - 3) Birth certificate
 - 4) Proof of residency
 - 5) Guardianship
 - 6) Uniform or dress code requirements
 - 7) Outstanding fees, fines, or absences
 - 8) Other required documentation.

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7. A homeless student who becomes permanently housed during the academic year, may remain at their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year and continue to receive all McKinney- Vento Act benefits.
8. Children and youths experiencing homelessness, and who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, will have access to all available academic and extracurricular activities for which they meet relevant eligibility criteria.
9. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.
10. Each school provides services to homeless children and youths that are comparable to services offered to non- homeless students in their school, including the following:
 - a. Transportation services;
 - b. Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria;
 1. Title 1
 2. Exceptional Student Education
 3. Educational programs for English learners
 - c. Programs in career and technical education;
 - d. Programs for gifted and talented students;
 - e. School nutrition programs;
 - f. Preschool programs administered by the LEA.
11. The District assures that records will be
 - a. Treated as student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information, under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act.
 - b. Maintained for each homeless child or youth, including:
 1. Immunization or other required health records;
 2. Birth certificates;
 3. Academic records;
 4. Guardianship records; and
 5. Evaluations for special services.
 - c. Made available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school.

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- d. Held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act.
12. If requested by the parent or guardian of a homeless child or by the liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth, the district shall be responsible for providing or arranging transportation to and from a child's or youth's school of origin.
- a. When the child's or youth's living arrangements are in an area served by another school district (district of residence), this school district (district of service) will coordinate with the district of residence to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin.
13. When the district determines that a placement other than the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, the district will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth with:
- a. A written explanation in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, and
 - b. Information on the right to appeal the placement determination.
14. During a school selection dispute,
- a. The child or youth will either remain enrolled in the student's school of origin or shall be immediately enrolled in the eligible school in which enrollment is sought, either the school zoned for the address where the student is residing or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend, pending final resolution of the dispute including all available appeals;
 - b. The parent or guardian of the child or youth or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school or the district, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions;
 - c. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's designated homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
 - d. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which the youth seeks enrollment pending resolution of such dispute.

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STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:

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1003.21, 1003.22, F.S.

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS

ASSISTANCE ACT, P.L. 100-77

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

PL 114-95 20 USC 6311(g)(1)(F)

HISTORY:

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