

## ***CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS***

### **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

**5.021**

#### **POLICY:**

Homeless children who live within the county shall be admitted to school in the District, shall have access to free public education including preschool, shall be given the opportunity to meet local and state academic achievement standards, and shall be included in state and District assessments and accountability systems.

#### **I. Definitions**

##### **A. Homeless Child**

One who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth 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 FEMA trailer;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals or not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian;
5. Have a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - a. A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

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- b. An institution providing temporary residence for persons who are to be institutionalized; or
  - c. A public or private place not designed or normally 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 qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in I.A.1. through I.A.5.
- B. Unaccompanied Youth - A youth is a person up to the age of 21. The term unaccompanied homeless youth includes a child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- C. Certified Homeless Youth – A minor, homeless child or youth, including an unaccompanied youth, who has been certified as homeless or unaccompanied by a school district homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or designee, or the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services or designee, a licensed clinical social worker, or a circuit court.
- D. School of Origin - The school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

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- E. Enroll and Enrollment - Attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
  - F. Immediate – Without delay.
  - G. Parent – Parent or guardian of a student.
  - H. Liaison – The staff person designated by the District as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
  - I. 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.
  - J. 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 [s.722(g)(3)(A)]
- II. The District shall identify a liaison to carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
  - III. The District shall identify homeless students as defined by federal and state law. If the District liaison for homeless children and youth determines that the minor is an unaccompanied homeless youth, the liaison shall issue to the youth a certificate documenting his/her status as required by law.

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- IV. The District shall seek to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Uniform or dress code requirements, outstanding fees, fines, or absences shall not be barriers to enrollment or participation
- V. The District shall ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless students, even if the child or youth missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness.
  - A. The District shall assist homeless children to provide documentation to meet state and local requirements for entry into school.
  - B. A homeless child shall be given a thirty (30) school day exemption to provide proof of age, certification of a school-entry healthy examination, proof of immunization, and other documentation required for enrollment.
- VI. Each homeless student shall be provided the services that are available for all other students including transportation, school nutrition programs, before and after school programs, academic and extracurricular activities, and education services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria such as exceptional education, gifted education, vocational and technical programs, preschool programs.
- VII. If requested by a child's or youth's parent or guardian, a homeless child or youth may enroll in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

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- VIII. The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.
- IX. Appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior school shall be awarded.
- X. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.
- XI. If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations or immunization records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or the youth to the homeless liaison who will assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or records.
- XII. 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 shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when the child or youth enters a new school or school district. These records shall be treated as student records and held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and shall not be deemed to be directory information.
- XIII. Keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is presumed to be in the child's or youth'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 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.

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- XIV. When the district determines that a placement other than the school of origin is in the best interest, the district will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth with a written explanation in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, and information on the right to appeal the placement determination.
- XV. During a school selection dispute, 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 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 and 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.
- XVI. If requested by the parent of a homeless child or by the liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall be responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin throughout the duration of homelessness. The District shall share the responsibility of transportation if a homeless student begins living in another district in a homeless status and continues to attend the school of origin.

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- XVII. 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.
- XVIII. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized, segregated, or separated in any education program on the basis of their homeless status.
- XIX. 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,
  - 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. ESE.
- XIV. The District shall follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Florida Statutes.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** 1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.S.

**LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:** 382.002, 722(g), 743.067, 1000.21, 1001.43, 1003.01, 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: ADOPTED:** 10/28/08

**REVISION DATE(S):** 7/2009, 5/25/2010, 7/23/13, 1/27/2015, 6/26/2018, 10/27/2020, 4/26/2022

**FORMERLY:** Homeless Education