

CHAPTER 5.00 – STUDENTS

HOMELESS STUDENTS

5.02*

- I. Homeless children who live within the county shall be admitted to school in the District, shall have equal access to the same free appropriate public education (including preschool programs), provided to other students. The School District assures homeless students have access to the education and other services needed to ensure they have an opportunity to meet local and state academic achievement standards, and shall be included in state and District assessments and accountability systems.

- II. 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 public or private place not designed or normally used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 6. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
 7. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in II.A.1. through II.A.6.

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- B. Unaccompanied Youth – includes a homeless 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, 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 student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
- E. Designated receiving school includes the next level school, elementary from pre-kindergarten, 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 in the district designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.
- F. 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.
- G. Enroll and Enrollment – Attending school and participating fully in school activities.
- H. Immediate – Without delay.
- I. Parent – Parent or guardian of a student.
- J. 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 including but not limited to ensuring families and children experiencing homelessness have access to a public preschool program; providing appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by the homeless student; providing access to academic and extracurricular activities; and carrying out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

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- III. The District shall identify homeless students as defined by federal and state law. If the District’s 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.
- IV. The District shall seek to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth.
- V. The District shall ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless students.
 - 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 health examination, proof of immunization and other documentation required for enrollment.
 - C. If a dispute arises over eligibility or school selection or enrollment in a school:
 - 1. The child shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals;
 - 2. The parent or guardian of the child or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the district, including the rights of the parent guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions. Written notification will be in a manner and form understandable to the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth.
- 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, and education services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria such as exceptional education, gifted education, vocational and technical programs, preschool programs, Title I, and limited English proficiency programs.
 - A. A district serving children who are homeless shall coordinate:
 - 1. The provision of services with local social services agencies and other agencies or entities providing services to children who are homeless and their families; and

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2. Transportation, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities with other local educational agencies.
 3. With state and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy to minimize educational disruption for children who become homeless, if needed.
- VII. Homeless students shall be given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school.
- VIII. Homeless students shall be allowed to remain in the school of origin if in the student's best interest, unless this is contrary to the wishes of the parents. The homeless student may continue his/her education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness:
 - A. If the student becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
 - B. for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- IX. In determining the best interest of a homeless student, the District will consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent/guardian. The school selected in accordance with this policy immediately enrolls the homeless student, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; or has missed the application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- X. Homeless students and/or parents shall have the right to dispute school assignment if placement is other than the school of origin. The District shall ensure that unaccompanied youth and the parents of homeless students are notified of the right to remain in the school of origin pending final resolution of the dispute, and of the dispute process. The District will refer the parent, guardian, or youth to the homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
- XI. 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 for 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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- XII. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized, segregated, or separated in any educational program on the basis of their homeless status.
- XIII. Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including health and immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs of a homeless student shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when the student enters a new school district.
- 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, 743.067, 1000.21, 1001.43,
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MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, P.L.100-77

Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. PL 114-95

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