

Weakley County Board of Education

Descriptor Code:
6.503

Homeless Students

Revised Date:
10/21/14

In order to ensure that homeless students have equal access to the same free appropriate public education as provided to other students, the following shall apply: ¹

Homeless students are individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and include the following:

1. Students 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 camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
2. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
3. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
4. Migratory students who meet one of the above described circumstances.

ENROLLMENT/PLACEMENT

The district will consider the best interests of the student with parental involvement in determining whether the student should be enrolled in the school of origin or the school that non-homeless students who lives in the attendance area in which the homeless student is actually living are eligible to attend. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, the student should continue his/her education in the school of origin, except when contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. If the student is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless coordinator will consider the views of the student in deciding where the student shall be educated. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the student lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

The school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless student, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation. However, the district may require a parent or guardian of the student to submit contact information.

The district shall provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless student's parent/guardian, or to the homeless student if unaccompanied, if the district sends the student to a school other than the school of origin ("*school of origin*" is defined as the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled) or other than a school requested by the parent or guardian.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The student or parent/guardian shall be referred to the district homeless coordinator, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

SERVICES

Each homeless student shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the district including, but not limited to, transportation services; educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as educational programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and gifted and talented students; vocational programs and technical education; school meals programs; preschool programs; before- and after-school care programs and programs for students with limited English proficiency. Homeless students will not be segregated in a separate school or in a separate program within a school based on the student's status as homeless.

TRANSPORTATION

In the event that it is in the best interest of the homeless student to attend the school of origin, transportation to and from school shall be provided at the request of the parent/guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied student, the homeless coordinator. If the student's temporary housing is outside the district of the school of origin, the Weakley County will work with the school of origin to agree on a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for transporting the student. If an agreement cannot be reached, the costs will be shared equally.

RECORDS

Any records ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained so that appropriate services may be given the student, so that necessary referrals can be made and so that records may be transferred in a timely fashion when a homeless student enters a new school district. Copies of records shall be made available upon request to students or parents in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

COORDINATOR

The Board designates the following individual to act as the district's homeless coordinator:

Homeless Coordinator
Weakley County Schools
8319 Hwy. 22, Dresden, TN
(731) 364-2247

The district shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the district homeless coordinator. The homeless coordinator shall ensure that:

1. Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.

2. Homeless students enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools in the district.
3. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which such families and students are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start and preschool programs administered by the district and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services.
4. The parents or guardians of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated where such students receive services, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens.
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law.
7. The parent or guardian of a homeless student and any unaccompanied youth is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected.
8. Unaccompanied youths will be assisted in placement or enrollment decisions, their views will be considered and they will be provided notice of the right to appeal.
9. Students who need to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, will receive assistance.

Legal Reference:

1. McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 Subtitle B §§ 721-725

Cross Reference:

Student Transportation 3.400
Parental Involvement 4.502
Promotion and Retention 4.603
School Admissions 6.203
Migrant Students 6.504