

### **Homeless Children and Youth Placement**

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Ohio law, the School believes all homeless children have a right to equal educational opportunities. The School shall provide services to each homeless child or youth that is comparable to services offered to other students in the School.

A "homeless" child or youth is an individual that lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence and includes an individual that:

- is "doubling up" or is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- is living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- is abandoned in a hospital;
- is awaiting foster care;
- has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- is a migratory child as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act and Federal Law.

### **School Placement & Enrollment**

In determining where a homeless child or youth attends school, the School shall place the child according to the child's best interest. The determination shall be based on the following:

- when a child becomes homeless during the school year or in between school years, the School shall continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness;
- if the child becomes permanently housed during an academic year, the School shall continue the child's education in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year;
- enroll the child or youth 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; and
- factors a school may consider include: the child's age, the distance of a commute, personal safety issues, the student's need for special instruction, length of anticipated in a temporary shelter, time remaining in the school year.

The School shall keep a homeless child or youth in the "school of origin" unless the "school of origin" is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent guardian. The school of origin is the school the student attended when permanently housed or last enrolled. If the School wishes to send a homeless child to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested, the School must provide a written notice containing an explanation and a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision. The written notice explanation must be provided to the parent or guardian. The process for resolving disputes is discussed below.

Homeless students should be enrolled immediately. Enrollment shall occur even if the student does not have

the enrollment records required by the School. The School shall contact the school last attended by the student to obtain health records and shall immediately refer the homeless child's parent or guardian to the School's homeless liaison so additional documents may be obtained. The School must obtain all records in a timely fashion.

Enrolled homeless students shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school. Services include, but are not limited to: transportation, programs in vocational and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, school nutrition programs, and before/after school programs.

#### Disputes Regarding Placement

Should a dispute arise, the dispute resolution process should follow these guidelines. The dispute resolution process shall be as informal and accessible as possible, allowing for impartial and complete review. Students are to be provided with all services for which they are eligible while the dispute is being resolved. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth should be able to initiate the resolution process directly at the school they choose, as well as at the district LEA homeless liaison's office. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their views. Written documentation should be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and be provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

Should a dispute arise over school selection or enrollment in a school the following procedure is to be followed:

- The Local Education Agency (LEA) shall provide the parent or guardian with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment.
- The LEA shall inform the parent or guardian in writing of their right to appeal the decision.
- Should the dispute continue the LEA shall refer the parent or guardian to the local LEA liaison who shall review the complaint and issue an opinion in writing to the parent or guardian.
- Should the dispute continue the LEA liaison shall assist the parties involved in presenting the situation to the Ohio Department of Education homeless education coordinator.
- The homeless education coordinator shall recommend a decision for distribution to the parent, local superintendent and local educational agency liaison.
- Should the dispute continue the final appeal is made to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for review and disposition.

#### Liaison for Homeless Children

The Head Administrator shall appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children. The Liaison will perform, coordinate, and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and shall work to ensure the School complies with this policy and all applicable law.

#### Transportation

The School shall provide transportation, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin, if:

- The child continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, the child's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local

educational agency in which the school of origin is located.

- The homeless child's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

*Federal:* 42 U.S.C. 11431, et seq.

