



Detroit Public Schools: Education of Homeless Children and Youth Policy

In compliance with federal law, it is the policy of the Detroit Board of Education to provide a free, appropriate education for all children as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Homeless children and youth must be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. The Detroit Public Schools will ensure that homeless children and youth are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment because of their homeless status (<http://detroitk12.org/enroll>).

Definition of the Term “Homeless Children and Youth”

The term “homeless children and youth” is defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as:

- Children who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.
- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of others, with or without their parents, due to loss of housing (doubled up).
- Children living in motels or hotels or trailer home due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Children living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Children and youth who have 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.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Unaccompanied youth includes youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.
- Children awaiting foster care placement.

Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the DPS Homeless liaison and DPS Homeless staff will identify homeless children and youth in the district. The DPS Homeless Unit, consisting of the DPS Homeless liaison and staff, will train school personnel on The McKinney-Vento Act; available resources; indicators of homelessness; sensitivity in identifying homeless families and youth; and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison. **Attendance Agents and Social Workers will assist with the verification and identification of students who may meet the requirements of a “Homeless Child or Youth”.**

Enrollment

The School District cannot delay or deny enrollment of a homeless student. Schools must immediately enroll students in homeless situations, even if they do not have required uniforms or documents, such as: school records, birth certificates, immunization records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents. Unaccompanied youth must also be enrolled immediately in school. Unaccompanied youth may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or DPS Homeless Unit member. Students are able to enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.

Transportation

Homeless students have the right to receive transportation to and from their school of origin or the school closest to where they are currently living, if requested. The request may come from the parent, guardian, youth, or DPS staff. If the student’s temporary residence is outside of the Detroit Public School District the new district and DPS will determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation. Transportation services will be comparable to those provided to other students.

Training

The DPS Homeless Unit will conduct the training for district staff, parents, transitional housing facilities, and other community agencies. The training and activities will be designed to increase staff awareness of homelessness, facilitate immediate enrollment, ensure compliance with this policy, and increase sensitivity to homeless children and youth.

Coordination

The DPS Homeless Unit will coordinate with and seek support from the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth; public and private service providers in the community; housing and placement agencies; the pupil transportation department; neighboring local liaisons; and other organizations and agencies. Coordination will include conducting outreach and training to those agencies participating in the local continuum of care, homeless coalition, homeless steering committee, and other relevant groups. .

Student Rights

Homeless children and youth have the right to:

- Attend school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Continue in the school in which they last attended before they became homeless.
- Participate in school programs and services with non-homeless students, including receiving tutoring, remedial assistance, head Start, State pre-K, special education, gifted, and Title I programs.
- Automatic eligibility for free meals.
- To not be isolated or stigmatized because of their homeless status.
- Be enrolled in school without the assistance of a parent or guardian.
- Free and public education to until they have reached their high school graduation or equivalent, or their 26th birthday in special education.

Parents Rights

- To choose which non-application school the child will attend (either the school of origin or the school nearest their current address, whichever is in the best interest of the child).
- To appeal if a school refuses to admit a child or a school refuses to keep a child enrolled.
- To a written explanation from the school regarding enrollment disputes.
- To seek assistance of liaisons, advocates or attorneys.
- To receive tutoring or remedial assistance for their children.

Dispute Resolution

See Detroit Public Schools: Education of Homeless Children and Youth Dispute Resolution Procedure.

Services Provided to Homeless Children and Youth

The Detroit Public Schools will assist each homeless child or youth in accessing services afforded to other students, including the following:

- School Social Work Services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as Title I services or similar state or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency.
- Head Start
- Programs in Vocational and Technical education
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs
- Before school and after school programs
- Tutoring programs
- Referrals for medical and mental health services
- Pre-school programs
- Parent education
- Counseling

Definitions

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.

Enrollment- Attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

For assistance please contact: George Eason, Program Supervisor-Homeless Liaison at 313-748-6388. E-mail address is: george.eason@detroitk12.org.

References:

The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. SS11431-11436.

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. SS6311-6315.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. SS1400 et seq.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, 42 U.S.C. SS1751 et seq.

June 5, 1992 Policy of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.