

## **HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Homeless children and youths residing in the District shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths who reside in the District. They shall be provided the services and have access to the programs and activities that are offered to other children attending District schools, including transportation services, educational services for which the children/youths meet eligibility criteria (e.g., special education, Title I programming, programs and services for English Learners), gifted and talented programming, career and technical education programs, and school nutrition programs. A homeless child or youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless children and shall not be stigmatized by school personnel.

“Homeless children and youths” are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes, but is not limited to, children and unaccompanied youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus stations, or similar settings. The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

The District Administrator has primary administrative-level oversight of the District’s services for homeless children and youths. He/she, or a qualified administrative-level designee, shall be responsible for (1) providing any required assurances to applicable state and federal agencies that the District is complying with applicable state and federal requirements related to the education of homeless children and youths; and (2) reasonably monitoring compliance with such assurances.

District Administrator (or designee) shall designate a staff member who shall serve as the District’s liaison for homeless children and youths. The District’s liaison for homeless children and youths will work with administrators and other District personnel to periodically review existing policies, procedures, practices, and data to identify and develop proposals to remedy and remove barriers that homeless children and youths may face in the school enrollment and admission processes, in regularly attending school, in accessing applicable support services (such as guidance counselors), in accessing academic programs, academic activities, or extracurricular activities, or in receiving appropriate credit for prior academic work.

The District’s liaison for homeless children and youths will also ensure that:

1. Homeless children and youths residing in the District are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies. Special attention will be given to the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.
2. Homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the District.
3. Homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start, early intervention services under laws applicable to students with disabilities, and other preschool programs.
4. Homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to other appropriate services (e.g., health care services, dental health services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services).

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5. The parent or guardian of a homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the child/youth.
6. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, such as the schools, public libraries and family shelters. The notice shall be disseminated in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.
7. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with legal requirements.
8. The parent or guardian of a homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless youth are fully informed of transportation services that may be available to them under the law and they are assisted in accessing such transportation services.
9. School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support. The liaison for homeless children and youths will also receive and participate in professional development and other support activities as required by the Department of Public Instruction, the District and federal law.
10. Unaccompanied homeless youths are: (a) enrolled in school, (b) have opportunities to meet the same challenging academic standards as the District establishes for other children and youths, including receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, and, (c) are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087vy) and that they may obtain assistance from the District's liaison for homeless children and youths to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of such Act.
11. Appropriate school personnel assist homeless children and youths with their educational transitions (e.g., from early childhood to elementary school, elementary school to middle school/junior high school, middle/junior high school to high school, and from high school to post-secondary options).
12. The District's Title I plan describes the services the District will provide homeless children and youths to support the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youths.
13. Reliable, valid, and comprehensive data needed to meet the established legal requirements related to homeless children and youths is collected, reported to the public, and provided to the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths.
14. School personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and homeless children and youths are informed about the liaison's duties.

**LEGAL REFERENCES:**

**Wisconsin Administrative Code**

PI 1 [Department of Public Instruction complaint resolution and appeals process; to be used in dealing with disputes involving homeless issues]

**Federal Laws**

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act [equal access for homeless students; required policies to remove barriers]

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Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [20 U.S.C. § 6312 Local educational agency plan requirements, including plan requirements related to homeless children and youths]

**CROSS REFERENCES:**

- 342.1 Programs for Students with Disabilities
- 342.5 Title I Programs
- 411 Equal Educational Opportunities
- 411.2 R Homeless Children Admission Procedures
- 411.3 Children in Foster Care
- 420 School Admission
- 431 Student Attendance

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