

## Homeless Student Regulations

### Required by Federal and State Law

#### Homeless students shall, by definition, include the following:

1. Children and youth 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; or are abandoned in hospitals.
2. Children and youth 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. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who meet one of the above-described circumstances.

#### Enrollment/Placement (See JBC)

The district, according to the child's or youth's best interest, shall either continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which: 1. a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and 2. for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

#### School Stability

In determining the best interest of the child or youth, the district homeless student liaison shall:

1. Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the

request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth:

2. Consider student-centered factors related to the child's or youth's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youth, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
3. If, after conducting the best interest determination based on consideration of the presumption in clause (1) and the student-centered factors in clause (2), it is determined that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth, provide the child's or youth's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal such determination; and
4. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the district homeless student liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, gives priority to the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal.

#### Immediate Enrollment

The school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth:

- 1 Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation; or
- 2 Has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

#### Relevant Academic Records

The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.

#### Relevant Health Records

If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations or other required health records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth, to the district homeless student liaison, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or screenings, or immunization or other required health records.

#### Records

Any records ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained so that the records involved are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district and in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. See policies JR through JRD.

#### Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a school:

1. The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought (whether sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth), pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals;
2. The parent or guardian of the child or youth or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, the local educational agency or the State educational agency involved, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions; and
3. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district homeless student liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

#### Placement Choice

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

#### Privacy

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education records, and shall not be deemed to be directory information, under policy JRB.

**Contact Information**

Nothing shall prohibit the district from requiring a parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth to submit contact information.

**Definition**

The term “school of origin: means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.

When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the term “school of origin” shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

**Comparable Services**

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

1. Transportation services;
2. Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for English learners;
3. Programs in career and technical education;
4. Programs for gifted and talented students; and
5. School nutrition programs.

Coordination

The district shall coordinate the provision of services under these regulations with the Department for Children and Families and other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children and youths and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.), and transportation, transfer of school records, and other interdistrict activities, with other local educational agencies.

Housing Assistance

If applicable, the district shall coordinate with state and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy to minimize educational disruption for children and youths who become homeless.

The coordination required shall be designed to:

1. Ensure that all homeless children and youths are promptly identified;
2. Ensure that all homeless children and youths have access to, and are in reasonable proximity to, available education and related support services;  
and
3. Raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

Homeless Children and Youths with Disabilities

For children and youths who are both homeless and eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), the

district shall coordinate the provision of services under these regulations with the provision of programs for children with disabilities served by the district and other involved local educational agencies.

District Homeless Student Liaison

The board designates the following individual to act as the district's homeless student liaison: Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, 5928 SW 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, Topeka, KS 66610, 785-339-4000. The district shall inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of this liaison. The district homeless student liaison shall ensure:

1. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
2. Homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, district schools;
3. Homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and received educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) under the Heat Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.), and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency.
4. Homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;

5. The parents or guardian of homeless children and youths 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;
6. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, 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 these regulations;
8. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is full informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected;
9. School personnel providing services under these regulations receive professional development and other support; and
10. Unaccompanied youths;
  - a. are enrolled in school;
  - b. have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as Kansas establishes for other children and youth; and
  - c. are informed of their status as independent students under federal law regarding student financial assistance for higher education acquisition



and that the youths may obtain assistance from the district homeless student liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The liaison shall also work with the state coordinator for education of homeless children and youth to request and receive needed technical assistance and monitoring to ensure the district complies with federal and state law regarding homeless students. Similarly, the liaison will coordinate with the state coordinator in order to provide professional development opportunities for district personnel to aid them in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless children and youths and will respond to inquiries from parents, guardians, and homeless children and youths to ensure they are provided with the full protection of the law and services they are due.

#### Notice

The district shall inform school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and homeless children and youths of the duties of the district homeless student liaison, and publish annually updated contact information for the liaison on the district's website.

#### Local and State Coordination

The district homeless student liaison, as a part of assigned duties, shall coordinate and collaborate with state coordinators, the community, and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to

homeless children and youths. Such coordination shall include collecting and providing to the state coordinator the reliable, valid, and comprehensive data.

#### Homeless Status

The district homeless student liaison may affirm, without further agency action by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, that a child or youth who is eligible for and participating in a program provided by the district, or the immediate family of such a child or youth, who meets the eligibility requirements, is eligible for such program or service.

#### Dispute Resolution Process

A complaint regarding the placement or education of a homeless child or youth shall first be presented orally and informally to the district's homeless student liaison. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the complainant may present a formal written complaint (grievance) to the homeless student liaison. The written complaint must include the following information: date of filing, description of concerns, the name of the person or persons involved, and a recapitulation of the action taken during the informal charge stage. Within five (5) working days after receiving the complaint, the liaison shall state a decision in writing to the complainant, with supporting evidence and reasons. In addition, the liaison will inform the superintendent of the formal complaint and the disposition.

#### Transportation (See EDAA, JBC, and JGG)

If it is in the best interest of the homeless child or youth to attend the school of origin, transportation to and from that school will be provided at the request of the parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth,

the homeless coordinator. If the student's temporary housing is outside the attendance area of the school of origin, then the district will work with the school of origin to agree on a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for transporting the child. If an agreement cannot be reached, the costs will be shared equally.

Approved: August 7, 2017