

Mifflin County  
School District

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

ADOPTED: February 26, 2009

REVISED: January 24, 2019

	STUDENT HOMELESSNESS
<p>Authority SC 1306 Title 22 Sec.11.18 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11431 et seq</p>	<p>The Board recognizes the need to promptly identify homeless children and youths within the district, facilitate their immediate enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.</p> <p>The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive district policies, procedures, and administrative regulations that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability, and success of homeless children and youths.</p> <p>It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.</p>
<p>Definitions 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a</p>	<p><b>Homeless students</b> are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.</li> <li>2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.</li> <li>3. Living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters.</li> <li>4. Abandoned in hospitals.</li> <li>5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.</li> <li>6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings.</li> <li>7. Living as migratory children in conditions described in examples above.</li> </ol>

<p>Delegation of Responsibility</p> <p>42 U.S.C Sec 11432</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Living as run-away children.</li> <li>9. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers, or separated from parents/guardians for any other reason.</li> <li>10. Living as school age parents/guardians in houses for school age parents/guardians if they have no other living accommodations.</li> </ol> <p><b>School of origin</b> is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.</p> <p><b>Unaccompanied youth</b> means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian, or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason. (7)</p> <p>The Board directs the Superintendent to appoint a district liaison for homeless children and youth.</p> <p>The district liaison shall ensure outreach and coordination with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless children, youths, and families.</li> <li>2. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification transfer of records, transportation, and other inter-district activities.</li> <li>3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.</li> </ol> <p>The district’s liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children, youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens.</p> <p>The district’s liaison shall provide reliable, valid, and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania’s Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.</p>
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Guidelines  
42 U.S.C.  
Sec. 11432

**Enrollment/Placement**

*Best Interest Determination –*

In determining the best interest of a child or youth, the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school or origin is in the child or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety, giving priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
3. If, after such consideration, the district determines 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/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. It shall also provide information regarding the right to appeal.

*Placement –*

In accordance with the child or youth's best interest, the district shall continue to enroll a homeless student in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing.

Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living.

The district's liaison shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.

The district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of any district decision related to school selection or placement, including the right to appeal.

*Enrollment –*

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if:

1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.
2. The application or enrollment deadline has passed during any period of homelessness.

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

The district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.

*Assignment –*

If the district is unable to determine the student’s grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student’s assignment within the school.

*Dispute Resolution –*

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

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district’s liaison, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process.
2. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
3. The district’s liaison shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.

A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal a district’s written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania’s Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

**Comparable Services**

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to:

1. Transportation services.
2. School nutrition programs.
3. Career and technical education.
4. Preschool programs.
5. Educational programs for which the homeless student meets the eligibility criteria, such as:
  - a) Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs.
  - b) Programs for English Language Learners.
  - c) Programs for students with disabilities.
  - d) Programs for gifted and talented students.

**Transportation**

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district, but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.

**Training**

The district's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

The district's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to:

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec.1306

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec 11.18, 403.1

Education for Homeless Children – 42 U.S.C. Sec 11431 et seq.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations –  
34 CFR Part 99

Guidelines for Enrollment of Homeless Children – Federal Register,  
67 Fed. Reg. 10698

PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan