

Homeless Students**I. DEFINITIONS**

A. Federal Definition - Homeless students are federally defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This definition includes the following types of students who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. 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;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in the above described circumstances.

B. State statutes define non-residency as children residing with relatives or non-relatives, when it is the intention of such relatives or non-relatives and of the children or their parents or guardians that such residence is to be (1) permanent, (2) provided without pay and (3) not for the sole purpose of obtaining school accommodations. In addition, the statute indicates that children in temporary shelters are entitled to free school privileges from either the school district in which the shelter is located or from the school district in which the child would otherwise reside, if not for the need for temporary shelter. The district has an obligation to identify homeless and migratory children.

II. APPEAL PROCEDURES

A. Appeals Process - C.G.S. 10-186 defines the process that must be used for resolving issues involving homeless students.

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II. APPEAL PROCEDURES (continued)

- B. Placement During an Appeal** - Federal law requires school districts to allow homeless students to “stay put.” Thus, a homeless student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of any dispute

- C. District Liaison’s Role in an Appeal** - The district’s homeless liaison shall carry out the dispute resolution process expeditiously and, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.

III. ENROLLMENT REQUESTS FROM HOMELESS PARENTS

- A.** The selected school is required to immediately enroll the child, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. Parents/guardians may be required to submit contact information so that the school may reach them if necessary.

- B.** The last school attended must be contacted to obtain records.

- C.** If the child lacks immunizations or immunization/medical records, the enrolling school must refer the parent/guardian to the liaison in order to get help obtaining immunizations and records.

IV. DUTIES OF THE DISTRICT LIAISON FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

1. Ensure homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies and entities.

2. Ensure homeless children enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in the school district's schools.

3. Ensure that homeless families and children receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, preschool programs, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

4. Parents/guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

5. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children are disseminated where such children receive services. (For example, family shelters, soup kitchens, and schools)

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IV. DUTIES OF THE DISTRICT LIAISON FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS (continued)

6. Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated.
7. Parent/guardian is fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing those services.
8. Must assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions, including considering the youth's wishes in those decisions, and providing notice to the youth of the right to appeal such decisions.
9. Must assist children who do not have immunizations, immunization records, or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations, immunization records, or medical records.
10. Must collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-186 – Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearings. Appeals to the state board. Establishment of hearing board.
- 10-253 - School privilege for children in certain placements, nonresident children and children in temporary shelters.

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