

# THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: 200 Pupils

TITLE: Students

Experiencing Homelessness

ADOPTED: August 24,  
2011

REVISED: February 15, 2018

## 251 STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

### Authority

The School Reform Commission recognizes the need to promptly identify students experiencing homelessness 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.[1][2][3]

The SRC shall ensure that students experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students.[1][2][3][4]

The SRC authorizes the Superintendent to waive District policies and administrative procedures that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of students experiencing homelessness. [3]

It is the policy of the SRC that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.[5][6]

### Definitions

**Enroll or enrollment** - attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[7]

**Students experiencing homelessness** - individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:[7][8]

1. Children and youths who are:

- a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

Living in motels, hotels, other temporary locations ~~due to lack of alternative~~ adequate accommodations;

- b. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or

- c. Abandoned in hospitals.
2. Children and youths 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;
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.

School of origin - the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.[6]

Unaccompanied youth - a student experiencing homelessness 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]

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent shall designate a District liaison for students experiencing homelessness, who shall have the duties and responsibilities imposed by law and SRC policy.[6]

The district's Regional Coordinator shall work with the Pennsylvania Department of Education designated to ensure outreach and coordination with:[6]

1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to students experiencing homelessness and their families.
2. Other LEAs on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.
3. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[9][10]
4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

- 5 Law enforcement agencies, juvenile and family courts, and providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

The District's Regional Coordinator shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens.

Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness, and unaccompanied youths.[6]

The District's Regional Coordinator 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.[6]

The District's Regional Coordinator shall conduct an annual assessment of need in order to ensure that the District continues to provide optimal services and resources relevant to the regional context. The District's Regional Coordinator will engage in ongoing progress monitoring and evaluation to be conducted annually, at minimum, to ensure that the District's ECYEH program continues to meet the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

### **Mandatory Regulatory Procedures**

The District's Regional Coordinator shall propagate Administrative Procedures enacting this policy including procedures for:

1. Enrollment of Students
2. Best Interest Determination for Students
3. School Placement
4. Homeless Status Dispute Resolution
5. Comparable Services

### **Education Records**

Information about a student experiencing homelessness' living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.[16][17]

### **Uniforms**

No school shall create uniform and dress requirements that create financial hardships for students and their families experiencing homelessness. Nor shall any student in a homeless situation receive disciplinary actions for not having a uniform due to financial

hardship. Every effort must be made to protect the privacy of students in this situation. [26]

### Transportation

The District shall provide transportation for students experiencing homelessness to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district.[1][6][20]

If the school of origin is outside District boundaries or students experiencing homelessness 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.[6]

### **Legal References:**

1. 24 P.S. 1306

2. 22 PA Code 11.18

3. 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq

4. 34 CFR 299.19

5. 42 U.S.C. 11431

6. 42 U.S.C. 11432

7. 42 U.S.C. 11434a

8. 34 CFR 200.30

9. Pol. 103.1 - Nondiscrimination-Qualified Students With Disabilities/Protected Handicapped Students

10. Pol. 113 - Special Education

11. Pol. 200 - Enrollment of Students

12. Pol. 201 - Admission of Students

13. Pol. 203 - Immunizations and Communicable Diseases

14. Pol. 204 - Attendance

15. Pol. 209 - Health Examinations/Screenings

16. Pol. 216 - Student Records

17. Pol. 113.4 - Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information

18. Pol. 206 - Assignment Within District

19. Pol. 146 - Student Services

20. Pol. 810 - Transportation

21. Pol. 808 - Food Services

22. Pol. 115 - Career and Technical Education

23. Pol. 918 - District-Wide Parent and Family Engagement

24. Pol. 138 - English as a Second Language/Bilingual Education Program

25. Pol. 114 - Gifted Education

26. Pol. 221- Dress and Grooming

### **Related Information:**

22 PA Code 403.1

20 U.S.C. 1232g

20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq

34 CFR Part 99

67 Fed. Reg. 10698

PA Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan