

TITUSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



Homeless Education Program PROCEDURES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

This document contains board policy and procedures for determining homelessness and the supporting forms.
Titusville Area School District Homeless Liaison Contact:

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PROCEDURES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

The Titusville Area School Board is committed to educating homeless children and youth, and will serve each homeless student according to the student's best interest.

I. Residency Requirements

Homelessness is a sensitive issue. In some cases, a student's homelessness will be apparent during registration, i.e., residing at a homeless shelter or doubled-up with a relative or friend. School personnel should be alert and sensitive to the issue; however, Titusville Area School District needs to identify and track its homeless student population according to federal guidelines.

Children and youth who meet the criteria of being homeless, even if unaccompanied by a guardian, must be given full and equal access to an appropriate public education and ensured success in the educational program. The permanency and adequacy of the housing conditions will be considered when determining if a student is homeless. The Homeless Liaison will make a determination of the student's homelessness based upon the following criteria:

1. Sharing the housing, doubled-up with 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, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Using public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings, as primary nighttime residence.
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
7. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
8. Living as run-away children, abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers, or separated from parents/guardians for any other reason.
9. Living as school age parents/guardians in houses for school age parents/guardians if they have no other living accommodations.

II. School Registration of Homeless Students

Homeless children and youth shall be immediately enrolled in school, even if the child or youth lacks the records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency and other documentation. [42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432 Pol. 200, 201, 203, 204, 209, 216]. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records.

A homeless child/youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of

homelessness. If the homeless child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, they are entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year. If the child or student becomes homeless in between academic years, i.e.

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during the summer, they are entitled to attend their school of origin for the following academic year.

Subsequent to being registered, the homeless student should be immediately referred to the school counselor who make appropriate referrals for assistance.

III. Health Records and Birth Certificate Requirements

- a. If a homeless child or youth seeks to register without a record of immunization, the registrar will contact the student's former school to request the student's records, immunization and to discuss other enrollment/placement issues. If information is not available to satisfy immunization compliance, this requirement should be temporarily waived, pending efforts to obtain the medical records. In the interim, the school nurse will collaborate with community health agencies to obtain proper immunizations.
- b. If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be registered immediately and subsequent appropriate steps should be taken to resolve this issue.

IV. Categorical Eligibility for Migrant, Homeless, and Runaway Children Under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

Effective July 1, 2004, Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended Section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Following are the guidelines set out by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for implementation of this amendment.

Documentation and Procedures

1. Homeless, runaway or migratory children are automatically certified as eligible for free meal benefits and can begin receiving free meal benefits upon proper documentation for meals. Please note that documentation as runaway, homeless, or migratory can only be provided by Migrant Education or Homeless staff.
2. Migrant Education/Homeless staff are responsible for providing proper documentation of a child's status to the Food Service Directors in each school district.
3. Initial documentation for the 04-05 school year includes (a) a list of eligible migrant/homeless/runaway children as September 28, 2004 that is signed and dated by authorized Migrant Education/Homeless staff or (b) an electronic list from authorized Migrant Education/Homeless staff of eligible migrant/homeless/runaway children as of receipt of this notice.

4. For all subsequent years, these lists should be provided to Food Service Directors within the first week of school.
5. The lists should include each child's first name, middle name/initial, last name and date of birth. Include respective school building if available.
6. After the initial lists are provided at the beginning of each school year, proper documentation will be considered (a) electronic or hard copy notification from authorized Migrant Education/Homeless staff to the appropriate Food Service Director each time a new child is identified or (b) a free and reduced meal application that is simply signed and dated by Migrant Education /Homeless staff at the time of a child's enrollment in a school district. The application does not have to be completed in full. Regardless of the method used, all information in #5 should be included.
7. Once notification is received, the school food authorities/local education agencies must notify the responsible guardian as soon as possible about the child's free meal eligibility (any application submitted on behalf of the child would be disregarded because of categorical eligibility).

Considerations

- Documentation of status provided by Migrant Education/Homeless staff is in lieu of free and reduced price meal applications and must be sought, as much as possible, prior to an application being completed by the responsible guardian.
- Upon enrollment, if school district staff suspect that a child is migrant/homeless/runaway but the student is not being enrolled by Migrant Education/Homeless staff, contact local Migrant Education/Homeless staff so that a staff person can determine the child's eligibility status.

Additional Information

- Contact information for Migrant Education/Homeless staff in each area is accessible by going to their respective websites.

Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program - <https://www.education.pa.gov/K12/Migrant%20Education/Pages/default.aspx>

Pennsylvania Homeless Children's Initiative - <https://www.education.pa.gov/K12/Homeless%20Education/Pages/default.aspx>

The Department of Education will provide Migrant Education/Homeless staff in the local areas with a list of names and email addresses for each Food Service Director by district.

- Additional information regarding the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs can be found at <https://www.education.pa.gov/Teachers%20->

[%20Administrators/Food-Nutrition/programs/Pages/National-School-Lunch-Program.aspx](#)

V. Educational Records, Transfer and Withdrawal

Educational information needed for proper placement should initially be obtained from the student's former school. If educational records or educational information are not available, the student should be registered and an educational record developed in accordance with the Titusville Area School District Student Records Guidelines. In these cases, an academic diagnostic test should be administered or an appropriate review of school records by the principal and/or school counselors shall be conducted to assist in determining an appropriate placement according to their level of academic skills.

If a homeless student seeks to register without having appropriate transfer forms, the receiving school should immediately register the student, contact the former school for transfer information and request that the educational record be forwarded. The sending school should provide requested information during the telephone contact and forward educational records promptly.

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding which homeless child or youth shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district, and in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

VI. Custody/Guardianship Requirements

An unaccompanied youth who is experiencing homelessness must be enrolled immediately, even if the youth does not have a fixed place of residence, proper documentation or solely because the youth is not under the supervision of a parent, guardian or person in a parental relationship. The LEA homeless liaison will assist in enrollment.

The school principal/designee, in conjunction with the school counselor/homeless liaison, should make every effort to locate the parent or guardian to complete the registration process. In unusual situations, Child and Youth Services or Department of Social Services may be contacted, with referrals consistent with school policy in reporting cases of parental neglect.

VII. Determining Feasibility for School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the school in the residency area where the child is currently living. The following individuals may be consulted in determining what placement is in the child's or youth's best interest:

- The homeless child,
- The parents or caretakers of the homeless child,
- Homeless shelter personnel,
- Representatives of social service agencies,
- School division homeless education coordinators,
- School social workers, and
- School counselors.

It is the school district's responsibility to determine the school of origin and residency and to resolve any conflict concerning the school placement that is in the best interest of the student. Whenever possible, the school district is to comply with the parents'/caretakers' wishes. If the school district and parents do not agree on the appropriate placement, the state's enrollment dispute resolution procedure must be followed. The student should be enrolled in the school parents have chosen during the resolution process. If schools of residency and origin are in different school districts and determined as the best placement, the local homeless education liaisons from both school districts must work together to arrange transportation.

The McKinney-Vento Act states that once a child has been identified as homeless, residency requirements do not apply. The federal law requires that a child or youth experiencing homelessness attend:

- The *school of origin*: This is the school that the child last attended before experiencing homelessness or the school where the student was last enrolled;
or
- The *school of residency*: The school identified by the attendance zone in which the student is currently physically staying.

Enrollment should take place immediately.

A worksheet is provided to assist in determining the feasibility for school placement decisions that are in the students' best interest. **(See Attachment A)**

VIII. Enrollment Dispute Resolution

Disagreements and disputes are to be settled as close to the point of conflict as possible. Each local homeless education liaison shall assist the family and school to ensure compliance with federal and state legislation and policy governing the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The liaison shall work with appropriate local school division representatives to address any policies or procedures that are identified as barriers in the access to and success within a free appropriate public education. The Office of the State Coordinator of Homeless Education may be consulted at any time for technical assistance.

VIV. Dispute Resolution Process for School Selection or Enrollment

If a school chooses to send a child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or the school selected by the family or youth, the school shall consult with the local homeless education liaison prior to making a final placement determination. If the school's denial of enrollment is supported by a review of feasibility and best interest, the school shall provide the parent or guardian of the child or youth with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision. **(See Attachment B)**

If an appeal is requested either in writing or verbally through the use of Attachment C, the school shall:

- Immediately admit the student to the school in which enrollment is sought and provide all services for which the student is eligible, pending resolution of the dispute; and
- Refer the child, youth, parent, or guardian to the designated local homeless education liaison who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

Review Procedure

If disputes or complaints of non-compliance arise regarding the education for homeless children and youth, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recommends that:

- A. The person having the complaint first contact the school or school district (i.e., the local school district contact person for homeless students, the principal, or superintendent) to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and most likely to be able to resolve it quickly;
- B. If Step A is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Educational Liaison (if a site exists), or, PDE will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program at phone number (717) 772-2066; **(See Attachment D)**
- C. Individual cases may be referred to the PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education as needed by the State Homeless Coordinator; and,

- D. PDE will deliver a response within 15 business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school/district letter or on the Dispute Letter Form if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Children's Initiative.

X. Procedures for Identification of Enrolled Students as Homeless

When school personnel have been made aware that a student has become homeless or is

suspected to be homeless due to a sudden change in living arrangements, the building principal or school counselor should attempt to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) to verify the information.

Once the information has been received, the district homeless liaison is notified in order to review the information and to assist in making the final determination of homeless.

Teachers and staff who receive information about a change in a student's living arrangements should immediately provide that information to their building principal or school counselor.

If a student has been determined to be homeless by the district homeless liaison, procedures should be followed as outlined in this document in order to determine residency and support services that are needed and/or required to be provided the student. Support services may be coordinated through the Student Assistance Program.

If there are multiple students affected in the family who are enrolled in different buildings throughout the district, a coordination of support services should be implemented under the direction of the District Homeless Liaison via the Student Assistance Program.

PowerSchool (SIS) Homeless Data Entry Procedures

When a student has been deemed homeless by the homeless liaison for the district, the following must be done in PowerSchool:

1. Transfer Information/Edit Current Enrollment Page
 - Economically Disadvantaged drop-down - yes
2. Lunch Page
 - Lunch Status must be set to free
 - Pennsylvania State Information (Economic Status Food Participation) must be set to free
3. Special Program Entry
 - Entry date – the date they were deemed homeless
 - Exit date – June 30
 - Enter the appropriate grade level
 - Choose the appropriate homeless code from the program drop-down menu:
 - 055 Homeless Unaccompanied
 - 056 Homeless Accompanied

Note: The only students who will have an exit date other than June 30 are students who withdraw from the district. When you withdraw a student, check the box that indicates to exit them from special programs. This will fill the special programs exit date automatically with the appropriate date.

4. The homeless tab on the State Province page of PowerSchool is completed based on data from within the official homeless liaison documentation. Reporting

updates are gathered at routinely scheduled school counselor meetings.

XI. Tracking system for Homeless Students

No student is removed from the spreadsheet during the program year. Updating the information periodically provides an historical record for that child/youth.

As such, by the end of the program year, the June spreadsheet will capture all children/youth experiencing homelessness in your district/school/facility for the program year and their information at the end of the year or the time at which they left or became no longer homeless.

Between July 1st and August 31st, the District Homeless Liaison, will identify those students who continue to qualify as a homeless student entering the new school year. Building principals, school counselors and SAP team coordinators will assist in this identification process by reviewing the final list of students who were identified as homeless during the previous school year. Assessment of the student's current living conditions will be conducted to determine if the student continues to meet the criteria for being homeless

XII. Resources

HOTLINES:

Child Abuse Line ... 1-800-932-0313
NW PA AIDS Alliance ... 1-800-359-AIDS

Sexual/Domestic Violence/Other Crimes ... 1-800-243-4944 or 827-3472
Runaway ... 1-800-231-6946
Venango County Mental Health ...437-2375
Meadville Mental Health ...333-2924

ABUSE-ASSAULT:

Family Services & Children's Aid Society (Children)
...827-3649

PPC Violence Free Network ... 1-800-243-4944 or 827-3472
Sexual/Domestic Violence/Other Crime Victims ... 1-800-243-4944 or 827-3472

COMMUNITY ACTION:

Titusville Area United Way ... 827-1322

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Child Advocacy – Referrals Only ... 677-5085
Venango Voices for Children CASA ... 346-7221 ext. 102
Safe Kids – Venango County ... 677-0672 Youth
Philanthropy of the Venango Area Community Foundation ... 677-5085
Child to Family Connections ... 437-3862

DAYCARE:

Child Care Information Services ... 337-8055 or 1-800-682-6118
Y.W.C.A. ... 827-2746

FAMILY PROBLEMS:

Active Aging, Inc. ... 1-800-321-7705
Family Planning of Crawford County ... 724-8748
Family Planning Services ... 1-800-210-6226 Family Services & Children’s Aid Society ... 827- 3649
PPC Violence Free Network ... 1-800-243-4944 or 827-3472

Retired Service Volunteer Program (R.S.V.P.) ... 827-3611 or 336-6111
Families in Charge ... 336-4312
Y.W.C.A. ... 827-3931

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Oil City ... 677-4056
Social Security Administration ... 1-800-772-1213 or 676-9293
Venango County Assistance Office ... 437-4342
North Side Association ... 676-0789 or 676-3189
12 Caring Habits ... 677-1271
Venango Foster Parent Programs ... 432-9743

TRANSPORTATION:

FOOD – CLOTHING:

Associated Charities ... 827-6613
Love, Inc... 827-4882
Salvation Army ... 827-0386
St. James Soup Kitchen ... 827-3590
Titusville Community Café ... 827-9134 Titusville
Food Bank (1st & 3rd Wednesday) ... 827- 2378
Titusville Food Pantry ... 827-6613

HOUSING:

Housing Authority of Titusville ... 827-7676
Temporary House of Women Greenhouse ... 333-4279 or 827-7276
Y.W.C.A. / St. James House ... 827-2746 or 827-9777
Venango County Housing Authority
Franklin ... 432-3416
Oil City ... 676-5764
Venango county ... 677-5926
Home Repairs – Elderly and Disabled ... 437-6530
Emergency Shelter ... 677-4005

MENTAL HEALTH:

Crawford County Base Service Unit ... 814-724-8380
Mental Health Drop-in Center ... 775-0770

FUEL ASSISTANCE/WEATHERIZATION:

Department of Public Welfare ... 437-4342 Office of Economic Opportunity ... 432-9767 Venango County Weatherization Program ... 432- 9763

FOOD- FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Community Services of Venango County
Franklin ... 432-5749
Oil City ... 676-5764
Salvation Army
Franklin ... 432-5919

TJ’s Taxi Service ... 827-8294
Bakers Transportation ... 678-2443
Venango County Transportation ... 432-9767

WEB RESOURCES

District Website:

<http://www.gorockets.org/HomelessYouth.aspx>

Worksheet for Determining Feasibility for School Placement

Date: _____

Please provide the following information for the previous schools the child attended, listing the most

recent school first.

1. Are the school of origin and the school of residency in the same or different public school districts?

Dates of Attendance	School Name/State	Living Arrangement at the Time

2. What is the child’s desire concerning the school of his/her best interest?

3. What is the opinion of the parent or caregiver concerning the child’s school of best interest? 4.

What is the distance and time spent on travel from the current residence to the school of origin?

5. If transportation is not currently available back to the school of origin, how can it be arranged?

6. What time of year is it (near the end of the school year, the summer)?

7. How long did the child attend the school of origin? Were meaningful social and educational relationships established?

8. Are there specified people in the school of origin who have been providing support or assistance to the family or child experiencing homelessness?

9. Are there special programs such as gifted, bilingual, or remedial education in which the child has been participating at the school of origin?

- If yes, please name.

- Are they available at the school of residency?

10. Based on the knowledge of the family situation, how long is it likely that the family will remain at the current residence?

11. What is the likelihood that the family experiencing homelessness will once again establish residency in the attendance area of the school of origin?

Recommendation:

Individuals consulted on this determination of feasibility for school placement in the student's best interest:

Signatures of the individual(s) making the recommendation:

cc: Homeless Liaison

To be completed by the receiving school when an enrollment request is

denied Date: _____

Person Completing Form: _____ Title:

_____ School: _____

In compliance with Sections 722(g)(3)(E) and 722(g)(3)(B)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001, the following written notification is provided to:

Parent or Guardian: _____

Student(s): _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied. This determination was based upon:

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice or by contacting the school division's local homeless education liaison:

Liaison's Name: _____ Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal documentation to support your position. You may use the form attached to this notification.
- You may seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys.
- You may contact the Pennsylvania Department of Education to discuss this decision with the State Coordinator for Homeless Education at 717-783-6466.

**cc: Homeless Liaison
Parent**

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Attachment C**

Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the parent, guardian, caretaker, or unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises. This information may be shared verbally with the local liaison, as an alternative to completing this form.

Date Submitted: _____

Students(s): _____

Person Completing Form: _____

Relation to student(s): _____

I may be contacted at (phone or email): _____ I

wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by:

School _____

I have been provided with:

- A written explanation of the school's decision, and
- Contact information for the local homeless education liaison.

Dispute Resolution can be added to the form after it is finalized.

Optional: You may include a written explanation to support your appeal in this space or provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a copy of this form when submitted. _____ (Initials)

cc: Homeless Liaison

Parent

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Attachment D

**Pennsylvania Department of Education
Pennsylvania Homeless Children's Initiative**

Date:

State Coordinator
Education for Homeless Children & Youth Program
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor Re: Homeless Dispute Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear State Coordinator:

My name is My child(ren) attend school in the _____ School District. I need your help with the following problem(s). I have checked the box that fits my situation. I have included a brief statement in the space provided.

The School District would not enroll my child (children). _____

Child(ren) couldn't begin school because they didn't have all their medical and/or school records.

Child(ren) not permitted to stay in their current school. _____

Special Education testing/placement services denied or unavailable. _____

School District will not provide transportation to stay in the current school. _____

Other _____

I have written on the reverse side what has already been done to help me. (Optional)

Please call me at () _____, or at () _____. Or, you can write to me at: (print full address) _____

Thank you in advance for looking into this matter.

Parent Name