

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: HOMELESS STUDENTS

ADOPTED: January 9, 2006

REVISED:

PENN MANOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

1. Purpose

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to students who reside in the District. This Policy provides guidelines and procedures which ensure that homeless children and youth have access to an appropriate public education.

2. Definitions

A “homeless child” is a school-age individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- (a) A child who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason;
- (b) A child who is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- (c) A child who is living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelter;
- (d) A child who has been abandoned in a hospital or who is awaiting foster care placement;
- (e) A child who has 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;
- (f) A child who is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting;
- (g) A child who is a migratory child and who qualifies as a homeless child because living in circumstances described in paragraphs (a) through (f) above;
- (h) A runaway child;

- (i) A child who has been abandoned or forced out of his/her home by a parent/guardian or caretaker;
- (j) A child who is a school age unwed mother living in a house for unwed mothers if she has no other available living accommodations.

“Liaison” is the staff person designated by the School Board as the person responsible for carrying out the duties outlined in this Policy.

“Migratory child” means a child who is, or whose parent or spouse is a migratory agricultural worker, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fisherman, who have moved from one school district to another in preceding thirty-six (36) months in order to obtain, or accompany such parents or spouses in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work.

“School of origin” is defined as the school the homeless child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the homeless child was last enrolled.

“Unaccompanied youth” means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (e.g., runaway and throw away children).

3. Homeless Student Liaison

The Superintendent shall designate an individual to act as the District’s Liaison. The District’s Liaison will be responsible for ensuring the following:

- (a) Homeless children are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- (b) Homeless children enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools within the District;
- (c) Homeless families, and homeless children receive educational services for which they are eligible;
- (d) The parents or guardians of homeless children 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;
- (e) Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated where such children receive services, (e.g., schools, family shelters and soup kitchens);
- (f) Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law and this Policy;

4. Enrollment/Placement

- (g) The parent or guardian of a homeless child or unaccompanied youth is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in obtaining transportation to the school the student will be attending;
- (h) Unaccompanied youths are assisted in placement or enrollment decisions and provided notice of the right to appeal; and
- (i) Children who need to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, receive assistance.

Each homeless child in the District shall be enrolled in the school that is determined to be in the best interests of the homeless child. In determining the best interests of the homeless child, the Liaison shall: (i) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the homeless child's parent or guardian; (ii) provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless child's parent or guardian if the Liaison sends such child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and (iii) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, assist in placement or enrollment decisions, with consideration of the views of the unaccompanied youth, and provide notice to such youth of the right to appeal.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the homeless child and begin instruction, even if the homeless child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. However, the parent/guardian will be requested to submit contact information. The Liaison shall contact the homeless child's school or origin for oral confirmation that the homeless child has been immunized, and the Liaison shall request the homeless child's education records from the school of origin. If the homeless child needs to obtain immunizations or immunization or medical records, the Liaison shall assist in obtaining such immunizations or immunization or medical records.

If the Liaison is unable to determine the homeless child's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the Liaison shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the homeless child's placement.

Should a homeless child obtain permanent housing, the District, in coordination with the Liaison, will reevaluate the placement of the student and determine if the student's enrollment in the current school is appropriate.

<p>5. Enrollment Disputes</p>	<p>If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the homeless child shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian of the homeless child shall be provided with a written explanation of the District's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to appeal the decision. The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth will then be referred to the Liaison so that the dispute may be resolved.</p>
<p>6. Services</p>	<p>Homeless children shall be provided services comparable to those available to other District students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school needs/nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.</p>
<p>7. Transportation</p>	<p>The District shall provide transportation for homeless children to the school or origin or the school in which such students are to be enrolled.</p> <p>If the school or origin is in another school district and the homeless child is enrolled in the District, or if a homeless child's school of origin is in the District but he or she is enrolled in a different school district, the school systems will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will share the responsibilities and costs equally.</p>