

Homeless

Manual

# This manual is a compilation of information from a variety of sources and includes guidelines for compliance with Homeless student-related provisions. For additional details regarding the District’s Homeless policies or procedures, please contact the District’s Homeless Liaison.

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**Yuma School District-1 Statement of Philosophy**

It is the board’s intent to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in school in accordance with state and federal law.

The Board shall approve at least one staff member in the district to serve as a homeless student liaison and fulfill the duties set forth in state and federal law.

The liaison shall work to identify homeless children and facilitate each homeless child’s access to and success in school. By October 1st of each year, the liaison shall report the number of homeless students to the Colorado Department of Education.

The liaison shall mediate disputes concerning school enrollment, assist in making transportation arrangements, assist in requesting the student’s reports, provide information and give referrals on services and opportunities, and assist any homeless child who is not in the custody of a parent or guardian with enrollment decisions.

**Definition of Homeless Student**(C.R.S. 22-1-102.5 Definition of homeless child)

The general assembly hereby finds and declares that, because of the growing number of children and families who are homeless in Colorado, there is a need to ensure that all homeless children receive a proper education. It is the intent of the general assembly that no child shall be denied the benefits of a free education in the public schools because the child is homeless.

* As used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires, “homeless child” means:
* A school-aged child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including but not limited to:
* A child who is living in a motel, hotel, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
* A child who is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
* A child who is abandoned in a hospital; and
* A child awaiting foster care placement; or
* A school-aged child who has a primary nighttime residence that is:
* A supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for persons with mental illness;
* An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
* A public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including but not limited to an automobile, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, or a similar setting.
* “Homeless child” shall not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of congress or a state law.
* “Homeless child” shall include a migrant school-aged child who meets the requirements of this subsection
* “Homeless child” shall include a school-aged child who meets the requirements of this subsection who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

**Enrollment of Homeless Students**

Students defined in state and federal law as homeless children shall be admitted without payment of tuition.

As used in this policy, the term “school of origin” means the school the student attended at the time of becoming homeless. If the student became homeless at a time when the student was not in school, the last school attended shall be the school of origin.

A homeless student currently living outside of the district in which the school of origin is located may be deemed to reside, and may attend school in:

* the district where the child is presently located, or
* the district in which the school of origin is located; except that a homeless student who becomes permanently housed outside that district during the school year may only continue for the remained of the year.

In determining the best interests of the homeless student, except when it is against the wishes of the student’s parent or guardian, the district shall keep the homeless student in the school of origin to the extent feasible.

If the district sends the homeless student to a school other than the school of origin or to a school other than the one requested by the student’s parent or guardian, the district shall provide written explanation to the parent or guarding, including the right to appeal the decision.

If a homeless student is not in the custody of a parent or guardian, the liaison shall assist with enrollment decisions, consider the wishes of the student and give the student and give the student notice of the right to appeal.

If an enrollment dispute arises between the homeless student’s parent or guardian and the district, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the parent or guardian until the dispute is resolved.

If an enrollment dispute arises between a student not in the custody of a parent or guardian and the district, the student shall immediately be enrolled in the school selected by the student until the dispute is resolved.

Enrollment shall be immediate even if the student lacks records routinely required prior to enrollment. The school shall then make arrangements to obtain any necessary records and to have the student received any necessary immunizations.

**Lunch Waiver**

When a student is identified as homeless they are automatically waived with or without paperwork. This is at the INITIAL point of identification.

The free status stays with that student the entire school year until the student is “permanently” housed. Then they must complete the paperwork/application.

**Fee Waiver**

Student fees for the purpose of serving homeless children include but are not limited to: fees for field trips, fees for Art courses/projects, foods courses, technical education courses/projects, and yearly class fees. These fees are to be automatically waived. The waiving of fees will be done directly by the program social worker and/or a building administrator.

To encourage all homeless students to participate in all school activities, payment of all student fees will be waived if the student is identified as homeless.

If necessary, the Homeless Donation Account may provide reimbursement to schools for field trips that are out of pocket expenses for homeless students. This account may also be used to pay for expenses such as packets for picture day, book fairs, etc… These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the program social worker, and are dependent upon a number of factors which may include available funds in the Donation Account.

**Transportation**

Yuma School District-1 has adopted policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian to or from the “school of origin”. If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the District in which the school of origin in located, YSD1 will provide or arrange for the child’s or youth’s transportation to or from the school of origin. If the homeless child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin, but begins living in an area served by another district, YSD1 will agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin with the other district.

**Services**

Each homeless child shall be provided services for which the child is eligible, comparable to services provided to other students in the school, regardless of residency, including transportation services, education services, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

The district shall coordinate with other districts and with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children as needed.

Each homeless child shall be provided services for which the child is eligible comparable to services provided to other students in the school selected regardless of residency.

Homeless children shall be provided access to education and other services that such children need to ensure that they have opportunity to meet the same student performance standards to which all students are held.

The superintendent shall designate at least on staff member in the district to serve as the homeless liaison and fulfill the duties set forth in state and federal law.

**Compliant/Dispute Resolution Process**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending the resolution of the dispute (five days) the dispute process may be initiated by the parent/guarding, unaccompanied youth, principal or other school officials.

The child, parent, guarding, or other accompanying adult who wishes to appeal an adverse decision must start the appeal process by submitting a request for dispute resolution to YSD1 Homeless Liaison. If the district’s Homeless Liaison denies a school selection or enrollment request that is based upon the rights of the child under the McKinney-Vento Act, the Liaison will provide to the child, parent, guardian, or other accompanying adult, in writing, the reason for the decision and notice that the decision and notice that the decision may be appealed. This notice will advise the child, parent, guardian, or other accompanying adult that the child will be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is ought and transportation will be provided pending resolution of the appeal.

**Academic Performance**

Yuma School District-1 believes that Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all student are held(See Sec. 721 (4) of the McKinney-Vento Act). Yuma School District-1 will examine Homeless student’s assessment test scores separately from other students for the purpose of school improvement as well as the purpose of student intervention dictates. In addition and consistent with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Homeless children and youth must be given the opportunity to achieve to the same high standards as all other children.

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