

FY19 Calhoun County Homeless Procedures

A homeless child is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime location in a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. This definition also includes a child who shares the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; lives in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; lives in a car, park, public space or abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting; has been abandoned in a hospital or is awaiting foster care placement; or is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless.

A homeless child has the right to attend school in either the district of origin or the district of current location.

The following procedures will be used to ensure that homeless students receive equitable education services within the Calhoun County District:

Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the liaison will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in the district, both in and out of school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct counselors and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student, and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison.

Community partners in identification may include: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other social service agencies, street outreach teams, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

The liaison will keep data on the number of children and youth experiencing homelessness in the district, where they are living, their academic achievement (including performance on state- wide and district-wide assessments), and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education or school transfers.

School Selection

Each child and youth experiencing homelessness has the right to remain at his or her school of origin, or to attend any school that housed students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend. Maintaining a student in his or her school of origin is important for both the student and our school district. Students who change schools have been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools.

High mobility rates have also been shown to lower test scores for stable students. Keeping students in their schools of origin enhances their academic and social growth, while permitting our schools to benefit from the increased test scores and achievement shown to result from student continuity.

Therefore, in selecting a school, children and youth experiencing homelessness shall remain at their schools of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent's or youth's wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are experiencing homelessness, and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing between academic years. Calhoun County School System only has one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school in the district.

Feasibility shall be a child-centered determination, based on the needs and interests of the particular student and the parent's or youth's wishes. Potential feasibility considerations include:

- Safety of the student;
- Continuity of instruction;
- Likely area of family's or youth's future housing;
- Time remaining in the academic year;
- Anticipated length of stay in temporary living situation;
- School placement of siblings;
- Whether the student has special needs that would render the commute harmful.
 - Services that are required to be provided, including transportation to and from the school of origin.

Enrollment

- Admission: Upon designation, the district shall immediately admit the homeless child to school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation and even if there is a dispute with the child's parents regarding school selection or enrollment. Homeless children will have the same opportunity as other children to enroll in and succeed in the district's schools. They will not be placed in separate programs based on their status as homeless. They may qualify for tutoring, before/after school programs, Title I, free meals, summer programs, and clothing to meet a school requirement, school supplies, and extra counseling. For homeless students attending school out of the district, the district shall, within five (5) days of receipt of a request for records, forward a complete copy of the homeless child's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records, and guardianship paper, if applicable.

Transportation

- Transportation: The district shall provide transportation for homeless students as

required by applicable law.

- Without appropriate transportation, a student may not be able to continue attending his or her school of origin. At a parent's request, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin for a child or youth experiencing homelessness. Transportation shall be provided for the entire time the child or youth the student attends a school in Calhoun County. The liaison shall request transportation to and from the school of origin for unaccompanied youth. Parents and unaccompanied youth must be informed of this right to transportation before they select a school for attendance.
- Requests shall be processed and transportation arranged without delay. If the student experiencing homelessness is living and attending school in this district, this district shall arrange transportation. If the student experiencing homelessness is living in this district but attending school in another, or attending school in this district but living in another, this district will follow the district transportation policy to determine who must arrange transportation. It is this district's policy that lack of transportation shall not result in a student experiencing homelessness missing school. If such a situation arises, this district will arrange transportation and if needed immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Homeless Liaison for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.
- In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth experiencing homelessness shall also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to non homeless students.

- The Title I Director will serve as the District Liaison for homeless children. The liaison's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring that:

Parents of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them, including transportation
Enrollment disputes involving homeless children are promptly mediated and resolved School personnel identify homeless children, including homeless preschoolers in coordination with social service agencies and other appropriate entities
Homeless children receive educational services, including Head Start and preschool services which they are eligible, as well as referrals to health care and other appropriate services

Disputes

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth experiencing homelessness shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student shall also have the rights of a student experiencing homelessness to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I services while the dispute is pending.

The school where the dispute arises shall provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and shall immediately refer the parent or youth to the liaison. The liaison shall ensure the student is enrolled in the school of his or her choice and receiving other services to which he or she is entitled and shall resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth shall be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The liaison shall keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues or schools are repeatedly delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The parent, unaccompanied youth, or school district may appeal the liaison's decision as provided in the state's dispute resolution process.

Credit for full or partial coursework

To ensure homeless children receive credit for full or partial coursework, the building counselor should report attendance and grades for the identified Homeless students at their school to the homeless liaison. The homeless liaison will keep a copy for documentation. Students who have attendance or academic concerns should be brought immediately to the attention of the administrator in charge of curriculum and the homeless liaison for follow up.

Training/Information is provided by the Homeless Liaison and/or principals

for the LEA to increase staff awareness and compliance with the Homeless policy.

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