

As required by the North Carolina Constitution and North Carolina law, the Guilford County Board of Education (the “Board”) is committed to providing a free public school education to all children who are legally entitled to enroll in the District. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the North Carolina State Plan for Educating Homeless Children, the Board will make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and youth of school age located within Guilford County, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate barriers to their receiving an education that may exist in District policies or practices. Based on individual need, homeless students will be provided services available to all students, such as preschool, free or reduced price school meals, services for English learners, special education, career and technical education (CTE), academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) services, and before- and after-school care.

The provisions of this policy will supersede any and all conflicting provisions in Board policies that address the areas discussed in this policy.

A. DEFINITION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

Homeless students are children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term “homeless student” will also be deemed to include the term “unaccompanied youth,” which includes a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Homeless children and youth include those students who are as follows:

1. sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
2. living in motels, hotels, transient trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. abandoned in hospitals;
5. living in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
7. living in a migratory situation that qualifies as homeless because the child lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

B. ENROLLMENT, ASSIGNMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

1. Enrollment

- a. Eligibility

Notwithstanding the enrollment eligibility requirements established by the Board elsewhere in policy, school personnel shall immediately enroll homeless students even if they do not have proof of residency, school and immunization records, birth certificates, or other documents; have missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of homelessness; have outstanding fees; or are not accompanied by an adult. The Homeless Liaison shall assist the students and parents or guardians in securing appropriate records or otherwise meeting enrollment requirements.

- b. Records

Homeless students transferring into the District may provide cumulative and other records directly to District personnel. The Superintendent or designee shall not require that such records be forwarded from another district before the student may enroll. However, school personnel shall immediately request the official records from the previous school.

Information regarding a child or youth's homeless situation must be treated as a student record and protected accordingly. See policy 4700, Student Records.

2. Assignment

A homeless student (or the student's parent or guardian) may request to attend (1) his or her school of origin or (2) any public school that other students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend. The school of origin is defined as the school the student attended before losing permanent housing or the school in which the student was last enrolled, including a preschool. When a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools. Unless not in the student's best interest, a homeless student who continues attending the school of origin will remain enrolled in the school of origin for the entire time the student is homeless and until the end of any academic year in which the student moves into permanent housing.

The Superintendent shall designate the Director of Student Assignment or other appropriate personnel to consider the parent/student's request and to decide, in consultation with the Homeless Liaison, which school a homeless student will attend. The decision must be based upon consideration of student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including factors concerning the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied

youth. The Superintendent's designee must presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest unless contradicted by the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth.

If the Superintendent's designee determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, he or she must provide a written explanation of the reasons for the determination to the parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth, along with information regarding the right to appeal the placement decision, as described in Section D, below.

3. Transportation

The Board of Education will provide homeless students with transportation services comparable to those of other students. In addition, at the parent or guardian's request (or at the request of the Homeless Liaison for unaccompanied youth), the Board will provide transportation services to/from the school of origin. The Superintendent or designee and the Homeless Liaison shall coordinate homeless students' transportation needs, based on the child's best interest. In situations in which a student attends school in this District but his or her temporary housing is in another district (or vice versa), the Superintendent or designee shall work with the other district to share the cost and/or responsibility for transportation. If an agreement cannot be reached between the districts, the cost of such transportation must be divided evenly.

If a homeless student becomes permanently housed and chooses to remain in his or her school of origin, the Board will provide transportation to the student for the remainder of the school year.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR TITLE I SERVICES

Homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services. The Homeless Liaison and the Title I director shall collaborate to identify the needs of homeless students.

D. ENROLLMENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The District will implement an enrollment dispute resolution process that is consistent with the process required by the State Board of Education in the North Carolina Administrative Code, 16 N.C.A.C. 6H .0114, .0115, .0116-0112 and will publish the process on its website and/or in the Student and Parent Handbook.

The student or parent or guardian will be referred to the District's Homeless Liaison, who shall carry out the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

E. HOMELESS LIAISON

The Superintendent or designee shall appoint and train a school employee to serve as the Homeless Liaison.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, *et seq.*; *Non-Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program*, U.S. Department of Education (July 2016); G.S. 115C-366(a2), -369; 16 N.C.A.C. 6H-~~0112~~, 0114, .0115, .0116; State Board of Education Policy SPLN-000

Cross References: Immunization and Health Requirements for School Admission (policy 4110), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy 4120), Discretionary Admission (policy 4130), School Assignment (policy 4150), Student Records (policy 4700)

Replaces: JBC (in part) (revised November 17, 2016)

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