

Green Mountain School District 103

Policy: 3115

Section: 3000 - Students

Students Experiencing Homelessness - Enrollment Rights and Services

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide them with equal access to the same free, appropriate education (including public preschool education) provided to other students. Special attention will be given to ensuring the identification, enrollment, and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school, as well as mitigating educational barriers to their academic success. Additionally, the district will take reasonable steps to ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized or segregated in a separate program within a school on the basis of their homeless status.

Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those students who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings; or
- Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The superintendent will designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's McKinney-Vento liaison for homeless students and their families. The liaison may simultaneously serve as a coordinator for other federal programs, provided that they are able to carry out the duties listed in the procedure that accompanies this policy.

The principal of the school will establish a point of contact for such youth. The point of contact is responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them with the district's homeless student liaison. The district's homeless student liaison is responsible for training the building points of contact.

Best interest determination

In making a determination as to which school is in the homeless student's best interest to attend, the district will presume that it is in the student's best interest to remain enrolled in their school of origin unless such enrollment is against the wishes of a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

Attendance options will be made available to homeless families on the same terms as resident families in the district, including attendance rights acquired by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, and intra and inter-district choice options.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian will be informed of the district's decision and the reasons therefore, (or informed if the student does not qualify for McKinney-Vento, if applicable) and their appeal rights in writing and in a language they can understand. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state policy. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school will immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. However, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including academic records, medical records, proof of residency, mailing address or other documentation. Additionally, enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to missed application deadlines, fees, fines, or absences at a previous school.

If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student will be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school will be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, and in compliance with the state's Address Confidentiality Program when necessary. However, the district cannot demand emergency contact information in a form or manner that creates a barrier to enrollment and/or attendance at school.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families will coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where such children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The notice must be disseminated in a manner and form that parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth receiving such services can understand, including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in their native language. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students and will participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities, as determined by the state-level (OSPI) coordinator for homeless children and youth programs.

The superintendent will:

- Assure district staff is provided training specific to identifying and referring homeless students,
- Strongly encourage every district-designated homeless student liaison to attend training provided by the state on identification and serving homeless youth. Ensure that the district includes in materials provided to all students at the beginning of the school year or at

enrollment, information about services and support for homeless students (i.e., the brochure posted on the OSPI website).

- Use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness (e.g., distributing and collecting a universal annual housing intake survey, providing parent brochures directly to students and families, announcing the information at school-wide assemblies, posting information on the district's website).

Facilitating on-time grade level progression

The district will: 1) waive specific courses required for graduation for students experiencing homelessness if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district; or 2) provide reasonable justification for denial of the waiver. In the event the district denies a waiver and the student would have qualified to graduate from their sending school district, the district will provide an alternative process of obtaining required coursework so that the student may graduate on time.

The district will consolidate partial credit, unresolved, or incomplete coursework and will provide students experiencing homelessness with opportunities to accrue credit in a manner that eliminates academic and nonacademic barriers for the student.

For students who have been unable to complete an academic course and receive full credit due to withdrawal or transfer, the district will grant partial credit for coursework completed before the date of the withdrawal or transfer. When the district receives a transfer student in these circumstances, it will accept the student's partial credits, apply them to the student's academic progress, graduation, or both, and allow the student to earn credits regardless of the student's date of enrollment in the district.

Cross References:	3116 - Students in Foster Care 3120 - Enrollment 3231 - Student Records 3413 - Student Immunization And Life Threatening Health Conditions 4218 - Language Access
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Legal References:	RCW 28A.320.142 Unaccompanied youth – Building point of contact – Duty of District 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act RCW 28A.225.215 Enrollment of children without legal residences RCW 28A.320.145 Support for homeless students. 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA] Chapter 28A.320 RCW Provisions applicable to all districts (new section created by 3SHB 1682, 2016 legislative session)
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Last Revised: **July 01, 2019**

Classification: **Essential**

Prior Revised Dates: **10.02; 10.04; 12.11; 12.14; 07.16; 11.16; 07.17; 10.17; 05.18; 01.25**