

# Downey Unified School District

## STUDENTS

### HOMELESS STUDENTS

AR 2510

The coordination and responsibility for carrying out the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and overseeing services for homeless students will be assigned to the Senior Director of Student Safety, Wellness, and Engagement as District liaison.

#### Definitions

The term homeless children and youth means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes: (42 United States Code [42 U.S.C.] Section 11434a; EC Section 48852.7)

1. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or, are abandoned in hospitals
2. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings
3. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in conditions described above
5. Unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

The term school of origin means the school that the homeless student attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled. If the school the homeless student attended when permanently housed is different from the school in which he/she was last enrolled, or if there is some other school that he/she attended within the preceding 15 months and with which he/she is connected, the district liaison shall determine, in consultation with and with the agreement of the homeless student and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, and in the best interests of the homeless student, which shall be deemed the school of origin. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][3][I]; EC Section 48852.7)

When determining the best interest in making educational and school placement decisions for a homeless student, consideration is given to, among other factors, educational stability, the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress, and the student's

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#### Definitions - continued

access to academic resources, services, and extracurricular and enrichment activities that are available to all district students. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][3][B]; EC Sections 48850, 48853)

#### District Liaison

The Superintendent designates the following staff person as the district liaison and supervisor of the support team for homeless students: (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][6][A])

Dr. Robert Arroyo Jagielski  
Senior Director of Student Safety, Wellness, and Engagement  
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Phone: 562-469-6564

#### District Liaison Duties (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][6][A]; EC Section 48852.5)

1. Identify homeless children and youth in the District, both in and out of school, through coordinated activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Train school personnel to identify and assist homeless families.
3. Serve as a resource in facilitating immediate enrollment of homeless students through the attainment of records necessary for student enrollment into or transfer out of district schools, including immunization, medical, and academic records.
4. Inform parents/guardians of all educational and related opportunities available to their children and provide parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education. All parent information must be provided in a form, manner, and language understandable to each parent.
5. Ensure that homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible.
6. Disseminate notice of the educational rights of homeless students in district schools that provide services to homeless children and at places where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and hunger relief agencies (soup kitchens).

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#### District Liaison Duties (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][6][A]; EC Section 48852.5) - continued

7. Work with public and private agencies to obtain services for families and to coordinate those services.
8. Fully inform parents/guardians of all transportation services.
9. When notified pursuant to EC Section 48918.1, assist, facilitate, or represent a homeless student who is undergoing a disciplinary proceeding that could result in his/her expulsion
10. When notified pursuant to EC Section 48915.5, participate in an individualized education program team meeting to make a manifestation determination regarding the behavior of a student with a disability
11. Keep data on the number of students served including academic achievement.
12. Resolve disputes or appeals from parents/guardians that arise over issues regarding enrollment and/or services. The parent or unaccompanied youth may appeal the liaison's decision using the Uniform Complaint procedure.

#### Services

Homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school including:

1. Transportation
2. Title I
3. Special Education
4. English Learner programs
5. Vocational and Technical programs
6. GATE
7. School Nutrition
8. Before and After School programs

#### Additional Services and Provisions

1. All homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for free meals. Upon enrollment, the enrolling school will submit the student's name to Food Services for processing.

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### Additional Services and Provisions - continued

2. Homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of what school they attend. The Title I director and the liaison will work together to provide in school and outside of school support services comparable to those provided to other Title I students.
3. Unaccompanied youth should be referred to the liaison and/or support team for enrollment options.
4. Enrollment:  
The district shall make placement decisions for homeless students based on the student's best interest. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][3][B]; EC Section 48852.7. Homeless children and youth may remain at their schools of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent's or youth's wishes. Parents may at any time enroll children in the school of residence.

When making a placement decision for a homeless student, the Superintendent or designee may consider the age of the student, the distance of the commute and the impact it may have on the student's education, personal safety issues, the student's need for special instruction, the length of anticipated stay in the temporary shelter or other temporary location, likely area of future housing, school placement of siblings, and the time remaining in the school year.

However, placement decisions shall not be based on whether a homeless student lives with his/her homeless parent/guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison shall assist in placement or enrollment decisions, consider the views of the student, and provide notice to the student of his/her appeal rights.

In determining a student's best interest, a homeless student shall, to the extent feasible, be placed in his/her school of origin, unless his/her parent/guardian requests otherwise.

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#### Additional Services and Provisions - continued

Once a placement decision has been made, the principal or designee shall immediately enroll the student in the school of choice. The student shall be enrolled even if he/she:

- Has outstanding fees, fines, textbooks, or other items or monies due to the school last attended
- Does not have clothing normally required by the school, such as school uniforms
- Is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, and medical records, including, but not limited to, records or other proof of immunization history

The principal or District Liaison shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. Issues dealing with lack of documentation normally required for enrollment will be immediately referred to the liaison. The District Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian, or the student if he/she is an unaccompanied youth, in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student.

If the student is placed at a school other than his/her school of origin or the school requested by his/her parent/guardian, the District Liaison shall provide the parent/guardian with a written explanation of the decision along with a statement regarding the parent/guardian's right to appeal the placement decision. The student may continue attending his/her school of origin for the duration of the homelessness. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432; EC Section 48852.7)

- If the student is transitioning between grade levels, he/she shall be allowed to continue in the same attendance area.
- If the student is transitioning to a middle school or high school, and the school designated for matriculation is in another school district, he/she shall be allowed to continue to the school designated for matriculation in that district.

If the student's status changes before the end of the school year so that he/she is no longer homeless, he/she shall be allowed to stay in the school of origin: (EC Section 48852.7)

- Through the duration of the school year if he/she is in grades K-8
- Through graduation if he/she is in high school

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#### Additional Services and Provisions - continued

5. Resolving Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment in a particular school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][3])

The parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the placement decision, which shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in language that the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth can understand. The written explanation shall include:

- The district liaison's contact information
- A description of the district's placement decision
- Notice of the student's right to enroll in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute, including the right to fully participate in all school activities
- Notice of the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth's right to appeal the decision to the county office of education and, if necessary, to the California Department of Education (CDE)

The District Liaison shall work to resolve an enrollment dispute as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][3][E])

In working with the student's parents/guardians to resolve an enrollment dispute, the District Liaison shall:

- Inform them that they may provide written and/or oral documentation to support their position
- Inform them that they may seek the assistance of social services, advocates, and/or service providers in having the dispute resolved
- Provide them a simple form that they may use and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute resolution process
- Provide them a copy of the dispute form they submit for their records
- Provide them the outcome of the dispute for their records

If the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth chooses to appeal the district's placement decision, the District Liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the county office of education (COE).

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#### Additional Services and Provisions - continued

If the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth chooses to appeal the COE's placement decision, the COE homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the CDE.

6. Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for a homeless student to and from his/her school of origin when the student is residing within the district and the parent/guardian requests that such transportation be provided. If the student moves outside of district boundaries but continues to attend his/her school of origin within this district, the District Liaison shall consult with the superintendent or designee of the district in which the student is now residing to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][6][A])

The district shall not be obligated to provide transportation to students who continue attending their school of origin after they cease to be homeless, unless the formerly homeless student has an individualized education program that includes transportation as a necessary related service for the student. (EC Section 48852.7)

7. Transfer of Coursework and Credits

When a homeless student transfers into a district school, the district shall accept and issue full credit for any coursework that the student has satisfactorily completed while attending another public school, a juvenile court school, or a nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency and shall not require the student to retake the course. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][1][F]; EC Section 51225.2)

If the homeless student did not complete the entire course, he/she shall be issued partial credit for the coursework completed and shall be required to take the portion of the course that he/she did not complete at his/her previous school. However, the district may require the student to retake the portion of the course completed if, in consultation with the holder of educational rights for the student, the district finds that the student is reasonably able to complete the requirements in time to graduate from high school. Whenever partial credit is issued to a homeless student in any particular course, he/she shall be enrolled in the same or equivalent course, if applicable, so that he/she may continue and complete the entire course. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][1][F]; EC Section 51225.2)

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Partial credits shall be awarded on the basis of 0.5 credits for every seven class periods attended per subject. If the school is on a block schedule, each block schedule class period attended shall be equal to two regular class periods per subject. Partial credits and grades earned by a student shall be included on the student's official transcript within two business days of the district's notification of the student's transfer, as required under EC Section 49069.5.

In no event shall the district prevent a homeless student from taking or retaking a course to meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the California State University or the University of California. (EC Section 51225.2)

#### 8. Applicability of Graduation Requirements

To obtain a high school diploma, a homeless student shall complete all courses required by EC Section 51225.3 and fulfill any additional graduation requirements prescribed by the Governing Board. However, when a homeless student who has completed his/her second year of high school transfers into the district from another school district or transfers between high schools within the district, he/she shall be exempted from all district-adopted coursework and other district-established graduation requirements, unless the district makes a finding that the student is reasonably able to complete the additional requirements in time to graduate from high school

by the end of his/her fourth year of high school. Within 30 calendar days of the homeless student's transfer, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the student, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for him/her, and the district liaison for homeless students of the availability of the exemption and whether the student qualifies for it. If the Superintendent or designee fails to provide this notification, the student shall be eligible for the exemption once notified, even if the notification occurs after the student is no longer homeless. (EC Section 51225.1)

To determine whether a homeless student is in his/her third or fourth year of high school, the district shall use either the number of credits he/she has earned as of the date of the transfer or the length of his/her school enrollment, whichever qualifies him/her for the exemption. (EC Section 51225.1)



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#### Additional Services and Provisions - continued

The District Liaison shall notify any homeless student who is granted an exemption and the person holding the right to make educational decisions for him/her how any requirements that are waived will affect the student's ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution and shall provide information about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges. (EC Section 51225.1)

The district shall not require or request a homeless student to transfer schools in order to qualify for an exemption and no request for a transfer solely to qualify for an exemption shall be made by a homeless student, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for the student, or the district liaison on behalf of the student. (EC Section 51225.1)

If a homeless student is exempted from local graduation requirements, the exemption shall continue to apply after the student is no longer homeless or if he/she transfers to another school or school district. (EC Section 51225.1)

If the District Liaison determines that a homeless student is reasonably able to complete district graduation requirements within his/her fifth year of high school, he/she shall: (EC Section 51225.1)

- Inform the student and, if under 18 years of age, the person holding the right to make educational decisions for him/her, of the option available to the student to remain in school for a fifth year to complete the district's graduation requirements and how that will affect his/her ability to gain admission to a postsecondary educational institution
- Provide information to the homeless student about transfer opportunities available through the California Community Colleges
- Upon agreement with the homeless student or with the person holding the right to make educational decisions for him/her if he/she is under 18 years of age, permit the student to stay in school for a fifth year to complete the district's graduation requirements

#### 9. Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

A homeless student who enrolls in any district school shall be immediately deemed to meet all residency requirements for participation in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities. (42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g][1][F]; EC Section 48850[a][2])

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10. Notification and Complaints

Information regarding the educational rights of homeless students, as specified in EC sections 51225.1 and 51225.2, shall be included in the annual uniform complaint procedures notification distributed to students, parents/guardians, employees, and other interested parties pursuant to 5 California Code of Regulations Section 4622. (EC sections 51225.1, 51225.2)

Information regarding this policy will be part of the required parent notification provided each year and will be posted at each school site.