

Admission of Homeless Students

To the extent practical and as required by law (RSA 193:12, McKinney-Vento Act), the Ashland School District will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services.

Definition

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

1. sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. being abandoned in hospitals;
5. awaiting foster care placement;
6. living in public or private places not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. being migratory children living in conditions described in previous examples.

Homeless Student Liaison

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for students in transition (homeless) and their families. The liaison will assume the following responsibilities:

1. help insure that homeless children enroll and succeed in school;
2. inform the parents and guardians of homeless students of the educational and related services available to their children;
3. coordinate with local social services agencies that provide services to children and families in transition (homeless); and
4. coordinate transportation services when necessary.

Enrollment

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to the immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families will be encouraged to provide immunization records as soon as possible. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies within three school days.

Enrollment Appeal

A complaint regarding the enrollment of a homeless student shall first be presented orally to the district's homeless coordinator or designee, as appointed by the Superintendent. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the complainant may present a formal appeal to the homeless coordinator. The written appeal must include the following information: date of filing the appeal/complaint with the homeless coordinator; a summary of the events surrounding the complaint; and the name of school personnel involved in the decision. Within five (5) business days after receiving the complaint, the coordinator shall provide a written statement of the decision, including the reasons for the decision. The coordinator will inform the Superintendent of Schools of the formal complaint and its resolution.

If the situation is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, an appeal may be made in writing to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The homeless coordinator shall ensure that the Superintendent or his/her designee receives copies of the written complaint and the response of the coordinator. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall schedule a conference with the complainant within ten (10) business days to discuss the appeal. Within five (5) business days of the conference, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons for the decision.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent or his/her designee, a similar written appeals package shall be directed through the Superintendent to the Ashland School Board requesting a hearing before the Board at the next regularly scheduled or specifically called meeting. Such request must be brought forward to the Superintendent within five (5) business days of receipt of the Superintendent's or his/her designee's decision. The Board shall issue a final decision in writing within twenty (20) business days. If appropriate, a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision to the Commissioner of Education shall be included in the written decision of the Board.

If in disagreement with the decision of the Ashland School Board, an appeal may be made to the New Hampshire Department of Education. The decision of the Commissioner of Education shall be final. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Commissioner may appeal the determination to a court of competent jurisdiction.

Transportation

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, the districts will make reasonable efforts to coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student. Contingent upon agreement between the two Superintendents, transportation costs shall be shared equally between the two districts.

Legal References:

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(19), Homeless Students
RSA 193:12, Legal Residence Required
No Child Left Behind Act, 2002
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431, et seq.

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