



Subject	Student Services
Classification	Students Experiencing Homelessness Policy
Date Issued	August 2016
Policy Number	UC 150.02
Issued By	
Supersedes	
Updated	May 2018

### **Authority**

The Board of Trustees recognizes the need to promptly identify students experiencing homelessness within Universal schools, facilitate their immediate enrollment in Renaissance neighborhood charter schools, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Board of Trustees shall ensure that students experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same educational programs and services provided to other Universal students.

The Board of Trustees authorizes the principal to waive District policies and administrative procedures that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of students experiencing homelessness.

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.

### **Definitions**

*Enroll or enrollment* - attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

Students experiencing homelessness - individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

1. Children and youths who are:
  - a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; Living in motels, hotels, other temporary locations due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - b. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or
  - c. Abandoned in hospitals.
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
3. Children and youths 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 circumstances described above; and
5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.

School of origin - the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied youth - a student experiencing homelessness not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The principal shall designate a school liaison for students experiencing homelessness, who shall have the duties and responsibilities imposed by law and the Board of Trustees' policy.

The school's liaison shall work with The School District of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure outreach and coordination with:

1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to students experiencing homelessness and their families.
2. Other LEAs on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other school activities.
3. School staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.
5. Law enforcement agencies, juvenile and family courts, and providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

The school's liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youths. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of students experiencing homelessness, and unaccompanied youths.

Upon request, the school's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.



The school's liaison shall conduct an annual assessment of need in order to ensure that the school continues to provide optimal services and resources to meet the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

Upon request, the school's liaison will engage in ongoing progress monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the school's ECTEH program continues to meet the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

### **Mandatory Regulatory Procedures**

The school's liaison shall propagate Administrative Procedures enacting this policy including procedures for:

1. Enrollment of Students
2. Best Interest Determination for Students
3. Homeless Status Dispute Resolution
4. Comparable Services

*Education Records*- Information about a student experiencing homelessness' living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.

*Uniforms* - No school shall create uniform and dress requirements that create financial hardships for students and their families experiencing homelessness. Nor shall any student in a homeless situation receive disciplinary actions for not having a uniform due to financial hardship. Every effort must be made to protect the privacy of students in this situation.

*Transportation* - The school shall provide transportation for students experiencing homelessness. If the school of origin is outside school's boundaries or students experiencing homelessness live in another district but will attend their school of origin, the school shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.