Existing Policy 5118.1, adopted 5/19/22, appropriate as written

Students

Homeless Students

The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children and youths within the district, encourage their enrollment in school and eliminate existing barriers to their education, which may exist in district policies or practices, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws.

Further, it is the policy of the Board of Education that no child or youth shall be discriminated against or stigmatized in this school district because of homelessness. Homeless students, as defined by federal and state statutes, residing within the district or residing in temporary shelters in the district are entitled to free school privileges.

Homeless students shall not be separated from the mainstream school environment on the basis of their homelessness. Such students shall have access to education and other services they need to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held.

Homeless students within the district not placed in a shelter remain the district's responsibility to provide continued educational services. Such services for the child may be continued in the school ("school of origin") that the student attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment; or provided in the school that is attended by other students living in the same attendance area where the homeless child lives.

To the extent feasible, a homeless child will be kept in the school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian. If placement in the school of origin is not feasible, the homeless student must be placed in the school that is attended by other students living in the same attendance area in which the homeless child lives. The District will provide a written explanation, including the right to appeal, whenever the District sends a homeless student to a school other than the school of origin, or a school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Homeless children shall be provided educational services that are comparable to those provided to other students enrolled in the district, including but not limited to, Title I, transportation services, compensatory educational programs, gifted and talented, special education, ELL, health services and food and nutrition programs, and preschools operated by the District, if they meet the established criteria for these services.

The Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee shall refer identified homeless children under the age of eighteen who may reside within the school district, on a case-by-case basis, to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) when there is reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

The district administration shall attempt to remove existing barriers to school attendance by homeless emancipated minors and youth eighteen years of age:

1. The selected school for the homeless child shall enroll the child, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. The last school enrolled shall be contacted to obtain records.

2. Other enrollment requirements that may constitute a barrier to the education of the homeless child or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent. If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize other reasonable means to determine the appropriate grade level for the child.

3. Fees and charges, which may present a barrier to the enrollment or transfer of a homeless child or youth, may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.

4. Transportation services must be comparable to those provided other students in the selected school. Transportation shall be provided to the student's school of origin in compliance with federal and state regulations. If the school of origin is in a different school district from where the homeless child or youth is

currently living, both school districts shall agree on a method for sharing the responsibility and costs, or share the costs equally.

5. Official school records policies and regulations shall be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent, in compliance with federal statutes.

6. The district shall make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from information available. The District's liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations and records. The District shall arrange for students to receive immunizations through health agencies and at District expense if no other recourse is available. Immunizations may, however, be waived for homeless youth only in accordance with provisions of Board of Education policy on immunizations.

7. The Board will provide any homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian full access to his/her educational records, including medical records, in the Board's possession.

8. Other barriers to school attendance by homeless children or youth may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.

9. The District will treat information about a homeless child or youth's living situation as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Such information shall not be deemed to be directory information.

Any homeless child or youth denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. The homeless child or youth or the parent/ guardian of such homeless individual shall be provided with a written explanation of the reasons for the denial of accommodations in a manner and form understandable to such homeless child or youth or parent/guardian. Information shall also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of accommodations. The homeless child or youth shall be entitled to continue in attendance in the school district during all available appeals. In addition, if a homeless child or youth is denied school accommodations, such homeless child or youth shall be entitled to a hearing conducted pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-186.

The District's educational liaison for homeless children is the Director of Special Services.

Students residing in a temporary shelter are entitled to free school privileges from the district in which the shelter is located or from the school district where they would otherwise reside if not for the placement in the temporary shelter. The district in which the temporary shelter is located shall notify the district where the student would otherwise be attending. The district so notified may choose to either:

1. Continue to provide educational services, including transportation between the temporary shelter and the school in the home district; or

2. Pay tuition to the district in which the temporary shelter is located.

The Superintendent shall develop administrative regulations to ensure compliance with applicable statutes in the implementation of this policy.

(cf. 5143 Student Health Assessments and Immunizations)
(cf. 5146 Child Abuse and Neglect)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-253(d) School privileges for children residing permanently with relatives or non-relatives.

10-253(e) School privileges for children in certain placements, non-resident children and children in temporary shelters.

17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surrounding without court order.

17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.

17a-103 Reports by others.

17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

46b-120 Definitions.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (PL 107-110-Sec 1032)

4-176 to 4-180a Agency Hearings

4-181a Contested cases. Reconsideration. Modification.

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearings. Appeals to state board. Establishment of hearing board. Readmission. Transfers.

PA 17-194 An Act Concerning Access to Student Records for Certain Unaccompanied Youths

PA 19-179 An Act Concerning Homeless Students' Access to Education

Policy adopted: ~~**May 19, 2022**~~

WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Woodbridge, Connecticut