

**KEYSTONE EDUCATION CENTER
CHARTER SCHOOL**

Section: PUPILS

Title: HOMELESS POLICY

KEYSTONE EDUCATION CENTER CS

Date Adopted: March 14, 2013

230. HOMELESS POLICY

Homeless Students Education

The No Child Left Behind Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11431 *et seq.*, require that homeless children and youth have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. The Keystone Education Center Charter School Board of Directors (“Board”) recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other students. The Board adopts the following policy to ensure the Keystone Education Center Charter School’s compliance with federal and Pennsylvania law and regulations pertaining to homeless children and youth.

A. GENERAL POLICY

Homeless students shall have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other students. Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless. The Keystone Education Center Charter School shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the school, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education.

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

The Board may waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer.

B. DEFINITIONS

1. **Homeless students** are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

- a. Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.

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- b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
 - c. Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
 - d. Abandoned in hospitals.
 - e. Awaiting foster care placement.
 - f. Living in public or private places not designated for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
 - g. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
 - h. Living as migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above 42 U.S.C. §11434a(2).
2. **School of origin** is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.
3. **Unaccompanied youth** is defined as youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 42 U.S.C. §11434a(6).

C. DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

1. **Written Notice Requirements** - Keystone Education Center Charter School shall provide written notice at the time any homeless child or youth seeks enrollment, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled, to the parents or guardian of the child or youth (or in the case of an “unaccompanied youth,” the youth) that -
- a. Shall be signed by the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth);
 - b. Sets forth the general rights as established by federal and Pennsylvania law (and this policy);
 - c. Specifically states:
 - 1. the choice of schools homeless children and youths are eligible to attend;

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2. that no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;
 3. that homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs; and
 4. that homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel; and
- d. Provides contact information for the local liaison for homeless children and youths and the State Coordinator for Educational of Homeless Children and Youths. 42 U.S.C. §11432(e)(3)(C)(i)

Keystone Education Center Charter School administration is authorized to notify homeless youth and children of the above information, and shall ensure that the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth receive this information in an understandable manner and form, including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in the native language of the parent/guardian/youth.
42 U.S.C. §11432(e)(3)(C)(iii).

2. **Provision Of Assistance** - Keystone Education Center Charter School shall provide assistance to the parent or guardian of each homeless child or youth (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) to exercise the right to attend the parent's or guardian's (or youth's) choice of schools.
42 U.S.C. §11432(e)(3)(C)(iii).
3. **Transportation** - if the homeless child or youth continues to live in an area served by the Keystone Education Center Charter School, and is the area in which the child's/youth's school of origin is located, the Keystone Education Center Charter School shall provide transportation for that homeless student to his/her school of origin.

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If the homeless child/youth's living arrangements in the area served by the school of origin in the district terminate and the child/youth, though continuing his/her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another school district, the Keystone Education Center Charter School and the school district in which the homeless child/youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the two school districts are unable to agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(l)(J)(iii).

4. **Placement/Enrollment of Homeless Children/Youth**

- a. **Placement** -the Keystone Education Center Charter School shall, according to the child/youth's best interest, continue the child/youth's education in the school of origin while the child/youth remains homeless or until the end of the academic year in which he/she obtains permanent housing. Or, Keystone Education Center Charter School shall enroll, according to the child/youth's best interest, the child/youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A).
- b. **Best Interest Defined** - in determining the "best interest" of a homeless child or youth, Keystone Education Center Charter School shall do the following:
 1. to the extent feasible, keep the homeless child/youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child/youth's parent or guardian;
 2. provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal enrollment disputes, to the homeless child/youth's parent or guardian, if Keystone Education Center Charter School sends the child/youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by a parent or guardian.
 3. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the "homeless liaison" assists in placement or enrollment decisions and considers the views of the unaccompanied youth and provides the unaccompanied youth of the right to appeal enrollment decisions. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B).

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c. Enrollment of Homeless Children/Youth

1. the School selected by a homeless child/youth shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to Keystone Education Center Charter School policies, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation.
2. the enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child/youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.
3. if the child/youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child/youth to the liaison, who shall assist in obtaining the necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C).
4. If the district is unable to determine the child/youth's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the child/youth's placement.

- d. Enrollment Disputes** - if a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parents/guardians shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision, their right to appeal and procedures to use for the appeal. The child/youth or parent or guardian shall be referred to the liaison for homeless students and families. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E).

D. DISTRICT LIAISON FOR HOMELESS YOUTH AND CHILDREN

1. The Board designates the Chief Executive Officer and/or his/her designee to serve as the school's liaison for homeless students and families.
2. The school's liaison shall ensure that:
 - a. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies. The school's liaison shall coordinate with:

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1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth families.
 2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
 3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.
- b. Homeless children and youths enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
 - c. Homeless families, children and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the district, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate services.
 - d. The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
 - e. Public notice of education rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where homeless children and youths receive services, such as schools, family shelters and soup kitchens.
 - f. Enrollments disputes are mediated in accordance with federal law and school policy.
 - g. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6).