

Homeless Policy and Procedures

Westbrook Walnut Grove School District

Homeless Education Policy and Procedures

507-859-2141

Title IA (Section 111(a)(1)) requires that a district (including charter schools) receiving Title IA funds include in its district plan a plan to provide services to homeless students to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in December 2001, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The WWG Homeless Liaison will review the WWG Homeless Policies and Procedures, and Homeless Liaison duties with staff and community members each fall. Once the policies and procedures have been reviewed, they will be sent by email to local WWG churches, businesses, libraries, post offices, city offices, and school buildings to be hung up for public view.

Definitions

Homeless children and youth means children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:

- Living in a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings or substandard housing.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (does not include trailers or mobile homes in a mobile home park), or campgrounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Unaccompanied youth includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

A child or unaccompanied youth shall be considered homeless for as long as he/she is in a living situation described above.

Homeless Liaison

The Westbrook Walnut Grove School acting liaison is Paul Olson, the WWG Elementary

Principal. (507-859-2141)

The Homeless Liaison is required to:

- Ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the Local Education Agency (LEA).
- Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including pre-school operated by the LEA, and referrals to health services.
- Ensure that parents and guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in WWG where children and youth receive services under the Act.
- Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, or any unaccompanied youth, if fully informed of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing these services if available and feasible.
- Assist unaccompanied youth in placement/enrollment decisions.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

The Homeless Liaison will have the responsibility to contact the parent or guardian of students, or unaccompanied youth designated as homeless, to review their rights under the school homeless policy and McKinney-Vento, and ensure they receive any and all needed services through the school, and will refer to any applicable county services. The first contact will be attempted within two days of enrollment.

General Assurances

The Westbrook Walnut Grove School provides the following general assurances:

- Homeless children and youth shall not be segregated into a separate program based on their status as homeless and shall not be stigmatized in any way.
- Homeless children and youth shall be provided services comparable to those received

- by other students in the school, including transportation services, and education programs for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I or similar state and local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs.
- Homeless children and youth will have access to district administrative level of funds for serving homeless students.
 - Westbrook Walnut Grove School shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging academic standards as other students.
 - Westbrook Walnut Grove School shall provide and post notices of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

Identification and Reporting

Homeless children and youth will be identified through:

- The application process for enrollment (self-identification)
- School personnel recommendations
- Coordinated activities with other entities and agencies
- School Selection
- Enrollment and Records
- Nutrition Programs
- Transportation

Westbrook Walnut Grove School will comply with all federal, state, and county, and other data collections and purporting requirements regarding homeless children and youth including flagging the MARSS student record for the duration of the year.

School Selection

Homeless students have a right to select from the following schools:

- The school he/she attended when permanently housed (school of origin)
- The school in which he/she was last enrolled (school of origin)
- The school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides (school of residency)

A homeless child or youth's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of homelessness. If a child or youth becomes permanently housed during the academic year, he or she is entitled to stay in the school of origin for the remainder of the year.

Enrollment and Records

Homeless students may be identified at the time of enrollment (through self-reports).

Homeless youth will not be discriminated against in any way. Homeless children and youth will be allowed immediate enrollment in accordance with current school policies even if the parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, medical records, or other documentation. The WWG designee shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain the relevant records. When the student needs to obtain immunizations, or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the homeless liaison. The liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or record for the student.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall assist in the enrollment process. Unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled if space is available even if unable to provide the school with the records normally required for enrollment (as above) and despite lack of parent or legal guardian's supervision or permissions.

Any confidential record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, and evaluations for special services or programs, of each homeless child or youth will be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district.

Nutrition Programs

Homeless students automatically qualify for free breakfast and lunch at the Westbrook Walnut Grove School. Homeless students will be added to the free meals program as soon as they have been identified.

Transportation

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, LEAs must provide services to homeless children/youth that are comparable to those received by other students in the school selected, including transportation. In addition, schools must provide transportation for homeless students to and from their school or origin, if feasible, consistent with district regulations regarding miles from school, routes, and other transportation policies and regulations.

The Westbrook Walnut Grove School, where feasible and applicable, at the request of the parent/guardian and/or in the best interest of the homeless children and youth, shall provide transportation to students experiencing homelessness to ensure the students are able to stay at the WWG School for the duration of their homelessness. WWG may work with the youth's district of residence or other agencies to provide transportation services.

Enrollment Dispute Resolution Process - Requirements of Section 722(g) of the McKinney-Vento Act

If a disagreement arises over school selection or enrollment, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is requesting enrollment, pending the resolution of the dispute. Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities”.

The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the LEA’s homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.

A written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand. The explanation will include a clear statement of the right to appeal the decision and the steps needed to appeal. The liaison will meet with the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to ensure their understanding of the written statement and appeals process, if desired by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

If the parent or guardian wishes to appeal, they may send a written request to the Minnesota Department of Education State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth asking the State Coordinator to review such decision for compliance with applicable law. Such request must include any documentation related to the dispute resolution proceeding.

The State Coordinator may request any additional information from either party he or she deems relevant in resolving the issue. The Minnesota Department of Education has its own homeless student enrollment dispute resolution procedure, which it must follow that includes various stakeholders and a time frame for resolving the dispute quickly. The State Coordinator will inform all parties of the final determination. Ongoing, uninterrupted access to all guaranteed services will continue to be provided during the appeals process.