

Cook County School District 130

Homeless Plan

Whether a child or youth meets the definition of homeless depends on the living situation and the individual circumstances.

Definition:

Homeless students are children or youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals
- Are awaiting foster care placement
- Are staying in public or private places not ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings or
- Are otherwise not residing in a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

Enrollment:

A homeless child or youth is entitled to attend any of the following:

1. the school in which he or she was enrolled when permanently housed (school of origin);
2. the school in which he or she was last enrolled (school of origin); or
3. any public school that non homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
4. if the homeless child or youth presents for enrollment and the school to which they present is neither a school of origin nor a school in which other children or youth in the same living area as the homeless child are entitled to attend, the school administrator will explain this to the parent, guardian, or youth. The school administrator will contact the district liaison for homeless students for next steps in the enrollment protocol. Homeless students are not to be denied enrollment.

Children and youth who have experienced homelessness are permitted to attend their school of origin for as long as they remain homeless, or if the child becomes permanently housed, for the remainder of the academic year in which housing is acquired.

Transportation:

Where a homeless child or youth chooses to continue enrollment in his or her school of origin, District 130 must ensure that transportation is provided. If the child is living outside the borders of the LEA, the district homeless liaison* should be contacted for transportation arrangements.

District Responsibilities:

- Access to homeless children, youth and families in all programs and activities offered by the school
- Post rights of homeless children and youth
- Provide outreach to homeless families and youth to ensure all school-age and pre-school children not enrolled in school are promptly enrolled
- Enroll all homeless students in free breakfast and lunch programs
- Waive any of the fees or charges that are subject to waiver under the Illinois fee-waiver rules
- Record data regarding homeless children as required by the ISBE

Coordination:

District 130 will compile a list of agencies providing supportive services to the families of homeless children and youth.

Privacy:

It is prohibited, under the Illinois School Students Records Act, for any school staff in District 130 to provide school student records or information therein to any landlord, zoning office, contractor, municipal official or housing authority.

Liaison for Homeless Students:

The liaison for homeless students in District 130 will be the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

Homeless Students in District 130:

- The District 130 liaison for homeless students will provide the documents for enrolling homeless students to school administrators, as well as a document explaining rights of the homeless.
- Homeless children and youth currently attending school in the district should be identified by school staff and a homeless designation form completed at the school site. This form is to be sent to the liaison for homeless student within 24 hours of its completion. The homeless parent or guardian is to be provided the document outlining their rights.
- For students enrolling in school and identifying themselves as homeless, the school staff or administrator should complete the homeless designation form at the school site. This form is to be sent to the liaison for homeless student within 24 hours of its completion. The homeless parent or guardian is to be provided the document outlining their rights.
- School administrators and the social worker assigned to the school assure that homeless children receive all educational services for which they are eligible including preschool, referrals for healthcare, dental care, mental health and other appropriate services.

- Transportation services within the district are provided as currently provided for non homeless children. If transportation is needed from outside the district, the school administrator should contact the homeless liaison.
- Disputes between the school district and homeless parents are handled in accordance with applicable law.
- Students and families identified as homeless by other community entities, such as homeless shelters and community service agencies, will be provided the opportunity to enroll at a district school through the appropriate school administrator or the district homeless liaison. The district homeless liaison will continue to work within the community to identify homeless youth not currently in school.
- Training for school personnel on the educational rights of homeless children and their families will be provided annually.
- The homeless district liaison works to identify homeless families with preschool children during the initial school enrollment or as part of the identification of a family transitional status during the academic year. Data will be collected on students at home. The district homeless liaison ensures that homeless children and their families have equal access to ISBE funded preschools available in their community and referral to all early childhood programs of any kind that homeless children age birth to five may be eligible for education in the community service area. In the Preschool for All initiative homeless children are a priority and if slots are available at the time of request, a homeless child can be enrolled and then screened within the first 30 days to establish and develop an education plan for the child.
- Posters providing information on homeless youth will be available each year for school sites through the district homeless liaison.
- District policies will be reviewed regularly and revised to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children.
- Homeless liaison will compile an annual list of district homeless you and forward to ROE monthly current homeless student forms.