| Cambria-Friesland School District | Chapter Code: JFE |
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| Board of Education Policy | Original Board Policy |

## Homeless Child and Youths

The Cambria-Friesland School District shall implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act to ensure that children and youth in transition are provided with equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education as provided to other children and youths. Children and youths in transition shall have equal opportunity to meet state and district academic achievement standards, and are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment.

Information regarding this policy is available to all students as part of our annual notices which are published annually in our newsletter and are posted on the district's website.

A. Definitions

1. **Adequate Resident** is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

2. **Homeless Children and Youths** means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed regular, and adequate nighttime residence, due to economic hardship, including children and youths who:

* are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason

* are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations

* are living in emergency or transitional shelters

* have 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

* are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, or similar setting

* are migratory children and unaccompanied youth who are living in a situation described above

* are unaccompanied, which includes young people who have run away from home, no longer welcome at their home, and/or been abandoned by parents or guardians.

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

3. **The Homeless Children and Youths Liaison** is the staff person designated by the District as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. In the School District of Cambria-Friesland School District, the homeless liaison is the school counselor.

4. **Enroll and Enrollment** means attending school and participating fully in school activities.

5. **Fixed Residence** is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change.

6. **Immediate** means without delay.

7. **Parent** means a person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

8. **Permanently Housed** means that the child has fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime housing.

9. **Regular Residence** is one which is used on a nightly basis.

10. **School of Origin** means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

11. **Unaccompanied Youth** includes youth in homeless situations who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This may include young people who have run away from home, no longer welcome or asked to leave their homes, and/or been abandoned by parents or guardians. In all cases, the school district will obtain if possible, and keep on file, a current emergency contact for each unaccompanied youth.

B. Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the district, both in and out of school.

Community partners in identification may include the following: family and youth shelters, welfare departments and other social service agencies and faith-based organizations.

C. School Selection

Each child and youth in transition has the right to remain at his or her school of origin.

Therefore, in selecting a school, children and youth in transition shall remain at their schools of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent or youth's wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing between academic years.

Feasibility shall be a child-centered determination, based on the needs and interests of the particular student and the parent or youth's wishes. Potential feasibility considerations include:

* Safety of the student
* Continuity of instruction
* Likely area of family or youth's future housing
* Time remaining in the academic year

* Anticipated length of stay in temporary living situation
* School placement of siblings
* Whether the student has special needs that would render the commute harmful

D. Enrollment

Consistent, uninterrupted education is vital for academic achievement. Due to the realities of homelessness and mobility, students in transition may not have school enrollment documents readily available. Nonetheless, the Cambria-Friesland School District will immediately enroll any child or youth in transition. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment.

* The school must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records. Initial placement of students whose records are not immediately available can be made based on the student's age and information gathered from the student, parent, and previous schools or teachers.

* If necessary, the liaison will assist with obtaining immunization and/or immunization and other medical records. Health records may often be obtained from previous schools or state registries, and community-based clinics can initiate immunizations when needed.

E. Transportation

At the request of the parent or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the school liaison or designee will assist in having transportation provided for children and youth in transition to the school of origin, for the duration of homelessness.

Once the student becomes permanently housed, it is at the district's discretion to assist the family with transportation needs.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act requires districts to provide transportation for preschool students comparable to transportation for any preschool student in the district.

F. Services

Children and youth in transition shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

* Transportation (as described above)
* Title 1
* Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
* Gifted and talented programs
* School nutrition programs
* Pre-school programs

G. Health Care Services

School personnel shall refer children and youth in transition to appropriate health care services, including dental and mental health services. The liaison and school nurse will assist the school in making such referrals, as necessary.

H. Parent Involvement

School personnel must also inform parents of all educational and related opportunities available to their children and provide parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.

I. School Selection and Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth in transition shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student shall also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1 services while the dispute is pending.

J. Free Meals

Hunger and poor nutrition are obvious barriers to learning. To help ensure that children and youth in transition are available for learning, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that all children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for free meals.

K. Title 1

Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for Title 1 services, regardless of what school they attend. The trauma and instability of homelessness put students at sufficient risk of academic regression to warrant additional support. The district shall provide services comparable to those provided to Title 1 students to children and youth in transition attending non-participating schools.

Title 1 funds may not be used to provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin. However, once students who were homeless become permanently housed, districts may use Title 1 funds to pay for their transportation for the remainder of the school year.

The district's Title 1 plan will be coordinated with McKinney-Vento services, through collaboration between the Title 1 Coordinator and the liaison. Children and youth in transition shall be assessed, reported on, and included in accountability systems, as required by federal law and U.S. Department of Education regulations and guidance.

**Approved: November 26, 2012**