



Book	CCPS Policies and Regulations
Section	J - Students
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**Office:** Associate Superintendent for Education Services

## EDUCATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

### I. Definitions

- A. School of origin means the school that the student attended or was last enrolled before becoming homeless.
- B. Fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not normally subject to change.
- C. Best interest of student means that, to the extent feasible, CCPS will maintain a student in the school of origin unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian.
- D. Unaccompanied youth means a homeless student between the age of 18 and 21 who is not accompanied by an older adult, or is otherwise living alone, and qualifies as homeless.
- E. Homeless students means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence, and who are otherwise eligible to receive educational services from Cecil County Public Schools. This term includes:
  - 1. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
  - 2. Students who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - 3. Students who are living in emergency or transitional shelters;

4. Students abandoned in hospitals;
5. Students who are awaiting foster care placement;
6. Students who have a primary night time residence that is a private or public place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for a human being;
7. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, buses, bus or train stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory students (as defined by Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended) who are living in circumstances described above.

## II. Procedures for Enrollment

### A. Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) shall not:

1. Deny, delay, or transfer enrollment solely because a student is homeless or because a homeless student is unable to produce school, medical, or residency records.
2. Segregate homeless students into special classes, programs, or schools solely because a student is homeless.

### B. With respect to a homeless student who is enrolling or about to enroll, CCPS schools shall:

1. Immediately enroll the student in the school of origin, or the school in the attendance area where the homeless student is actually living, or eligible to attend, in accordance with the best interest of the student. A parent, guardian, or a public agency having legal or lawful custody may enroll homeless students. A pupil personnel worker shall assist a homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and who is 18 years or older in this process.
2. Cause a pupil personnel worker to help make a determination that the homeless student is in the care of an individual other than the parent or guardian, if he or she is not living with a parent or guardian.
3. Make a reasonable effort to verify that the student is homeless.
4. Contact the school last attended by the homeless student to obtain relevant academic and other records.
5. Refer the family to the Department of Student Services for assistance in understanding their rights, programs, services for homeless students, transportation services, and notice of dispute resolutions and appeals.
6. Coordinate with other community service organizations in assisting the homeless student and his/her family.
7. Cause a pupil personnel worker to assist with immunizations; assist the parent in obtaining necessary immunizations in a timely manner; or refer the student to the school nurse.
8. Promptly provide appropriate disability accommodations and special education services for a homeless student who is eligible to receive such accommodations and/or services.
9. Refer the homeless student to the Student Services Team for monitoring of school adjustment needs.

## III. School Placement and Enrollment

- A. CCPS shall enroll the student in a school determined to be in the student's best interest in accordance with current law.
- B. The student shall remain in the school determined to be in the student's best interest for as long as the student remains homeless, or if the student becomes housed, until the end of the academic year.
- C. The decision regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the homeless student lives with the homeless parent or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.
- D. If CCPS sends the student to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, the school must provide written explanation of the decision that includes notice of the parent's or guardian's right to appeal the decision.

## IV. Determination of School Placement That Is In the Student's Best Interest

- A. In determining the best interest of the homeless student for the purposes of Section III above, CCPS shall:

1. To the extent feasible, keep a homeless student in the school of origin unless contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian.
2. Consider the following factors.
  - a. The student's age;
  - b. The school which the student's siblings attend;
  - c. The student's experience in the school of origin;
  - d. The student's academic needs;
  - e. The student's emotional needs;
  - f. Any other special needs of the family;
  - g. Continuity of instruction;
  - h. Length of stay in the shelter;
  - i. The likely location of the family's future permanent housing;
  - j. Time remaining in the school year;
  - k. Distance of commute and the impact it may have on the student's education and other students and/or transportation related factors; and
  - l. Safety of the child.

#### V. Student Transportation

A. Homeless students will be provided with transportation services comparable to the transportation services provided to non-homeless students. Parents will be notified of the availability of transportation services that are necessary for the homeless student to attend the school in which the student is enrolled. The school will work with the homeless liaison, the Transportation Department, and the parent or guardian to determine transportation needs.

B. If the student requires transportation to attend the school that is determined to be in the student's best interest, transportation shall be provided:

1. As long as the student attends the school of origin and remains homeless; or
2. Until the end of the current school year, if the child becomes permanently housed during the school year.

C. If the homeless student resides in Cecil County and attends a school of origin in another jurisdiction in Maryland, CCPS and the other school system involved shall agree upon method and costs for providing the student with transportation to and from the school of origin.

#### VI. Dispute Resolution

The following procedure shall be implemented to address disputes regarding services to homeless students.

A. School personnel informed of a parent's or guardian's disagreement with the enrollment, or access to services provided to the homeless student, shall refer the parent to the Director of Student and School Safety for assistance with dispute resolution.

B. Upon receipt of a written complaint from the parent/guardian of a homeless student, the Director of Student and School Safety shall resolve the complaint in writing within five (5) school days. Notice of appeal rights will also be included with respect to a written resolution of such complaint.

C. If the parent is dissatisfied with the resolution, or if the Director of Student and School Safety does not issue a resolution within five (5) school days, the parent of the homeless student may file a written complaint with the Superintendent of Schools.

D. The Superintendent shall issue a decision within ten (10) school days which shall include notice of the parent's rights to appeal the decision.

E. If the Superintendent does not issue a decision within ten (10) school days or if the parent of the homeless student is dissatisfied with the decision, the parent may appeal in writing to the Cecil County Board of Education within thirty (30) days pursuant to Education Article Section 4-205(c) Annotated Code of Maryland.

F. The Cecil County Board of Education shall decide the appeal in writing on an expedited basis within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the appeal. Notice of appeal rights will be included.

G. If the parent of the homeless student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board, the parent may appeal the decision to the State Board in writing

within thirty (30) days pursuant to COMAR 13A.01.01.03.

H. During the dispute resolution process, including any appeals, the student may remain enrolled at the school of origin. Transportation shall be provided to the student during the dispute resolution process.

#### VII. Identification, Review, and Reporting

A. Data will be collected and reported to the Maryland State Department of Education, local schools, and other agencies as required by the Maryland State Department of Education and the McKinney-Vento Act.

#### VIII. Designation of Liaison

A. The Superintendent hereby designates the Director of Student and School Safety to name a homeless liaison in accordance with current law.

B. The homeless liaison's duties will include:

1. Enrolling in school and accessing school services;
2. Obtaining immunizations or medical records;
3. Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
4. Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement;
5. Helping to coordinate transportation services for homeless children and youth;
6. Collaborating and coordinating with State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth; and,
7. Collecting, maintaining, and reporting data to the Maryland State Department of Education as required.

C. The homeless liaison shall ensure that:

1. Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA;
3. Homeless children and youth, and their families, receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services;
4. Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth 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;
5. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act; and,
7. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where they receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act.