

ADMISSION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

To the extent practical and as required by law, the Laconia School District will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, career and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Definition

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camp grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals;
5. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
6. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
7. Are migratory children living in conditions described in previous examples.

Homeless Student Liaison

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the District's liaison for homeless students and their families.

The District's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social services agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths

and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfer; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. The district's liaison will also review and recommend to the district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Enrollment

Homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in which attendance area the student is actually living, or other schools.

If there is an enrollment dispute between the child's parent/guardian and the school district, the student(s) shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed in writing of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to the immunization records, the student shall be admitted under personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies.

Enrollment Appeal

A complaint regarding the enrollment of a homeless student shall first be presented orally to the district's homeless coordinator or designee, as appointed by the Superintendent. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the complainant may present a formal appeal to the homeless coordinator. The written appeal must

include the following information: date of filing the appeal/complaint with the homeless coordinator; a summary of the events surrounding the complaint; and the name of school personnel involved in the decision. Within five (5) business days after receiving the complaint, the coordinator shall provide a written statement of the decision, including the reasons for the decision. The coordinator will inform the Superintendent of Schools of the formal complaint resolution.

If the situation is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, an appeal may be made in writing to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The homeless coordinator shall ensure that the Superintendent or his/her designee receives copies of the written complaint and the response of the coordinator. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall schedule a conference with the complainant within ten (10) business days to discuss the appeal. Within five (5) business days of the conference, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons for the decision.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent or his/her designee, a similar written appeals package shall be directed through the Superintendent to the Laconia School Board requesting a hearing before the Board at the next regularly scheduled or specifically called meeting. Such request must be brought forward to the Superintendent within five (5) business days of receipt of the Superintendent's or his/her designee's decision. The Board shall issue a final decision in writing within twenty (20) business days. If appropriate, a statement regarding the right to appeal the decision to the Commissioner of Education shall be included in the written decision of the Board.

In in disagreement with the decision of the Laconia School Board, an appeal by the complainant may be made to the New Hampshire Department of Education. The decision of the Commissioner of Education shall be final. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Commissioner may appeal the determination to a court of competent jurisdiction.

Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the district will make reasonable efforts to coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student.

Adopted: July 1, 2003

Revised: May 1, 2012; April 19, 2016, February 6, 2018