

# ROSLYN UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HOMELESS CHILDREN

## Policy 5151

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The School District will identify homeless children, as that term is defined under federal and state law, within the School District. and will provide homeless children with access to a free and appropriate public education. A homeless child's school of attendance will be designated in accordance with law.

A "homeless child" is a child who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or who has a primary nighttime location in a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, or a place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. An "unaccompanied youth" is a homeless child not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall develop procedures necessary to expedite the homeless child's access to the designated school. Such procedures shall include:

1. Admission: Upon designation, the School District shall admit the homeless child to school in accordance with law.

Homeless children will have the opportunity to enroll in the School District's schools. They will not be placed in separate schools or programs based on their status as homeless. The School District shall eliminate barriers to identification, enrollment and retention of homeless children, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees, fines or absences.

2. Transportation: The School District shall provide transportation for homeless students currently residing within the School District in accordance with the School District's transportation guidelines, and as required by applicable law. If a child is receiving transportation to his/her school of origin and obtains permanent housing during the school year, the student has the right to continued transportation services to the school or origin until the end of the academic year, as well as if the student completes the final grade level in a building, or attends the designated receiving school at the next level. If the homeless child attends a summer educational program and the lack of transportation poses a barrier to such child's participation in the summer educational program, the School District shall provide transportation. Additionally, the School District shall provide or arrange for transportation to extracurricular or academic activities where: (1) the homeless child participates in or would like to participate in an extracurricular or academic activity, including an after-school activity at the school; (2) the homeless child meets the relevant eligibility criteria for the activity the lack of transportation poses a barrier to such child's participation in the activity. The School District should provide transportation for academically-based extracurricular activities and summer school and each potential activity should be reviewed on an individual basis to determine transportation eligibility.

3. School Records: For homeless students attending school out of the School District, the School District shall, to the extent the School District is in possession of such records, within five (5) days of receipt of a request for records, forward a complete copy of the homeless child's records including proof of age, academic records, evaluation, immunization records and guardianship papers/custodial affidavits (if applicable). For



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homeless students attending school in the School District, the School District shall request the student's records (academic, medical, etc.) from the school the student last attended.

4. Coordination: The School District shall coordinate with local social services agencies and other entities providing services to homeless children and their families for the provision of services , and shall coordinate with other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transportation, transfer of records, and other inter-district activities. This shall include providing appropriate services to homeless students with disabilities who are eligible for services under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA").

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will designate a liaison for homeless children and provide the liaison with appropriate professional development on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students, including the definitions of terms related to homelessness. The liaison's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ensuring that:

1. homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities;
2. parents/guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
3. parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services available to them, and are assisted in accessing them;
4. enrollment disputes involving homeless children are promptly mediated and resolved;
5. school personnel, through outreach and in coordination with shelters and social service agencies and other appropriate entities identify homeless children;
6. homeless children receive educational services for which they are eligible;
7. homeless children in grades 11 and 12, and children who were homeless in grade 10 but are now in a permanent residency, individually meet with a guidance counselor to discuss college preparation, including the application process, the college selection process, financial aid, and the availability of on-campus supports. The liaison shall further make the homeless children's parents or guardians aware of these counseling sessions and encourage them to participate in the counseling sessions;
8. unaccompanied youth are (a) enrolled in school, (b) have opportunities to meet the New York State academic standards, including receiving credit for full or partial coursework earned in a prior school, and (c) are informed of their status as independent students and that the youth may obtain assistance from the School District liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and.
9. public notice of educational rights of homeless children is disseminated in locations

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frequented by homeless unaccompanied youth and parents/guardians of homeless children, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to them;

10. students and parents in temporary housing receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;
11. staff who provide services to homeless students receive required professional development and support on identifying and meeting the needs of homeless students;
12. school personnel, service providers, advocates working with students in temporary housing, parents/guardians of students in temporary housing, and students in temporary housing are informed of the duties of the liaison.

In accordance with law and regulation, the School District will offer a prompt dispute resolution process described in more detail below.

In accordance with the Commissioner's Regulations, the School District shall collect and transmit to the Commissioner information necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children within the State.

The School District shall maintain forms provided by the Commissioner of Education for designating a homeless child's district of attendance. These forms must be provided to any homeless child or parent or guardian who seeks to enroll a child in school.

If the School District wishes to send a homeless child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision, together with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement which shall be in a manner and form understandable to them. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall refer any such dispute to the School District's homeless liaison for resolution. The homeless child must be enrolled in the school sought by the parent or guardian pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.

### Dispute Resolution Process

If, after the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee reviews the designation form, he/she finds that the student is either not homeless, not entitled to attend the School District's school, or not entitled to transportation (if requested), the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will do the following:

1. contact the School District's homeless liaison to assist in the dispute resolution process; and



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2. contact the student and parent (if available) and inform them of their opportunity to provide more information prior to the School District making a final determination.

If, after consideration of any additional information and input from the homeless liaison, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee makes a final determination that a student is not homeless, or not entitled to enrollment or transportation he/she must provide the student's parent or guardian, or the student, if the student is an unaccompanied youth, with written notice that the student is not entitled to the request. This written notice must:

1. state the rationale/basis for the School District's determination;
2. state the date as of which the student will be excluded from the School District's schools (or transportation);
3. advise that the School District's final determination may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education;
4. provide the name and contact information of the School District's homeless liaison;
5. inform the student's parent or guardian or the student, if the student is an unaccompanied youth, that the School District's homeless liaison is required to assist him/her in filing such an appeal; and
6. include, as an attachment, the form petition needed to file an appeal to the Commissioner.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will deliver the School District's final decision to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth in a timely manner. The student must remain enrolled and provided with transportation, if requested, until the School District makes a final determination and for a minimum of thirty (30) days after the determination to give the student's parent or guardian or unaccompanied youth the opportunity to appeal to the Commissioner of Education.

If the parent/guardian or student commences an appeal to the Commissioner within thirty (30) days of the final determination, the homeless child or youth will be permitted to continue to attend the school that he/she is enrolled in at the time of the appeal and/or receive transportation to that school until the Commissioner renders a decision.

#### Access to Free Meals

The School District will provide free meals to all children identified as homeless. They do not have to complete a free or reduced price meal application. When the homeless liaison or a shelter director provides a homeless child's name to the School District's food service office, free school meals will commence immediately.

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Questions about this policy or the protections available to students in temporary housing can be directed to the McKinney-Vento Liaison designated on the School District website. Questions can also be directed to NYS-TEACHS at (800) 388-2014 or the State Education Department at (518) 473-0295.

Cross-ref:     5100 Student Attendance  
                  5150 School Admissions  
                  5152 Admission of Non-Resident Students

Ref:     42 USC §§11431, et seq.  
            Education Law §§ 305; 3202; 3209  
            Executive Law §§532-b; 532-e  
            Social Services Law §§17; 62; 397  
            8 NYCRR §§100.2; 175.6

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