

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF JOHNSON CREEK BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY	POLICY: 420.2
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Homeless Students and School

Children who meet the Federal definition of “homeless” shall be provided the same access as all other students to all Johnson Creek School District programs and services. Homeless children will not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. No homeless student will be denied enrollment based on a lack of proof of residency. No Board policy, administrative guideline, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of homeless children. Safeguards will exist to protect homeless students from any discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

The term “homeless children and youth” shall be interpreted to mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship.

It will include children and youth who:

- Are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Are living in emergency shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- Have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Runaway children or children who are abandoned

Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status will be determined and documented in cooperation with parents/guardians or in the case of unaccompanied youth the district’s homeless educational liaison.

Placement in a school shall be according to the child’s best interest and include options to:

- Continue the child’s or youth’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year
- Enroll the child or youth in the local schools or any other school where non-homeless resident students attend

In determining the best interests of the child or youth to the extent feasible, the child or youth will be kept in the school of origin if requested in writing by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or ordered through the legal system. If such is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent(s) or guardian(s), the child will be placed in the local school or any other school where non-homeless resident students attend.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the district's homeless educational liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth. Unaccompanied youth who do not live with their parent(s) or guardian(s) may enroll themselves in school.

The 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.

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parent(s) or guardian(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

At the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the district's homeless educational liaison or designee, transportation will be provided for homeless children to the school of origin.

Once permanent housing is found the family has a choice to stay in the school of origin but the School District of Johnson Creek will no longer provide nor contribute financial support for transportation. At the time of enrollment parent(s)/guardian(s) of homeless children and unaccompanied youths will be notified of the district's policy to discontinue providing transportation for homeless students once permanent housing is found.

Permanent housing shall be defined as any signed lease or long-term approved living situation. Self-paying day to day in a motel is not considered permanent housing.

In the case where the school of origin and current residence are different local educational agencies (LEAs), the two school districts will agree on a method for transportation and share costs.

It shall be the responsibility of the district's homeless educational liaison to ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are voluntarily identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the district.
- Homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the child/youth.

- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated in such public places as schools, meal sites, shelters and other locations frequented by low-income families.
- Compliance with all policies and procedures exists and all enrollment disputes are mediated
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a homeless child or youth, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.
- Assistance is provided to children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Programs for homeless students are coordinated with other federal and local programs.

Appeal requests based on decisions of the district's homeless educational liaison will go to the district administrator. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Adopted: 5/3/04
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