

# HOMELESS, FOSTER, STUDENTS EXPERIENCING EDUCATIONAL INSTABILITY

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| <p>3. Delegation of Responsibility</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;</li> <li>3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;</li> <li>4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and</li> <li>5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.</li> </ol> <p><b>Foster Care</b> also known as out-of-home care, is a temporary service provided by states for children who cannot live with their parents/guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has responsibility for placement and care. Foster care can refer to placement settings such as unrelated foster parents, relatives, group homes, child care institutions, residential care facilities, emergency shelters, pre-adoptive homes, and supervised independent living.</p> <p><b>Student Experiencing Educational Instability</b> means a student who has experienced one or more changes in school entity enrollment during a single school year as a result of any of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Homelessness, as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;</li> <li>2. Dependency relating to child protective services relating to juvenile matters;</li> <li>3. Delinquency as disclosed at the discretion of the parent/guardian</li> <li>4. As part of court-ordered services under a voluntary placement or custody agreement.</li> </ol> <p><b>School of origin</b> is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school or origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.</p> <p><b>Unaccompanied youth</b> means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.</p> <p>The Joint Operating Committee designates the Supervisor of Special Programming to serve as CCTI's Liaison (or Point of Contact) for homeless children and youths. The liaison's name and contact information shall be provided to the educational</p> |
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|  | <p>decision maker of the student.</p> <p>CCTI's liaison shall coordinate with the liaison from the school district of residence to ensure outreach and coordination with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless, foster and students experiencing educational instability.</li> <li>2. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.</li> <li>3. Staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.</li> <li>4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.</li> </ol> <p>CCTI's liaison shall coordinate with the liaison from the school district of residence to ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.</p> <p>CCTI's liaison, in coordination with the school district's liaison, shall correspond with community homeless service providers to ensure non-interruption of transportation, to allow student to remain in the school of origin.</p> <p>CCTI's liaison in coordination with the guidance counselor shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.</p> <p>CCTI's liaison in coordination with the Guidance Counselor, shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notify the students' IEP team or 504 Service Agreement Team of the student's status as a homeless, foster, students experiencing educational instability.</li> <li>2. Ensure prompt placement of the student in appropriate courses.</li> <li>3. Request from previous school entities, information pertaining to the student's records, transcripts, IEP or 504 service plan documents.</li> <li>4. Develop a Graduation Plan to detail the courses needed for timely graduation and post-secondary education or workforce transitioning.</li> </ol> |
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| <p>4. Guidelines</p> | <p><u>Best Interest Determination</u></p> <p>In determining the best interest of a child or youth, CCTI in coordination with the school district of residence, shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.</li> <li>2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety, proximity to living arrangements, giving priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.</li> <li>3. If, after such consideration, CCTI and the school district of residence determine that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall include information regarding the right to appeal.</li> </ol> <p><u>Placement</u></p> <p>In accordance with the child's or youth's best interest, the school district of residence and CCTI shall continue to enroll a homeless student in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools.</p> <p>CCTI's liaison, in coordination with the liaison from the school district of residence, shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.</p> <p>The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decision related to school selection or placement, including the right to appeal.</p> |
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|  | <p><u>Admission</u></p> <p>CCTI shall immediately admit the student, even if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for admission.</li> <li>2. The application or admission deadline has passed during any period of homelessness.</li> </ol> <p>CCTI's liaison, in coordination with the liaison from the school district of residence, shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academics or other records.</p> <p>CCTI may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.</p> <p><u>Grade Level Assignment</u></p> <p>If CCTI is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, CCTI shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's assignment within CCTI.</p> <p><u>Dispute Resolution for Homeless Students</u></p> <p>If the school district determines it is not in the homeless student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian of an unaccompanied youth, the district will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a written explanation of reasons for its determination and shall include information regarding the parent/guardian's right to appeal.</li> <li>2. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to CCTI's liaison, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process.</li> <li>3. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.</li> <li>4. The student shall remain in the school of origin pending resolution of the dispute.</li> <li>5. CCTI's liaison, in coordination with the liaison from the school district of residence, shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.</li> </ol> <p>A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal the written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.</p> |
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|  | <p><u>Dispute Resolution for Students in Foster Care</u></p> <p>If a dispute arises pertaining to the appropriate school placement for a child in foster care, to the extended possibilities and appropriate, the student shall remain in their school of origin pending resolution of the dispute.</p> <p><u>Education Records</u></p> <p>Information about a homeless, foster care, and students experiencing educational instability's living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.</p> <p><u>Comparable Supports and Services</u></p> <p>Homeless, foster and students experiencing other educational instability shall be provided supports and services comparable to those offered to other students, including, but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transportation services.</li> <li>2. School nutrition programs.</li> <li>3. Career and technical education programs.</li> <li>4. Educational programs for which the homeless student meets eligibility criteria, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs.</li> <li>b. Programs for English Language Learners.</li> <li>c. Programs for students with disabilities.</li> <li>d. Programs for gifted and talented students.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Refer the student to the Student Assistance Program (SAP).</li> <li>6. Access to the school's guidance counselor &amp;/or outside agencies during the school day.</li> <li>7. Academic supports and services to meet the student's needs, whether or not the student has an IEP, 504 Service Plan.</li> <li>8. Frequent check-ins with the student and his/her teachers to elicit information about accommodations, supports, services needed.</li> </ol> |
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|  | <p><u>Graduation Plan</u></p> <p>CCTI's liaison in coordination with Guidance Counselor, and approved by the Director, shall ensure that each student experiencing homelessness, foster care and other educational instability is provided with a graduation plan to ensure timely graduation. A copy of the Graduation Plan will be placed in the student's school file. The Graduation Plan shall include course requirements necessary for the student to graduate. Efforts to ensure timely graduation may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Substituting a specific course requirement with similar subject area course content completed at a prior school entity. Student would have needed to have had satisfactorily completed course work or demonstrated competency. Evidence of competency may include but not limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Satisfactory completion of a project, essay or presentation.</li> <li>b. Achieved a passing exam grade.</li> <li>c. Successful completion of CTE course.</li> <li>d. Other as approved by the Director.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. If a course requirement cannot be waived, CCTI shall provide a modified credit recovery course of study.</li> <li>3. If the student is determined not eligible for graduation, CCTI in coordination with the school district, may issue a diploma if the student meets the graduation requirements of the prior school entity's graduation requirements.</li> </ol> <p><u>Keystone Diploma</u></p> <p>If the student experiencing educational instability is determined not eligible for graduation even after all varied alternatives are explored, CCTI in coordination with the district, and approved by the Director, will work with the Department of Education to determine whether the student is eligible for a Keystone Diploma.</p> <p>Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) may elect to remain in school until the age of 21. Such students may maintain the right to graduation through credit attainment or successful completion of IEP goals.</p> |
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