

HOMELESS POLICY & PROCEDURES

ADVENTURE SCHOOLS
EDUCATIONAL IMPACT, INC.

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness exists in our community. A combination of high housing costs and poverty causes many families to lose their housing. Many young people leave their homes due to abuse, neglect and family conflict. Children and youth who have lost their housing live in a variety of places, including motels, shelters, shared residences, transitional housing programs, cars, campgrounds and other. Their lack of permanent housing can lead to potentially serious physical, emotional and mental consequences. Educational Impact, Inc. will ensure that all children and youth receive a free, appropriate education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in our school. Educational Impact, Inc. will also follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

It is the policy of Educational Impact, Inc. and Adventure Schools to view children as individuals. Therefore, this policy will not refer to children as homeless; it will instead use the term children and youth in transition. Under federal law, children and youth in transition must have access to appropriate public education, including pre-school, and be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Adventure Schools will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment.

Information regarding this policy will be distributed to all parents upon enrollment and once during the school year. Information will also be provided to a parent who seeks to withdraw their child from school. Posters will also be distributed twice a year in the surrounding neighborhood.

POLICY STATEMENT

Adventure Schools is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students, including those experiencing homelessness. This policy aims to ensure that homeless students have access to education and support, recognizing their unique challenges and circumstances.

DEFINITIONS

Homelessness: For the purposes of this policy, homelessness includes students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This encompasses living in shelters, motels, cars, parks, public spaces, temporary housing, or doubled up with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other similar situations.

School Liaison: A designated staff member responsible for coordinating services and support for homeless students and families.

Unaccompanied youth: A youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above. The more general the term *youth* also includes unaccompanied youth.

Enrollment: The process of admitting homeless students into our school in a timely manner, without barriers or delays.

Retention: The ongoing support and accommodations provided to homeless students to ensure their continuous participation and success in their educational journey..

Immediate: Without delay.

Parent: A person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

School of origin: The school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

IDENTIFICATION

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the district, both in and out of school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth in transition, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison. Community partners in identification may include the following: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other social service agencies, street outreach teams, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions and legal services.

The liaison will keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the district, where they are living, their academic achievement (including performance on state and district wide assessments) and the reason for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education or school transfers.

ENROLLMENT & RETENTION

This outlines the procedures and support mechanisms that Adventure Schools follows to ensure that homeless students have equal access to quality education, enrollment, and retention within our institution. We are committed to complying with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, including those experiencing homelessness.

Enrollment Procedures

- **Identification of Homeless Students**
 - Upon enrollment, parents or guardians are encouraged to provide information about their housing situation.
 - The school will train staff members to identify homeless students through ongoing professional development and collaboration with local shelters, social service agencies, and community organizations.
- **Enrollment Documentation**
 - Homeless students will be allowed to enroll immediately, even if they lack traditional enrollment documents such as proof of residence, immunization records, proof of age, or previous academic records.
- **Guardianship and Residency Affidavits**
 - In cases where the parent/guardian is unable to provide proof of guardianship or residency, the Homeless Liaison will work with the family to complete an affidavit based on the information provided by the parent/guardian.

Support Services for Homeless Students

- **Designated Liaison**
 - The school will appoint a designated liaison for homeless students who will coordinate services, facilitate communication between school personnel, families, and community agencies, and ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- **Transportation**
 - Homeless students will have access to transportation services to ensure their attendance at school, even if they have changed residences. The Homeless Liaison will collaborate with transportation services to arrange suitable transportation options.
- **School Supplies and Materials**
 - The school will provide necessary supplies, textbooks, and materials to homeless students at no cost, ensuring they have the tools needed to succeed academically.

Academic and Social Support

- **Individualized Support Plans**
 - Homeless students will have access to individualized support plans that outline academic and social-emotional needs and interventions. Teachers, counselors, and other relevant staff members will collaborate to develop and implement these plans.
- **Counseling Services**
 - Counseling services will be available to homeless students to address their emotional and social well-being, providing a safe space to discuss their experiences and challenges.

Retention and Educational Stability

- **Educational Stability**

- The school will make efforts to maintain educational stability for homeless students by allowing them to remain in their school of origin, even if they change their temporary living situation.

- **Enrollment Rights**

- Homeless students will not be denied enrollment due to missed application deadlines, lack of documentation, or unpaid fees. They will also have the right to appeal decisions related to enrollment and retention.

TRANSPORTATION

Without appropriate transportation, a student may not be able to continue attending his/her school or origin. To avoid such forced school transfers, at a parent's request, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin for a child or youth in transition. Transportation shall be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school, as defined above, including during pending disputes. The liaison shall request transportation to and from the school of origin for the unaccompanied youth. The length of the commute will only be considered in determining the feasibility of placement in the school of origin based on potential harm to the student, as discussed above. Parents and unaccompanied youth must be informed of their rights to transportation before they select a school for attendance.

In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth in transition shall also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed students.

ATTENDANCE

Adventure Schools is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to all students, including those experiencing homelessness. This policy aims to ensure that homeless students have access to education and support, recognizing their unique challenges and circumstances.

- **Attendance Support:**

- Homeless students may face challenges that affect their attendance. Absences due to homelessness-related issues will be excused.
- Homeless Liaison will be notified when a homeless student has 1 unexcused absence and make contact with the parent/guardian to understand the cause of the absence and how to help remove that barrier to prevent additional unexcused absences.
- The Homeless Liaison and school will work with homeless families to develop an attendance plan that accommodates their circumstances.
- Students who are consecutively absent for 10 unexcused days due to their circumstances will not be automatically withdrawn from the school.

- **Transportation Assistance:**
 - The Homeless Liaison will explore transportation options, which may include providing bus passes, coordinating carpooling, hiring a third party transportation company or collaborating with local agencies to ensure homeless students can attend school.
- **Academic Support:**
 - Homeless students will receive academic support to bridge any gaps caused by missed classes or assignments due to their housing situation.
 - Teachers will provide additional assistance to help students catch up and succeed academically.
- **Designated Liaison:**
 - The Homeless Liaison will serve as the main point of contact for homeless students and families, providing information, referrals, and support.
 - The Homeless Liaison will work with families to address barriers to attendance and ensure access to available resources.
- **Collaboration with Community Organizations:**
 - The Homeless Liaison and/or school will establish partnerships with local shelters, social services agencies, and nonprofits to coordinate services and support for homeless students.
 - Collaborative efforts will aim to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of homeless students.
- **Communication:**
 - Homeless families will be kept informed about school events, activities, and important dates.
 - The school will maintain open communication with families to address any concerns and ensure they are aware of available resources.

SERVICES

Children and youth in transition shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school, including:

- Transportation
- Title I
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Vocational and technical educational programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs
- Before and After school programs
- Behavioral and Mental Health Services

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Homeless Liaison will collaborate with local shelters, community organizations, and government agencies to provide additional resources and support to homeless students and their families.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All information related to a student's homelessness will be kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis, following applicable privacy laws.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from students, families, and staff will be taken into consideration when making adjustments.

AWARENESS AND TRAINING

The school will provide training to staff to increase awareness and sensitivity regarding the challenges faced by homeless students. Efforts will be made to create an inclusive and supportive school environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

Adventure Schools' Homeless Student Attendance Policy reflects our commitment to supporting the educational success of homeless students. By providing a compassionate and flexible approach, we aim to remove barriers to attendance and promote a positive learning experience for every child in our care.