

MONONA GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Rule 420 (2)

HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy

The Monona Grove School District ensures that homeless children and youth have equal access to educational programs provided to other children and youth, have opportunity to meet the same challenging Wisconsin Model Academic Standards and Monona Grove School District standards to which all students are held, are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and are protected from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes children and youth who:

- share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations;
- are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- are abandoned in hospitals;
- are awaiting foster care placement;
- have a primary night-time 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; and
- migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

The district Homeless Liaison Coordinator or his/her designee determines homeless status in consultation with a child or youth's parents, when applicable. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of Monona Grove School District forms and/or through direct contact with Monona Grove School District staff.

Procedure

A. School Selection

When a child is identified as homeless, the District will:

1. Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin (the school attended when permanently housed, or the school in which last enrolled) 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; or
2. Enroll the child or youth in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend; and
3. The Monona Grove School District will make enrollment decisions based on the best interests of the child.

In determining the best interests of the child or youth, the child or youth will be kept in the school of origin to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the district Homeless Liaison Coordinator or his/her designee will assist in the placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

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.

School selection will be documented through the Monona Grove School District "Determining Feasibility of School Placement" form [(Administrative Exhibit 420(1))] for children who are homeless.

B. Enrollment

The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment. The District will immediately request records from the previous school.

The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

C. Guardianship

The Monona Grove School District will not prevent the enrollment of a homeless child or youth through residency requirements. Nor will the District prevent enrollment of a homeless child or youth solely because the child is not living with parents or guardians.

D. Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable services offered to other students in the school selected in the Monona Grove School District, such as:

- Preschool programs
- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child meets eligibility criteria such as ESL or special education programs
- Programs for students at-risk of educational failure
- Programs for students with gifts and talents
- School nutrition programs
- Title I services
- After school programs
- AODA programs and services
- Vocational educational programs

E. Transportation

At the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison Coordinator or his/her designee, the District will provide or arrange for transportation for homeless children to the school of origin, if the school or origin is in the Monona Grove School District.

If the school of origin is not the Monona Grove School District, the District in which the school of origin is located and the Monona Grove School District will share responsibility and cost of transportation.

F. Homeless Liaison Coordinator

The District Administrator shall appoint a Monona Grove School District Homeless Liaison Coordinator for homeless children and youth. The Monona Grove School District Homeless Liaison Coordinator shall ensure that:

- School personnel through coordination with other entities and agencies identify homeless children and youth.
- Homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the Monona Grove School District.
- Homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services, such as health care, dental services, and mental health services.
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a homeless child and any unaccompanied homeless youth is 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 and mediate enrollment disputes.
- The parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin or to the school that is selected and are assisted in accessing transportation.
- Coordination of services between Monona Grove School District and other homeless family services providers.
- 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.

G. Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The District will provide the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child or youth or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation [“Written Notification of Enrollment Denial – Administrative Exhibit 420(2)"] of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent(s), guardian(s), or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The District will then refer the parent or guardian to the Monona Grove School District Homeless Liaison Coordinator. The Monona Grove School District Homeless Liaison Coordinator shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute.

Appeals will go to the District Administrator or his/her designee. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the Monona Grove School District Homeless Liaison Coordinator shall also ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.