



# Lynn Public Schools

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## Policy for Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth

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# Lynn Public Schools

## Policy for

### Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth

The goal of McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool education, as provided to other children and youth.

The Lynn Public Schools ensures the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act regarding identification, enrollment, attendance and success in school of homeless children and unaccompanied youth in grades Pre-Kindergarten – 12. The responsibility to ensure the implementation has been assigned to Parent Information Center's Director and staff.

#### I. Designation of a Homeless Education Liaison

The Lynn Public Schools' Parent Information Center is the central registration office for all admissions and within system transfers of students. The Lynn Public Schools' Homeless Education Liaison interviews parents/guardians of homeless children and unaccompanied youth at the time of registration. After identification of a homeless student or unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Education Liaison provides the following:

- Assists with immediate school enrollment
- Contacts last school placement to secure school records and immunization records
- Arranges transportation
- Arranges for free breakfast and lunch
- Contacts social workers or agencies involved with the family
- Ensures the correct educational placement by coordinating services through the Language Support and Special Education Office
- Ensures student integration in the regular education setting
- Facilitates resolution in disputes and assists with appeals process when requested
- Works directly with school staff to identify students who become homeless during the school year and assists in students' academic success
- Coordinates with shelters, motels, and state agencies to ensure access to all available benefits
- Provides information to parents regarding after school and night school programs.
- Collaborates with local service providers and refers homeless families to these agencies for the purpose of providing assistance and support
- Provides information, education and training around issues homelessness for school personnel
- Coordinates crisis intervention, advocacy and clinical services for homeless students and families

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#### II. Definition of Homelessness

Lynn Public Schools recognizes that homeless students are those lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This definition shall include children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Are abandoned in hospitals
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings
- Unaccompanied youth- a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- Migratory youth living in conditions described in the previous examples

#### III. School Selection

Parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth may choose to stay at their school of origin or transfer to the school where they are temporarily residing according to that district's placement policy. To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing.

#### IV. Enrollment

Once the enrollment decision is made, Lynn Public Schools will remove barriers and shall immediately enroll the student to the extent feasible, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment. Homeless students' placement in grades and classes should be handled according to district policy. The Homeless Education Liaison will assist homeless students who arrive without records by contacting the previously attended school system to obtain the required records. Lynn Public Schools reserves the right to do random address checks on those unable to provide proof of residency.

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#### V. Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to and from their school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth. Transportation will be provided if:

- The school of origin is in Lynn but the homeless student is temporarily living in a different district, and the distance does not exceed one hour for those in Grades 1-12 or 45 minutes for students in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten
- The school of origin is in a different district but the homeless student is temporarily living in Lynn, and the distance does not exceed one hour for Grades 1-12 or 45 minutes for students in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten
- The homeless student is temporarily residing within the district and per the Lynn Public Schools' eligibility guidelines for transportation

The cost for transportation will be shared for students temporarily residing in one district and attending the school of origin in another district.

#### VI. School Nutrition Program

Homeless students will be immediately enrolled in the free breakfast and lunch program.

#### VII. Support Services

To the extent practical and as required by law, the Lynn Public Schools will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational/technical education programs, and gifted and talented programs.

#### VIII. Dispute Resolution

If there is an enrollment dispute, the homeless student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which the enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the district's decision and their right to appeal in writing. The Homeless Education Liaison will facilitate the dispute resolution and appeal process. The final decision in such a situation resides with the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education.