

IDENTIFYING & SERVING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

It is the responsibility of every employee of the Hazleton Area School District to spot signs of children who may be experiencing homelessness and to report the information to the District Homeless Liaison. Per the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, **these children have the right to immediate enrollment, school stability, access and support to academic success.** Following is a summary of the definition(s) of those children who may be considered homeless, signs to look for, events that may create a homeless situation and the responsibilities of the Hazleton Area School District as a whole to, remove any barriers in relation to school enrollment, education, nutrition, transportation, and involvement in extra-curricular activities or field trips. **Realize that each homeless situation is unique and should be handled individually.**

DEFINITION(S) OF HOMELESS

Families and children who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence including:

- Sharing housing (doubled-up) due to loss of housing or other event
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camp ground
- Living in emergency shelters, cars, parks, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory children living in similar situations
- Unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Recent irregular attendance or tardiness
- Clothing worn multiple days or sudden personal hygiene issues
- Consistently unprepared with school supplies or unfinished homework
- Appearing tired and/or hungry frequently
- Marked behavior change (withdrawal, nervousness, aggression, etc.)
- Refrains from referencing home, family and personal belongings

DISTRICT HOMELESS LIAISON

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EVENTS THAT CAUSE HOMELESSNESS

- Fire
- Eviction
- Abandonment
- Left home (run-away)
- Domestic violence
- Parental job loss or loss of income
- Hospitalization/death of parent or guardian
- Incarceration of parent or guardian
- Other poverty-related issues

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Enroll immediately by removing barriers such as: proof of residency, birth certificate, immunization records and former school records
- Provide transportation (if needed) based upon district walk/bus guidelines
- Provide free school meals
- Respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the situation, i.e. **do not** bring special attention to homeless children in front of classmates
- Provide comparable services to those received by other students including; special education, vocational programs, gifted programs, etc.
- Ensure participation in field trips, class projects and activities even if they don't have transportation or necessary fees