RESPONSIBILITY IN IDENTIFYING & SERVING HOMELESS YOUTH

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 this 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 for academic success. Following is a summary of the definition(s) of those children who may be considered homeless, signs to look for, event(s) 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. 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 nighttime residence including:
- Sharing housing (doubled-up) due to loss of housing or other event
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camp grounds
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory children living in similar circumstances (above)
- Unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

EVENTS THAT MAY CREATE HOMELESSNESS
- Fire
- Eviction
- Abandonment
- Left home (runaway)
- Domestic violence
- Parental job loss or loss of income
- Hospitalization or death of parent or guardian
- Incarceration of parent or guardian
- Other poverty-related situation

SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES
- Immediately enrollment by removing barriers such as: proof of residency, birth certificate, immunization records and former school records.
- Provide transportation (if needed) based upon district walking/busing guidelines.
- Provide free meal benefits.
- Respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of the situation(s) ie. do not bring special attention to homeless children in front of classmates.
- Provide services comparable to those received by other students including; special education, vocational programs, gifted programs, etc.
- Ensure participation in field trips, activities and class projects even if they don’t have transportation or necessary fees.

SIGN(S) TO LOOK FOR
- Irregular school attendance or tardiness
- Wearing the same clothing for multiple days or personal hygiene issues
- Consistently unprepared with school supplies or completing homework assignments
- Changing schools frequently
- Appearing tired and/or hungry frequently
- Marked change in behavior (withdrawal, shyness, nervousness, aggression)
- Refrains from referencing home, family and personal belongings

HASD Homeless Liaison:
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