

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

SIGNS 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:

Bernadette Sedor
1515 West 23rd St.
Hazle Township, PA 18202
570-459-3111 ext. 3127

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.