

Purpose

To provide guidelines to ensure that children and youth who are homeless are enrolled in Allegany County Public Schools without barriers and that they receive equal access to all educational and school-related activities.

Definitions

“Homeless student” means a child or youth who is eligible to attend Allegany County Public Schools and who lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime place of residence. The definition includes:

- A. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- B. Students who are living in motels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of adequate accommodations;
- C. Students who are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- D. Students who are abandoned in hospitals;
- E. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is
 - 1. a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting; or
 - 2. a setting that is considered to be substandard housing, which may be determined by considering whether the setting in which the family, child, or youth is living lacks one of the fundamental utilities such as water, electricity, or heat; is infested with vermin or mold; lacks a basic functional part such as a working kitchen or a working toilet; or may present unreasonable dangers to adults, children, or persons with disabilities.
- F. Migratory students who qualify as homeless because the children are staying in accommodations not fit for habitation.
- G. Students who run away from home or a foster placement and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations should be considered homeless.
- H. Unaccompanied homeless youth: A homeless child or youth not in the company of a parent or guardian.

“ACPS homeless liaison” is the person responsible for ensuring that homeless children are identified, enrolled, and provided all appropriate educational services. This person also serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, central office, shelter workers, and other service providers.

“Parent” or “guardian” means the

- A. Parent, individual or public agency having legal or lawful physical custody of the homeless student;
- B. Person or public agency to whom guardianship of a child or youth has been giving by order of court; or
- C. Homeless student or you if the student is 18 years or older and not parent/guardian is available.

“School of origin” means the school or preschool the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. When a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving/feeder school.

Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Allegany County is committed to ensuring that all children and youth have equal access to educational programs and school-related activities. To that end, the Board seeks to eliminate all barriers to the enrollment of children and youth who are homeless and eligible to attend public school in Allegany County.

The Board further ensures that staff will assist all children and youth who are homeless and enrolled in the Allegany County Public School System (ACPS) in maintaining a stable educational environment by minimizing the effects of homelessness on their academic achievement and their social-emotional development.

Legal Reference			
Policy Cross Reference McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act 42 USC § 11431, <i>et seq.</i> and Maryland State Department of Education: COMAR 13A.05.09.	Adopted	Reviewed	Revised – June 11, 2024, 1 st Reading Aug. 13, 2024, 2 nd Reading Sept. 10, 2024, 1 st Reading Oct. 15, 2024, 2 nd Reading