

Students

Homeless Students

The Board of Education shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children residing within the district, encourage their enrollment and eliminate any existing barriers to their education.

The Board of Education shall ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized, segregated or discriminated against on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless students, as defined by law, residing within the New Milford Public School District or residing in shelters within the school district shall be entitled to free school privileges.

Homeless students within the district not placed in a shelter remain the district's responsibility to provide continued educational services. Such services for the child may be:

1. Continued in the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school of last enrollment ["school of origin"]; or
2. Provided in the school that is attended by other students living in the same attendance area where the homeless child lives.

To the extent feasible, a homeless child will be kept in the student's school of origin, unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian.

Homeless children shall be provided with educational services that are comparable to those provided to other students enrolled in the district, including but not limited to: Title I, transportation services, compensatory educational programs, gifted and talented, special education, ESL, health services and food and nutrition programs. Homeless children not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian shall be entitled to knowledge of and have access to all educational, medical or similar records in his or her cumulative record.

The Assistant Superintendent of Schools shall coordinate such efforts and be designated as the District's Homeless Liaison. As the District's Homeless Liaison, the Assistant Superintendent shall assume primary responsibility for referring identified homeless children under the age of eighteen who may reside within the school district to the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families ["DCF"], when there is reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse. Such referrals to DCF shall always be made on a case-by-case basis since homelessness by itself does not automatically constitute abuse or neglect. Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to limit or impair the legal obligations of the District's mandated reporters to report incidents of suspected abuse or neglect to DCF.

The administration shall attempt to remove existing barriers to school attendance by homeless emancipated minors of school age as follows:

1. The selected school for the homeless child shall enroll the child, even in the absence of records normally required for enrollment. The last school enrolled shall be contacted immediately to obtain records.

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2. Other enrollment requirements that may constitute a barrier to education of the homeless child may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent. If the school district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize other reasonable means to determine the appropriate grade level for the child.
3. Fees and charges, which may present a barrier to the enrollment or transfer of a homeless child, may be waived at the Superintendent's discretion.
4. Transportation services must be comparable to those provided other students in the selected school. Transportation shall be provided to the student's school of origin in compliance with federal and state regulations.
5. Official school records policies and regulations shall be waived at the Superintendent's discretion in compliance with federal and state statutes.
6. The school district shall make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from available information. The Assistant Superintendent shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations and records. The District's medical advisor may assist the Assistant Superintendent in such efforts.

Students residing in a temporary shelter are entitled to free school privileges from the district in which the shelter is located or from the school district where they would otherwise reside if not for the placement in the temporary shelter. The district in which the temporary shelter is located shall notify the district where the student would otherwise be attending. The district so notified may choose to either:

1. Continue to provide educational services, including transportation between the temporary shelter and the school in the home district; or
2. Pay tuition to the district in which the temporary shelter is located.

If a homeless child is denied school accommodations on the basis of residency, he or she shall be entitled to a hearing in accordance with state law and Board policy.

If the school district where the child would otherwise be located cannot be identified, the school district in which the temporary shelter is located shall be financially responsible for the child's educational costs, except that if DCF places a student who requires special education and related services in a temporary shelter, the school district in which the child resided immediately prior to the DCF placement shall be responsible for the cost of such special education and related services.

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If a student requiring special education has been placed in an out-of-district program by either a school board or by a state agency, the school district in which the child would otherwise reside shall continue to be responsible for the child's education until such time as a new residence is established, even though the child or the child's family resides in a temporary shelter.

The Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee, shall develop administrative regulations, including a procedure for mediation of disputes, to ensure compliance with this policy and applicable law.

(cf. 5141 – Student Health Services)
(cf. 5143 – Student Health Assessments and Immunizations)
(cf. 5146 – Child Abuse and Neglect)
(cf. 5118 – Nonresident Students)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-205 Appointment of school medical advisors
10-207 Duties of medical advisors
10-253(e) School privileges for children in certain placements, non resident children and children in temporary shelters.
17a-101 Protection of children from abuse. Reports required of certain professional persons. When child may be removed from surrounding without court order.
17a-102 Report of danger of abuse.
17a-103 Reports by others.
17a-106 Cooperation in relation to prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

46b-120 Definitions.
Public Act 19-179 An Act Concerning Homeless Students' Access to Education

United States Code
42 U.S.C. §11432 Grants for state and local activities for the education of homeless children and youths.

Policy adopted:	June 10, 2003	NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Policy revised:	June 12, 2007	New Milford, Connecticut
Policy revised:	September 17, 2019	
Policy revised:	May 19, 2020	