

SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY FAMILY	HEALTH AND SAFETY OF STUDENTS	648
<p><u>648.</u></p> <p>Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services</p>	<p>The Shrewsbury Public Schools will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and appropriate educational services. Homeless students will receive services for which they are eligible, including all pre-school, special education, Title I, and school nutrition programs. Special effort will be undertaken to ensure the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Notice of educational rights of homeless students will be disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services. School personnel will collaborate with representatives from local transitional housing agencies, food banks, medical clinics, and town social service agencies to coordinate services for homeless students and their families.</p> <p>1. Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately, operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship • Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations • Being abandoned in hospitals • Awaiting foster care placement • Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings • Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings • Children or youth living in emergency or transitional shelters • Unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian • Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples. <p>2. The assistant superintendent will be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families. He/she can be reached at 508-841-8400. Building principals will inform the assistant superintendent when students and/or families have been identified as homeless. In addition to assisting families and students with the enrollment processes, the liaison will coordinate with local social service and housing agencies that provide services to homeless families, and will provide notice of the rights of homeless students, including transportation, special education, in-district schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.</p>	

3. The Shrewsbury Public Schools will ensure that students are not segregated or stigmatized because of their status as homeless. No homeless child or youth shall be required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths. Homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services, including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs.

4. The assistant superintendent, in consultation with school principals, will make placement decisions based on the 'best interest' of the homeless child or youth. To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent or guardian, or unaccompanied youth. The extent to which it is feasible to place a homeless child or youth in the school of origin depends on:

- The child's age
- The distance of a commute and its impact on the child's education
- Personal safety issues
- The child's need for special education and related services
- The length of the child's anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location
- The time remaining in the school year.

5. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students or unaccompanied youth may request enrollment in the school district where the student is actually living, or other schools to the extent such options would be available to all other students in the district (i.e. choice, charter). Attendance rights are available to homeless families on the same terms as families residing in the district. If there is an enrollment dispute within a district or between districts, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolutions in accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Education's Dispute Resolution Process.

6. The homeless student may be given a health assessment by the school nurse and/or physician if recommended by the building principal. If a homeless student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted and the district liaison will assist the student. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

<p>Adopted 11/17/04</p>	<p>7. The district will take steps necessary to protect homeless children who are victims of domestic violence. These steps may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protecting the identity of these children in school database systems• Training school staff on confidentiality laws and policies• Enrolling the children in a different school, arranging for pick-up and drop-off school bus locations that are not known to the alleged abusers• Sensitizing bus drivers and school staff to a child's circumstances• Helping families to file copies of protective orders with schools. <p>8. Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district, but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the two districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student. Shrewsbury will endeavor to share the resulting transportation costs equitably, or will comply with the requirement of law and divide the costs equally with the other district. The district liaison will ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless student or an unaccompanied youth receives notice, in the language of the home, of all transportation services and is assisted in accessing such services. Peter D. Cirioni is the Coordinator of the Massachusetts Department of Education's Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. He can be reached at 781-338-6294, and pcirioni@doe.mass.edu.</p>
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