



Homeless Students

Operational Policy & Procedure 10.36

I. Policy Purpose/Scope

The policy of The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) is to ensure that homeless students enrolled at FSDB are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as guaranteed by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act. This means that homeless students enrolled at FSDB shall have access to the education and other services that they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging Florida student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized, segregated, separated into other classrooms or educational programs on the basis of their status as homeless. This policy applies to all staff serving homeless students at FSDB.

This policy discusses Homeless Students in relation to: A. Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act, B. Homeless Liaison Responsibilities, C. Application, Enrollment and Withdrawal Processes, D. Unexcused Absences and Tardies, E. Reporting Data, F. Immunizations and Health Examinations, G. Afterschool Programs, and H. Counseling.

II. Definitions

Homeless Child or Youth: Student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as defined on the homeless disclosure form.

Homeless Liaison: FSDB staff person who facilitates and collaborates services between homeless families and school staff, shelter workers, and other service providers or organizations. The FSDB Homeless Liaison collaborates with the Florida Homeless Education Coordinator, members of the campus McKinney Vento Team, the community, and other FSDB personnel who provide education and related services to FSDB enrolled homeless students to ensure that homeless FSDB students have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Immediate: Taking action without delay.

Local Education Agency (LEA): School district where the student resides.

School of Origin: School that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled.

Substandard Housing: Home lacks one of the fundamental utilities (water, electricity, or heat and air conditioning), is infested with vermin or mold, lacks a basic functional part (toilet or kitchen facilities), or presents unreasonable dangers to adults, children, or adults with disabilities.

Unaccompanied Youth: Minor not in the physical custody of a parent/legal guardian and under age 18 (legal independence).

III. Detailed Policy Statement

A. Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act requires states to address problems that impact the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students in school.

To this end FSDB shall:

- Designate an FSDB staff person to be the FSDB Homeless Liaison;
- Identify homeless students;
- Develop/revise procedures to address enrollment and retention of homeless children/youth;
- Provide other services comparable to non-homeless students, including:
 - comparable transportation services
 - preschool programs
 - appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school
 - educational programs for students with limited English proficiency
 - programs in career and technical education
 - extracurricular activities
 - programs for gifted students
 - school nutrition programs
- Ensure students are awarded partial or full credit for courses in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.436.
- Collaborate with other community service providers and organizations to support homeless students and their families; and
- Coordinate timely transfer of school records.

If an enrolled student begins the year homeless, FSDB shall provide to that student homeless services for the duration of the school year regardless of change in homeless status.

B. Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

The FSDB Homeless Liaison is responsible for ensuring that:

- Homeless students are identified through the admissions process, annual information update process, or through referral;
- Homeless students and families are informed about services for which they are eligible;
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated: FSDB shall include such notice on its website, in the Parent-Student Handbook, in newsletters sent to parents during the school year, and in the FSDB application packet given to families inquiring about enrollment, in addition to ensuring that school personnel, contracted service providers, advocates and other organizations are aware of the duties of the FSDB Homeless Liaison.

To meet these responsibilities, the FSDB Homeless Liaison, social workers, and/or mental health counselors on the McKinney-Vento Team will assist homeless students to provide information about

and ensure access to relevant services, obtain immunization/other medical records; and access comparable transportation services.

C. Applications, Enrollment and Withdrawal Processes

All students seeking to be admitted to FSDB must first complete the application and admissions process and receive a determination from FSDB of eligibility for enrollment.

Applicants to FSDB are required to complete an application/information packet, which includes a residency form. FSDB shall accept as complete an application packet submitted by a homeless student that does not contain a completed residency form. FSDB shall not delay the admissions process pending receipt of residency documentation. However, the applicant must submit contact information for the adult student applicant or applicant's parent/legal guardian. The application includes several screening questions regarding home status.

FSDB shall contact the homeless applicant's prior school to obtain academic and other records. Homeless students shall receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.436.

Homeless status will not be a consideration of the admissions process to determine eligibility to enroll at FSDB. The admissions process will be implemented following the FSDB Admissions and Staffing Manual.

If an enrolled homeless student seeks to withdraw from FSDB, the school shall provide to the student/parent/guardian written notice informing them that the student has the right to remain at FSDB, if it is in the student's best interest, and transportation will be provided by FSDB. However, if the parent or student still wishes to withdraw, any subsequent request to reenroll shall require reapplication. FSDB will make a good faith effort to facilitate the reapplication. Any dispute regarding subsequent reenrollment in FSDB as a school of origin shall be subject to a dispute resolution process to address only the issue of whether the student, parent/guardian was provided the notice described in this paragraph. If FSDB did not provide this written notice to the parent, guardian, or student of the student's rights pertaining to school of origin and transportation rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, the parent, guardian, or student should be informed of his or her right to appeal this to the Florida Department of Education.

Any dispute regarding subsequent reenrollment in FSDB as a school of origin when a student has been determined not to meet eligibility criteria shall be subject to administrative due process hearings prescribed by Florida authority and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The FSDB Homeless Liaison shall work with the family to assist them with the paperwork to help expedite the process.

D. Unexcused Absences and Tardies

If a student's homeless status hinders that student's ability to attend school, resulting in absences or late arrival to school, the absences/tardies caused by homelessness should not be counted against the student. This provision was strengthened under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) section 721 which advises against suspension of homeless students due to lack of access to food and other services that out-of-school suspension or expulsion may cause. Students who have excessive absences and tardies are referred to the Multi-Tiered Support Services (MTSS) team to review the concern and identify solutions and interventions. The FSDB Homeless Liaison keeps the McKinney-Vento Team Members in each school apprised of homeless students in order to avoid inappropriate sanctions for excessive tardiness or unexcused absences.

E. Reporting Data

FSDB shall submit, through the automated student database system, all required data through the Florida Department of Education Survey process as documented in the FDOE Data Base Manuals. These manuals are updated annually and published for school district compliance.

F. Immunizations and Health Examinations

If a homeless applicant to FSDB does not have immunization or health examination records, the FSDB Homeless Liaison shall assist in obtaining the necessary health care or health records. Homeless students shall be granted a temporary exemption of up to 30 school days from either the date of the student's eligibility determination or, if deemed eligible during the summer, the first day of school to present or have on file the documentation. Student immunization and health records are maintained within the student information system. Immunization records become part of the student's formal transcript.

G. Afterschool Programs

Homeless students are entitled to participate in the regular afterschool programming provided by the school in its entirety; the school must address all barriers to their full participation in these programs under ESSA section 722. This includes academic afterschool programs such as the grant-funded tutoring, as well as recreational opportunities provided other students such as athletics or clubs. Transportation must not be a barrier to full participation.

H. Counseling Processes

The state of Florida has a special requirement with regard to preparing homeless students for post-secondary education. LEAs must ensure that counselors provide advice to homeless (high school) students to prepare and improve the readiness of such students for college. The FSDB Homeless Liaison, along with school counselors and other LEA staff tasked with college preparation, should ensure that all homeless high school students receive information and individualized counseling regarding college readiness, college selection, the application process, financial aid, and the availability of on-campus supports. The Homeless Liaison will monitor the Deaf Department and Blind Department school counselors to ensure that homeless high school students receive this counseling.

IV. Getting Help

If you need assistance with...	Contact...
Interpreting this policy	Administrator of Instructional Services
Training	Homeless Liaison

V. References, Forms and Resources

References

Admissions and Staffing Manual
Attendance and Withdrawal Manual

Forms

FSDB Dispute Resolution Process
FSDB as School of Origin Notice of Rights

Resources

Annual Information Update/Skyward Online Registration
Parent-Student Handbook

VI. Applicability/Approval

This policy on Homeless Students applies to staff members. This policy supersedes OPP 10.36 Homeless Students dated 02/12/2018. The Administrator of Instructional Services is the campus authority for this policy.

Approved by

Tracie C. Snow

Tracie C. Snow, President

4/13/21

Date

VII. Authority/History

Authority

Florida Statutes: 1002.36

Laws Implemented

Florida Statutes: 1002.36

History

New: 10/10/2011

Revised: 08/25/2014, 01/31/2017, 02/12/2018, 04/13/2021



**Florida School for
the Deaf & the Blind**

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FSDB as a School of Origin: Notice of Rights

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. § 11431, addresses the problems with enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. Importantly, homeless children and youth must be provided with access to educational and other services that they need to meet the Florida State Standards. The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) is committed to assisting homeless students be successful in the classroom.

The Act recognizes that maintaining a stable school environment for homeless students is critical to their success in school. Stability can be enhanced by allowing a student to remain in his/her school of origin.

The Act defines school of origin as the school that a student attended when permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled.

FSDB is not a school district or a local educational agency. It is a school of choice, and it is a school able to provide educational programming and services to students who satisfy the enrollment criteria.

Therefore, as FSDB is your/your child's school of origin, you/your child has a right to stay at FSDB and receive transportation to/from FSDB as long as you/your child remains eligible for enrollment at FSDB.

I acknowledge my right to stay enrolled in/keep my child enrolled in FSDB as the school of origin, as that term is defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.

I also acknowledge that my/my child's right to stay enrolled at FSDB is contingent on a determination of eligibility for enrollment. If I am/my child is deemed ineligible for continued enrollment at FSDB, then I acknowledge that I no longer have the right to attend FSDB as my school of origin.

Signature of parent/legal guardian/adult student

Date





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FSDB Dispute Resolution Process for Enrollment Disputes Relating to School of Origin

Requested School: Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind
207 San Marco Ave.
St. Augustine, FL 32084
904-827-2200

Is this the school of origin? (School of origin is defined as the school that the child/youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child/youth was last enrolled)

Yes No

If "No," there is no basis for the dispute. If "Yes," provide the following information:

Student's Grade when last enrolled at FSDB:

K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th
 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Student's current address: _____

Student's current phone number: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian/Disputing Party's Name: _____

Relationship: Parent Legal Guardian Adult Student Other

Current address: _____

Current phone number: _____

Does the student live in a shelter? Yes No

Was the student enrolled at FSDB? Yes No

If "Yes," was the student determined to meet eligibility criteria? Yes No

Did the student withdraw from FSDB? Yes No

Was the student/parent/guardian provided with a written notice that the student had the right to remain at FSDB, if it was in his or her best interest, and transportation would be provided by FSDB?

Yes No



Also, was he or she provided notice that if the student still withdrew from FSDB, then a withdrawal from FSDB would require the student to reapply if the student subsequently sought reenrollment at FSDB?

Yes No

If FSDB did not provide this written notice to the parent, guardian, or student of the student's rights pertaining to school of origin and transportation rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, did FSDB inform the parent, guardian, or student of his or her right to appeal this to the Florida Department of Education?

Yes No

FSDB HOMELESS LIAISON'S ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE DISPUTE:

Date that FSDB Homeless Liaison was notified of the dispute: _____

FSDB Homeless Liaison took action within how many days after receiving notice of the dispute?

Describe action taken by FSDB Homeless Liaison: _____

Was the dispute resolved? Yes No

Did the FSDB Homeless Liaison provide the parent/guardian/adult student with a written explanation of the decision?

Yes No

Signature of FSDB Homeless Liaison

Date



Notice Regarding a Homeless Student’s Withdrawal from FSDB as a School of Origin

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. § 11431, addresses the problems with enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. Importantly, homeless children and youth must be provided with access to educational and other services that they need to meet the Florida State Standards. The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) is committed to assisting homeless students be successful in the classroom.

The Act recognizes that maintaining a stable school environment for homeless students is critical to their success in school. To ensure this stability, the Act requires that local educational agencies make school placement determinations based on the best interest of the homeless student. Therefore, to the extent feasible, a school district must educate a homeless student in his or her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent.

The Act defines school of origin as the school that a student attended when permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled.

FSDB is not a school district or a local educational agency. It is a school of choice, and it is a school able to provide educational programming and services to students who satisfy the enrollment criteria.

If FSDB becomes a homeless student’s school of origin, that student has a right to stay at FSDB and receive transportation to/from FSDB as long as the student remains eligible for enrollment at FSDB.

HOWEVER, FOR ALL HOMELESS STUDENTS FOR WHOM FSDB IS THE SCHOOL OF ORIGIN:

- 1) if the enrolled homeless FSDB student is determined to no longer meet FSDB’s eligibility criteria, that student shall be withdrawn as ineligible, regardless of FSDB being that student’s school of origin. Enrollment disputes arising under this scenario shall only be resolved via the administrative due process procedures set forth in Florida law and in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- 2) if the enrolled, eligible homeless FSDB student withdraws from FSDB, that student or his parent or guardian shall be provided written notice that the student has the right to remain at FSDB, if it is in his or her best interest, and transportation will be provided by FSDB. However, if the parent or student still wishes to withdraw the student from FSDB, then a withdrawal will require that student to reapply to FSDB should the student subsequently seek reenrollment in this School. That FSDB was the student’s school of origin shall not waive the reapplication process. Enrollment disputes arising under this scenario shall only involve the issue of whether the student/parent/guardian was informed in writing of the student’s right to remain in the school of origin and to receive transportation and the reapplication requirement subsequent to the student’s withdrawal from FSDB as the student’s school of origin.

I, _____, (parent/legal guardian/adult student), have read this notice, understand its contents, and acknowledge that after the student’s withdrawal from FSDB as the school of origin, any subsequent request to reenroll at FSDB shall require the student to reapply.

Signature of parent/legal guardian/adult student

Date

Signature of FSDB witness

Date



