

## HOMELESS STUDENTS POLICY

In accordance with federal and state law, the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School Board will ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational programs and services comparable to those provided to other students in the school; are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless; and are provided transportation to and from the homeless student's school of origin.

### **I. LOCAL HOMELESS LIAISON**

The Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School Board appoints the Jaffrey Grade School Principal as its Local Educational Agency Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth. The liaison shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and their families; other school districts on issue of transportation and records transfers; and State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. The liaison and the Superintendent will also review and recommend to the School District changes in policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

### **II. DEFINITION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The term "homeless children and youths" means children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reasons.

It includes children who:

- are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- are living in emergency shelters
- are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar setting

Migratory children (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 6399) and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

## HOMELESS STUDENTS POLICY (CONTINUED)

### III. PROCEDURE

#### A. School Selection

In accordance with federal and state law, the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District will make placement decisions based on the child's best interests and will:

- A. continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, if the child becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year, if the child becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- B. enroll the child in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend.

In determining the best interest of the homeless child, the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District will:

- to the extent feasible, keep the child in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's parents or guardian;
- provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal as described below, to the homeless child's parent or guardian if the School District sends the child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian;
- in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the School District's homeless liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions regarding the student, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal described below.

The "school of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

The decision regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child lives with the homeless parents or guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

## HOMELESS STUDENTS POLICY (CONTINUED)

### B. Enrollment

The school selected shall immediately “enroll” the child, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school selected will immediately contact the school last attended by the child to obtain records.

The terms “enroll” and “enrollment” are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

### IV. COMPARABLE SERVICES

Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as

- Preschool programs
- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child meets eligibility criteria such as ESL or special education programs
- Programs for “At Risk” students
- School nutrition programs
- After School programs

### V. TRANSPORTATION

At the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local homeless liaison), the Jaffrey-Rindge Cooperative School District will provide transportation for homeless children to and from the school of origin in accordance with the following requirements:

- If the homeless child continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, that LEA must provide or arrange for the child’s transportation to or from the school of origin.
- If the homeless child continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS POLICY (CONTINUED)**

### **V. DISPUTES**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute; and the following procedures shall be used to resolve the dispute:

- The local homeless liaison will provide guidance, technical assistance and mediation support to resolve disputes at the local level.
- If the issue is not resolved, parents of homeless children and/or unaccompanied youth will be provided with written information about the dispute process. The local homeless liaison will act on the behalf of unaccompanied youth to resolve disputes.
- The State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children in the State Department of Education will be called upon to assist in resolving differences, which are not resolved at the local level.
- The superintendent shall decide residency issues.
- If more than one school district is involved in a residency dispute or the parents who live apart cannot agree on the residence of a minor child, the respective superintendents shall jointly make a decision, and such determination shall be final.
- In those instance when an agreement cannot be reached in a timely manner, the commissioner of education shall make a determination and such determination shall be final.

As required by: The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11431, et seq. and RSA 193:12, IV.