

1           **ADMISSION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

2   In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Alexandria City School  
3   Board is committed to educating children and youth who are experiencing homelessness.  
4   Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) does not permit the stigmatization or segregation of  
5   students experiencing homelessness. Attendance in the ACPS is free to school-age persons living  
6   with a parent, guardian, or person *in loco parentis* (person acting in place of a parent by assuming  
7   the responsibility for care and supervision of a child which a parent would ordinarily exercise) in  
8   a temporary shelter, such as a hotel or motel, in the school division, not solely for school purposes.  
9   The school division coordinates the identification and provision of services to such students with  
10  relevant local social services agencies and other agencies and programs providing services to such  
11  students and with other school divisions as may be necessary to resolve interdivisional issues.

12  ACPS serves each student who is experiencing homelessness according to the student’s best  
13  interest and continues the student’s education;

- 14       ● in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness if the student experiences  
15       homelessness between academic years or during an academic year or for the remainder of  
16       the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year;
- 17       ● or enrolls the student in the same attendance-area public school as the student who is not  
18       experiencing homelessness.

19  In determining the best interest of the student who is experiencing homelessness, ACPS

- 20       ● presumes that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student’s best interest,  
21       except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student’s parent/guardian, or (in  
22       the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 23       ● considers student-centered factors related to the student’s best interest, including  
24       factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety  
25       of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student’s parent/guardian or  
26       (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 27       ● if, after conducting the best interest determination based on consideration of the  
28       presumption and the student-centered factors above, ACPS determines that it is not in  
29       the student’s best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the  
30       parent/guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth, provides the  
31       student’s parent/guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the  
32       reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent,  
33       guardian or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal;  
34       and
- 35       ● in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensures that the division’s Homeless Liaison  
36       assists in placement or enrollment decisions regarding the student, gives priority to the  
37       views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to  
38       appeal as described below.

39

40 **Enrollment**

41 The school selected in accordance with this policy immediately enrolls the student who is  
42 experiencing homelessness, even if the student

- 43 ● is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic  
44 records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, or  
45 other documentation; or
- 46 ● has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

47 The enrolling school immediately contacts the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant  
48 academic and other records.

49 If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or other required health records, the enrolling school  
50 immediately refers the parent or legal guardian of the student or, (in the case of an unaccompanied  
51 youth) the youth, to the division’s Homeless Liaison, who assists in obtaining necessary  
52 immunizations or screenings, or immunization or other required health records.

53 If the documentation regarding the comprehensive physical examination required by Policy JHCA  
54 Physical Examination of Students cannot be furnished for a child or youth experiencing  
55 homelessness, and the person seeking to enroll the pupil furnishes to the school division an  
56 affidavit stating that the documentation cannot be provided because the child or youth is  
57 experiencing homelessness and also indicating that, to the best of their knowledge, such pupil is  
58 in good health and free from any communicable or contagious disease, the school division  
59 immediately refers the student to the division’s Homeless Liaison who, as soon as practicable,  
60 assists in obtaining the necessary physical examination by the county or city health department or  
61 other clinic or physician’s office and immediately admits the pupil to school.

62 The decision regarding placement is made regardless of whether the student lives with  
63 parents/guardians experiencing homelessness or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

64 **Enrollment Disputes**

65 If a dispute arises over eligibility, or school selection, or enrollment in the school:

- 66 ● the student who is experiencing homelessness is immediately enrolled in the school in  
67 which enrollment is sought and is provided all services for which they are eligible, pending  
68 resolution of the dispute;
- 69 ● the parent or guardian of the student or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth  
70 is provided with written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or  
71 enrollment made by the school, the school division, or the Virginia Department of  
72 Education, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or student to appeal the decision;
- 73 ● the student, parent, guardian is referred to the division’s Homeless Liaison who carries out  
74 the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
- 75 ● in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison ensures that the youth is  
76 immediately enrolled in the school which the youth seeks enrollment pending resolution of  
77 the dispute.

78 **Appeal Process**

79 *Oral Complaint*

80 In the event that an unaccompanied student or the parent or guardian of a student (hereinafter  
81 referred to as the Complainant) disagrees with a school's decision regarding the student's  
82 eligibility to attend the school, the Complainant orally presents their position to the division's  
83 Homeless Liaison.

84 *Written Complaint*

85 If the disagreement is not resolved within five (5) school days, the Complainant may present a  
86 written complaint to the Homeless Liaison. The written complaint must include the following  
87 information: the date the complaint is given to the Homeless Liaison; a summary of the events  
88 surrounding the dispute; the name(s) of the school division personnel involved in the enrollment  
89 decision; and the result of the presentation of the oral complaint to the Homeless Liaison.

90 Within five (5) school days after receiving the written complaint, the Homeless Liaison will reach  
91 a decision regarding the contested enrollment and will provide a written statement of that decision,  
92 including the reasons therefore, to the complainant. The liaison will inform the Superintendent of  
93 the formal complaint and its resolution.

94 **Appeal to Superintendent**

95 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the written decision of the Homeless Liaison, the  
96 Complainant may appeal that decision to the Superintendent by filing a written appeal. The  
97 Homeless Liaison ensures that the Superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the  
98 response thereto. The Superintendent or designee schedules a conference with the Complainant to  
99 discuss the complaint. Within five (5) school days of receiving the written appeal, the  
100 Superintendent, or designee, provides a written decision to the complainant including a statement  
101 of the reasons therefore.

102 **Comparable Services**

103 Each student who is experiencing homelessness is provided services comparable to services  
104 offered to other students in the school attended by the student who is experiencing homelessness  
105 including the following:

- 106 ● transportation services
- 107 ● educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as services  
108 provided under Title I, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational  
109 programs for English learners;
- 110 ● programs in career and technical education;
- 111 ● programs for gifted and talented students; and
- 112 ● school nutrition programs.

113

## 114 **Transportation**

115 At the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Liaison),  
 116 transportation will be provided for a student experiencing homelessness to and from the school of  
 117 origin as follows:

- 118 ● if the child or youth experiencing homelessness continues to live in the area served by the  
 119 division in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to  
 120 and from school of origin is provided or arranged by the division in which the school of  
 121 origin is located.
- 122 ● if the child or youth experiencing homelessness' living arrangements in the area served by  
 123 the division in which the school of origin are located terminated and the child or youth,  
 124 though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area  
 125 served by another division, the division of origin and the division in which the child or  
 126 youth experiencing homelessness is living must agree upon a method to apportion the  
 127 responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school  
 128 of origin. If the divisions are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs  
 129 for transportation will be shared equally.

## 130 **Definitions**

131 The term "student experiencing homelessness" means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular,  
 132 and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- 133 1) children and youth, including unaccompanied youths who are not in the physical custody of  
 134 their parents, who:
  - 135 a) are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other  
 136 causes; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of  
 137 alternative adequate accommodations; or in emergency or transitional shelters; are  
 138 abandoned in hospitals;
  - 139 b) have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or  
 140 ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or
  - 141 c) are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or  
 142 trains stations, or similar settings; and
- 143 2) migratory children who qualify as experiencing homelessness for the purposes of this policy  
 144 because the children are living in circumstances described above.

145 The term "student experiencing homelessness" also includes students who are experiencing trauma  
 146 or a lack of safety related to, or fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence,  
 147 sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous, traumatic, or life-threatening conditions related to the  
 148 violence against the student or a family member in the student's or family's current housing  
 149 situation, including where the health or safety of children are jeopardized and who has no other  
 150 safe residence and lacks the resources to obtain other safe permanent housing.

151 The term "migratory child" means a child who moved from one residence to another and from one  
 152 school division to another in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or  
 153 migratory fisher or with, or to join, as parent or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or  
 154 a migratory fisher.

155 The term “school of origin” means the school that the student attended when permanently housed  
156 or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

157 The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or  
158 guardian.

159 Adopted: December 5, 1996

160 Amended: July 10, 1997

161 Amended: October 5, 2000

162 Amended: June 19, 2003

163 Amended: June 15, 2004

164 Amended: December 19, 2013

165 Amended: June 18, 2015

166 Revised: May 5, 2022

167

168 Legal Refs.: 20 U.S.C.§ 6399

169

170 42 U.S.C. §§ 11302, 11431, 11432,11433, 11434a.

171

172 Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, §§22.1-3, 22.1-70, 22.1 -78, 22.1-253.13:1,  
173 22.1-270.

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177 Cross Refs.: JEC School Admission  
178 JHCA Physical Examinations of Students

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7       in place of a parent by assuming the responsibility for care and supervision of a child which a  
8       parent would ordinarily exercise) in a temporary shelter, such as a hotel or motel, in the school  
9       division, not solely for school purposes. The school division coordinates the identification and  
10       provision of services to such students with relevant local social services agencies and other  
11       agencies and programs providing services to such students and with other school divisions as may  
12       be necessary to resolve interdivisional issues.

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14       according to the student's best interest and continues the student's education;

- 15       • in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness if the student experiences  
16       homelessness between academic years or during an academic year or for the remainder of  
17       the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year;
- 18       • or enrolls the student in the same attendance-area public school as the student who is not  
19       experiencing homelessness.

20       In determining the best interest of the student who is experiencing homelessness, ~~ACPS~~  
21       ~~Alexandria City Public Schools~~

- 22       • presumes that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest,  
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24       the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 25       • considers student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including  
26       factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety  
27       of homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent/guardian or  
28       (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 29       • if, after conducting the best interest determination based on consideration of the  
30       presumption and the student-centered factors above, ~~the Alexandria City Public~~  
31       ~~Schools~~ ACPS determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school  
32       of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, or (in the case of an  
33       unaccompanied youth) the youth, provides the student's parent/guardian or the  
34       unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination,  
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- 37       • in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensures that the division's Homeless Liaison  
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101 Complainant to discuss the complaint. Within five (5) school days of receiving the written appeal,  
102 the Superintendent, or designee, ~~shall~~provides a written decision to the complainant including a  
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121 division in which the school of origin is located, the child’s or youth’s transportation to  
122 and from school of origin ~~shall be~~ is provided or arranged by the division in which the  
123 school of origin is located.
- 124 ● if the child or youth experiencing homelessness’ living arrangements in the area served by  
125 the division in which the school of origin are located terminated and the child or youth,  
126 though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area  
127 served by another division, the division of origin and the division in which the child or  
128 youth experiencing homelessness is living ~~shall~~ must agree upon a method to apportion the  
129 responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school  
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131 for transportation ~~shall~~ will be shared equally.

132 **Definitions**

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134 and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

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136 their parents, who:
  - 137 a) are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or other  
138 causes; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of  
139 alternative adequate accommodations; or in emergency or transitional shelters; are  
140 abandoned in hospitals;
  - 141 b) have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or  
142 ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or
  - 143 c) are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or  
144 trains stations, or similar settings; and
- 145 2) migratory children who qualify as experiencing homelessness for the purposes of this policy  
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150 violence against the student or a family member in the student’s or family’s current housing  
151 situation, including where the health or safety of children are jeopardized and who has no other  
152 safe residence and lacks the resources to obtain other safe permanent housing.

153 The term “migratory child” means a child who moved from one residence to another and from one  
154 school division to another in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or  
155 migratory fisher or with, or to join, as parent or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or  
156 a migratory fisher.

Commented [1]: Per the amendment of 42 U.S.C. § 11302.

157 The term “school of origin” means the school that the student attended when permanently housed  
158 or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

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168 Revised: May 5, 2022

169

170 Legal Refs.: [20 U.S.C. § 6399](#)

171

172 [42 U.S.C. §§ 11302, 11431, 11432, 11433, 11434a.](#)

173

174 Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, §§22.1-3, 22.1-70, 22.1 -78, 22.1-253.13:1,

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177 [Superintendent’s Memo No. 64 \(Dec. 5, 2003\)](#)

178

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