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2 **ADMISSION OF CHILDREN ~~WHO ARE HOMELESS~~ EXPERENCING HOMELESS-**
3 **NESS**

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

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16 The Alexandria City Public Schools ~~will~~ serve each student who is experiencing homelessness
17 according to the student's best interest and:

- 18 • continue the student's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness
19 • ~~if the student becomes homeless~~ experiences homelessness between academic
20 years or during an academic year; or
21 • ~~for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed~~
22 during an academic year; or—
23 • enroll the student in the same attendance-area public school as the student who is not
24 experiencing homelessness.

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26 In determining the best interest of the student who is experiencing homelessness, the Alexandria
27 City Public Schools ~~shall~~

- 28 • presumes that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest,
29 except when doing so is contrary to the request of the student's parent or guardian, or
30 (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 31 • considers student-centered factors related to the student's best interest, including fac-
32 tors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety of
33 homeless students, giving priority to the request of the student's parent or guardian or
34 (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;
- 35 • if, after conducting the best interest determination based on consideration of the pre-
36 sumption and the student-centered factors above, the Alexandria City Public Schools
37 determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or
38 the school requested by the parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied
39 youth) the youth, provides the student's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth
40 with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form
41 understandable to such parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, including infor-
42 mation regarding the right to appeal; and
43 • ~~to the extent feasible, keep the student in the school of origin, except when doing so is~~
44 ~~contrary to the wishes of the student's parents or guardian; —~~
45 • ~~provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal as~~
46 ~~described below, to the parent or guardian of the student who is homeless, if the~~

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~~division sends the student to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent of guardian; and;~~

- in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensures that the division's Homeless Liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions regarding the student, ~~considers the~~ gives priority to the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal as described below.

Enrollment

The school selected in accordance with this policy shall immediately enroll the student who is experiencing homelessness, even if the student

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

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The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.

If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or ~~immunization, birth, or medical~~ other required health records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or legal guardian of the student or, (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth, to the division's Homeless Liaison, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or screenings, or immunization or other required ~~medical health~~ records.

If the documentation regarding the comprehensive physical examination required by Policy JHCA Physical Examination of Students cannot be furnished for a homeless child or youth experiencing homelessness, and the person seeking to enroll the pupil furnishes to the school division an affidavit stating that the documentation cannot be provided because the child or youth is experiencing homelessness ~~of homelessness of the child or youth~~ and also indicating that, to the best of his or her knowledge, such pupil is in good health and free from any communicable or contagious disease, the school division shall immediately refer the student to the division's Homeless Liaison who shall, as soon as practicable, assist in obtaining the necessary physical examination by the county or city health department or other clinic or physician's office and shall immediately admit the pupil to school.

The decision regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the student lives with ~~homeless~~ parents/guardians experiencing homelessness or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

Enrollment Disputes

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

- the student who is experiencing homelessness shall be immediately ~~admitted to~~ enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought and be provided all services for which he or she is eligible, pending resolution of the dispute;

- the parent or guardian of the student or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth shall be is provided with written explanation of the school's any decisions regarding-related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, the school division, or the Virginia Department of Education, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or student to appeal the decision;
- the student, parent, guardian shall be is referred to the division's Homeless Liaison who shall carries out the appeal process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
- in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison shall ensures that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school which the youth seeks enrollment pending resolution of the dispute.

Appeal Process

Oral Complaint

In the event that an unaccompanied student or the parent or guardian of a student (hereinafter referred to as the Complainant) disagrees with a school's decision regarding the student's eligibility to attend the school, the Complainant shall orally present his/her position to the division's Homeless Liaison.

Written Complaint

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

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

Appeal to Superintendent

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the written decision of the Homeless Liaison, the Complainant may appeal that decision to the Superintendent by filing a written appeal. The Homeless Liaison shall ensure that the Superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the response thereto. The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference with the Complainant to discuss the complaint. Within five (5) school days of receiving the written appeal, the Superintendent, or designee, shall provide a written decision to the complainant including a statement of the reasons therefore.

Comparable Services

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

- transportation services
- educational services for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for ~~students with limited English proficiency~~ learners;
- programs in ~~vocational career~~ and technical education;
- programs for gifted and talented students; and
- school nutrition programs.

Transportation

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

- if the ~~homeless~~ child or youth experiencing homelessness continues to live in the area served by the division in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the division in which the school of origin is located.
- if the ~~homeless~~ child's or youth's experiencing homelessness' living arrangements in the area served by the division in which the school of origin ~~is~~ are located terminated and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another division, the division of origin and the division in which the ~~homeless~~ child or youth experiencing homelessness is living shall 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 divisions are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

Definitions

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

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

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183 The term “migratory child” means a child who moved from one residence to another and from one
184 school division to another in the preceding 36 months as a migratory agricultural worker or migra-
185 tory fisher or with, or to join, as parent or spouse who is a migratory agricultural worker or a
186 migratory fisher. is, or whose parent or spouse is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a
187 migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, has moved
188 from one school division to another in order to obtain, or accompany such parent or spouse in
189 order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing.—

Commented [MS4]: From the Code of Virginia

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

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194 The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guard-
195 ian.

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197 Adopted: December 5, 1996
198 Amended: July 10, 1997
199 Amended: October 5, 2000
200 Amended: June 19, 2003
201 Amended: June 15, 2004
202 Amended: December 19, 2013
203 Amended: June 18, 2015

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205 Legal Refs.: U.S.C.§ 6399
206 42 U.S.C. §§ 11302, 11431, 11432,11433, 11434a.
207 Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, §§22.1-3, 22.1-70, 22.1 -78, 22.1-253.13:1,
208 22.1-270.
209 Superintendent’s Memo No. 64 (Dec. 5, 2003)

210
211 Cross Refs.: JEC School Admission
212 JHCA Physical Examinations of Students