

# Infinity Charter School

**SECTION:** PUPILS  
**TITLE:** HOMELESS STUDENTS  
**APPROVED:** February 8, 2016  
**REVIEWED:** October 9, 2018  
 October, 8, 2019  
 October 13, 2020

## No. 307 - Homeless

### **PURPOSE:**

The Board recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access via the enrollment lottery to the same educational programs and services provided to other Charter School students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the Charter School via the enrollment lottery, , and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

The Board shall waive policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation and success in school of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the Director/CEO.

### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Board designates the Director/CEO to serve as the Charter School's liaison for homeless students and families.

The district's liaison shall coordinate with:

1. Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
2. Other school districts on issues of records transfer and transportation.
3. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The Charter School's liaison shall provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular and nighttime residence, which include the following conditions:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters.
4. Abandoned in hospitals.
5. Awaiting foster care placement.
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings.
8. Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples.
9. Living as run-away children.
10. Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents/guardians or caretakers.
11. Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations.

School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

**GUIDELINES:**

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless.

Enrollment/Placement

The Board recognizes that the Charter School may enroll Homeless students, either as a result of a Homeless Student entering the enrollment lottery, or a student becoming homeless following enrollment. Because the Charter School Law does not provide for disenrollment of students who may move to another district, Homeless Students enrolled in the Charter School shall continue to be enrolled in the Charter School. The Charter School shall make reasonable best efforts to determine with specificity a Homeless Students' residency for purposes of seeking reimbursement under Section 1725-A of the Charter School Law.

In the case of a Homeless Student who enrolls during the School Year, the Charter School shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to Charter School policies. However, the Charter School may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The Charter School liaison may contact the previous school for oral confirmation of immunizations, and the school shall request records from the previous district, pursuant to Board policy. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment.

School/Health Records

The receiving school may contact the school of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within thirty (30) days. The instructional program should begin without delay after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed.

The Charter School support staff will assist the parent/guardian/student in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Placement/Disputes/Complaints

If the Charter School is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the Charter School shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute and following applicable law. The parent/guardian/student will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal. The parent/guardian/student will be referred to the Charter School liaison, who will carry out the state's grievance procedure as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the Charter School liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute and following charter school law with regard to the enrollment lottery.

If disputes or complaints of noncompliance arise regarding the education of homeless students, the following steps shall be taken:

1. The person filing the complaint shall first contact the school or Charter School through the Charter School liaison, the Principal, or Superintendent to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and most likely to be able to resolve it quickly.
2. If Step 1 is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Education Liaison, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.
3. Individual cases may be referred to the PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, as needed, by the State Homeless Coordinator.

PDE will deliver a response within fifteen (15) business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school/ Charter School letter or on the Dispute Letter Form if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Initiative.

#### Services

Homeless Students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other Charter School students including, but not limited to, transportation services; school nutrition programs; vocational programs and technical education; preschool programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students.

#### Transportation

The Charter School shall provide transportation for Homeless Students via regular busing if possible. Allowance for more frequent changes of address will be made. When appropriate, the Charter School will coordinate with the child's original School District homeless services to provide for alternate transportation.

Fiscal Responsibilities

The following guidelines will be followed in cases when the education of the student is provided by the Charter School where the homeless student is temporarily living.

1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students.
2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school Charter School will send a form for the determination of Charter School residence for students in facilities or institutions to the presumed school district of residence.
3. If the form is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating Charter School will enter the student on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating Charter School will bill the resident district for tuition and will report membership data according to state child accounting procedures.
4. If the form is disclaimed and a district of residence cannot be determined, the student will be considered a ward of the state. The educating Charter School will enter the student on its rolls as a nonresident ward of the state and will report membership according to state child accounting procedures. The Department of Education will pay tuition to the educating Charter School based on membership reported to child accounting.

In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not the Charter School of new residence, the educating Charter School will continue to educate the formerly homeless student on its roll as a nonresident student.