

**FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND  
OPERATIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Page 1 of 9

**POLICY NUMBER**

**SUBJECT**

**OPP 10.36**

**Homeless Students**

FSDB shall ensure that homeless children and youth attending FSDB are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students attending FSDB. This means that FSDB's homeless students 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 or segregated or separated into other educational programs on the basis of their status as homeless.

**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, FDOE and FSDB shall work together to:

- 1) designate an FSDB staff person to be the FSDB homeless liaison;
- 2) develop/revise policies to address enrollment and retention of homeless children/youth;
- 3) provide comparable transportation services;
- 4) provide other services comparable to non-homeless students, including:
  - preschool programs,
  - educational programs for students with limited English proficiency,
  - programs in vocational and technical education,
  - programs for gifted students, and
  - school nutrition programs.

If an FSDB-eligible child begins the year homeless, FSDB shall provide to that student homeless services for the duration of the school year regardless of homeless status (as long as the student remains eligible for enrollment at FSDB).

**DEFINITIONS:**

**A homeless child or youth** is someone who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition includes children and youth who are:

- 1) sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- 2) living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- 3) living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- 4) abandoned in hospitals;
- 5) awaiting foster care placement;
- 6) 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;
- 7) living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- 8) migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

**An unaccompanied youth** includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

**Parent** means parent or legal guardian of a student.

**The school of origin** means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled.

**Enroll and enrollment** mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

**Immediate** means without delay.

**Liaison** means the FSDB staff person serving as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, shelter workers, and other service providers. The FSDB liaison coordinates and collaborates with the Florida Homeless Education Coordinator, the community, and other FSDB personnel who provide education and related services to FSDB-eligible homeless children and youth to ensure that homeless FSDB students have the opportunity to succeed academically. In addition, the FSDB homeless liaison is responsible for ensuring that:

- (1) homeless children and youths are identified by FSDB personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- (2) FSDB-eligible homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed at, FSDB;
- (3) homeless children, youths, and families attending FSDB receive educational services for which they are eligible;
- (4) parents/guardians of homeless children and youths attending FSDB are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education;
- (5) public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated: FSDB shall include such notice on its website, in its student handbook, in the first newsletter sent to parents at the beginning of each school year, and in the information packets given to families inquiring about enrollment. FSDB social workers could distribute information to agencies with whom they work. FSDB will work with the State about requesting that Florida LEAs provide a copy of FSDB's public notice to sensory impaired students enrolled in that LEA;
- (6) because enrollment at FSDB is contingent on a child meeting the statutory enrollment criteria, enrollment disputes are addressed in the manner described either in FSDB's homeless policy, or in its enrollment policy and corresponding Board Rules addressing enrollment.

FSDB shall further ensure that:

- (i) if a homeless child's application to FSDB results in an ineligibility determination, then the child's LEA, or the LEA in which the child's school of origin is located, shall be notified immediately in order to admit the child. The child may challenge FSDB's ineligibility determination via the applicable administrative due process hearing procedures, but the child shall not be enrolled at FSDB until the child is found eligible for enrollment at FSDB.
- (ii) if a homeless child admitted to, and enrolled in, FSDB is determined to no longer be eligible for continued enrollment, then the child's LEA, or the LEA in which the child's school of origin is located, or St. John's County School District, shall be notified immediately in order to prepare to admit the child; however, the child may challenge FSDB's ineligibility

determination and continue to attend classes at FSDB as a “stay put” student.

- (7) the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all comparable transportation services, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the School.

To meet these responsibilities, the FSDB homeless liaison will assist homeless children and youth to:

- complete FSDB’s enrollment application, and, if determined to meet eligibility criteria, enroll in school and access services;
- obtain immunization/other medical records; and
- access comparable transportation services.

FSDB shall inform school personnel, contracted service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the FSDB homeless liaison.

**APPLICATION AND ADMISSION TO FSDB:** All students seeking to be admitted to FSDB must first complete the application and intake process and receive a determination from FSDB of eligibility for enrollment. Individuals who have been determined not to meet the statutory enrollment criteria are deemed ineligible for admission and 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 child/youth that does not contain a completed residency form. FSDB shall not delay the Intake process pending receipt of residency documentation. However, the applicant must submit contact information for the applicant or applicant’s parent/guardian.

FSDB may contact the homeless applicant’s prior school to obtain academic and other records.

If a homeless student seeks to withdraw from FSDB when FSDB is that student’s school of origin, FSDB shall provide to the student/parent/guardian written notice informing him or her that his or her child or 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.

**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. The FSDB

homeless liaison shall work with the FSDB attendance coordinator to develop a system of identifying homeless students in order to avoid inappropriate sanctions for excessive tardiness or unexcused absences. In addition, the FSDB homeless liaison shall work with FSDB staff to address the student's difficulties in getting to school.

**REPORTING DATA TO FDOE:** FSDB shall submit, through the automated student database system, the following data:

- (1) the number of homeless children and youth enrolled at FSDB during the previous school year, and the total number of homeless children and youth served in each K-12 grade during the school year;
- (2) the number of homeless preschool age children attending FSDB's preschool programs during the school year;
- (3) of the number of homeless FSDB students, the total number who had, as their primary nighttime residence at the time of initial identification, the following:
  - (a) shelters,
  - (b) doubled-up,
  - (c) unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, etc.),
  - (d) hotels/motels; and
- (4) of the number of homeless FSDB students reported, the total number who are unaccompanied youth.

**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 children and youths 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.

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
L. Daniel Hutto, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:**  
**42 U.S.C. § 11431**

**LAWS IMPLEMENTED:**  
**1002.36 (4)(d)**

**HISTORY:        NEW:        10/10/11**

**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 Sunshine State Standards. 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, \_\_\_\_\_, (adult student/parent/guardian), 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/guardian/adult student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of FSDB witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

**FSDB DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR ENROLLMENT DISPUTES**  
**RELATING TO SCHOOL OF ORIGIN**

Requested school:                   The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind  
  207 N. San Marco Avenue  
  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 Name/I.D. #:

Student’s Grade when last enrolled at FSDB:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> K               | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <sup>th</sup>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <sup>st</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <sup>th</sup>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <sup>d</sup>  | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <sup>th</sup>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <sup>rd</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <sup>th</sup> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <sup>th</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 <sup>th</sup> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <sup>th</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <sup>th</sup> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <sup>th</sup> |   |

Student’s current address:

Student’s current phone:

Parent/guardian/disputing party’s name:

Relationship:                    Parent    Guardian    Adult Student    Other

Current Address:

Current Phone:

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?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of FSDB Homeless Liaison

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**FSDB AS 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 Sunshine State Standards. 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/guardian/adult student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)