426   Homeless Education Program

The School District of Wisconsin Rapids will ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational programs, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state and district academic standards, are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and will establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

The District will comply with current federal and state laws regarding homeless student status and will fully implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

<u>Definition of Homeless Children and Youth</u>

For the purpose of identifying homeless children and youth, the School District of Wisconsin Rapids will use the McKinney-Vento Act's definition. The Act defines homeless children and youth as:

1. Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:

    a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (referred to as doubled-up)
    b. Living in motels, hotels, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
    c. Living in emergency or transitional shelters

2. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or similar settings.

    a. Living in substandard housing
        i. Wood County's definition of substandard housing

4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless BECAUSE they are living in circumstances as described above.

5. Children and youth who are "unaccompanied." These are students who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, including students who are runaways or are abandoned and are living in situations that are not fixed, regular, or adequate. Guidelines for unaccompanied youth follow:

    a. District Homeless Liaison or school based-homeless coordinator will work with the parent to identify a caregiver or work with the unaccompanied youth to identify an adult contact for educational support.

    b. Unaccompanied youth who are special education students, or who are being evaluated for special education services under Section 504, must be provided with a surrogate parent if after diligent attempts to involve their legal parent or guardian have been made and the parent/guardian cannot or will not participate. The surrogate parent can be a non-agency caregiver identified by the student, or one assigned by the District in accordance with the legal selection criteria found in 34 CFR 300.519(d).

c. Unaccompanied youth who are minors and are without an adult caregiver may excuse their own school absences in accordance with District attendance policies. Unaccompanied youth may sign school paperwork normally signed by a parent or guardian.

The School District of Wisconsin Rapids does not discriminate in admissions to any school, class, program, or activity or in facilities usage on the basis of gender, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, religion, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

LEGAL REF: Wisconsin State Statute 118.13
                 Wisconsin Administrative Code, PI 1 and PI 9
                 Title IX, Education Amendment of 1972
                 Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
                 Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
                 American with Disabilities Act of 1990
                 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
                 Civil Rights Act of 1991
                 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act
                 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

CROSS REF: 411, Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment
                 420, School Admissions
                 426-Rule, Homeless Education Program
                 432, School Attendance Boundaries
                 751, Student Transportation

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