**Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth**

Anderson County Schools shall provide educational and related services to homeless children and youth, including preschool-aged homeless children,and homeless children or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (unaccompanied youth) in a manner that does not segregate or stigmatize students on the basis of their homeless status.

Anderson County Schools shall provide its schools with guidelines that detail the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities that schools have to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. These guidelines shall emphasize the right of homeless students to:

1. Have equal access to all educational programs and services, including transportation, that non-homeless children enjoy;

2. Have access to preschool programs as provided to other children in the District;

3. Continue attending their school of origin, when deemed in the best interest of the child, for the duration of homelessness;

4. Attend regular public school with non-homeless students; and

5. Continue to receive all services for which they are eligible (i.e., special education, gifted and talented, English learner).

Anderson County Schools shall provide transportation to the school of origin for homeless children at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison) if the child continues to live within the area served by the District in which the school of origin is located. If the child locates to a District other than that of his/her school of origin, the districts shall work together to apportion transportation to and from the school of origin and associated costs. If the districts are unable to reach agreement, responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

Anderson County Schools shall designate an appropriate staff person to serve as liaison to homeless children and unaccompanied youth. In addition to coordination of McKinney-Vento implementation in the District, the liaison is responsible for:

· “Outreach” to other entities and agencies so that homeless students are identified;

· Providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless children in locations frequented by parents/guardians and unaccompanied youths. This notice is to be in a manner and form that is understandable;2

· Seeing that school personnel who provide McKinney-Vento Services receive professional development and other support; and

Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth (continued)

· Ensuring that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school and receive support to accrue credits and access to higher education.

Anderson County Schools shall inform school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents, guardians and homeless children and unaccompanied youths of the duties of the liaison.

All concerns regarding the education of homeless children and unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the District liaison. If a complaint arises regarding services or placement of homeless children and unaccompanied youth, the dispute resolution procedures as set forth in [704 KAR 007:090](http://policy.ksba.org/documentmanager.aspx?requestarticle=/kar/704/007/090.htm&requesttype=kar) shall apply.

Disputes over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment are to be appealed to the Kentucky Department of Education using the Dispute Resolution for Homeless form located at the link below:

<https://education.ky.gov/federal/progs/txc/Documents/Homeless%20Dispute%20Resolution%20Form.pdf>

The liaison shall provide a copy of the referenced form to the complainant.

Anderson County Schools shall provide services for homeless children and unaccompanied youths with disabilities as required by law.

**Children in Foster Care**

Students in foster care shall have equal access to all educational programs and services, including transportation, which all other students enjoy.

Foster children are to be immediately enrolled in a new school. The District shall collaborate with the Cabinet to ensure immediate and appropriate enrollment of the child and immediately contact the student’s previous school for relevant records. The previous school shall provide the new school records within the student information system maintained by the Kentucky Department of Education by the end of the working day on the day of receipt of a request. If a record provided to the new school is incomplete, the previous school shall provide the completed record within three (3) working days of the original request. Remaining records shall be provided within ten (10) working days of the request.

The Superintendent shall appoint a Foster Care Liaison to coordinate activities relating to the District’s provision of services to children placed in foster care, including transportation services, when the District is notified by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in writing that the Cabinet has designated its foster care point of contact for the District. The Superintendent may appoint the District Foster Care Liaison prior to such notice from the Cabinet.

Children in foster care, including preschool aged children if the District offers a preschool program,shall be eligible to attend their “school of origin” unless a determination is made that it is not in the child’s best interest. Such determination will be made in collaboration with the child welfare agency. Dispute resolutions shall be handled by all agencies involved in the determination of the foster child’s placement.

When possible, a child exiting the foster care program during the school year shall be allowed to complete the school year in the school of origin.

Best Interest of the Child

Determining the best interest of the child takes into consideration the following factors, including but not limited to:

· The benefits to the child of maintaining educational stability;

· The appropriateness of the current educational setting;

· The child’s attachment and meaningful relationships with staff and peers at the current educational setting;

· The influence of the school’s climate on the child;

· The safety of the child; and

· The proximity of the placement to the school of origin, and how the length of a commute would impact the child.

Upon the determination that changing a child's school of enrollment is in the best interest of the child, the Cabinet, any applicable child-caring facility, child-placing agency, school, districts, and the child's state agency caseworker shall collaborate to ensure the immediate and appropriate enrollment of the child;

1. The child's state agency caseworker shall immediately contact the receiving district to inform the district of the pending enrollment changes.

2. The child's state agency caseworker or child-caring facility or child placing agency case manager shall either accompany the child and the foster parent to the new school to enroll the child or contact applicable staff at the new school via telephone during the day of enrollment, to assist with the enrollment, to share information relating to the child's unique needs and prior experiences that may impact their education, and to identify and prevent disruptions in any instructional or support services that the child may have been receiving prior to that time, including but not limited to medical and behavioral health history and individual service plans.7