

**PPEP TEC HIGH SCHOOL
POLICY ON THE EDUCATION OF
HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

ADMISSION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

It is the policy of the PPEP TEC High School (PTHS) Governing Board to ensure that homeless children and youth are provided with equal access to its educational programs, have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State of Arizona and PTHS academic standards, are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless, and to establish safeguards that protect homeless students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness.

Homeless children and youth are protected under several Federal and State laws.

Federal Level

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
Title I
IDEA

State Level

A.R.S. §15-823
A.R.S. §15-824
A.R.S. §15-828
A.R.S. §15-872

I. Compliance with the Mc-Kinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

This policy complies with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, or P.L. 100-77, which ensures that each child of a homeless individual, and each homeless youth shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. Under the Act, schools are prohibited from delaying a homeless child's entry into school due to delays in obtaining school records. Rules regarding guardianship must be waived for homeless students living with foster parents or relatives other than their legal guardians.

II. Compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes

This policy also complies with Arizona Revised Statutes, A.R.S. §15-824(C) which states:

“The current residence of a homeless pupil who does not reside with the person having legal custody of the pupil, is considered to be the residence of the homeless pupil if the person having legal custody of the pupil is a resident of the United States. For the purposes of this subsection, “homeless pupil” means a pupil who has a primary residence that is:

1. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations.
2. An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized.

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3. A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.”

III. Immediate Enrollment of Homeless Children and Youth

Under this policy, PPEP TEC High School shall immediately admit students who meet the definition of “homeless” by:

- Not requiring birth certificate; and
- Not requiring proof of immunization until the fifth calendar day of enrollment as defined in A.R.S. §15-872(H).

Furthermore, records will immediately be requested from the previous school by the PPEP TEC High School Student Records Department.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

I. Homeless Children and Youths – Who are they?

The term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes children and youths who:

- are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- are living in emergency shelters
- are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- runaway children or children who are abandoned

Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents, or in the case of unaccompanied youth the PPEP TEC High School Homeless Liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of PTHS forms such as the *Student Residency Questionnaire* and/or through direct contact with PTHS staff.

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II. The Role of PPEP TEC High School

What homeless children need most of all is a home. But, while they are experiencing homelessness, what they need most is to remain in school. School is one of the few, stable, secure places in the lives of homeless children and youth – a place where they can acquire the skills they need to help them escape poverty.

PPEP TEC High school will not stigmatize or segregate students on the basis of their homelessness status, and will provide homeless students with a stable and safe environment conducive to learning.

Furthermore, PPEP TEC High School assures that barriers to enrollment are removed for students who are homeless including:

- A. Enrollment documentation will not be required immediately. Enrollment barriers may include:
 - Immunization requirements
 - Transportation
 - Birth certificates
 - Availability of school records
 - Guardianship requirements
 - Residency requirements
 - Physical examination records
 - Other

- B. PPEP TEC High School will continue the child in the PPEP TEC school of origin:
 - For the remainder of the academic year; or
 - In any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, for the following academic year; or
 - Transfer the student to a PPEP TEC High School site closer to the child's place of residence.

- C. PPEP TEC High School also assures that homeless students will be provided with:
 - At the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth the PPEP TEC High School Homeless Liaison or designee, transportation will be provided for homeless children/youth to and from the school of origin, school of attendance, or PPEP TEC High School site requested, for the duration of the school year.
 - Services comparable to those offered other students;

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- Integrated access to all existing programs and mechanisms available to non-homeless peers;
- Participation in educational services for which the student is eligible such as Title I, special education, gifted programs, and school nutrition programs;
- If funding is received from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the availability of tutoring or supplementary instruction linked to the achievement of the Arizona State Standards; and
- Completion of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless students and their eligibility for programs and services.

D. The PPEP TEC High School Homeless Liaison or designee shall ensure that:

- homeless children and youths are voluntarily identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- homeless children and youth enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in PPEP TEC High School.
- homeless families, children, and youth received educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services.
- the parents or guardians of a homeless child and any unaccompanied youth is informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the child/youth.
- compliance with all policies and procedures, and mediate enrollment disputes.
- the parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin or to the PPEP TEC High School selected.
- coordination of services between PTHS and other homeless family service providers.
- assistance is provided to children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations or medical records.
- students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- programs for homeless students are coordinated with other federal and local programs.

E. The PTHS Homeless Liaison may be contacted to:

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- Provide training to parents, charter staff, and agencies or services provided by the charter school;
- Arrange for direct assistance to families through referral to PPEP & Affiliates, Inc. counseling, rent/utility assistance, job placement, adult education, etc.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment for a student eligible under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

- The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. PPEP TEC High School will provide its share of the transportation to the school selected for the duration of the dispute resolution process.
- The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to PPEP TEC High School's Homeless Liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.

The Homeless Liaison shall work through the expedited dispute resolution process. For PPEP TEC High School, that process involves:

- The Homeless Liaison and the Superintendent shall work through the expedited dispute resolution process by meeting with the homeless youth, parents, or guardians; by examining all paperwork available; and by making a decision about the dispute within 5 business days.
- After a decision has been made, PPEP TEC High School shall provide the parent, guardian, or homeless youth with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment. PPEP TEC High School shall also provide written forms so that, if dissatisfied with the school's decision, the parent, guardian, or homeless youth may appeal the decision to the Arizona Department of Education: Mattie McVey, 1535 W. Jefferson Street, Bin #32, Phoenix, Arizona 85007, (602) 542-4963.

For more information or questions about the admission of homeless children and youth, please contact the PPEP TEC High School Homeless Liaison at (520) 294-6997.