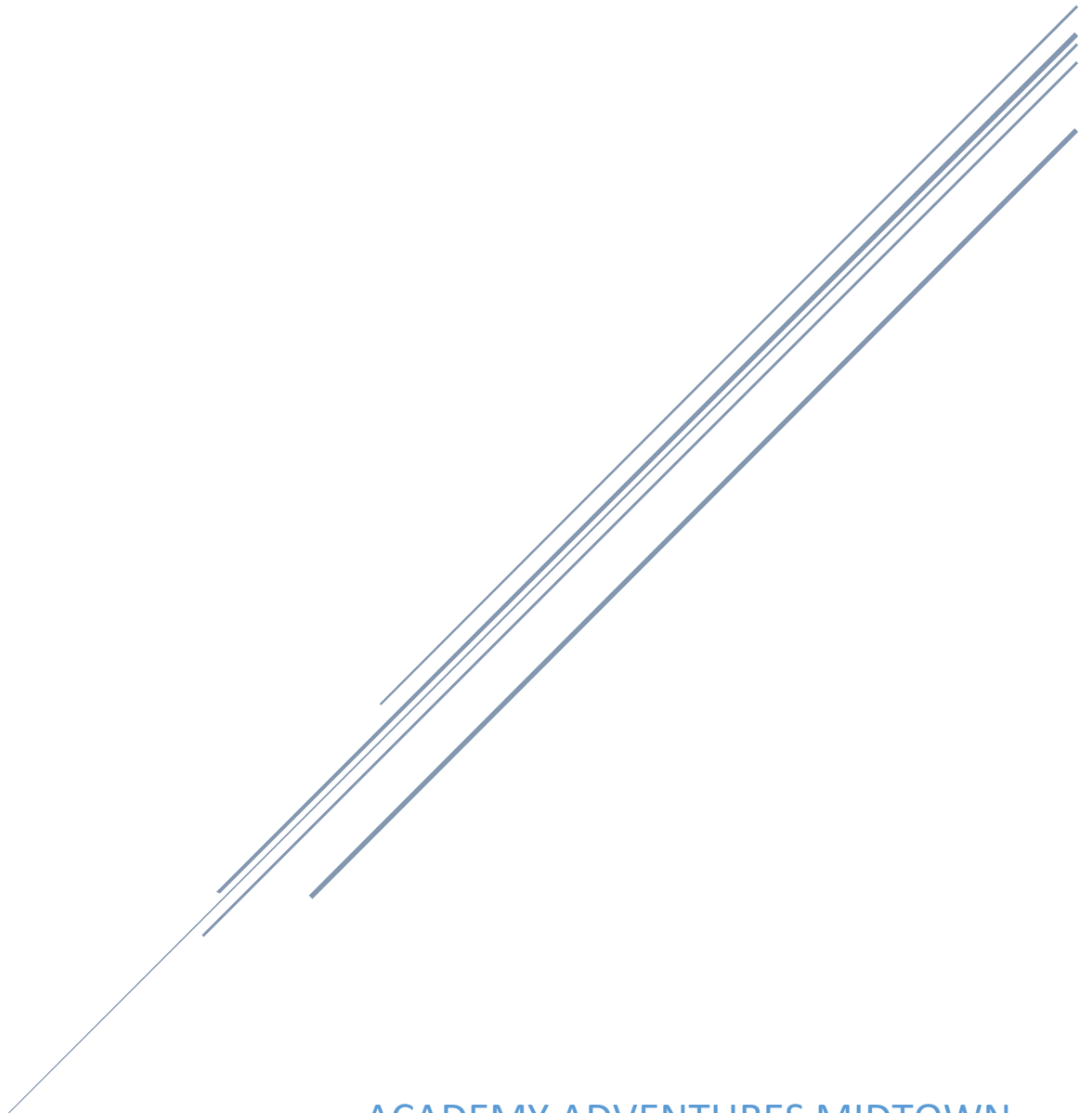


# HOMELESS POLICY & PROCEDURES



ACADEMY ADVENTURES MIDTOWN  
ED AHEAD, INC.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Homelessness exists in our community. A combination of high housing costs and poverty causes many families to lose their housing. Many young people leave their homes due to abuse, neglect and family conflict. Children and youth who have lost their housing live in a variety of places, including motels, shelters, shared residences, transitional housing programs, cars, campgrounds and other. Their lack of permanent housing can lead to potentially serious physical, emotional and mental consequences. Ed Ahead, Inc. will ensure that all children and youth receive a free, appropriate education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in our school. Ed Ahead, Inc. will also follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

It is the policy of Ed Ahead, Inc. to view children as individuals. Therefore, this policy will not refer to children as homeless; it will instead use the term children and youth in transition. Under federal law, children and youth in transition must have access to appropriate public education, including pre-school, and be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Academy Adventures Midtown will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment.

Information regarding this policy will be distributed to all parents upon enrollment and once during the school year. Information will also be provided to a parent who seeks to withdraw their child from school. Posters will also be distributed twice a year in the surrounding neighborhood.

## **DEFINITIONS**

***Children and youth in transition*** means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for free public education, including pre-school, and who lack fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting.
- Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

A child or youth shall be considered to be in transition for as long as he/she is in a living situation described above.

***Unaccompanied youth*** means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above. The more general the term *youth* also includes unaccompanied youth.

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

***Immediate*** means without delay.

***Parent*** means a person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

***School of origin*** means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

***Liaison*** is the staff person designated by our LEA as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Act.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the district, both in and out of school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth in transition, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison. Community partners in identification may include the following: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other social service agencies, street outreach teams, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions and legal services.

The liaison will keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the district, where they are living, their academic achievement (including performance on state and district wide assessments) and the reason for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education or school transfers.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Consistent, uninterrupted education is vital for academic achievement. Due to the realities of homelessness and mobility, students in transition may not have school enrollment documents readily available. Nonetheless, the school will immediately enroll any child or youth in transition. Enrollment will not be denied or delayed due to lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of Residency
- Transcripts/school records (enrolling school must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records. Initial placement of students whose records are not immediately available can be made based on the student's age and information gathered from the student, parent and previous schools or teachers)
- Immunization or Immunization/health/medical/physical records (if necessary, the school must refer students to the liaison to assist with obtaining immunizations and/or immunization and other health records. Health records may often be obtained from previous schools or state registries, and school or community based clinics can initiate immunizations when needed)
- Proof of Guardianship
- Birth Certificate
- Any other documentation requirements
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to school dress code
- Any factors related to student's living situation

Unaccompanied youth must also be immediately enrolled in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling or liaison.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Without appropriate transportation, a student may not be able to continue attending his/her school or origin. To avoid such forced school transfers, at a parent's request, transportation shall be provided to and from the school of origin for a child or youth in transition. Transportation shall be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school, as defined above, including during pending disputes. The liaison shall request transportation to and from the school of origin for the unaccompanied youth. The length of the commute will only be considered in determination the feasibility of placement in the school of origin based on potential harm to the student, as discussed above. Parents and unaccompanied youth must be informed of their rights to transportation before they select a school for attendance.

In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth in transition shall also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed students.

## **SERVICES**

Children and youth in transition shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school, including:

- Transportation
- Title I
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English Language Learners
- Vocational and technical educational programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs
- Before and After school programs