

707.1 WORTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING FOSTER CARE OR HOMELESSNESS

Under the McKinney-Vento Act (federal law) requires school districts to provide students experiencing homelessness or foster care with transportation to and from their school of origin, if requested by the parent, guardian, or homeless education liaison. School of origin is defined as the school the student attended before they lost their housing.

Transportation can be provided by:

- Rerouting regular school bus routes past shelter, motels and other places where students live
- Using existing routes such as those set up to serve special education programs or nonpublic schools
- Contracting with the parent or guardian of the child
- Issuing public transportation passes
- Using a taxi service
- Contracting with other districts
- Collaborating with other public agencies

Other Important Points about Transportation:

- Students have the right to enroll in a school immediately so transportation services may have to be arranged quickly.
- Students may stay in their school of origin the duration of the school year, if desired.
- Students must receive transportation services comparable to those provided other students. For example, districts providing late activity bus service for resident students must also provide this level of service for students experiencing homelessness or foster care.
- Homeless and foster care students have to follow the district policy for transportation, which includes the distance of one or two miles for those eligible for transportation.
- If a homeless or foster care student is being transported by a bus company and act in a way that is not safe to the bus driver or students, the consequences of discipline should match the District/Bus safety policy. A homeless student must follow the same policy as the rest of the students regarding safety. If their behavior is not safe, then they are to be treated the same and school r bus staff may treat them with the same consequences as not being allowed to be on the bus for a period of time.

Homeless and foster care students adhere to the district policy regarding the eligibility of transportation due to living one or two miles from the school. If a student becomes homeless and lives under the eligible transportation distance for the school, they would follow the same policy as the rest of the students.

Note: The District 518 transportation policy will be the guiding principal for consideration of transportation of homeless and foster care students. Adjustments to existing routes will be made to accommodate students attending District 518. Those living outside district boundaries will be addressed on a case by case basis for potential transportation to and from school.

Homeless or Foster Care:

Please email the MARSS Coordinator about homeless situations. Please include specific information about the family to help determine homeless status and reason including location of address where they are living.

Examples: evicted, fire burned home, living in a car, motel, etc.

The MARSS Coordinator will determine if the family is homeless and then will email food service and the district receptionist about transportation.

If transportation needs to be set up, the MARSS coordinator will contact the bus companies to set up transportation. That information will be communicated back to the building secretary and the social worker.

The student is marked Homeless in Campus and the code of:

- D: Double Up
- H: Hotel / Motel
- S: Sheltered
- U: Unsheltered

Address Change that affects Transportation:

There is a designee in each building who handles the transportation codes in Campus for the district in most schools. For those schools, please notify:

1. If a start date is changed, as Campus puts a transportation start date behind the scenes. The district receptionist will have to match up the transportation start date with the enrollment start date.
2. Please notify the district receptionist if an address change is more than one week.

SAFE AT HOME: USE PRIVATE FLAGS:

Safe at Home is an address confidentiality program to help families that fear for their safety that are residents of Minnesota. People in Safe at Home are assigned a Post Office Box address that they can legally use as their actual address for all of the interactions with others. For transportation purposes, a Safe at Home participant family cannot be required to disclose their real address. This is a change due to 2013 legislation. A district may ask for an intersection near the family's home or address to fulfill the transportation request made by the parent. This intersection or address should only be available to key personnel – a bus driver for example, to perform their jobs. This information is considered private and should be safeguarded. By law, a district cannot refuse transportation for a student if the family's real address is not disclosed.

Intersection location information is a legal and more appropriate approach for providing transportation services to a Safe at Home family. More than likely, when the program participant provides the intersection information for student transportation, they will also provide a form prescribed by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State indicating laws the party receiving the notice must follow. This form will also indicate possible criminal and/or civil consequences if prohibited disclosures of information are made. View the Safe at Home website for more information.

The PO Box is from St. Paul. Mail is then diverted to another address from St. Paul. Families in this situation are NOT St. Paul residents. They are a resident of the district where they live. The PO Box is just a mailing address.

- Families addresses should be marked with private household flags in Campus
- Train staff and substitutes at your site to watch for private flags and respect that information
- Be respectful of this situation in all areas

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