

Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS)

Notice of Rights of Homeless Students

The Board of Education of the City of Chicago (Board) shall provide an educational environment that treats all students attending the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) with dignity and respect. Every student in a temporary living situation shall have equal access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are permanently housed. This commitment to the educational rights of students in a temporary living situation, youth, and youth not living with a parent or guardian, applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available by the Board.

A student is considered to be in a temporary living situation if he or she lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
- living in a motel/hotel, trailer park or camping ground, due to lack of alternative, adequate housing;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- awaiting DCFS foster care placement
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; and
- migratory children living in one of the above settings.
- youth not in the custody of a parent/guardian (unaccompanied youth) of any age, in one of the above settings.

All STLS Students Have Rights To:

- **Immediate school enrollment.** *A school must immediately enroll students even if they lack health, immunization or school records, proof of guardianship, or proof of residence. "Enrollment" means enrolled into the school, attending classes and participating fully in school activities.*
- **Enroll In:**
 - the school he/she attended when permanently housed or the school in which he/she was last enrolled (school of origin)
 - any school that permanently housed students living in the same attendance area in which the STLS student or youth is actually living are eligible to attend (attendance area school)
- **Remain** enrolled in his/her selected school for as long as he/she remains in a temporary living situation or, if the student becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year.
- **Enroll in** preschool
- **Access** to charter schools, selective enrollment schools, magnet schools, and all other CPS programs in the same manner as students who are permanently housed and assistance with application process will be provided upon request
- **Participate** in tutoring services beyond those provided to all students; school-related activities; and/or receive other support services
- **Receive** free school meals, fee waivers, free uniforms, and low-cost or free medical referrals
- **Transportation services:** If parents/caregivers choose to continue their child's education in the school of origin, CPS will provide transportation to and from the school of origin, and all school-related activities, for as long as the student is in a temporary living situation or, if the student becomes permanently housed, until the end of the academic year.
 - **Eligible students receive CTA transportation cards and adult caregivers of eligible students in grades PK-6 receive CTA transportation cards to accompany the student to/from school. Eligible students in grades PK-6 whose caregiver is unable to accompany them on public transportation due to a hardship may apply for yellow school bus service by submitting documentation or affidavit of their inability to transport the student.** Examples of a "hardship" situation are:
 - Parent/caregiver employment, job training, or education program
 - Parent's/caregiver's mental and/or physical disability
 - Children need to be transported to and from schools at different locations
 - Court order, DCFS, or DCFS contract agent requires activities that do not enable parent/guardian to transport children to and from school
 - Rules of shelter or similar facility will not permit parent/caregiver to leave to transport children to and from school
 - Other good cause why parent/caregiver cannot use public transportation to transport children to and from school

Students who temporarily reside outside of Chicago due to homelessness and attend their CPS school of origin receive transportation assistance as do students experiencing homelessness who live in the City of Chicago but attend a school of origin outside of CPS.

Dispute Resolution: When a school official denies a student in a temporary living situation enrollment or transportation to the school of origin, the parent or student may file a complaint with the CPS STLS Department. The STLS Department will attempt to resolve the dispute in a timely manner. The STLS Department will refer you to free and low-cost legal services to help you, if you wish. During the dispute, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school with participation in school activities and/or provided transportation to the school of origin until the dispute is resolved. Every Chicago Public School, including charter schools, has an STLS Liaison who will assist you in making enrollment decisions, provide notice of the dispute resolution process, if needed assist you in completing the dispute resolution forms and refer you to low-cost legal assistance.

If you have questions about enrollment in school, or want more information about the rights of STLS students in Chicago Public Schools, call the STLS program at (773) 553-2242, fax at (773)553-2182 or email at STLSInformation@cps.edu.