

Policy 0530-10

K-12 Guidance and Counseling Programs

West Ada School District will provide a K-12 School Counseling Program that serves students at each elementary, middle, and high school. The K-12 School Counseling Program will include the following components:

- A classroom instructional component that provides appropriate information and activities to assist students in their achievement. School counselors assist with training building staff and facilitating school-wide social emotional learning programs which serve all students.
- An individual planning component that assists students in their personal/social, educational, and career development. Included within this component is a requirement that all students will maintain a parent- approved student learning plan for their high school and post-high school options. Any parent not wanting a plan developed for their child will need to submit a written request to the building principal.
- A responsive services component that provides immediate assistance to students in need of crisis intervention, individual short-term counseling, and/or community referral services for long-term support. School counselors may also facilitate student support groups to assist students with academic and social emotional success.
- A system support component that consists of management activities which establish, maintain, and enhance the effective delivery of school counseling services.

Homeless Students

In compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by ESSA of 2015, and Idaho Code 33-1404, West Ada School District Board of Trustees has established the following policy to ensure that homeless children and youth receive a free appropriate public education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school. West Ada School District, in compliance with state and federal law and regulations, will provide an atmosphere in which students are not segregated or discriminated against on the basis of their homelessness.

DEFINITIONS

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes:

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- 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 liaison” is the staff member designated by the superintendent as the person responsible for carrying out the duties of the local homeless education liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. “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.

SCHOOL SELECTION

Each child and youth in transition has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend any school that houses students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living. Therefore, in selecting a school, homeless children and youth will remain at their schools of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent or youth’s wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing during the summer. Services that are required to be provided, including transportation to and from the school of origin and services under federal and other programs, will not be considered in determining feasibility.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunizations or immunization/health/medical/physical records
- Proof of guardianship

- Birth certificate
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of clothing that conforms to dress code
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

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

TRANSPORTATION

Parents and unaccompanied youth will be informed of this right to transportation before they select a school for attendance. At a parent's or unaccompanied youth's request, transportation will be provided to and from the school of origin for a homeless child or youth. Transportation will be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school, as defined above, including during pending disputes. It is this district's policy that inter-district disputes will not result in a homeless student missing school. If such a dispute arises, the West Ada School District will arrange transportation and immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Idaho State Department of Education Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, homeless children and youth will also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed West Ada School District students.

SERVICES

Homeless children and youth will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the selected school, including:

- Transportation
- Title I, Part A services - Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, regardless of what school they attend
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- Before- and after-school programs
- Pre-School
- Free meals - On the day a homeless child or youth enrolls or is identified in school, the school of origin shall submit the student's name to the district Homeless Liaison for immediate processing.

ATTENDANCE

When applying any district policy regarding tardiness or absences, any tardiness or absence related to a child or youth's living situation will be excused.

DISPUTES

If there is a dispute regarding the educational placement of a homeless student, or if a school or school district/LEA denies a child, youth, or unaccompanied youth homeless status, then a written notice of explanation of such decision shall be promptly provided to the parent/guardian of the child, or to the youth, if unaccompanied by a parent/guardian. Such notice shall be in language the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth can understand, shall include a description of how to dispute the decision, and shall include a summary of the dispute resolution process.

In addition, the West Ada School District shall promptly refer the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth to the homeless liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process within ten (10) business days. The parent/guardian shall be referred to the homeless liaison who shall advise the parent/guardian of the child's rights, assist in and carry out the dispute resolution process. With respect to unaccompanied youth, the liaison shall ensure the same access to the dispute resolution process.

During the pendency of the dispute resolution process, the child, youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be immediately enrolled or continue enrollment in the school of choice (school of origin or local attendance area). Enrollment shall include all educational services for which the student is eligible, such as attending classes and full participation by such student in all school activities.

If agreement cannot be reached between the parties regarding the educational placement or enrollment status of the student, then the West Ada School District shall promptly seek further assistance from the State Coordinator of Homeless Education to review and determine within ten (10) business days how the student's best interests will be served. All interested parties will be expeditiously informed of the State's determination in writing. The decision of the State Department of Education shall constitute final resolution.

TRAINING AND INFORMATION

The district's Homeless Liaison will coordinate training for district staff regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requirements. Information regarding this policy, including the educational rights of homeless children and youth will be posted in every school in the district, as well as other places where children, youth, and families in transition receive governmental and community services.

Married Students

Married students must obey the same rules and regulations that apply to other students, especially attendance. Special privilege to work or to attend to home responsibilities will not be granted.

Pregnant Students

Generally, pregnant students will be encouraged to stay in school as close to the birth date of their child as they feel comfortable. Students are offered support based on individual needs. Support groups and individual counseling are available. Students are encouraged to return as soon after the birth as possible.

Students are required to do the regular classroom assignments or equivalent make-up work in order to retain grades and credit.

Suicide Prevention

The West Ada School District Board of Trustees strives to provide a learning environment that is safe, supportive, healthy, and respectful. Communication and cooperation between the school and home environments are critical steps toward suicide prevention and intervention.

In accordance with Idaho Code 33-512B neither the school district nor a school employee has a duty to warn a parent or protective agency of suicidal tendencies absent the district's or employee's knowledge of direct evidence of such suicidal tendencies. However, the district's administrative personnel and counseling personnel may provide help, guidance and referrals for mental health services at no cost to the district when such administrative and/or counseling personnel have knowledge that a student exhibits signs of potential self-harm.

The Superintendent of the West Ada School District will designate district staff member(s) who will be responsible to draft and implement procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as necessary based on requirements of state law. Procedures will include, but are not limited to the following:

PREVENTION

1. Staff Professional Development: All staff employed by the district are required to participate in annual staff training regarding youth suicide prevention including information about risk factors, warning signs, and response procedures.
2. Youth Suicide Prevention Programming: Developmentally appropriate, student-centered education materials on suicide prevention will be integrated into the curriculum of health classes as it aligns with Idaho State Health Content

Standards. The content of these age-appropriate materials will be evidence based or research informed.

3. Community resources and referrals will be available for parents/guardians and adult students, upon inquiry, relating to suicide prevention and general mental health care.

INTERVENTION

1. Specialized Training: School counselors, social workers, school nurses, school psychologists, and building administrators are trained regarding the district's suicide prevention procedures and required documentation process, including how to facilitate a crisis interview, parental/guardian notifications and to provide community referrals to the parent/guardian of a student who has been identified by a staff person as potentially suicidal.
2. In-School Suicide Attempts: In the case of an in-school suicide attempt, the student will be provided emergency first aid. Other students will be removed from the immediate area. Based on the level of student injury, staff will contact either emergency personnel and/or the parent/guardian. School counselor, school psychologist or school nurse will provide the parent/guardian with referrals for community mental health counseling. Actions taken by school staff will be documented.
3. Out-of-School Suicide Attempts: If a staff member becomes aware of a suicide attempt by a student that is in progress in an out-of-school location, the staff member will call 911 to contact the police. After reporting the incident to the police, the staff member will inform their school administrator and the student's school counselor. The actions taken by the staff member will be documented.
4. Parental Notification and Involvement: If a certified or administrative staff member is given direct evidence of the suicidal tendencies of a student, the student's parent or guardian will be notified by the building administrator or designee. School staff will provide community mental health referrals to the parent/guardian. If school staff, in their professional capacity, believe that contacting the parent or guardian would endanger the health or well-being of the student, Child Protective Services or the local police agency will be contacted and a delay in parent or guardian notification may occur. The reasons for contacting Child Protective Services or local police agency and the delay shall be documented.
5. Re-entry Procedure: Upon notification that a student will be returning to school after a suicide attempt, the school counselor may offer to facilitate a re-entry meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and other appropriate staff. A referral to the school level 504 team may also be considered. School staff will request that the parent/guardian authorize an exchange of confidential information allowing the school staff to communicate with the student's mental health provider.

POSTVENTION (After the death of a student by suicide)

Postvention procedures will include but are not limited to:

1. Development and Implementation of an Action Plan: A trained district crisis team will be available to act in a consultation and supportive role for a building crisis team who are responding to a death of a student by suicide. The building administrator has access to a variety of documents and forms to help create an action plan to guide the school response following a student death by suicide. The action plan will follow national best practices for postvention and will include the following steps: verify the death, assess the situation, share situationally appropriate information with staff, avoid suicide contagion, and initiate support services for students and staff.
2. External Communication: West Ada Chief Information Officer or district designee will be the sole media spokesperson. Staff will refer all inquiries from the media directly to the district designated spokesperson. The spokesperson will encourage all news media to follow safe messaging guidelines.

Reference: Code of Idaho, IDAPA 08.02.03; IC Sections, 33-1212 and 33-188