**HOMELESS STUDENT POLICY**

**Section 1. General**

Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls shall ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized or segregated into other educational programs on the basis of their status as homeless. Hawthorn shall establish safeguards that protect students from discrimination on the basis of their homelessness, and Hawthorn will remove barriers that affect the enrollment and retention of homeless students.

**Section 2. Definition**

**Section 2.1** Homeless students are individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence and include the following:

1. 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 adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
4. Migratory children who meet one of the above-described characteristics.

**Section 2.2** For purposes of this policy, “school of origin” is defined as the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

**Section 3. Placement**

Hawthorn will consider the best interest of the homeless student, with parental input, in determining whether the student should be enrolled in the school of origin or a school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area are eligible to attend. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the homeless student’s best interest, the homeless student should continue enrollment in the student’s school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. If the homeless student is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian, the homeless coordinator will consider the views of the homeless student in deciding where the student will be enrolled.

Hawthorn must provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless student’s parent or guardian, or to the homeless student if unaccompanied, if Hawthorn selects a school for enrollment other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in school, the homeless student shall be immediately admitted to or permitted to remain in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The homeless student, parent or guardian shall be referred to Hawthorn’s homeless coordinator, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

**Section 4.** **Enrollment**

If Hawthorn is selected as the school of best interest, Hawthorn will immediately enroll the student, even if she is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation. However, Hawthorn may require a parent or guardian of the homeless student to submit contact information.

**Section 5. Services**

Homeless students attending Hawthorn shall be provided services and educational programs comparable to those offered to other students in the school. Transportation services may be provided for homeless students when required by law.

**Section 6. Coordinator**

The Board designates the school’s Social Worker to act as Hawthorn’s homeless coordinator. The homeless coordinator will work to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same public education as is provided for other children and youth. The homeless coordinator’s responsibilities include:

1. Identifying homeless students with school personnel and other entities and agencies with which the school coordinates activities.
2. Assisting with immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth and providing assistance with obtaining academic and medical records.
3. Making school placement decisions on the basis of the best interest of the child and the wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
4. Handling enrollment disputes.
5. Prohibiting the segregation of homeless children and youth.
6. Informing the parents or guardians of homeless students of the educational and related opportunities available to the students and providing them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students.
7. Providing /arranging transportation for students when required by law.
8. Assisting in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records.
9. Informing parents, guardians, or unaccompanied homeless youth of the educational and related opportunities available to them.
10. Disseminating public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth as appropriate; and
11. Coordinating and collaborating with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

**Section 7. Complaint Resolution**

**Add the following language in a header: Homeless children and youth have the ability to dispute enrollment, eligibility or school section.**

*Level I –* A complaint regarding placement or access to educational programs of a homeless student should first be presented orally and informally to Hawthorn’s homeless coordinator. Complaints can be brought forth by parents as well as homeless children and youth. If the complaint is not promptly resolved, the homeless student or parent/guardian may present a formal written complaint to the homeless coordinator. The written complaint should include the following: date of filing, description of complaint, the name of the person or person involved, and a description of any action taken prior to the written complaint to resolve the complaint. Within five (5) business days of receiving the complaint, the coordinator will provide the complainant with a written decision regarding the complaint.

*Level II –* Within five (5) business days after receiving the decision at Level I, the complainant may appeal the decision to the Head of School by filing a written request for appeal. The written request for appeal shall include the written complaint and written decision from Level I. The Head of School may, but is not required to, meet with the complainant at a time of mutual convenience. Within five (5) business days after receiving the written request for appeal, the Head of School will issue a decision in writing.

*Level III –* If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Level II, the complainant may file a written request for appeal to the Board of Directors. The written request for appeal must be submitted to the Head of School within five (5) business days after receiving the written decision at Level II. The Board shall conduct a hearing and, within 30 business days after receiving the written request for appeal, the Board will issue its decision in writing.

*Level IV –* If the complainant is dissatisfied with the action taken by the Board of Directors, a written notice stating the reasons for dissatisfaction may be filed with the State Homeless Coordinator, Federal Discretionary Grants, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480. An Appeal of this decision can be made within ten days to the Deputy Commissioner of Education.

*Adopted February 2, 2021*