



Tips for Bus Drivers of Students Who Are Homeless

- Children experiencing homelessness may have a history of attending many schools and erratic attendance and tardiness. They may also demonstrate hostility and anger or extremes in behavior or show signs of shyness, withdrawal, nervousness, depression, needy behavior such as attention-seeking or withdrawn behavior.
- Homeless children may have inadequate or inappropriate clothing for the weather, and resistance to parting with personal items.
- Homelessness and shelter living consists of many “unknowns.” After having settled into a shelter, a family may move without notifying transportation, the school or the Title I Homeless Home School Liaison. Some shelters provide 30 days of shelter, while some families spend the night in church basements until an opening occurs in a 30 day shelter. People living in transitional shelters may live up to two years in their homes. There are a variety of living situations and a variety of families.
- Because of shelter rules and the general mobility of homeless students, these students move frequently and bus routes change daily. Flexibility is essential.
- You may be the first contact that the student has with the SPPS. If new to your route, it may be helpful to have the student sit near you on the bus. Depending on the age of the student, they may be nervous and need some reassurance that he/she is on the right bus. Older children may indicate they are embarrassed about being identified as being homeless or riding a bus from a shelter.
- Use patience with the students. Most likely, they are meeting new challenges each day within their living situation. These students often feel they have no control over anything in their life. Every thing they do in their lives is “new” to them.
- You may be the first to learn that a student may be moving. If you are aware of this, please contact Bob or Gary and they will contact the Title I staff who can confirm or deny this information. The route will drop after 3 days of the child not riding the bus after you notify Bob or Gary.
- The Title I Homeless staff urges parents to be responsible for calling transportation or their school if the family moves. There are situations when this does not occur. We want you to know that we try our best to encourage smooth transitions.
- The Title I Homeless staff requests parents to call transportation or tell the bus driver if their children will not be riding the bus. Often, this does not occur. We encourage you to give out the transportation phone number when appropriate. The Title I staff can assist if the problem persists. Please contact Gary or Bob and they will relay the information to the Title I Homeless team and they will intervene.

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