

Recommendations

There are many things that education professionals can do in order to effectively support homeless children.

- Identify children living in temporary accommodation or bad housing by getting to know pupils as individual personalities. This can make it easier for teachers to identify changes in their behaviour or character and make any necessary concessions.
- If a child is identified as being homeless all relevant teachers and support staff should be informed.
- Provide staff-supported homework facilities both during the school day and out of school hours, including school holidays.
- Offer access to funding for transport to and from school for homeless children who have been forced to move a considerable distance away from the school.
- Provide funding for special supplies required for schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or school trips that may not otherwise be affordable.
- Introduce children to welfare staff, such as mentors or Connexions staff as they may be nervous about making contact with these people independently. It is important that education professionals have regular meetings with the child, allowing them to keep up-to-date with how the child is progressing, and to ensure there are no further problems.
- Make contact with parents for an informal chat if they have missed parents' evenings, ensuring that contact is maintained between the school and the parents.
- Include details of support that is on offer from school in any correspondence to parents of new pupils and in any information packs or prospectus.
- Where a child has been moved to a new school as a result of their housing situation, it can be beneficial to pair the child up with a 'buddy' to look after them while they settle in.
- Allow staff, including Connexions staff, the time to develop links with local organisations that may be useful for signposting children or parents to. For example, this could include developing links with a local housing advice agency or forum.
- Have designated members of staff for pastoral care who do not have teaching responsibilities.
- When providing additional help and support to a child, care must be taken to ensure that this is done in such a way as to not single them out from their peers.
- Take the time to speak to the child about their interests, and where relevant offer invitations and support which will allow the child to access after-school activities and clubs.
- Take each individual's personal situation into account when issuing sanctions, eg when a child is persistently late, as this could be because the child has been moved to temporary accommodation a substantial distance from the school.
- Keep a store of school uniform for those pupils whose parents have insufficient funds to purchase a new uniform.
- Be creative in problem solving, there doesn't always have to be a large monetary cost to solutions.

Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity

Righting housing wrongs

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