Memorandum

One question families experiencing homelessness often ask is whether their children are able to participate in athletic activities in their new school district. To maintain a sense of consistency, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) has an established set of criteria which must be followed in order to determine student eligibility. At a minimum, this will require the attention of the building level athletic director along with information from the student identified as homeless and her/his parent(s) to complete the WIAA's "Displaced/Homeless Student Eligibility" form. This form is available at http://wiaawi.org/forms/homelessstudentform.pdf. It is important that this form be completed in a timely manner

Occasionally, homelessness is caused by a series of circumstances which result in students living on their own. Children or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian - known as unaccompanied youth - may be one way in which a student asserts homeless status. In a case like this, a letter requesting a waiver needs to accompany the "Displaced/Homeless Student Eligibility" form. The athletic director may want to work with the district homeless liaison to verify that the student qualifies as being homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. This waiver request should include a detailed narrative written in chronological order explaining the reason(s) for the student's change of residency. Extenuating circumstances with corresponding documentation (e.g., police reports) or "home life betterment" situations (e.g., parent is incarcerated and the student is temporarily living with a relative or friend waiting for the parent's release) help to support the facts. Additional information might include Code of Conduct and academic issues. WIAA policies can be found at http://wiaawi.org.

Health Insurance and Sports
While the WIAA does not require a student to have health insurance in order to participate in sports, it may be prudent to obtain health coverage for homeless students. An application for BadgerCare Plus as well as other program benefits can be found at http://access.wi.gov. It may take up to 30 days for homeless families and students to receive health coverage.

Unaccompanied Children and Youth
Unaccompanied children and youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) under 19 years of age may be eligible for health care services under BadgerCare Plus. Students over 19 years of age who are disabled and/or are parents living with their children may also qualify for

BaderCare Plus benefits. For more information regarding BaderCare Plus visit
http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us.

For students <u>over</u> age 19 who are neither parents nor disabled, the homeless liaison should
contact their county's Human Service's Income Maintenance worker to determine which health
benefit programs may be available for the student. Students who were in an out -of-care
program at age 18 (e.g., foster care, Kinship Care, residential and group home placements),
should contact the foster care department of their local Human Services Agency to obtain health
care benefits.   If a health care program is unavailable, the district's general budget, booster club,
a community agency, or a kind citizen should be asked to pay for health insurance coverage for
homeless students participating in the district's athletic programs. Title I-A funds may not be
used to pay for athletic expenses since sports are not considered an academic program.

Additional information on issues regarding homelessness is available at
http://dpi.wi.gov/homeless. Please contact us if you have any questions about the information
above.

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