



# OLD FORGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

“Home of the Blue Devils”

300 Marion Street, Old Forge, PA 18518

Phone: (570) 457-6721

[www.ofsd.cc](http://www.ofsd.cc)

Erin Keating, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Brian Rinaldi  
Business Manager

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Principals, School Counselors, Secretaries, Nurses, & Homeless Service Providers

FROM: Christopher Gatto, Pupil Personnel Coordinator

DATE: September 8, 2020

SUBJECT: TITLE I AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Old Forge School District recognizes the multiplicity of challenges most homeless, displaced, and doubled-up families encounter, and understand our responsibility to resolve some of the issues they face. The District also realizes the availability of resources in any emergency may make the difference between success and failure in school. Providing the appropriate support services is essential to supporting homeless youth. All district and building level resources should be made available for youth experiencing homelessness. Additionally, homeless status should not hinder any child from full participation in extra-curricular activities and events.

The principal, or their designee, must monitor the academic and behavioral progress of all students qualifying under the EYCEH. The use of the building’s Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a means to accomplish monitoring of these children. The PDE guidelines for “What the Student Assistance Program (SAP) Professionals Can Do to Help Students Experiencing Homelessness” are listed below. Each building must provide a list of building specific resources that can assist homeless students.

Christopher J. Gatto  
High School Principal

Michelle Hopkins  
Special Education Supervisor

Shelly Egan  
Elementary Principal



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## **ADDITIONAL AREAS TO KEEP IN MIND AND REVIEW AS SAP TEAMS AND SCHOOLS ASSIST STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:**

1. If families are doubled or tripled up (living with related or un-related individuals in the same residence), be aware of the potential impact on the children who were residing in the home before others moved in.
2. Contact the parent and shelter personnel if a child is absent for three or more days to find out if assistance is needed. The parent may not be motivated or equipped to ensure regular attendance if the family is not in a supervised shelter setting.
3. Do not bring any special attention to the fact that the children is/are homeless in front of their classmates.
4. Ensure that appropriate school staff are aware of the child's situation.
5. Provide school supplies and other items they might need without undue attention.
6. Ensure that all needs and services are documented, as the child's stay in your school may be time-limited and their next school will need that information to determine appropriate placement and current needs.
7. When the student is ill and must be sent "home," remember that the place he or she is living in may not be stable or quiet. A parent may not be at home in the shelter during the day, so contact the shelter staff and/or district homeless liaison to ensure appropriate arrangements for the student.
8. Be aware that living in noisy, crowded conditions, such as those in a shelter, can result in difficulty completing homework, tuning others out, and difficulty in listening and responding to important information.
9. Avoid taking away the student's possessions as a disciplinary measure, as the item/s may be the only thing they can really call their own (e.g. hat, stuffed animal, toy).
10. Ensure that the children can participate in field trips, school-wide activities and class projects even if they do not have transportation or necessary fees.
11. Avoid using the child's recess or Physical Education period as a make-up or detention period as they may not have the opportunity for exercise in the shelter or motel where they are staying.

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12. Be aware that some classroom assignments/projects may be embarrassing and difficult for a student experiencing homelessness – activities involving a house, family, or neighborhood may be nearly impossible for the child to explain or address.

13. Be aware that involvement in fundraisers, or getting permission slips or other papers signed and returned, may also be difficult for these children.

14. Discuss privately with the student what accommodations exist for doing homework and make necessary arrangements. Tutoring and after-school programming can provide an opportunity for academic enrichment.

15. Offer emotional support and reassurance that homelessness is a temporary condition. Reassure the child that this situation is not his or her fault.

16. Always inform and involve your district’s homeless liaison of these situations.

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