

My right to shelter

Chapter 9



What supports am I entitled to if I am homeless without my family?

If you are homeless and without your parent or guardian, or if you are in crisis and need emergency care, you can contact your local social worker in **Tusla** (the Child and Family Agency).

If it is after 5pm or the weekend and the office is closed, contact your local Garda station where a member of the Gardaí will contact a social worker for you.

The social worker will assess your needs and try to find accommodation or care for you. The social worker may contact your family if it is appropriate to do so. Or, the social worker may place you in emergency homeless accommodation.

Emergency and homeless services are provided through the Crisis Intervention Service in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow and through the Emergency Place of Safety Service in the rest of the country.

There are also a number of organisations, like **Focus Ireland**, who work with young people who find themselves homeless. See chapter 10 'where can I go for help' for details.

What supports are available if I am homeless with my family?

During working hours (normally 9am -5pm, Monday to Friday) your family should go to the local authority which has a general responsibility to provide housing to adults who cannot provide it for themselves, along with those who normally live with them. They can help with accommodation by providing housing directly (social housing) or through arrangements with voluntary housing organisations and other voluntary bodies. In crisis situations, they may provide emergency accommodation, such as hotel rooms or family hubs or they may agree to pay for accommodation in a hotel or Bed and Breakfast. Outside working hours in Dublin, you can contact Dublin Regional Homeless Executive Freephone at 1800 707 707.

If you need information about available services, contact Focus Ireland on 01-671 2555 or Facebook [@focusirelandcharity](https://www.facebook.com/focusirelandcharity).



Can I choose where I am placed – can I be placed near my school, my old home or my friends?

No, unfortunately you and your family will have limited control over where you are placed. It depends where there is available accommodation. You may have to move away from your local community and go to a different school.

Can I get help with the cost of travel?

If your family are homeless in Dublin for at least one month and are living in emergency accommodation, you can access LEAP cards to cover the cost of travel to and from school. The LEAP cards are distributed by the Focus Ireland Family Home Action team, **OR** you can get it from the organisation running a family hub if you are in its family hub. Each card is loaded with €150 of credit. Cards are not reloaded with credit but are replaced with new cards with new credit.

There is no LEAP card programme outside of the Dublin region. If you and your family require additional support in order to fund travel to school from emergency homeless accommodation, you can apply to the Community Welfare Service for an Exceptional Needs Payment.

Do I have to tell my school that I am homeless?

No, you do not have to tell the school that you are homeless, but your parents or guardian may want to inform them that you have changed address so that they can receive documents or letters. Sometimes it can help to talk to a teacher or let others in school know what you are going through, but that is your choice.

Does my school have to make allowances for me if I am homeless?

There is no official guidance for schools on how to deal with children who are experiencing homelessness. Many schools try to make allowances if they know you are homeless. They might:

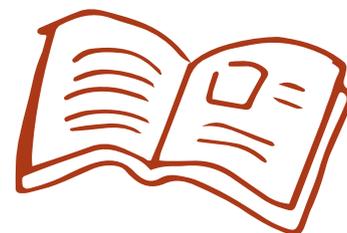
- look at how they can support you with homework
- allow you to leave books in the school rather than carry them back to your accommodation
- allow you to catch up on missed sleep
- support you with school supplies.

This depends on the school and the resources that they have.

Are there school supports I can access if I am homeless?

If you go to a school that is in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme, you can ask about accessing supports like the Home School Community Liaison Officers. Some schools may also have funding to help with school costs.

Some schools run breakfast clubs, or they are part of the School Meals Programme so might have lunches. This might be helpful if you have to leave your emergency accommodation before you have a chance to eat breakfast.



What supports can I access if I want to talk about my situation?

Childline offer a wide range of support and are available at any time to contact by:

- free phone 1800 66 66 66
- free texting 50101
- live messaging them on their [website](#).

Chapter 3 gives advice on where children can access support and information about their mental health.

For parents and guardians

Can I get extra help with childcare?

Parents who are homeless and have children under the age of five can get free childcare for 25 hours a week. This includes 15 hours of free pre-school where children are eligible. It also includes a daily meal.

Parents should not be asked to pay any top-up or co-payment for these part-time hours. For more information, contact your local [city or county childcare committee](#).

