



Orange County Department of Education McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Overview: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act No Child Left Behind

All school-aged homeless children are entitled to the same free and appropriate public education that is provided to non-homeless students. Schools are required to remove barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless students.

Federal Education Definition of Homeless

A student between the ages of 0 and 22*, who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

- A. has a primary nighttime residence that is a shelter designated to provide temporary living accommodations such as shelters, motels/hotels, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing.
- B. lives in a car, park, abandoned building, public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- C. lives temporarily in a trailer park or camping area due to the lack of adequate living accommodations.
- D. lives "doubled-up" with another family, due to loss of housing, stemming from financial problems.
- E. is abandoned at a hospital.
- F. resides in a home for school-aged, unwed mother or mother-to-be, if there are no other available living accommodations.
- G. is awaiting foster care in limited circumstances but does not include placement in a foster family, foster family agency or group home.
- H. is placed by the state in an emergency shelter due to lack of alternative housing.
- I. is an abandoned, runaway or pushed out youth or migratory child living in any of the circumstances described above.

*Extended beyond compulsory attendance age to address the needs of preschool, early head-start, and student with special education needs.

School Selection / Student Rights

- ◆ Homeless student can attend the last school of enrollment, if feasible, *OR* Homeless student can attend the school in the area where the family is temporarily residing
- ◆ Student can remain at selected school site throughout the duration of homelessness. The school site is considered the school of origin.
- ◆ If the family gains permanent housing, the student can remain at the current school for the duration of that academic year.
- ◆ Homeless students who are not attending their school of residence do not have the right to attend the next matriculating school. The student must attend the school in the area in which he/she is temporarily residing.

Enrollment

Schools must immediately enroll homeless students, regardless of the lack of:

- ◆ Academic Records
- ◆ Medical Records
- ◆ Proof of Residence
- ◆ Immunization Records

The enrolling school shall immediately contact the last school of attendance to obtain missing records.

Enrollment Documentation

May include, but is not limited to:

- ◆ **Standard Enrollment Forms**
- ◆ **Night-time Residency Questionnaire:** Must be included in Enrollment Packet to allow parents to self-identify.
- ◆ Should be distributed to all students annually to identify students that became homeless after enrollment.
- ◆ **Free/Reduced Lunch Application:** Homeless Student is automatically eligible. No income verification required.
- ◆ **Caregiver Authorization Affidavit:** Use when a caregiver other than the parent is enrolling a student.
- ◆ **Affidavits:** Per district policies. Examples of use: temporary residence, proof of age of minor, etc.
- ◆ **Dispute Resolution Form and Written Notification of Enrollment Decision:** Enroll student immediately, pending resolution of the dispute. Provide these forms and information to the parent per your district policy.

McKinney-Vento School District Responsibilities

Areas of Responsibility	Activities and Responsibilities to Support Compliance
Ensure access to school and appropriate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Designate a contact person as a liaison for homeless children and youth, ensuring that homeless children are identified, enrolled, and receive equitable access to high-quality education and support services. ◆ Review and revise policies that may impede homeless students' access to school. ◆ Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth, increasing awareness of homeless children's educational rights. ◆ Ensure identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness. ◆ Immediately enroll homeless children and youth, eliminating delays caused by lack of records, permanent address, immunization, and/or other enrollment requirements. ◆ Enrollment means attending and fully participating in the academic program. ◆ Ensure that homeless children are not segregated or stigmatized because of their homelessness.
Reduce school transfers and enhance educational stability and continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Keep children in their school of origin to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of parents/guardians. ◆ Ensure the right to attend school of origin extends for the entire duration of homelessness and that children who become housed during the academic year may continue their education in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.
Strengthen parental choice and involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure homeless parents are fully informed of the enrollment options and educational opportunities available to their children. ◆ Provide written explanation to parents should disputes arise over school selection or school enrollment and refer parents to liaisons to mediate such disputes. ◆ Provide homeless parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
Ensure educational rights of unaccompanied youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Immediately enroll unaccompanied youth. ◆ Maintain unaccompanied youth in school of origin to the extent feasible, unless this is against the youth's wishes. ◆ Immediately enroll youth in the school to which they seek enrollment pending resolution of any disputes regarding such placement. ◆ When applying for McKinney-Vento funding, include an assessment of the needs of unaccompanied youth in the application.
Ensure access to public preschool programs for young homeless children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Inform preschools operated by the SEA or LEA of McKinney-Vento Act provisions related to young homeless children. ◆ Develop policies and strategies to facilitate the enrollment of young homeless children in preschool program.