

North Tippah School District

Homeless Student Information



Revised June 2021

Enrolling Homeless Students

Enrolling homeless students is a core concept in the McKinney-Vento Act as the law's purpose is to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education. The term *enrollment* is a critical part of the law and is defined as, "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1)]. Schools are required to enroll homeless students immediately, even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines while experiencing homelessness and regardless of what point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

In addition to enrolling students in the general education program, local liaisons are to ensure that homeless students receive educational and related services for which the families and students are eligible. As a result, homeless students should be enrolled in any program operated by the school that is appropriate for the student's needs, such as the school meals program, services through Title I, Part A, school transportation, and preschool programs administered by the local educational agency. It is important to note that homeless students are eligible for Title I Part A services even if they are not attending a Title I school [20 U.S.C. § 6315(c)(2)(E)]. Local liaisons also must ensure access to community-based programs such as Head Start (including Early Head Start), other public preschool programs, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.), and healthcare, dental, mental health and substance abuse services, and housing services that facilitate school attendance or success. It is appropriate to provide these referrals at the time of enrollment. (See Chapter 7 Transportation for more information and Chapter 16 Related Legislation and Guidance for more information on other school services.) Also, students must be enrolled immediately.

Documents Required for Enrollment

Students experiencing homelessness often do not have documents or records that are typically required for school enrollment. The McKinney-Vento Act recognizes that students often do not have the usual documentation at the time of enrollment and requires schools to enroll homeless students even if they do not have paperwork normally required. Liaisons or other appointed staff should follow up with the family and assist them with obtaining school, immunization, or health records needed by the school.

Districts should review and revise enrollment policies to allow for reasonable flexibility regarding enrollment documentation. For example, districts often require "reasonable proof of date of birth" at the time of enrollment. While a birth certificate would obviously meet this need, other options could include medical records that include a date of birth, baptismal records, passports, or other government issued documentation. Additionally, the limited resources of homeless families can make it especially difficult for parents or guardians to make unplanned visits to the school, especially if it requires them to miss work. As a result, to the extent possible, schools should gather all necessary documents, complete required forms, and make appropriate referrals at the time of the initial visit to the school for enrollment.

Identifying and Serving Homeless Students

1. The McKinney-Vento definition of homeless children
 - a. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 seeks to ensure that homeless students have access to the same public education they would receive if they were not homeless
 - b. Districts are charged with ensuring that a child's homelessness causes no interruption in his education, that he be provided with whatever services or supplies he needs to fully participate in his school's academic program
 - c. Homeless children and unaccompanied youth are those who "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."
 - i. Families Sharing Housing (doubled up) with relatives or other families due to economic hardship.
 - ii. Families living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, or shelters.
 - iii. Children abandoned in hospitals, or awaiting foster care placement.
 - iv. Children living in places not designated for housing, such as cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus or train stations
 - v. Children designated as "migratory" who meet one of the above criteria
 - d. All school districts must designate a liaison for homeless children and unaccompanied youth who will
 - i. assist homeless students and families in enrolling in school and obtaining required immunizations or other medical records
 - ii. make sure parents and school personnel are aware of the rights of homeless children and unaccompanied youth
 - iii. ensure that students are immediately enrolled pending resolution of enrollment disputes
 - iv. coordinate transportation
 - v. coordinate all stakeholders responsible for providing education and related support services
2. Enrollment Requirements
 - a. McKinney-Vento requires immediate enrollment even if a student lacks documentation normally required for enrollment, such as records from his previous school, vaccination or other medical records, or proof of residency
 - b. The school is required to contact the student's previous school to obtain school records
 - c. The school is required to refer the student's parents for assistance in obtaining needed medical records or services
 - d. In the case of a dispute, the student must be enrolled until the dispute is resolved
 - e. The student's parents must be notified, in writing of their right to appeal an enrollment decision
 - f. Unaccompanied homeless youth must be enrolled immediately and referred to the homeless liaison for assistance
 - g. If it is determined that it is in a child's best interest, and it is feasible, to continue his education at the school of origin, a district must provide a homeless students transportation to and from his school of origin.
3. Students experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible to receive Title I services
4. Students experiencing homelessness are to have access to all school programs
5. District are prohibited from segregating and / or stigmatizing students who are experiencing homelessness

Steps toward identification of Homeless Students

1. Know the signs:
 - a. Attendance at many schools
 - b. Lack of continuity in education
 - c. Lack of immunization records
 - d. Chronic hunger or fatigue
 - e. Erratic attendance and tardiness
 - f. Inability to contact parents
 - g. Poor Hygiene
 - h. Lack of basic school supplies or ability to complete after school projects
 - i. A marked change in behavior
 - j. Poor self-esteem or extreme shyness
 - k. Aggression
 - l. "Old" beyond years
 - m. Protective of parents
 - n. Anxiety late in the school day
 - o. Parents
 - i. May exhibit anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
 - ii. Mention of staying with grandparents, or other relatives, friends, or in a motel
 - iii. Comments like "We are staying with relatives until we get settled"
2. Common reasons for homelessness in Tippah County:
 - a. Fire
 - b. Eviction due to loss of job
 - c. Parent(s) in jail
 - d. Teen moves out because of disagreements with parents or abuse
3. If you suspect that a child in your care has become or may soon become homeless, email the school counselor, the school nurse and the district homeless liaison (Karen Walden). In the email, give the child's name, grade and why you feel that they child may be homeless.
4. Counselors: Talk to the child first and as soon as possible talk to the parent. Use the homeless identification worksheet. Try to be discreet in your questioning to avoid embarrassment.
5. Counselors: If you determine that a child is experiencing homelessness:
 - a. Ask your MSIS contact to mark the "At Risk" tab labeled homeless
 - b. Contact the school nurse
 - c. Contact the Homeless Liaison
6. The homeless liaison will:
 - a. Ensure that the student is enrolled
 - b. Ensure that the student's education is not interrupted by district policy
 - c. Ensure that the student is enrolled in tutoring services and after school programs as needed
 - d. Supply the parents with a list of community services that may be helpful
 - e. Supply the students with any basic school and hygiene supplies that are needed
7. Title I funds are allowable if the expenditure is directly related to assistance needed for a student to participate fully in the ACADEMIC (not extracurricular) life of his school.
8. Prohibited: Homeless student's living expenses, driver's licensing fee, extracurricular fees, sports equipment, etc.

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Suspicion of Homelessness

Name of Student: _____ Grade _____ School _____

Name of person filling out form _____ Date _____

Position (teacher, nurse, librarian, etc.) _____

Please explain in the space below why you suspect that this student is or is becoming homeless:

Give form to the Counselor or Principal at your school

Signature of Counselor or Principal

Date

Fax a copy of this form to Karen Walden at 662-837-8455

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Determination of Homelessness

Name of Student _____ Date _____

School _____ Name of Interviewer _____

Adult being interviewed _____ Relationship to the student _____

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youths as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

Fixed – A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change

1. Is this a permanent arrangement or just temporary? _____
2. Are you looking for another place to live? _____
3. Why are you staying in your current place? _____
4. Where were you living right before this place? _____
5. Why did you leave _____
6. Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are? _____
7. Are you staying with friends / relatives just for a little while? _____
8. Did you and your friends / relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term? _____
9. Or is this a temporary situation for you? _____
10. Could your friends / relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to? _____
11. Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home? _____

Regular – A regular residence is one that is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis

1. Do you stay in the same place every night? _____
2. Do you have a key to the place where you are living? _____
3. Do you move around a lot? _____
4. How long have you been at the place you are living in now? _____
5. How long do you plan to stay? _____
6. How long did you live in your last place? _____

Adequate – An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

- 1. How many people are living in the home? _____
- 2. How many bedrooms / bathrooms does it have? _____
- 3. Are you and your children sharing a room? _____
- 4. How many people are staying in one room? _____
- 5. Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom, or public area? _____
- 6. Does the home have heat? _____ Electricity? _____ running water? _____
- 7. What condition is the home in? _____ Does it keep out rain and wind? _____ Is it safe? _____
_____ Is it warm and dry? _____ Do the windows have glass panes? _____
- 8. Can you come and go as you please?

Notes:

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Initial Homeless Form

School _____ Counselor _____

Student's First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Grade _____ MSIS Number _____

Date that student was enrolled in MSIS as homeless _____ by _____

Give a brief description of the student's situation: _____

Services Provided	Au	Se	Oc	No	De	Ja	Fe	Ma	Ap	Ma
Addressing needs related to domestic violence										
Assistance with participation in school programs										
Before, after-school, mentoring, summer programs										
Clothing to meet a school requirement										
Coordination between schools and agencies										
Counseling										
Early Childhood Programs										
Emergency assistance related to school attendance										
Expedited evaluations										
Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment										
Parent education related to rights and resources for children										
Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services										
Referral to other programs and services										
School supplies										
Staff professional development and awareness										
Transportation										
Tutoring or other instructional support										

Comments:



NORTH TIPPAH SCHOOL DISTRICT



S. JOHNSON SMITH, SUPERINTENDENT
20821 Hwy 15 Falkner, MS 38629
Phone: 662-837-8450 Fax: 662-837-8455

7. Transportation of a Homeless Student:

If it is deemed necessary for North Tippah School District to provide transportation, the building level principal, Transportation Director and the Homeless Liaison will meet to determine the mode of transportation according to the student’s best interest.

Building Level Principal: _____

Transportation Director: _____

Homeless Liaison: _____

Key Transportation Contact:

Building Level Principal or District Transportation Director (If applicable) and Homeless Liaison

The mode of transportation for homeless and other highly mobile students is determined by the student’s best interest.

Building Level Principal’s Role

1. Provide Transportation Director and Homeless Liaison with information about the transportation needs and pickup location of homeless students.
2. Provide Transportation Director and Homeless Liaison with the name of each homeless student’s grade placement, contact information, and classroom teacher’s name.

Building Level Principal’s/Transportation Director’s Role

1. Communicate regularly with the district homeless liaison and principals of schools which serve homeless students.
2. Establish procedures to receive information about the transportation needs and pickup location of homeless students.
3. Train bus drivers on the rights and needs of homeless students, as well as on the need for sensitivity and confidentiality.
4. Develop a bus routing system that can respond flexibly and quickly to new “pickups.”
5. Work with parents or guardians to arrange for transportation that is in the student’s best interest, including transportation to and from the school or origin, if necessary.