

Protocol for Enrolling Unaccompanied Youth in School

1. Enroll unaccompanied youth immediately, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act.
2. Contact your school district McKinney-Vento liaison to inquire about available services and support and to ensure the youth is appropriately entered into the district data system.
3. Welcome the youth to the school:
 - Inform the youth of classes, programs and activities available.
 - Provide a school tour.
 - Offer a peer and adult mentor.
 - Give the youth the opportunity to connect with the school counselor or school resource officer for support.
 - Inform the youth of his/her eligibility for free school meals and other McKinney-Vento services.
4. There is no automatic duty to report the youth to parents, law enforcement or CPS.
5. After enrollment, check with the state missing children clearinghouse or the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (missingkids.com or 1-800-THE-LOST).
 - If the youth has been reported missing, a school counselor or other appropriate adult should speak with the student to get more information about the youth's safety, home situation and possible repercussions of returning the youth home. The school should contact the school resource officer, if available. Schools without a resource officer should contact local law enforcement.
6. If you receive a request for records that have been flagged as a missing child, or you receive flagged records from another school, contact law enforcement immediately.
7. If you are contacted by the student's parent or legal guardian:
 - Confirm the parent's or legal guardian's identity.
 - Share information with parents and legal guardians, unless you have a court order to the contrary or the youth has alleged abuse (in which case contact Child Protective Services and refer the parent or guardian to that agency).
 - In cases of family conflict or dysfunction, refer the student and parent to the school counselor, school social worker, local youth-serving agencies or community family mediation resources.
8. If you have reason to suspect child abuse that triggers your duty as a mandated reporter, contact Child Protective Services.
 - All mandated reporters working with unaccompanied youth should tell them up front that they are mandatory reporters, so youth can choose what information to share. Many youth fear the involvement of child welfare services due to past negative experiences with the system, loyalty to parents, or concern for siblings still at home.