



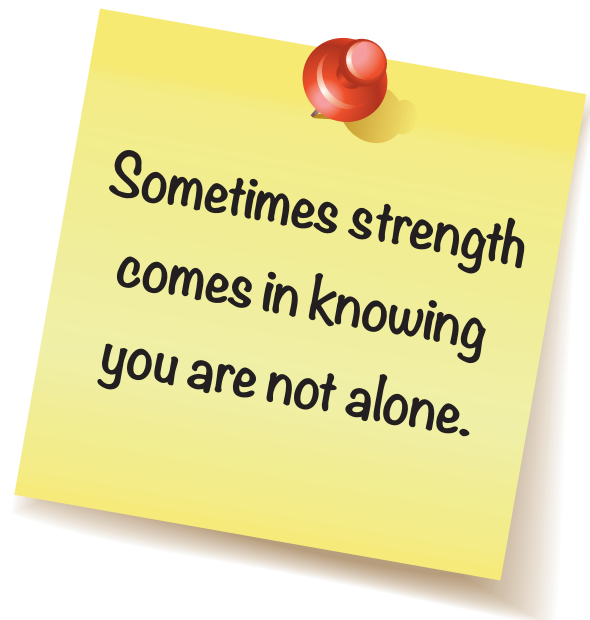
## TIPS FOR STUDENTS IN HOMELESS SITUATIONS

### YOUTH BECOME HOMELESS FOR MANY REASONS:

- Experiencing financial hardship
- Being kicked out of their homes
- Running away
- Sexual orientation
- Aging out of foster care
- Being abandoned or neglected
- Being Abused
- Substance abuse
- Experiencing the death of a family member or guardian

### IF YOU ARE A HOMELESS YOUTH, OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS, HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- You don't need to feel guilty or ashamed. Whatever happened to put you in this situation was out of your control and you are not to blame.
- There are people who care. Tell a trusted adult, such as a teacher, pastor, school liaison, principal, or counselor, about your situation. Let an authority figure know you are homeless. They will help to get you the support you need.
- **Help is available.** In your school community there are places and programs that help homeless youth stay in school, obtain services like access to food, showers, and medical care, and provide shelter and a safe place to sleep. For support and information about local and school resources, please contact the **Dallas ISD Homeless Education Program** at **972-749-5750** or email at [homelesseducation@dallasisd.org](mailto:homelesseducation@dallasisd.org). You can also visit the **HEP** webpage at: <https://www.dallasisd.org/Domain/109>.
- If you are a homeless youth in need of immediate safety, contact your local Safe Place program: use TXT 4 HELP, text the word "safe" and your current location (city/state/zip) to 4HELP (44357). Within seconds, you will receive a message with the closest Safe Place site and phone number for the local youth agency. You will also have the option to text interactively with a professional for more help. It's quick, easy, safe and confidential. Or, if you are in immediate danger, dial 911. Remember, you are not alone and there is a path out of homelessness.



**Don't be afraid to ask for help.  
You are worth it and help is available!**



## TIPS FOR TEACHERS & STAFF: HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

### WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness. It defines “homeless children and youth” as any student who lacks a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”. That includes students who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; living in emergency shelters or transitional housing; and living in cars, campgrounds, or bus stations.

### IDENTIFICATION TOOLS:

Know the signs and be familiar with common characteristics of students experiencing homelessness, including:

- Enrollment at multiple schools, lack of records, gaps in learning, poor/inconsistent attendance.
- Poor hygiene, unmet medical/dental needs, wearing the same clothes repeatedly, fatigue.
- Social and behavioral challenges, such as extreme shyness, withdrawal, or aggression; clinginess; difficulty with peer and/or adult relationships; poor attention span; anxiety late in the school day.
- Lack of participation in field trips and/or afterschool activities, lack of basic school supplies, inability to complete special projects.

### WHAT CAN I DO IF I BELIEVE A STUDENT IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR IS AT RISK OF BECOMING HOMELESS?

Teachers/staff play a critical role in the lives of students who are homeless. While McKinney-Vento liaisons bear the local-level legal responsibility for serving students experiencing homelessness, teachers/staff are well-positioned to observe and respond to student needs. Some strategies for providing support include:

- Learn more about the McKinney-Vento Act, connect with your local liaison and/or **Homeless Education Program (HEP)**. The **Dallas ISD HEP** is ready to provide support and guidance to homeless youth and families. Call our office, 972-749-5750 or email us at [homelesseducation@dallasisd.org](mailto:homelesseducation@dallasisd.org). You can also visit the **HEP** webpage at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Domain/109>.
- Create a welcoming climate and build trust with all students.
- Stabilize basic needs and support full participation. Make healthy snacks and/or hygiene supplies available. Ensure enrollment in the free meal program. (Homeless students are automatically eligible for free meals, and do not need to complete an application.) Ensure that the student has every opportunity to participate in school activities. Contact the homeless liaison and/or **HEP** to find out how to provide school/project supplies, cover field trip fees, purchase uniforms, and meet other needs. Give students a clipboard to use as a “desk” when they leave school.

**But most importantly, remember: Help is available! Sometimes strength comes in knowing you are not alone.**