



Tate County School District
Homeless Children and Youth
Policy and Procedures

2024-2025

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Tate County School District

Procedures for Enrolling Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act assures preschool-aged and school-aged children certain rights.

Definition:

The McKinney-Vento Acts defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - Abandoned in hospitals
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above
- Unaccompanied youth include young people who have run away from home, been thrown out of their homes, and/or been abandoned by parents or guardians.

Requirements:

The McKinney-Vento Act provides certain rights for homeless students. They include waiving certain requirements such as proof of residency when students are enrolling and allowing categorical eligibility for certain services. The Act also states:

- Homeless students may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Homeless students must be provided a written statement of their rights when they enroll and at least two times per year
- Homeless students may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Homeless students have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.

Procedures for Identifying a Homeless Student

- A student may be considered homeless if:
 - The student or parent/guardian indicates a homeless status at the time of enrollment
 - An affidavit of residency indicates that the arrangement is temporary due to necessity (due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason)
 - Further investigation reveals that the student/family lacks a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence.

Homelessness is considered situational and will be evaluated on a student-by-student basis.

Procedures for Enrolling a Homeless Student

The school may not deny, delay, or transfer enrollment solely because a student is homeless, or because a homeless student is unable to produce school, medical, or residency records.

A school enrolling, or about to enroll, a homeless student shall:

- · Immediately enroll the student, regardless of the availability of educational and/or immunization records
 - If a student attempts to register without a parent/guardian, effort should be made to contact the parent/guardian
 - The homeless student may not be barred from enrollment due to lack of immunization until an effort has been made to obtain records. If records cannot be obtained, assistance should be provided in getting the student properly immunized.
 - If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be registered. The Department of Human Services may be contacted to assist in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate.
 - The student will be identified as homeless in the district's student information system.
- Make a reasonable effort to verify that the child is homeless.
- Contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records
 - If student records cannot be obtained or records are not available an educational record (cumulative folder) will be developed. In these cases, an academic diagnostic test may be administered to assist in the determination of the student's skill levels and appropriate placement.
 - Priority shall be given in evaluations of homeless student suspected of having a disability.
- Provide free meals within one school day after the student enrolled. If necessary, assistance will be provided for completion of free and reduced lunch forms.
- ·Provide access to the same services comparable to those offered to other students in the school which the homeless student attends such as:

- transportation services
- educational services
- school nutrition programs
- vocational and technical programs
- extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- Coordinate with and/or refer student to other community resources in offering assistance to the homeless student/family.
- Contact the district homeless liaison

It is important that the academic and educational programs for children who are temporarily without a home are no different than those of the general student population.

Once a student has been identified as homeless using the before mentioned process and has been enrolled in a school within the Tate County School District, the following policy will be followed:

- Ensures that homeless children and youth are identified in the community, enrolled in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
- Ensures that activities carried out in the system will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children or youth.
- Ensures identified homeless children shall receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Special Education, Title I services, after-school tutoring if available, free and reduced lunch, counseling, referrals to health and other appropriate services.
 - Ensure that parents and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing services.
 - Ensures public notice of educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services.
- Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students including: transportation services, educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligible criteria, such as services provided under Title I, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency, programs in vocational and technical education, programs for gifted and talented students, and school nutrition programs.
- Ensures each school shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.

- The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.
- Ensures if the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the district liaison who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations or medical records.
- Ensures to the extent feasible, a homeless child or youth shall be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian. (See attached Procedures for Resolution of Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Students)
- Tate County School District shall provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the LEA sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the designated homeless liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such unaccompanied youth of the right to appeal.
- Tate County School District's policy and practice are to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, to or from the "school of origin".
- Ensures if the homeless child or youth continues to live in the district in the area served by the district in which the school of origin is located, Tate County School District shall provide or arrange for the child's or youth's transportation to the school of origin.
- Ensures if the homeless child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another district, the district of origin and the district in which the homeless child or youth is living will agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin.
- Ensures if the districts cannot agree on a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation will be shared equally.
- Transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved.

Transportation of Homeless Children

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. 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.

Course Work

Counselors at each school will contact all known previous schools to obtain school records for the student(s). Counselors will review the transcript to ensure the student does not lose any Carnegie unit credits for students enrolled in high school grades. For questions concerning the awarding of credits the counselor will contact the district Curriculum Coordinator and Homeless Liaison.

Counselors will provide students with information regarding their rights regarding FAFSA information if the student is or will be a graduate from high school.

Procedures for Resolution of Disputes Regarding Placement of Homeless Students

In case a dispute were to arise over school selection or enrollment, the Tate County School District shall immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent or guardian, pending resolution of the dispute. Disputes shall be resolved at the district level rather than the school level. The same provision applies to placement of unaccompanied youth. Inter-district enrollment disputes shall be resolved at the state educational agency level.

The Tate County School District shall provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights. The unaccompanied youth, parents, or guardian shall be referred to the Tate County School District liaison, who shall expeditiously carry out the dispute resolution process.

The dispute resolution process involving intra-district disputes shall be informal and accessible. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth may initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose, as well as at the school district or Tate County School District Homeless Liaison's office. The process officially begins by parents, guardians, or youth completing and turning the form into the school or district. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth shall be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their position.

Written notice shall be written in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand and include the following:

- A. Contact information for the Tate County School District Homeless Liaison and State coordinator, with a brief description of their roles.
- B. A simple, detachable form that parents, guardians may complete and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute process. The school shall copy the form and return the copy to the parent, guardian, or youth for their records when it is submitted.
- C. A step-by-step description of how to dispute the school's decision.
- D. Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute.
- E. Notice that "immediate enrollment" includes full participation in all school activities.
- F. Notice of the right to appeal to the State if the district-level resolution is not Satisfactory.
- G. Timelines for resolving district and State appeals.

All written protests submitted to the District, shall be considered by the Union County School Board at the first regularly scheduled meeting subsequent to the submission of the written protest.

For inter-district disputes, representatives from all involved districts and the state educational agency shall be present to resolve the dispute. The state-level appeal process, involving the State coordinator, shall be used to resolve the dispute. The State established timelines for resolution shall be followed.

Appeal Procedures

The child, parent, guardian, or other accompanying adult who wishes to appeal an adverse decision must start the appeal process by submitting a request for dispute resolution to the Superintendent. Upon submission of a request for dispute resolution, the Superintendent will:

1. Confirm that the child has received the opportunity to immediately enroll in the district school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the appeal; and
2. Expediently resolve the appeal according to the following dispute resolution Procedures:
 - a. The Superintendent will add the dispute to the agenda with the Tate County School District School Board and contact the person initiating the dispute within five working days of receiving the notice of dispute with the next School Board meeting date. The Board will listen to the person's account of the problem, review information from the Liaison, and consider the law and what factors affect the best interest of the child.
 - b. The Superintendent will provide within five working days:
 - i. A written explanation of the decision regarding school selection or enrollment; and
 - ii. Notice of the right to appeal the District's decision to the State Homeless Education Coordinator and the form with which to initiate such appeal will be sent to the complainant.

The Tate County School District is committed to serving homeless and unaccompanied youth and does not anticipate having to use the dispute resolution process. However, if needed, the procedures are in place to ensure the rights of homeless students.

Appendices

- Tate County School District Homeless Dispute Resolution Form Written Notification of Enrollment Decision (FORM 1)
- Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- Request for District-Level Dispute Resolution (FORM 2)
- Homeless Identification Form
- Tate County School District Homeless Policy
- Homeless Child Referral Form
- Homeless Student Rights Verification Sheet
- Student Residency Questionnaire

**Tate County School District Homeless Dispute Resolution Form Written
Notification of Enrollment Decision (FORM 1)**

This form is to be completed by the District Homeless Education Liaison when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: _____

Person completing form: _____ Job title: _____

In compliance with Section 722(g) (3) (E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001, the following written notification is provided to:

Parent or Guardian: _____

Student(s): _____

Regarding Enrollment Request: _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied based upon the following: _____

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the attached appeal form (**Form 2**) or by contacting the Tate County School District Superintendent:

Mrs. Alee' Dixon
574 Parkway Street
Coldwater, MS 38618
(662) 562-5861

Please Note:

- The student(s) listed above have the right to immediately enroll in the school of residency or school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute.
- You may use the form attached to this notification to provide evidence to support your position.
- You may contact the state coordinator for homeless education:

LaDewayne Harris
Mississippi Department of Education
PO Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205-0771
Telephone: 601-359-3499 FAX: 601-359-2587

You may seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys.

**Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Request for District-Level Dispute Resolution (FORM 2)**

This form is to be completed by the parent, guardian, caretaker, or unaccompanied youth to appeal the decision of the district Homeless Education Liaison.

Date submitted: _____

Person completing form*: _____

Contact Information: _____

Relationship to student(s): _____

Student(s): _____

School: _____

Date of enrollment decision being appealed: _____

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by the district Homeless Education Liaison.

I have been provided with:

- A written explanation of the district Liaison's decision (**Form 1**).
- Contact information for the superintendent:

Mrs. Alee' Dixon

574 Parkway Street

Coldwater, MS 38618

662-562-5861

- A copy of the District-Level Dispute Resolution Process concerning enrollment for students experiencing homelessness.

Optional: You may include a written explanation to support your appeal in the space provided below

*Signature of person completing form: _____

