

I. Homeless children who live within the county shall be admitted to school in the District, shall have access to free public education including preschool education, as provided to other children and youths and other services needed to ensure an opportunity to meet the same challenging State and local academic achievement standards to which all students are held and shall be included in state and District assessments and accountability systems.

II. Definitions

A. Homeless Child

One who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth who:

1. Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
2. Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters, or FEMA trailer;
4. Are abandoned in hospitals or not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian;
5. Have a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - a. A supervised shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
  - b. An institution providing temporary residence for persons who are to be institutionalized; or

- c. A public or private place not designed or normally used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
  - 6. Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
  - 7. Are migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in II.A.1. through II.A.56.
- B. Unaccompanied Youth – A homeless child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- C. Certified Homeless Youth – A minor, homeless child or youth, including an unaccompanied youth, who has been certified as homeless or unaccompanied by a school district homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or designee, the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services or designee, a licensed clinical social worker, or a circuit court.
- D. School of Origin – The school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled including a preschool.
- E. Designated Receiving School – This definition includes the next level school, elementary from prekindergarten, middle from elementary, high from middle, that a homeless child or youth, whose homelessness continues into the next school year, may attend when that next level school is the district designated school for those students in the homeless student’s school of origin.
- F. Eligible School: the school of origin, the school zoned for the address where the student is temporarily residing, or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend.
- G. Enroll and Enrollment – Attending school and participating fully in school activities.
- H. Immediate – Without delay.

- I. Parent – Parent or guardian of a student.
- J. Liaison – The staff person designated by the District as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- III. The District shall identify homeless students as defined by federal and state law. If the District’s liaison for homeless children and youth determines that the minor is an unaccompanied homeless youth, the liaison shall issue to the youth a certificate documenting his/her status as required by law.
- IV. The District shall seek to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth.
- V. The District shall ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless students, even if the child or youth missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness.
  - a. The District shall assist homeless children to provide documentation to meet state and local requirements for entry into school. Homeless students will be enrolled even if they cannot produce records or otherwise meet enrollments, including previous academic records, immunization or other health records, birth certificates, proof of residency, guardianship, uniform or dress code requirements, and outstanding fees, fines, or absences.
  - b. A homeless child shall be given a thirty (30) school day exemption to provide proof of age, certification of a school-entry health examination, proof of immunization and other documentation required for enrollment.
- VI. Each homeless student shall be provided the services that are available for all other students including transportation, school nutrition programs, before and after school programs, and education services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria such as exceptional education, gifted education, vocational and technical programs, preschool programs, Title I, and limited English proficiency programs.

Homeless students shall be given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school.

- VII. Homeless students shall be allowed to remain in the school of origin and receive all McKinney-Vento Act benefits for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, to the extent feasible, unless this is contrary to the wishes of the parents. It is presumed to be in the homeless child or youth's best interest to continue in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth. The district will consider student-centered factors for the student's best interests when determining the school placement of a homeless child or youth.
- VIII. Homeless students and/or parents shall have the right to dispute school assignment if placement is other than the school of origin. The District shall ensure that unaccompanied youth and the parents of homeless students are notified of the right to remain in the school of origin and of the dispute process. When the district determines that a placement other than the school of origins is in the child's or youth's best interest, the district will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth with a written explanation in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, along with information on the right to appeal the placement determination.
- IX. During a school selection dispute, the child or youth will either remain enrolled in the school of origin or shall be immediately enrolled in the eligible school in which enrollment is sought (either the school zoned for the address where the student is residing or another school which students residing in that attendance zone are eligible to attend) pending final resolution of the dispute including all available appeals. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth shall be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school or the district, including the rights of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's designated homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which the youth seeks enrollment pending resolution of the dispute.
- X. If requested by the parent of a homeless child or by the district designated liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth, the District shall be responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin throughout the duration of homelessness. The District shall share the responsibility for transportation if a homeless student begins living in another district in a homeless status and

continues to attend the school of origin. The district will coordinate with the district of residence to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin.

- XI. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized, segregated, or separated in any educational program on the basis of their homeless status.
- XII. The district will provide appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior school.
- XIII. The district will provide access for homeless children and youth to fully participate in academic and extracurricular activities for which they meet relevant eligibility criteria.
- XIV. Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.
- XV. The district will coordinate and collaborate with other school districts, community service providers, housing authorities, and organizations to provide support to homeless students and their families, coordinate homeless student-related transportation, transfer school records, and other inter-district activities, as needed.
- XVI. The student records of a homeless child or youth shall be treated as a student education record and held confidential, and shall not be deemed directory information, under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act. The district shall maintain records for each homeless child or youth, including immunization and other required health records; birth certificates, academic records, guardianship records; and evaluations for special services. The district shall make the records of a homeless child or youth available in a timely fashion when a child or youth enters a new school.
- XVII. The District shall follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Florida Statutes.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:**

**1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.S.**

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**Revised: 02/11/22**

**LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:** 382.002, 743.067, 1000.21, 1001.43,  
1003.01, 1003.21, 1003.22, F.S.  
**MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, P.L.100-77**  
**Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. PL 114-95**  
**20 USC 6311(g)(1)(F)**

**HISTORY:** **ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**REVISION DATE(S):** 03/09/2020; 04/11/2022  
**FORMERLY:**