



*For matters concerning homeless children and youth, please contact:
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HOMELESS EDUCATION PLAN

The Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youth - The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) Title X Part C, also known as The McKinney-Vento Act, guarantees that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths

Purpose of the Program

Homeless children and youth will be provided the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education regardless of their residency status. The program will ensure that these students are afforded equal access to academic and other services that will allow them to meet the same challenging state achievement standards as non-homeless students.

The program provides procedural guidelines to ensure that homeless students are not denied enrollment due to the lack of registration documentation at the time of enrollment. Homeless children and youth will be enrolled immediately pending obtainment of necessary documents. The school counselor will assist parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth in obtaining the proper documentation.

The homeless education program makes every effort to provide homeless children and youth with a stable school environment by enrolling students in the school of origin and providing them with transportation to and from the school of origin. Provisions are made for parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth to decline enrollment in the school of origin.

The program provides for a homeless liaison that will ensure program implementation and coordinate efforts to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, are provided the opportunity for academic success.

Identification and Registration Procedures

Homeless children and youth are often undetected. The system will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless children without stigmatizing terminology.

The parent or guardian may enroll a homeless child or youth with or without proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records. The school counselor will provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth appropriate assistance in obtaining the necessary records and documents for enrollment. Enrollment without the required immunization record will be pending receipt or acquisition of immunization documentation. The existing method of assigning a student number will be utilized when a student enrolls without a social security number.

An unaccompanied youth may enroll himself/herself. In this case, the school principal or designee will immediately contact the Central Office Homeless Liaison to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth. The school will provide the youth with proper assistance in language that the student understands. The Central Office Homeless Liaison will assist the homeless unaccompanied youth in obtaining eligible educational services.

Definition of Homeless

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; or
- awaiting foster care placement;

Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is public or not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans;

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.

Dispute Resolution

Disputes that arise over the eligibility status and placement decisions of homeless students will be handled in the following manner according to Board policy:

- A. If a dispute arises regarding the denial of homeless status, the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be informed of the right to challenge the decision through the following levels:
 - Homeless Education Liaison
 - Superintendent's Office
 - Board of Education
 - Alabama State Department of Education
- B. If a dispute arises over the school placement of a child or youth who meet the definition of homeless under the NCLB McKinney-Vento provisions, parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth have the right to:
 - Challenge the placement decision orally or in writing to the Homeless Education Liaison.
 - Be advised of the dispute resolution procedure.

Enrollment in School

The McKinney-Vento Act requires immediate of homeless children and youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, immunizations, proof of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation. It is the responsibility of the Jasper City Schools Homeless Education Liaison to ensure that documentation normally required for enrollment is gathered and submitted in a timely manner.

School of Best Interest Selection

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that a homeless child or youth attend the school that is in his or her best interest. The school chosen may be either the school of origin or the school of residency. The school of origin is the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled. The school of residency is the school that serves the area where the child or youth is currently physically dwelling. This may include the school that serves the community where a homeless shelter is located or where a child or youth is doubling-up with family or friends.

When making decisions concerning the school of best interest, a homeless child or youth should, to the extent possible, remain in the school of origin unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian of the child or youth. Remaining in the school of origin must also be the wish of an unaccompanied youth. If Jasper City Schools believes it is in the homeless child's or youth's best interest to enroll in a school other than the school of origin or the school of choice, the district will provide a written explanation of its decision to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

Automatic Eligibility for Free School Meals

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 includes the provision that homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth automatically become eligible for free school breakfast and lunch. A list of homeless children and youth will be acceptable in lieu of the school meal application usually submitted by the child's parent or guardian and will be sufficient for school officials to approve the child's eligibility for free school meals. When a student has been certified as eligible for free meals, based on designation as homeless, the eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year and up to 30 days into the next school year. This will remain in effect even if the homeless child or youth moves into permanent housing and is no longer homeless.

Additional Services and Opportunities

Homeless children and youth are entitled to educational services comparable to those offered to other students. These services include but are not limited to the following programs: Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), vocational and technical education, gifted and talented programs and extracurricular activities. Homeless children and youth are also eligible to receive Title I services that target students most at risk of failing in school.