

COWETA CHARTER ACADEMY
HOMELESS, DISPLACED, NEGLECTED OR DELINQUENT STUDENTS
Identification and Services Available

HOMELESS STUDENTS

Children who meet the federal definition of homeless and live within our attendance zone shall be admitted to school at Coweta Charter Academy and shall have equal access to free public education including other services offered to our entire student population that are needed to ensure an opportunity to meet local and state academic achievement standards and be included in State and school-wide assessments and accountability systems. They shall be able to fully participate in academic and extracurricular activities offered to our entire student population and not be stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless.

(I) Coweta Charter Academy shall:

Designate an appropriate staff person able to carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Act, as Coweta Charter Academy's liaison for homeless children and youth.

CCA will remove barriers to:

- identifying homeless children and youth.
- enrolling and retaining homeless children and youth in school.
- provide access to homeless children to attend public preschool programs if they are offered and administered by Coweta Charter Academy.
- provide appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by homeless children and youth while attending a prior accredited school.
- provide access for homeless children and youth to academic and extracurricular activities.
- immediately enroll homeless children and youth to a qualified school, coordinate LEA programs and collaborate with other school LEAs, community service providers and organizations, including: local social services and other community agencies to provide support to homeless students and their families, other school LEAs regarding homeless student-related transportation as required, transfer of school records, and other inter-LEA activities, as needed, housing authorities, and ESE.

(II.) Definitions

A. Homeless Children and Youth

Individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence and include:

1. Are sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; doubled up.
2. Are living in motels, hotels, travel trailer parks, or camping grounds due to

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- the lack of adequate alternative accommodation.
3. Are living in emergency or transitional shelters abandoned in hospitals.
 4. Are living in a primary night-time residence that is not designated for, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings; (cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings) or
 5. Are migratory children and youth who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in II.A.1. through II.A.5.
- B. Unaccompanied Youth – A student 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 LEA homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or designee, ~~or~~ 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.
- E. 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.
- F. Enroll and Enrollment – Attending school and participating fully in school activities.
- G. Immediate – Without delay.
- H. Parent – Parent or guardian of a student.
- I. Liaison – The staff person designated by Coweta Charter Academy as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- J. Designated Receiving School – 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 Coweta Charter Academy designated school for those students in the homeless student's school of origin.
- III. Enrollment and Dispute Resolution
- A. Coweta Charter Academy shall identify homeless students as defined by federal and state law. If Coweta Charter Academy'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.

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- B. Coweta Charter Academy shall seek to remove barriers and provide exemptions to the enrollment and retention of a student that has been identified as meeting the eligibility definitions of homelessness. Identified homeless students shall be immediately enrolled into a qualified school, even if they cannot produce records or otherwise meet enrollment requirements, including:
- previous academic records.
 - immunizations or other health records.
 - birth certificate.
 - proof of residency.
 - guardianship.
 - uniform or dress code requirements.
 - outstanding fees, fines or absences.
 - other required documentation for the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year.
- C. A homeless student, who becomes permanently housed during the academic year, may remain at their school of origin for remainder of the academic year and continue to receive all McKinney-Vento Act benefits. Keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is presumed to be in the child's or youth's best interest, 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. When considering placement in a school other than the child's or youth's school of origin, Coweta Charter Academy will consider student-centered factors to determine a placement that is in the student's best interest. The eligible school selected shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth missed an application or enrollment deadline during any period of homelessness.
- D. When Coweta Charter Academy determines that a placement other than the school of origin is in the best interest, Coweta Charter Academy 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, and information on the right to appeal the placement determination.
- E. During a school selection dispute:
- The child or youth will either remain enrolled in the student's 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 Coweta Charter Academy,

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including the rights of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions; and

- the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to Coweta Charter Academy'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 seek enrollment pending resolution of such dispute.

IV. Full Participation and Comparable services

- A homeless student, who becomes permanently housed during the academic year, may remain at their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year and continue to receive all McKinney-Vento Act benefits.
- Children and youths experiencing homelessness, and who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, will have access to all available academic and extracurricular activities for which they meet relevant eligibility criteria.
- Each homeless student shall be provided the services that are comparable to non-homeless students attending Coweta Charter Academy including at parents, guardian's, or liaison's request transportation to and from school of origin, if provided, school nutrition programs, if provided, before and after school programs, and education services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria such as exceptional education, gifted education, preschool programs if administered by LEA, Title I, and programs for English language learners, and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school.
- Coweta Charter Academy shall provide access for homeless preschool-aged children and their families to educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs if administered by the school LEA.
- Unaccompanied homeless high school youth will receive counseling to prepare and improve their readiness for postsecondary education.

V. Student Records

Coweta Charter Academy assures that records will be:

- Treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information, under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act.
- Maintained for each homeless child or youth, including immunization or other required health records; academic records; guardianship records; and evaluations for special services.
- Made available in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school.
- Held confidential in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provision Act.

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- VI. Transportation
Coweta Charter Academy shall provide:
- A. Transportation to and from a child's or youth's school of origin will be provided or arranged, at the request of the parent or guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied child or youth, Coweta Charter Academy's designated liaison for homeless children and youth.
 - B. When the child's or youth's living arrangements are in an area served by another school LEA (LEA of residence), the school LEA (LEA of service) will coordinate with Coweta Charter Academy of residence to agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the student with transportation to and from the school of origin.
- VII. Coweta Charter Academy shall follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 1001.41, 1001.42, 1003.21, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED: 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: NEW: 01/12/10

REVISION DATE(S): 7/23/2013, 12/9/14, 5/28/19, 3/10/2020

FORMERLY: NEW