



Ms. Heather Reardon

Coordinator of Family Support Services
Raytown Quality Schools
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Dear Community Partner:

I would like to introduce myself to you and your organization. My name is Heather Reardon and I am the Coordinator of Family Support Services for the Raytown School District. I am the designated Homeless Liaison for the district as required by The Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) program, authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This program is designed to address the needs of homeless children and youths and to ensure their educational rights and protections are in place.

The role of the Homeless Liaison is to ensure homeless children and youths are enrolled in school and have a full and equal opportunity for success. This is accomplished through ensuring families and youths understand their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act including the right to immediate enrollment, access to transportation, and access to all educational services for which they are eligible. Another key responsibility is outreach to our community resources. *We ask for your support in assisting students and families within the community who may be experiencing homelessness to get connected with the Raytown School District Family Support Services office.*

The following information is designed to improve understanding of the term “homeless” as defined by law. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, the term “homeless children and youths” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and include children and youths who:

- Are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- 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;
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Are migratory children who live in one of the above circumstances.

If families, children, or youths are found to be homeless, the McKinney-Vento Act provides rights to students and parents who are considered homeless:

- Homeless students who move have the right to remain in their school of origin (i.e. the school the student attended when permanently housed or in which the student was last enrolled, which includes preschools) if that is in the student’s best interest;

- If it is in the student's best interest to change schools, homeless students must be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if they do not have the records normally required for enrollment;
- Transportation must be provided to and from a student's school of origin, at the request of a parent or guardian, or, in the case of unaccompanied youth, the local liaison;
- Homeless students must have access to all programs and services for which they are eligible, including special education services, preschool, school nutrition programs, language assistance for English learners, career and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer learning, online learning, and before and after-school care;
- Unaccompanied youths must be accorded specific protections, including immediate enrollment in school without proof of guardianship; and
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youths have the right to dispute an eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision.

I've included a poster which you may display where you serve families. This has my contact information, as well as the State Homeless Liaison's contact information should families or youths have questions. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions, suspect a family may need some support, or is known to be homeless.

Thank you so much for being a valued member of our community and I look forward to partnering with you on behalf of our families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather Reardon".

Heather Reardon
Coordinator of Family Support Services/Homeless Liaison
Raytown C-2 School District