



# Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was established in 1987 and amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. The Act defines the term “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

The federal mandate ensures that homeless children and youth have access to the same free and appropriate public education as other children. Children who are homeless may qualify for assistance with school lunch, school supplies, tutoring and transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin.

Under McKinney Vento all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

Who is considered homeless?—Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney Vento.

Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school?—The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth’s best interest. If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student’s best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

What supports can school districts provide to homeless students?—Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, club, etc.

Homeless Dispute Process—If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney Vento services. At this time, the district will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination.

Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth, including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school they are seeking enrollment in until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

Role of the District Homeless Liaison: The District's liaison shall ensure outreach and coordinate with:

- Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless children and youth and families.
- Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.
- District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The District's liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.

The District's liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

If you think your student is eligible for services under McKinney-Vento, contact the District Homeless Liaison, Vanessa Veltre, LCSW at [vanessa.veltre@ecspgh.org](mailto:vanessa.veltre@ecspgh.org) or 412-247-7970 x 9621.

### Other Resources

Regional Officer: Nicole Anderson, Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness, 412-394-5894  
State Coordinator - Storm Camara, 717-772-2066

[ECS Homeless Students Board Policy](#)

[Basic Education Circular on Education for Homeless Youth](#)