

Overview of Homeless Education

January 22, 2026

Student Services

Turlock Unified School District

Key Take Aways

- McKinney Vento Compliance
- Homeless Youth Liaison: Issues (attendance/discipline)
- Housing Questionnaire: Primarily “Doubled Up”
- Immediate Enrollment (Access Services)
- Right to Remain in School of Residence
- Priority ELOP/After School Programs
- Transportation (School of Attendance)
- Immunization Exemption
- Partial Credits
- Graduation Contract 11-12
- FASFA
- Title 1 Funding: Mainly Used Transportation/School Supplies

Barriers Faced (1)

The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational barriers and challenges that children and youth experiencing homelessness face when it relates their right to enroll in and attend school, and provides supports needed for school success. Some of the barriers these children and youth face are:

- Lack of identification
- Enrollment requirements
- Lack of school supplies and transportation

Barriers Faced (2)

- Poor health, fatigue, hunger, anxiety, and trauma
- Prejudice and misunderstanding
- Lack of awareness
- Parents not wanting to get involved due to fear
- Credit deficiency
- Lack of legal guardian for an UHY

McKinney- Vento Act (1)

- The McKinney-Vento Act requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youth.
- Homeless students must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held.

McKinney- Vento Act (2)

- LEAs are also required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.
- LEAs must collaborate and coordinate with other federal and state educational programs, including Title I.
- It is also important to note that homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment.

McKinney- Vento Act (3)

- The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- The complete legislation can be found at <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/>.

California Education Codes

- Over the years, California Education Codes (*EC*) have been amended to align to federal McKinney-Vento Act statute.
- Throughout the presentation, some California *EC* sections are cited, but here are other sections that are pertinent to homeless education:
 - Sections 48412, 48850, 48852.5, 48852.7, 48859, 48915.5, 48918.1, 49073, 49076, 51421, 51421.5, 51225.1, 51225.2, and 52052

Homeless Definition (1)

- Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which are defined as:
 - A **fixed** residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
 - A **regular** residence is one that is used on a normal, standard, and consistent basis
 - An **adequate** residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

Homeless Definition (2)

Examples of homelessness include children and youth living in:

- Shared housing due to economic hardship
- Motels or hotels
- Public or private places not designed for sleeping
- Trailer parks or campgrounds
- Cars, parks, and abandoned buildings
- All shelters, including emergency or transitional shelters

Homeless Definition (3)

- Additional examples of homelessness include children and youth who are:
 - Migratory children who qualify as homeless
 - Abandoned in hospitals
 - Unaccompanied youth
 - Living in substandard living conditions – please consider such things as health and safety concerns, number of occupants per square foot, the age of occupants, and state and local building codes

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Definition

- An “unaccompanied homeless youth” (UHY) is a youth that is not in the custody of their parent or guardian and meet the definition of homelessness.
- Liaisons must help UHY choose and enroll in a school, give priority to the youth’s wishes, and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights.

Identification and Enrollment (1)

- LEAs are required to identify, enroll immediately, and serve homeless children and youth.
- LEAs can identify through the initial registration process, along with a variety of other ways, such as:
 - Using the TUSD- developed Housing Questionnaire (HQ) and its guidance at Student Services

Housing Questionnaire

Turlock Unified School District Housing Questionnaire California Department of Education

The form should be included at the top page of registration materials that the local educational agency (LEA) shares with families.

Student Last Name	First	Middle
SPED: YES ___ NO ___	SPED Program:	Date of Birth:

Name of School: _____ Grade: _____

The information provided below will help the LEA determine what services you and/or your child may be eligible to receive. This could include additional educational services through Title I, Part A and/or the federal McKinney-Vento Assistance Act. The information provided on this form will be kept confidential and only shared with appropriate school district and site staff.

Presently, are you and/or your family living in any of the following situations? *Check all that apply.*

- Staying in a shelter (family shelter, domestic violence shelter, youth shelter) or Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer
- Sharing housing with other(s) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, natural disaster, lack of adequate housing, or similar reason
- Living in a car, park, campground, abandoned building, or other inadequate accommodations (i.e. lack of water, electricity, or heat)
- Temporarily living in a motel or hotel due to loss of housing, economic hardship, natural disaster, or similar reason **including refugee and new arrivals.**
- Living in a single-home residence that is permanent.
- I am a student under the age of 18 and living apart from parent(s) or guardian.

The undersigned parent/guardian certifies that the information provided above is correct and accurate.

Print Parent/Guardian Name	Signature	Date
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(Area Code) Phone Number	Street Address	City	State	Zip
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Your child or children may have the right to:

- Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended (school of origin) or the local school where you are currently staying, even if you do not have all the documents normally required at the time of enrollment.
- Continue to attend their school of origin, if requested by you and it is in the best interest.
- Receive transportation to and from their school of origin, the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children, including free meals and Title I.
- Receive the full protections and services provided under all federal and state laws, as it relates to homeless children, youth, and their families.

Please list all children currently living with you.

Name	M/F	Birthdate	Grade	School

If you have any questions about these rights, please contact the local homeless liaison, Gil Ogden, by phone at (209) 667-0632 option 3 or by email at gogden@turlock.k12.ca.us.

Director of Student Services: _____ Date _____ #7

Identification and Enrollment (2)

- The poster must be posted in areas frequented by parents, guardians, and unaccompanied homeless youth, in a manner and form understandable to them and include the Homeless Liaison contact information

Even if you have:

- Uncertain housing
- A temporary address
- No permanent physical address

You are guaranteed enrollment in school by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and California state law if you live:

- In a house or apartment with more than one family due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- With friends or family because you are a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
- In substandard housing (without electricity, water, or heat)
- In a shelter (family, domestic violence, or youth shelter or transitional living program)
- In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
- In an abandoned building, in a car, at a campground, or on the streets

You can enroll in school immediately even without the documents normally required for enrollment, such as:

- Proof of residency
- Immunization records or other required health records
- School records
- Legal guardianship papers

Your child may:

- Participate fully in all school activities and programs for which he/she is eligible
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if you request it
- Continue to attend the school in which he/she was last enrolled even if you have moved away from that school's attendance area
- Qualify automatically for school nutrition programs

Your responsibilities are to:

- Make sure your child gets to school on time and ready to learn
- Stay informed of school rules, regulations, and activities
- Contact the homeless liaison for assistance in removing barriers to your child's education
- Attend parent/teacher conferences, Back-to-School Nights, and other school-related activities

You can ENROLL in school!

It is not a crime to live in one of the above situations and schools are here to assist you and your children with enrollment and appropriate services. This information will not be shared outside of the educational entity.

For questions about enrolling in school or for assistance with school enrollment, contact:

- Your local school district homeless liaison:
- Your county homeless liaison:
- Your homeless state coordinator:
Leanne Wheeler
State Coordinator
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite #406
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 1-866-856-6214

HS1201 English 11/01/08

Identification and Enrollment (3)

- Once you have identified them, you now need to enroll them, immediately, regardless of documentation.
- Homeless students are not required to have all documents necessary for enrollment. This can include school records, health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.

Identification and Enrollment (4)

- In addition, LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of children and youth in homeless situations, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.
- Enroll and enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- California *EC* Section 48850 aligns to the same provisions relating to immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth.

Identification and Enrollment (5)

- Lastly, any school records for students experiencing homelessness transferring from one LEA to another LEA should be transferred promptly and in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This will ensure that the records are made available in a timely manner when a child or youth enters the new LEA.

Preschool Enrollment

- Homeless liaisons are required to identify preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination activities with outside agencies.
- They also required to ensure access to Head Start, early intervention (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA.
- Coordination with social service agencies, child development programs, early intervention programs, and other preschool programs is key to serve and support the younger children.

School of Origin (1)

- 42 U.S.C. Section 11432[g] and California *EC* Section 48852.7 define “school of origin” as the school the child/youth attended when permanently housed, the school last enrolled, or a school that the homeless child/youth has a connection to in the last 15 months.
 - This includes preschool and feeder school patterns
- Students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.

School of Origin (2)

- California *EC* Section 48852.7 aligns to this provision and allow a homeless youth, now permanently housed, to remain in their high school through graduation, if:
 - It is in the best interest of the student; and,
 - It is parent/guardian or UHY requested
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent, guardian or UHY, the LEA must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and their right to appeal.

School Stability (1)

- In determining best interest, the LEA shall:
 - Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest, unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth
 - Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety
 - Give priority to the request of the parent/guardian
 - Give priority to the UHY's request

School Stability (2)

- If the LEA determines that it is not in the student's best interest, the LEA, in conjunction with the liaison, must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including the right to appeal.

Dispute Resolution (1)

- If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a school:
 - The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute (including all available appeals)
 - The parent, guardian, or UHY must be provided a written explanation of decisions made and how to appeal the decisions

Dispute Resolution (2)

- Whenever there is a disagreement, the school must:
 - Immediately enroll student in school according to parent's wishes;
 - Keep the student until the dispute is settled;
 - Provide transportation;
 - Explain the decision in writing to parents; and,
 - Contact liaison to assist in settling the dispute with parents, guardian, or youth

Dispute Resolution (3)

- If the dispute is appealed at the district level, then the appeal will be referred to the county office of education, and if dispute is appealed, again, then it is referred to the State Coordinator at the CDE.
- You can find information about California's Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process at the CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/disputeresolutionletter2020.docx>

Transportation (1)

- Local liaisons must ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected in accordance with the best interest determination.
- In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students in the school.

Transportation (2)

- LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at the request of a parent or guardian (or at the liaison's request for UHY).

Equal Access

- Gifted and Talented Education
 - Special education
 - Migrant education
 - English learner programs
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- Vocational education
 - Title I
 - State Meal Program
 - Before and/or after school programs

Higher Education Access

- All homeless youth must be able to receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.
- Liaisons must ensure UHY are informed of their status as independent students and may obtain assistance from the liaison to receive verification of that status.

Segregation

- LEAs are required to ensure that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homeless status.

Coordination Within the LEA

- LEAs must coordinate McKinney-Vento services with a variety of programs within the LEA such as Title I, Special Education, Migrant Education, Transportation, Food Services, even Data.
- Information about a homeless student's living situation is a student education record subject to the FERPA and should be kept within the LEA's boundaries.

Coordination Outside the LEA

- LEAs must coordinate McKinney-Vento services with a variety of programs outside the LEA such as faith-based agencies, community-based organizations, housing agencies, etc.

Charter Schools

- Charter schools that are LEAs must implement the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act to ensure that homeless students have access to and can succeed in their education. Services include those both for students who become homeless while attending a charter school as well as for homeless students who wish to enroll in a charter school.
- Charter school grants under Title IV, Part C must work with charter schools on recruitment and enrollment practices to promote inclusion of all students, including eliminating any barriers to enrollment for foster youth and UHY.

Coordination with Title I (1)

- Homeless children are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of their current academic performance and their school of attendance.
- State report cards must disaggregate achievement and high school graduation data for homeless students.
- Local plans must be coordinated with McKinney-Vento programs and describe the services provided to homeless students, including any reserved funds, to support their enrollment, attendance, and success.

Coordination with Title I (2)

- All LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds must reserve (set-aside) the funds necessary to provide homeless children services comparable to services provided in Title I, Part A schools:
 - The reservation amount must be based on the total LEA allocation prior to expenditures, may be determined based on a needs assessment, and should involve the liaison

Coordination with Title I (3)

- Some of the allowable uses of these funds include:
 - Providing comparable services to homeless children and youth despite their school of attendance
 - Services not ordinarily provided to other students
 - Providing transportation to the school of origin and to fund the liaison

Local Liaisons (1)

- Every LEA must designate a McKinney-Vento liaison able to carry out their legal duties.
- Liaisons must ensure that:
 - Homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
 - Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies
 - Access is provided and barriers to enrollment and retention are removed

Local Liaisons (2)

- Public notice of educational rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and UHY, in a manner and form understandable to them.
- Parents or guardians are informed of educational opportunities and transportation services.

Local Liaisons (3)

- School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other support
- Children, youth, and families have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA, Part C), and other preschool programs
- Children, youth, and families receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other services

Local Liaisons (4)

- Children and youth who do not have immunizations are assisted
- Liaisons participate in professional development and technical assistance as determined appropriate by the State Coordinator
- Liaisons coordinate and collaborate services for homeless children, youth, and their families
- Liaisons collaborate with the State Coordinator, community agencies, and school personnel.

Local Liaisons (5)

- Disputes are promptly resolved and assistance to access transportation is provided.
- UHY are enrolled in school and that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent them from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.



- Student Services +
- Complaint Procedures +
- Health Services +
- Student Accountability +
- Support Services -**
 - CalHOPE
 - Character Strong
 - Crisis Text Line
 - CSUS Mentoring Program
 - FOCUS Program
 - Foster Youth
 - Homeless Youth**
 - Immigration Resources

Homeless Youth

The McKinney-Vento Act

Before schools can be certain they are complying with legislation related to educating students experiencing homelessness, they must understand who can be considered homeless.

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines "homeless children and youth" (school-age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- 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.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily

Contact Us

Each local district shall designate a staff person as a liaison for homeless children who shall ensure the dissemination of public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations. If you are homeless or may become homeless, please contact the following:

TUSD Homeless Liaison
Gil Ogden
Student Services
1574 Canal Drive
Room WW-1
Turlock, CA 95380

P.O. Box 819013
Turlock, CA 95381-9013