Homeless Student Policy / McKinney-Vento Act Notice

MAS CHARTER SCHOOL MISSION ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(c), NMSA 1978 §22-12-10, and 6.10.3.1 *et seq.* and 7.5.3.10 NMAC, parents/guardians of homeless students (or the student if unaccompanied) are to receive and acknowledge receipt of notice of the rights set forth herein. A copy of this policy and notice shall be provided in a language the student, parent, or guardian can understand.

Mission Achievement and Success (MAS) Charter School will review its policies annually to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention in school of children and youth in homeless situations.

The contact information for the MAS liaison for homeless students is:

Lori Granado, School Social Worker
lori.granado@mascharterschool.com

This information can also be found on the MAS website: www.mascharterschool.com.

Duties of MAS Liaison for Homeless Students

The MAS Homeless Student Liaison shall carry out the duties described in the McKinney Vento Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 11432 *et seq*., as amended (the "Act"). The Liaison shall review the legal requirements for the position, data indicating the prevalence and needs of homeless children and youths in New Mexico and the MAS service area (including efforts that may be necessary to improve the identification of such children and youths), as well as past technical assistance provided to the School.

The Liaison shall provide outreach to other entities and agencies, to ensure homeless students are identified by School personnel; shall require public notice of educational rights be disseminated in School locations frequented by parents/guardians and unaccompanied youths, in a manner and form understandable to them; shall ensure that MAS staff receive professional development and other support regarding the requirements of the Act and that MAS staff provide appropriate services; and shall ensure that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school and receive support to accrue credits and access to higher education.

The Liaison shall ensure that unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students for purposes of college financial aid, and that the youths may obtain assistance to receive verification of such status. The Liaison shall work with MAS College and Career Counselors to ensure that unaccompanied youth receive assistance to prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

The Liaison shall work with the CEO and the governing board to adopt policies and practices to ensure participation by the Liaison in professional development and other technical assistance activities, as deemed appropriate by the State Coordinator; to inform school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents/guardians, and homeless children and youths of the duties of the liaison.

Definition

The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar

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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;
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in

Admission

Every homeless student will be provided the same opportunity for admission to MAS as every other student. Thus, students identified as "homeless children and youth", including unaccompanied youth, will be given the opportunity to apply, according to MAS admission/lottery practices and policies for all students. Homeless students and/or their parent or guardian should contact MAS's Liaison for assistance with applying for enrollment at MAS.

Enrollment/Registration

If admitted pursuant to school admission/lottery procedures, the student and/or his/her parent/guardian should attempt, to the best of his/her ability, to provide the school with information required to register at MAS. If the student/parent/guardian is unable to provide the school with the required information the school will attempt to locate the documents and shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant records. If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, MAS shall immediately refer the parent/guardian/student to the MAS liaison for homeless students, who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.

Failure to provide documentation shall not prohibit the homeless student from enrolling and registering at MAS. The student will meet with the MAS administration to determine the placement level upon enrolling, if there is no documentation to support placement.

If MAS receives a request for records of a homeless student who has transferred to another school, MAS shall provide the receiving school with any records within two (2) working days of having received the request.

Identification

The MAS liaison for homeless students will work to identify currently enrolled students who have become homeless. Students are encouraged to approach the liaison for homeless students if they enter a situation in which they are classified as homeless, or think they may be classified as homeless.

In addition, the Liaison for homeless students will ensure that:

1. Students enrolled have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in the school.

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2. Homeless families and students receive education services for which they are eligible as well as referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services based on their assessed needs.
3. The parents or guardians of homeless students, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
4. Enrollment and admission disputes are mediated and addressed in accordance with law and School policies.
5. Unaccompanied students will be assisted with enrollment decisions, their views will be considered, and they will be provided notice of the right to appeal.
6. Students who need to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, will receive assistance.
7. Students/parents/guardians will be notified of the availability of free/reduced-price school meals and will be certified for free school meals.
8. A homeless student's/unaccompanied youth's address and living situation may not be designated as directory information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may only be released with prior written consent of the eligible student or a parent/guardian. Disclosure may occur based on the exceptions recognized in FERPA.

Continued Support

The homeless education liaison, or designee, will provide homeless students and unaccompanied youth with information regarding services to homeless children and youth such as local social service agencies or programs providing services to homeless families to minimize educational disruption for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

MAS shall annually budget funds to provide services to homeless children and youth, including services not ordinarily provided to other students (*e.g. transportation, Liaison services*).

Services

Each homeless student/unaccompanied youth admitted to MAS shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students at MAS. These include, but are not limited to, educational services for which the student meets the relevant eligibility criteria, such as: special education programs for individuals with disabilities, health and nutritional offerings, before and after school activities, limited English proficiency programs, and social service referrals.

Students experiencing homelessness shall be directly certified for free school meals for the entire school year. The School's school food authority director shall be notified within one (1) school day of the homeless student's enrollment, and the director will directly certify the student for free school meals. The director will notify the NOVA coordinator to update the student's demographics and enter them as categorically eligible.

Homeless students/unaccompanied youth admitted to MAS pursuant to MAS admission/lottery procedures and who choose to enroll will have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school. Students experiencing homelessness/unaccompanied youth shall have priority placement in classes

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that meet state graduation requirements, and timely placement in elective classes offered by the School that are comparable to those in which the student was enrolled at the student's previous school or schools. Homeless students/youth shall receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with MAS and PED policies.

The student's state graduation requirements for a diploma of excellence shall be accepted. The student shall have equal access to sports and other extracurricular activities, career and technical programs, or other special programs for which the student qualifies. The student shall receive timely assistance and advice from staff to improve the student's college and career readiness.

Homeless/unaccompanied students shall receive supportive discipline from MAS, with suspension or expulsion used only as a last resort, after other appropriate interventions have been considered and/or attempted.

Transportation

If a homeless or unaccompanied student enrolled at MAS is unable to get to school via parent/guardian, MAS will provide or arrange transportation to/from either Yale or Old Coors campuses, at the request of parent/guardian, or Liaison for unaccompanied youth: MAS may do any of the following or another transportation option as determined appropriate:

- Provide a gas card based on the commitment and verification of student attendance and punctuality.
- In the event that the student is living in the area where another school district or charter school provides bus transportation, we will work with that district or charter school to accommodate transporting our student to the appropriate MAS campus.

The McKinney-Vento Act further states that when a homeless student who moves from one LEA to another and wishes to remain in the school of origin, and the parent or guardian requests transportation, the two LEAs must agree on a method to share the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If they are unable to agree on a method, they must share the responsibility and cost of the transportation equally [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)(II)].

Enrollment/Registration/Services Disputes

After a student is admitted to MAS pursuant to MAS admission/lottery processes, if a dispute arises over enrollment/registration/services:

- The homeless student shall be immediately enrolled at MAS, pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals;
- The parent or guardian of a homeless student or an unaccompanied youth, shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding enrollment, including the rights of the parent/guardian/student to appeal the decision;
- The student, parent or guardian shall be referred to the MAS Liaison for homeless students, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute, in accord with the procedure found in 6.10.3 8 NMAC; and

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- If a student is unable to be enrolled at MAS because enrollment numbers are full in his/her grade level, MAS Liaison will work with the student's home district to assist with prompt enrollment.

Dispute Resolution Process

Parents/guardians/students wishing to dispute matters pursuant to this policy and notice should use the following process:

- Complete the attached complaint form (Attachment A);
- Return the completed complaint form to the MAS liaison for homeless students (contact information above and on form);
- Parents/guardians/students have the right to obtain and utilize the assistance advocates or attorney with regard to disputes, and have the right to submit written and/or oral documentation to support their position;
- Upon receipt of a completed complaint form, MAS administration shall make reasonable attempts to schedule a meeting with the complainant to discuss and resolve the complaint, to occur within ten (10) calendar days;
- MAS shall address the complaint within ten (10) calendar days and shall inform the complainant in writing of the decision, including all factual information on which it is based and the legal basis in support thereof; a description of any options the school considered; the reasons why other options were rejected; a description of other factors relevant to the school's determination, including the facts, witnesses and evidence relied and their sources; appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are not missed; and contact information for the State Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth and a brief description of their roles.
- All decisions and notices shall be drafted using language and formatting appropriate for low literacy, limited vision readers, and individuals with disabilities.
- Translation/interpretation services shall be used at all stages of the dispute resolution process for youth and/or their parents/guardians who are English Learners or whose dominant language is other than English, without charge.
- The School shall provide electronic written notice to parents/guardians unaccompanied youth who have email and shall follow up with the notice in person or by mail.

If the School's decision is adverse to the parent/guardian/student, MAS's liaison for homeless students shall forward the NMPED's dispute resolution process form (from the NMPED website: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/student-success-wellness/mckinney-vento/) along with the School's written decision to the NMPED's homeless liaison within five (5) calendar days of the issuance of the School's final decision. Complainants have the right to appeal to the NMPED pursuant to 6.10.3.9 NMAC if the School's decision is not satisfactory to the complainant. To initiate the appeal, the complainant must notify the MAS liaison for homeless students within ten (10) business days of notification of the School's decision, and all provide copies of the dispute resolution process form to the NMPED's homelessness liaison.

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Posting of Notice

MAS shall post public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths at the school, where homeless families and youths receive services, and on the School's website.

MAS' school social worker/Liaison for Homeless Students can provide a list of area legal/advocacy services providers, clothing resources, food resources, and other supports upon request. Contact information is listed above.

State Coordinator of Education for Homeless Children and Youth:

Dana Malone, State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Dana.Malone@state.nm.us
(505) 827-1810

Dana Malone works with NM school districts, schools and other partners in order to provide educational stability to students experiencing homelessness by removing barriers such as enrollment in school, transportation, access to school meals, appropriate education and extracurricular activities.

The signature below indicates that the person signing has received and understands this information on rights.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____ Date: _____
(or unaccompanied student)

One (1) copy to signatory and one (1) to liaison for homeless students, with attachments

Form on next page

Attachment A: Complaint Form/McKinney–Vento

Name of Person(s) filing Complaint: _____

Contact Information:

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade level: _____

Has the problem been discussed with the school administration?

☐ Yes Date: _____

☐ No

Information the complainant wishes to have considered (*attach additional sheets if necessary*):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature of complainant: _____ Date: _____

When complete, please provide this form to:

Lori Granado, MAS Liaison for Homeless Students

lori.granado@mascharterschool.com