Tips for Teachers

HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSECURITY

Know the Law

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that protects the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Eligible students lack a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" or are "Unaccompanied minors" (no caregiver or guardian available.) The law requires that all LEAs ensure that eligible students have access to the same free, appropriate public education, including preschool, as provided to other students.

Examples of eligible housing include:

- "Doubled Up" housing (Sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, or economic hardship)
- Motels or hotels
- Shelters or transitional housing
- Living in parks, streets, cars, camping trailers, or other structures not suitable for habitation.

Basic Rights include:

- Immediate enrollment – enrollment documents can be submitted at a later date
- Right to attend school of origin (last school attended or when permanently housed) OR neighborhood school
- Right to remain in current school for remainder of school year even if housing is stabilized
- Right to confidentiality regarding their living situation

Know the Signs

Signs of housing instability may include:

- Enrollment at multiple schools, lack of records, gaps in learning
- Frequent absences or tardiness
- Poor hygiene, unmet medical/dental needs, wearing the same clothes repeatedly
- School refusal or fear of separating from family, anxiety late in the school day
- Sleeping in class, appearing drowsy or inattentive in class
- Inability to complete special projects or homework
- Food hoarding or taking food
- Social and emotional challenges such as extreme shyness, withdrawal, or aggression; difficulty with social relationships or acknowledging adult authority
- Lack of basic school supplies
- **No access to technology devices and internet connections or unable to participate in remote learning**

Know How to Help

Take time to meet with your student or their parents in a private and supportive setting about their living situation.

Allow that person to educate you about their situation and how best to help. If they deny they need help or services, consider having district material on Mc Kinney- Vento rights and services available (a poster or brochure).

Discuss your plan for help with the student and a caregiver; be careful not to overpromise.

Contact your local Mc Kinney- Vento Liaison for guidance and resources.

Examples of ways a liaison can help include:

- Help with enrollment, assisting with decisions regarding what is in a student's best interest
- Arranging transportation if appropriate
- Assistance in obtaining needed supplies (eg. Backpacks, school supplies, technology, uniforms)
- Referrals to community resources including emergency and long-term housing, food, resources and counseling

Your local McKinney-Vento Liaison:

Orange County Department of Education:
HOPES Collaborative, Contact list of all OC Liaisons
https://ocde.us/mv

California Department of Education
Homeless Education Team |
HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov