

Policies

Newport Public Schools Students – Administrative Policies – McKinney-Vento (Homeless Students)

No. 5130

1. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and procedures for homeless students to ensure they receive equal access to public education and the necessary support services to meet their needs in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and applicable state laws.

2. Definition of Homeless Students: Homeless children and youth are individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- Children and youth sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing (doubled up), economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters,
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Children and youth who 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
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- Unaccompanied youth, including those not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Policy

3. Identification and Duration: The district will ensure the prompt identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness through enrollment procedures, and coordination with local agencies.

- Confidentially inquiring about living situations at the time of enrollment and annually.
- Providing parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with information about educational rights.
- Collaborating with local shelters and community partners to identify eligible students

Duration of Eligibility

- Once identified as housing insecure, students are eligible for McKinney-Vento protections for the **entire school year in which they are identified**, even if their housing situation stabilizes during that period.
- Students retain the right to remain in their **school of origin** (the school last attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled) for the remainder of the school year, if in their best interest.
- If a student becomes permanently housed during the school year, they may continue enrollment in the school of origin until the end of that school year.
- For students who lose housing **between academic years/in summer**, eligibility and the right to remain in the school of origin extends through the subsequent school year.
- Decisions regarding continued eligibility will be made by the district Homeless Liaison in consultation with the student and family, always prioritizing the student's best interest.

4. Immediate Enrollment: Enrolling homeless students is a core concept in the McKinney-Vento Act as the law's purpose is to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education.

- Homeless students are entitled to immediate, full and equal opportunity enrollment in school. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to lack of necessary documents, such as proof of residency, immunization records, or previous academic records normally required for enrollment or barriers of student fees.
- Homeless students will not be denied enrollment or attendance due to lack of transportation, legal guardianship, or residence.
- The school district will immediately enroll homeless students in the school of their choice. School of choice means: either their school of origin or the school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.
 - The decision will be based on the best interest of the student and consider factors such as:
 - The student's need for stability.
 - The distance from the current residence to the school.
 - Safety concerns.
 - Parent input
- School Transcripts: Full or partial credit will be provided to students from previously attended schools

5. Transportation

The district will provide transportation for homeless students to and from their school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian, or homeless liaison, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act. This includes transportation to and from school sponsored extracurricular activities in which the student is a participant.

6. Homeless Education Liaison: The district will designate a Homeless Education Liaison who will:

- Assist homeless students and their families with school enrollment.
- Ensure that homeless students are identified and receive educational services.
- Facilitate access to transportation and other services required by the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Mediate disputes related to school selection, enrollment, or transportation.
- Coordinate with state and local agencies to provide services to homeless children and youths and provide required comprehensive data to the State Coordinator needed to meet requirements
- Participate in additional professional development and technical assistance activities as required.
- Each school will have a Family Service Coordinator designated to help families engage in opportunities to participate in their child's education and provide information about their rights including transportation.

7. Services and Supports: Homeless students will be provided services and supports to which they are eligible, comparable to those offered to other students in the district, including:

- Access to free meals.
- The District reserves Title 1 funds in order to ensure Title I educational services comparable to those provided to children in Title I - A funded school.
- Referrals to Head Start or district Preschool programs, if applicable.
- Special education services, if applicable.
- English language learner services, if applicable.
- Access to extracurricular activities, programs, and resources.

8. Unaccompanied Youth: Defined as a school aged student not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- Eligible for immediate enrollment without a parent or guardian
- Support with FAFSA application and provided with information/letter from the district liaison regarding their independent status

9. Dispute Resolution: In case of a dispute regarding eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the homeless student must be immediately enrolled in the school in which they seek enrollment while the dispute is being resolved. The district will follow the dispute resolution process outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act and state laws.

*Parent will receive written notification of the district's decision and the right to appeal

10. Educational Records

Once enrolled, homeless students will have their educational records promptly requested from their previous school. The school will work to gather missing

documentation and will not penalize students for delays in providing documents typically required for enrollment. Any record ordinarily kept by the school regarding each homeless child shall be maintained:

- So they are available in a timely manner when the student enters a new school or district
- In a manner consistent with FERPA, applicable laws and district policy

11. Family Engagement: The district recognizes the critical role of parents and guardians in the educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. To support meaningful engagement, the district will:

- Provide parents and guardians of children and youth experiencing homelessness with information about educational rights, school programs, and available services in a clear and understandable format, in the primary language.
- Actively involve parents and guardians in decisions regarding school selection, enrollment, transportation and any other services provided to their children.
- Connect parents and guardians to appropriate resources that support family stability and engagement in their child's education.
- The district's Homeless Liaison and school-based Family Service Coordinators will serve as the primary contacts for parents and guardians of children and youth experiencing homelessness, ensuring that they are fully informed of their rights and opportunities for involvement in their child's education.

12. Training and Awareness: The district will provide annual training to all school staff on the rights and needs of homeless students to ensure awareness and compliance with this policy.

13. Review of Policy: This policy shall be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, and to reflect best practices in supporting homeless students.

References

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.)
<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>

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