



TO SERVE EVERY STUDENT WITH EXCELLENCE AS THE STANDARD

# Student Support Services Students-in-Transition Procedure Manual



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## Causes of homelessness:

Lack of affordable housing  
Unemployment  
Poverty  
Low wages  
Domestic violence  
Mental illness  
Substance abuse

Information in this handout came from the following websites:

<http://www.fldoe.org/policy/federal-edu-programs/title-x-homeless-edu-program-hep.html>

<https://nche.ed.gov/determining-eligibility/>

<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/tools-to-identify-students-experiencing-homelessness/>

# Introduction

## Educational Challenges of Homeless Children & Youths

The number of homeless children and youths enrolled in school has increased by 79 percent over the last decade, with 1.5 million students identified in School Year 2017-2018. (US News & World Report, 6/24/2021.) An 11% increase over the previous school year and the highest number ever recorded. Inadequate stock of affordable housing, fluctuating unemployment rates, high health costs, and natural disasters combined with shrinking public resources has resulted in a steady increase of the number of children experiencing homelessness.

Homeless children and youths face many educational barriers due to the disruption and trauma of not having a fixed, regular, and adequate place to live. Most face educational disruption due to changing schools as they move from one temporary location to another. Homeless children and youths also have higher incidences of illness, depression, and exposure to violence than their peers who are stably housed. Specific educational challenges faced by homeless students include:

- not being identified for services.
- difficulty enrolling without records or, in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, without a parent or guardian present.
- difficulty regularly attending school.
- lack of stable transportation.
- frequent school changes.
- falling behind in school.
- not accruing credits on time.
- lack of basic needs including food, clothing, and adequate housing.
- stress, depression, trauma; and
- embarrassment and stigma related to their housing conditions.



Many homeless youths are also *unaccompanied*, meaning they are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Being both homeless and unaccompanied leaves youths fending for themselves in a world where they are vulnerable to a myriad of potentially life-threatening dangers.

For all these reasons, school can often be the one place of stability, safety, and support in the tumultuous lives of these students.

The Stewart B. McKinney-Bruce Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act,) has been in effect for more than a quarter of a century. Originally enacted in 1987 and reauthorized in December 2015 by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the McKinney-Vento policy for the education of homeless children and youth was established.

“Each state educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.”

As a result, state and local educational agencies were mandated to change their policies and practices that create barriers to education. This relates to both access and success of homeless children and youth in public schools.

Brevard Public Schools is committed to identifying and providing services to students who are in-transition in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

For more information on the law:

*Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance*

U.S. Department of Education <http://www2.ed.gov>

# Purpose of the Manual

The Students-in-Transition Procedures Manual was developed to provide schools with pertinent information regarding the services required to homeless students through McKinney-Vento legislation. It provides definitions, procedures, and forms to ensure that homeless students receive necessary services.

BPS has adopted the following procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth; this is to include receiving comparable services offered to other students in the school.

Brevard County (Florida)  
Bylaws & Policies

## 5111.01 - HOMELESS STUDENTS

Florida law requires that all children have access to a free public education. Under federal law (McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001), homeless children and youth must have access to a free and appropriate public education, including preschool, and be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Homeless students will not be stigmatized or segregated based on their status as homeless.

### **The McKinney-Vento Definition of *Homeless***

**Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act) defines *homeless* as follows:**

The term "homeless children and youths"—

- (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals; \*
- (B) children and youths 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 (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)).
- (C) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (D) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (B) through (C).

## Definitions:

1. The term "unaccompanied youth" means a child who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
2. The term "school of origin" means the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where the child or youth was last enrolled.
3. The terms "enroll and enrollment" mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.
4. The term "immediate" means without delay.
5. The term "parent" means parent or guardian of a student.
6. The term "liaison" means the staff person designated by our LEA and each LEA in the state as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the liaison by the McKinney-Vento Act.
7. The Brevard School District:
  - A. Identifies homeless students based on the McKinney-Vento Act definition shown above.
  - B. Ensures that all homeless children and youth are afforded the same free; appropriate public education; and receive comparable services (such as transportation services; educational services, including special/exceptional education and related services and programs for English language learners; career and technical education programs; gifted programs; school nutrition programs (free meals); Title I, Part A; and before and after school programs offered to other children and youth, and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school.
  - C. Provides access for homeless preschool-aged children and their families to educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool programs administered by the school district.
  - D. Seeks to remove barriers and provide exemptions as needed to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth, such as guardianship, transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, and other documentation.
  - E. Ensures the immediate enrollment and retention of homeless students.
  - F. Ensures that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized, segregated, or separated in another educational program, based on their status as homeless.
  - G. Ensures the rights of homeless students to remain in their school of origin with transportation services and their right to dispute school selection, if other than school of origin, and communicate these rights and the dispute process to the homeless parents or guardians or unaccompanied youth. If requested by the parent or homeless unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide transportation to and from the school of origin if feasible. If the homeless student is living in this district but attending school in another or attending school in this district but living in another, this district will coordinate with the neighboring district to arrange transportation.
  - H. Follows the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The Superintendent will appoint a Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth who will perform the duties as assigned by the Superintendent. Additionally, the Liaison will coordinate and collaborate with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and with community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

McKinney-Vento is the primary piece of Federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in U.S. public schools. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002.

National Law Center on Homeless and Poverty  
Determining Homelessness by the Definition<sup>1</sup>

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Drafted by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, March 2003. Address questions/comments to Patricia Julianelle, at [julianelle@nlchp.org](mailto:julianelle@nlchp.org). This information is not offered as legal advice and should not be used as a substitute for seeking professional legal advice. It does not create an attorney-client relationship with you.

## Homeless Student Identification Procedure:

Homeless children and youth are difficult to identify for many reasons, and thus often go unnoticed by school personnel. In order to identify homeless children both in and out of school, the district Liaison coordinates with community service agencies, local shelters, street outreach teams, and faith-based organizations. In addition, the liaison provides awareness training to all school clerks and guidance counselors.

- a) Self-report. A family or student may notify the school liaison or teacher and report their living situation; or upon enrollment they will report their situation to the school registrar.
- b) Shelter referral: The local shelters report to the District Homeless Liaison any school age children they are housing.
- c) Referrals from other school districts.
- d) Referrals from school social workers or community liaisons doing home visits for other family issues. Many of our double ups are identified this way.
- e) Referrals from various school staff such as guidance counselors or registrars. Many of our unaccompanied minors or doubled ups are identified at the school level.
- f) Other District offices such as Head Start, School of Choice, and District Communications.

### **It cannot be emphasized enough that determining whether a particular child or youth fits the definition of homeless is a case-specific inquiry.**

1. Identification: **Registrar/office clerk** is frequently the first contact.  
Confidentiality: The homeless status of a student is confidential, and all information obtained when determining a homeless status is confidential.
2. Registrar, office clerk or other school personnel **shall assist** the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth complete the annual Student Residency Statement (SRS). The SRS includes information to help in the identification of students-in-transition.

**Because the circumstances of homelessness vary with each family or unaccompanied youth's situation, determining eligibility must occur on a case-by-case-basis. If the student's residence is not fixed, regular, and adequate, it is considered a homeless situation.**

Please note: if a family is sharing the housing of others, the student is homeless. **only** if the family is sharing housing due to economic hardship or a similar reason. **However, if the student has been sharing the housing of the same family for a year or more, the situation should be clarified to determine if the student is homeless.**

**“A long-term, cooperative living arrangement among families or friends that is fixed, regular, and adequate should not be considered a homeless situation, even if the parties are living together to save money.”**

3. If the student meets the criteria for a student-in-transition, **enroll the student immediately**, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. If the parent/guardian needs assistance in obtaining documents, please contact Ivette Collado at (321) 633-1000.



## Unaccompanied Homeless Youth - Enrolling Students on Their Own

Brevard Public Schools enrollment procedures are based on the expectation that children are living with their parents or legal guardians. Requiring parents or legal guardians to sign forms upon enrolling children provides schools with protection from certain types of liability and with contact information for situations in which additional permissions or consultations are needed.



In a number of instances, however, children and youth who are enrolling in a school may not be living with their parents or legal guardians. Frequently, children in families experiencing homelessness are sent to live temporarily with friends or relatives. In other situations, youth have been forced to leave home due to abusive environments or are on their own for other reasons. These children and youth, in most cases, fit the definition of homeless, unaccompanied youth in the McKinney-Vento Act: a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

The Act **requires** school districts to **enroll homeless children and youth in school immediately, even if they lack required enrollment documents.** ("Enroll" and "enrollment" are defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities.")

Therefore, schools **may not condition school enrollment upon the receipt of proof of legal guardianship** by caregivers of homeless, unaccompanied youth; nor may they require caregivers to become legal guardians within a certain period after the child enrolls in school.

The school liaison plays a key role in identifying and supporting unaccompanied, homeless youth and are expected to:

1. help the student choose and enroll in school after considering their wishes.
2. inform them of their right to transportation and assist them in accessing transportation.
4. provide them with notice of their right to appeal to school or school-district decisions.
5. and ensure that they are enrolled in school immediately, pending resolution of disputes.

### Other ways to identify homeless students.

As school employees, we must be aware of the silent signals our students may present. Characteristics may be attributed to students with other issues as well as those students/families experiencing homeless:

Some common characteristics students may exhibit:

#### Depression/Anxiety

- Poor/short attention span
- Aggressive behavior
- Withdrawn
- Unwilling to socialize at recess.
- Anxiety late in the day
- Lying about where parents are or where they are living.
- Protective of parents/covers for parent.
- Poor self-esteem
- Developmental delays



#### Disturbed Relationships

- Difficulty trusting people.
- Old beyond years
- School phobia (want to be with parent)



- Does not know the rules of games.
- Difficulty making transitions.
- Fear of abandonment
- Need for immediate gratification.
- Unwillingness to risk forming relations with classmates & teachers.
- Clinging behavior



### **Poor Health/Nutrition**

- Skin rash
- Respiratory problems
- Increased vulnerability to colds and flu
- Unattended dental needs
- Unattended medical needs
- May lack immunization records.



### **Hunger**

- Hoards food at snack time

### **Poor Hygiene**

- Lack of shower facilities/washers, etc.
- Wear the same clothes for several days.
- Inconsistent grooming – well-groomed one day, poorly groomed the next day.

### **Transportation/Attendance Problems**

- Numerous absences
- Does not participate in after-school activities.
- Does not participate in field trips.
- Does not attend school on days when students bring special treats.
- Parents do not attend parent-teacher conferences, open houses, etc.
- Parents unreachable



### **Lack of Continuity in Education**

- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken diagnosis of abilities
- Difficulty adjusting to new school.
- Many different schools in a short time span
- Does not have personal records needed to enroll.
- Poor organizational skills
- Poor ability to conceptualize.

### **Lack of Privacy/Personal Space after School**

- Fatigue
- Incomplete, missing homework (no place to do homework or keep supplies)
- Withdrawn
- Unable to complete special projects (no access to supplies)
- Loss of books and other supplies on a regular basis
- Refusing invitations from classmates
- Concern for safety of belongings
- Lack of basic school supplies
- Inability to pay fees.



### **Some common statements used by homeless students/families may include:**

- "We've moved a lot."
- "We're staying with relatives/friends while looking for a place."
- "We're going through a bad time right now."



**If you suspect homelessness, these are possible follow up questions:**

**Why did the family move in together? Was it for mutual benefit or due to a crisis or other precipitating event?**

**Is there a plan for the household to remain intact over a long term, or is it a short-term situation?**

**Where would the family be if they were not able to stay where they are? In a clearly homeless situation or in another apartment or house?**

**Does everyone have a bed to sleep in? Is the plumbing and electric service safe? Is the housing otherwise adequate?**

**Is the family being added to the lease, or have they signed a lease?**

**Does the homeowner or renter have a legal right to force the family to leave without cause if they choose to do so?**

- 1. Are you living in this household because you do not have stable housing?**
- 2. Do you live in any of these situations?**
  - Sharing housing with relatives or others due to lack of housing
  - In a shelter or transitional living program
  - In a motel, hotel, park or campground due to lack of adequate housing
  - In a car or RV or in a public place (such as a bus station)
  - In sub-standard housing, such as an abandoned building
  - Without a parent or guardian, or a teen (up to age 21) living independently.
  - My parents are migrant workers.
  - In other situations that are not fixed, regular, or adequate for nighttime residence.
- 3. Would you be willing to talk/meet with our school liaison or homeless information specialist to discuss resources available to you?**



*Information on this form was adapted from the national Center for Homeless Education.*

## Once it is determined that a student is in-transition please complete the following:

1. Parent or student registers online and fills out the Student Residency form. The school clerk or front office personnel codes the student in FOCUS under the homeless tab.  
Please note that the FDOE requires the cause of homelessness to be entered and will reject the entry if the **cause** is not entered.  
Once identified as a student-in-transition, the student maintains that status for the remainder of the academic year.
2. Students in transition are eligible for free lunch in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. Free lunch begins immediately. The parent/guardian **does not need** to complete the Free/Reduced Lunch Application.
3. If the parent/student wants to continue in the school of origin, please follow the procedure to have a determination of approval made by the District Liaison. (Complete the School of Origin Request Form and send it to [sitforms@brevardschools.org](mailto:sitforms@brevardschools.org)). When a decision has been made, you will be notified.
4. Have the school homeless liaison meet with the student/family to assess needs and provide support.

### Services available through Brevard Public Schools

BPS makes available resources as required by federal, state, and local legislation. In addition to the required resources, BPS also provides other resources through funding made available by community contributions. The following is a list of services, both required and currently made available.

- Transportation to zoned school or school of origin.
- Enrolling in free lunch program
- School supplies
- Uniforms or appropriate school clothing
- Head Start and pre-school programs.
- Referrals to community resources through Homeless Information Specialists
- Shoes
- Medical and Dental care **referral** to Brevard Health Alliance
- After school academic support through TITLE I-**with referral** through guidance counselor
- Affidavit of Homelessness **to access** health care, college options and other community support

### Community Donations that may support our programs - IF AND WHEN FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE

- Gas cards for **specialized needs (on a limited basis)**
- School participation fees- fieldtrips, projects, and other school related activities
- Hygiene items (available to ALL students in need)
- Band instrument rental fees
- Laptop / hot spots and CPR (cell phone) and computer loan
- Homeless Information Specialist for family to provide resources of school and community.
- Free before and after-school care (for working parents) for a period of time to be determined based on availability of funds.
- 80% reduced cost for participation in Brevard Parks and Recreation camps (based on Brevard County P & R participation)
- Free prom dresses for all seniors through Hilton Cocoa Beach and Space Coast Realtors

# Transportation



## Key Provisions

- Local Educational Agencies (LEA's), otherwise known as school districts, must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin\*, at a parent or guardian's request.
- For unaccompanied youth, LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the LEA homeless liaison's request.
- "School of origin\*" is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness, in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during the academic year, and for the remainder of the academic year, even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.

## PROCEDURE FOR TRANSPORTATION TO THE SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

1. Assist the parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth complete a Student Residency Statement if need to. The Homeless Liaison will determine eligibility of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
2. Use the google link below to request transportation for a student in transition that lives beyond the 2 miles and out of area.  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScjNVGgELVq9uRU3HVhapUb3SWOo3ZeHeL\\_GaVHnCNA7pXRkQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScjNVGgELVq9uRU3HVhapUb3SWOo3ZeHeL_GaVHnCNA7pXRkQ/viewform)

3. The school should verify eligibility of homelessness with the Sit office.

All forms can be found online at the Brevard Public Schools website:

- First log in to BPS website with your account, and follow these steps.
  - Departments & Programs
  - Student Services
  - Students-in-Transition Internal
  - Procedure for transportation to the school of origin

### Students in Transition

**District Homeless Liaison: Ivette Collado**

**Office – 321-633-1000 ext:11294**

**Email [collado.ivette@brevardschools.org](mailto:collado.ivette@brevardschools.org)**

# Faces of the Homeless

Living on the street



Living in tents



Living in a shelter



Living in Shared Housing



Living in Motels



Unaccompanied Youth



Living in Cars