

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (DE) Administrative Code Title 14 Education; 901) was established to minimize educational disruptions for students who are experiencing homelessness. LEA Liaisons are responsible for ensuring that students in homeless situations are identified, enrolled, attend school and have equal opportunities for school success as those students who are not homeless.

What is the definition of a Homeless Child/Youth?

Any individual(s) who lack a **fixed, regular** and **adequate nighttime residence** are considered homeless. This includes:

- Sharing housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, and camp grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Extensive stay in a medical facility, such as a hospital, due to a lack of other housing accommodations
- Having a primary nighttime residence that is a public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations

Careful consideration should be given to migratory children living in circumstances described above.

How to identify a McKinney-Vento student?

Often a building secretary, or school registrar will be the first staff member to come in contact with the student/family. He/she should be aware of the warning signs that may indicate homelessness including lack of continuity in education, previous attendance issues, poor hygiene, inability to provide enrollment documents and immunization records, reactions/statements by the student or family member, and/or incomplete enrollment records. *It is important to avoid asking a student/family if they are "homeless."*

What happens when a building secretary/registrar suspects a student is homeless?

The Homeless Liaison should be contacted immediately to support the family and provide assistance in school enrollment. Discretion and confidentiality are extremely important.

What are the first steps for the Homeless Liaison?

The Homeless Liaison is responsible for guaranteeing that the student receives a free, appropriate public education. The parent/guardian must be informed of educational and related opportunities available for their child. Students are to remain in the school they have been attending whenever possible, although they may not meet residency requirements. The Liaison must ensure that proper enrollment occurs, contacting the previous school to assist in the determination of placement, obtaining the necessary documents, such as immunizations, and arranging transportation. The Liaison shall support the child's full participation in school activities including clubs, sports, homework help, etc.

How is school placement determined?

Whenever feasible, the child should remain in their school of origin. This is determined via conversations with the parent, child and the Liaison from the current school of enrollment. It may be necessary to schedule a Best Interest Meeting to determine school placement. If a dispute arises over school placement, the State Coordinator should be contacted and, if necessary, a dispute should be filed with the Secretary of Education.

What are Unaccompanied Youth?

“Unaccompanied Youth” are children under the age of eighteen who are not residing with a parent or legal guardian. Any school staff with knowledge of this information is required to report this information to the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families (DSCYF).

What are the roles and responsibilities of the Homeless Liaison?

- To assist with student enrollment and obtainment of needed documentation
- Support families and students identified under McKinney-Vento
- Provide related educational materials and resources for staff including teaching staff, registrars, secretaries, counselors, nurses, bus drivers, food service workers, facilities staff, administrators and tutors
- Enter information in the Department of Education database
- Ensure that posters and outreach material are displayed in common areas of the building(s)
- Obtain resources for students through grants, local partners, community and neighboring schools
- Collaborate with community agencies, law enforcement, legal aid, housing agencies, mental health agencies, libraries, youth services, motels, campgrounds and health centers to provide outreach and resources
- Attend professional development to support their knowledge and understanding