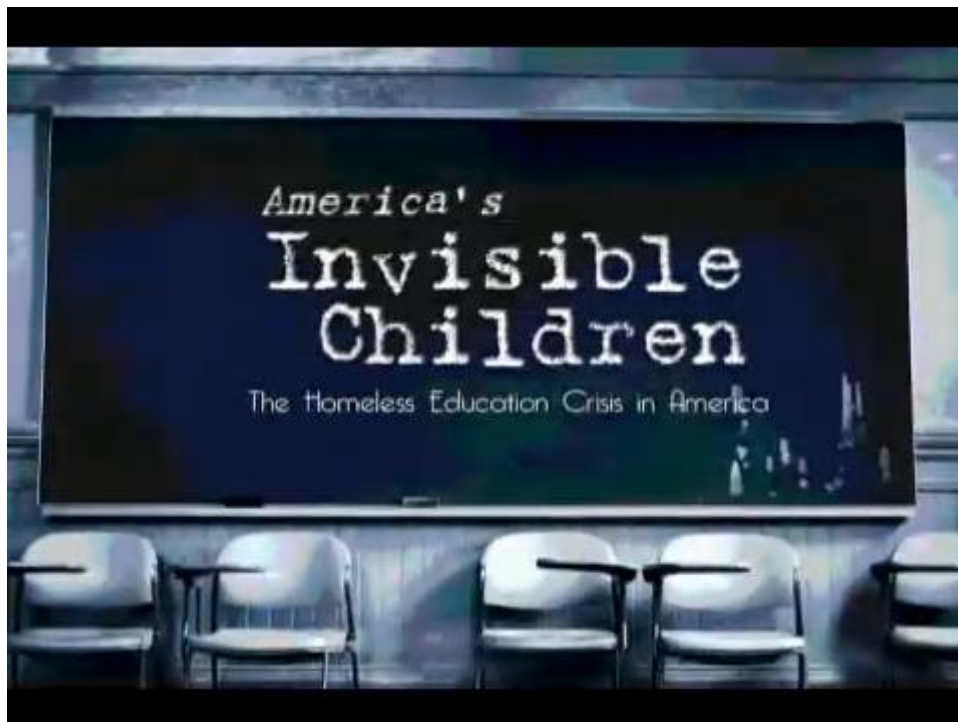


Smith County School District

Mc Kinney –Vento, Title IX Part A

Procedures Manual For Enrolling Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth



2024-2025

Smith County School District Procedures for Enrolling Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth 2024- 2025

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act assures preschool-aged, school-aged children and unaccompanied youth certain rights.

Definition:

The McKinney-Vento Acts 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 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;
- 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*** includes homeless students not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Requirements:

The McKinney-Vento Act provides certain rights for homeless and unaccompanied students. They include waiving certain requirements such as proof of residency when students are enrolling and allowing categorical eligibility for certain services. The Act also states:

- Homeless/unaccompanied students may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Homeless/unaccompanied students must be provided a written statement of their rights when they enroll and at least two times per year
- Homeless/ unaccompanied students may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Homeless/ unaccompanied students have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.



Procedures for Identifying a Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth

A student may be considered homeless if:

- The student indicates a homeless status at the time of enrollment
- An affidavit of residency or McKinney-Vento Referral Form indicate that the arrangement is temporary due to necessity (due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason)

Procedures for Enrolling a Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth

The school may not deny, delay, or transfer enrollment solely because a student is homeless, or because a homeless student is unable to produce school, medical, or residency records.

A school enrolling, or about to enroll, a homeless student shall:

- Immediately enroll the student, regardless of the availability of educational and/or immunization records
 - If a student attempts to register without a parent/guardian, effort should be made to contact the parent/guardian
 - The homeless student may not be barred from enrollment due to lack of immunization until an effort has been made to obtain records. If records cannot be obtained, assistance should be provided in getting the student properly immunized.
 - If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be registered. Department of Human Services may be contacted to assist in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate.
 - The student will be identified as homeless in MSIS.
- Make a reasonable effort to verify that the child is homeless.
- Contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records
 - If student records cannot be obtained or records are not available an educational record (cumulative folder) will be developed. In these cases, an academic diagnostic test may be administered to assist in the determination of the student's skill levels and appropriate placement.
 - Priority shall be given in evaluations of homeless student suspected of having a disability.

- Provide **free meals within one school day after the student enrolled**. If necessary, assistance will be provided for completion of free and reduced lunch forms.
- Provide access to the same services comparable to those offered to other students in the school which the homeless student attends such as:
 - transportation services
 - educational services
 - school nutrition programs
 - vocational and technical programs
 - extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- Coordinate with and/or refer student to other community resources in offering assistance to the homeless student/family
- Contact the district homeless liaison

It is important that the academic and educational programs for children who are temporarily without a home are no different than those of the general student population.

Points of Contact

State Homeless Liaison:

LaDewayne Harris

District Homeless Liaison:

Angela Harris

Local School Site Homeless Liaisons:

The district liaison and local school site homeless liaisons work in conjunction with each other to ensure that the McKinney Vento Act is implemented as stated by law in Smith County School District.

The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA;
- Homeless children and youth and their families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services;
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where they receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

In meeting these responsibilities, local liaisons must assist homeless children and youth with such activities as the following:

- Enrolling in school and accessing school services;
- Ensuring that the student is identified in SAM/ MSIS
- Obtaining immunizations or medical records;

- Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
- Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement;
- Helping to coordinate transportation services for homeless children and youth; and
- Collaborating and coordinating with State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.



Smith County School District Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form
--

Name of Student: _____

Date: _____

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a homeless child or unaccompanied youth has the right to attend the school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the best interest of the child:

The 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

The local attendance area school (local school) is defined as:

- Any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

This form will assist in determining which placement decision would be in the student's best interest.

Please provide the following information for the attendance options for the student:

School that the child or youth attended when permanently housed:

Name of school and district:

Dates of Attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

School in which the child or youth was last enrolled:

Name of school and district:

Dates of attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

Local Attendance Area School:

Name of school and district:

Current living arrangement:

1. Are the school of origin and the local attendance area school in the same district?
2. Which school does the child/ youth want to attend? Why?
3. Which school does the parent want the child/youth to attend? Why?
4. What is the distance and time spent on travel from the current residence to the school of origin?
5. If transportation is currently unavailable to the school of origin, how can it be arranged?
6. What time of year is it (at the beginning of school year, near the end of the school year, during the summer)?
7. How long did the child/youth attend the school of origin? Were meaningful social and educational relationships established?
8. Are there specific people in the school or origin who have been providing support or assistance to the family or child/youth experiencing homelessness?
9. Are their special programs, such as gifted, bilingual, or remedial education, in which the child/youth has been participating? If yes, please describe.

Are these special programs also available at the local attendance area school?
10. Based on knowledge of the family's situation, how long is the family likely to remain at the current residence?
11. What is the likelihood that the family experiencing homelessness will reestablish residency in the attendance area of the school origin?

Based on answers to the previous questions, the school district recommends the following school: _____

Individuals consulted to determine that placement is the student's best interest were:

1. _____ Title: _____

2. _____ Title: _____

3. _____ Title: _____

4. _____ Title: _____

Signature(s) of the individuals making the recommendation:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

**Smith County School District
Office of Federal Programs
Written Notification of Enrollment Decision**

- **To be completed by the receiving school when an enrollment request is denied**

Date: _____

Name of person completing form: _____

Title of person completing this form: _____

Name of School: _____

In compliance with section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney- Vento Homeless Act, the following written notification is provided to:

Name of Parent(s) Guardian(s): _____

Name of Student(s) _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment requested is denied.

This determination is based upon: _____

You have a right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice or by contacting the school district's local homeless education liaison.

Name of Local Liaison: _____

Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately at requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal communication(s) to support your position regarding the student's enrollment in the requested school. You may use the form attached to this notification.
- You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education if further help is needed or desired. Contact information for State Coordinator: LaDewayne Harris (601)359-3499

<p style="text-align: center;">Smith County School District Office of Federal Programs Enrollment Decision Dispute</p>

Date: _____

Student(s) _____

Person completing form: _____

Relation to student(s) _____

I may be contacted at (phone or e-mail) _____

I wish to appeal the enrollment decisions made by: _____

Name of School: _____

I have been provided with (check all that applies):

____ A written explanation of the school's decision

____ Contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison

____ A copy of the state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness.

Optional: You may include a written explanation in the space below to support your appeal or you may provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a written copy of this form when I submitted it. _____ (initial)