

# McKinney Vento Homeless Program



Revised 2013

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# Howe Independent School District

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## Program Description

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states that once a child has been identified as homeless, residency requirements do not apply. The federal law requires that a child or youth experiencing homelessness attend one of the following:

- The *school of origin*: The school that the child last attended before experiencing homelessness or the school where the student was last enrolled.
- The *local attendance area school*: 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.

Enrollment must take place immediately.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires schools to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the local attendance area school. The following individuals may be consulted in determining what placement is in the child's or youth's best interest:

- The homeless child or youth
- The parents or caretakers of the homeless child or youth
- Homeless shelter personnel
- Representatives of social service agencies
- Local homeless education liaisons
- School counselors

It is the school district's responsibility to determine the school of origin and local attendance area school and to resolve any conflict concerning the school placement that is in the best interest of the student. Whenever possible, the school district is to comply with the parents'/caretakers' wishes.

If the school district and parents/caretakers do not agree on the appropriate placement, the state's dispute resolution procedure must be followed. The student should be enrolled in the school that the parents or caretakers (or the student himself/herself, in the case of an unaccompanied youth) have chosen during the resolution process. If the local attendance area school and the school of origin are in different districts and the school of origin is determined to be the best placement, the local homeless education liaisons from both districts must work together to arrange transportation. If the two districts cannot reach a mutually agreed-upon arrangement, the two districts must split equally the cost and responsibility of transporting the student to the school of origin.

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## Homeless Liaison

### Duties of the Homeless Liaison:

- Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- Students experiencing homelessness enroll, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed, in school.
- Families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness 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 students experiencing homelessness 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.
- Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are fully informed of all transportation services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing these services.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations or immunization or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.
- Help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youths' wishes, and provide youth with notice of their right to appeal an enrollment decision that is contrary to their wishes.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school immediately pending the resolution of any dispute that may arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinators for Homeless Education and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youth in homeless situations.
- State coordinators and LEAs must educate school personnel, service providers, and advocates who work with families in homeless situations about the duties of the local homeless education liaison.

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McKinney Vento Homeless Program Links:

National Center for Homeless Education

800-308-2145 (Toll-free Helpline)

<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Association for the Education of Children and Youth

<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty

<http://www.nlchp.org>