



Supports for Homeless Students

Overview

1. Homeless students in the District shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate education and other services, including public preschool education, as other students.
2. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires that the District:
 - a. Ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homeless status;
 - b. Designate a homeless liaison to coordinate services to ensure that homeless students enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically;
 - c. Develop an appeal procedure for the prompt resolution of disputes that is accessible to all parties; and
 - d. Educate school staff and administrators about the rights of homeless students and families by providing information about the homeless assistance act and this directive in schools and administrative offices.

Definitions

1. “Enrollment” means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
2. “School of origin” means the school that a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

When a student who has been designated as McKinney-Vento (homeless) has completed the final grade served by the school of origin, *if the student is still in a homeless living situation*, the term “school of origin” shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

3. “Homeless student” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes:
 - a. Students who are temporarily staying at the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, emergency crisis situation, fire,



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- natural disaster, or a similar reason. This may include “couch surfing” or moving often between numerous other people’s residences;
 - b. Students who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c. Students who are living in homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, or agency based transitional housing program sites;
 - d. Students 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;
 - e. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
 - f. Migratory students who qualify as homeless because the students are living in circumstances described in a.-e.
4. “Unaccompanied Youth” means a student not living with or being supported by a parent or legal guardian. They may be completely out on their own or staying informally with one or more adults that are not their parent/legal guardian. It does *not* include students in Foster Care, unless a Foster Care student has run away from the foster home.

Assignment to School

The district shall, according to the student’s best interest, continue the student’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, or enroll the student in a district school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend. Homeless students seeking enrollment in schools with specific admission criteria or lottery based enrollment rather than neighborhood attendance boundaries (such as magnet, charter, immersion, etc.) need to follow the same protocols for entry as non-homeless students. If deadlines for application at those types of special schools were missed due to homelessness, the liaison will work with the school to see if exceptions can be made if there is space available.

In determining the best interest of the student, the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping the student in their school of origin is in their best interest, unless doing so is contrary to the request of the student’s parent or guardian;



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2. Provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, if the district sends a homeless student to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian;
3. Ensure that the district's liaison helps with placement or enrollment decisions for an unaccompanied student and considers the request of the student, and provides a notice of the right to appeal on placement and enrollment decisions.

Enrollment

The district shall immediately enroll the student in the school selected even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as academic records, medical records, proof of residence or other documentation.

The district shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other student records.

If the student needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the district shall immediately refer the parent or guardian to the district's liaison, who will help in obtaining necessary immunizations or records.

Records

Any records ordinarily maintained by the district, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records and evaluations for special services or programs, shall be maintained so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a homeless student enters a new school or district, consistent with state and federal law.

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection, enrollment, or eligibility, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school requested, pending resolution of the dispute.

The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the district's decision regarding school selection, including the rights of the parent, guardian or student to appeal the decision through the McKinney-Vento Act dispute resolution



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and appeal process, including final appeal to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) State Coordinator.

The student, parent or guardian shall be referred to the district's liaison, who shall ensure the resolution process is carried out as expeditiously as possible. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison shall ensure the student is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.

Services

Each homeless student shall be provided with services comparable to services offered to other students, including the following:

1. Transportation services;
2. Education services for which the student is eligible, such as:
 - a. Title 1*;
 - b. Special education;
 - c. Programs for English Learners;
 - d. Career and technical education;
 - e. Talented and gifted programs.
3. *All homeless students are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of their current academic performance.
4. School nutrition programs.
 - a. All homeless students are direct certified as Free Lunch status upon qualification as McKinney-Vento Homeless for that school year.
5. The designation of McKinney-Vento Homeless status for a student lasts from the time of identification/qualification until the end of that school year, regardless of whether the student subsequently becomes housed. The designation does not roll over into the following school year. Students must be referred to the McKinney-Vento program each year and be qualified or not based on the current living situation.



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Coordination

The district shall coordinate the provision of services to homeless students with local social service agencies, and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless students and their families. Services will also be provided in cooperation with other districts on inter-district issues such as transportation, transfer of school records and issues concerning appropriate credit for full or partial course work completed at a prior school to ensure that homeless students have access to available educational and related services.

District Liaison

The district's liaison shall ensure that:

1. Homeless students are identified and assessed for needs;
2. Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in district schools;
3. Homeless families and students have access to and receive educational services through Head Start, Early Intervention and preschool services;
4. Homeless families and students receive educational services for which they are eligible, as well as information about and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, shelters and housing services, and other appropriate services;
5. Parents of homeless students are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to the students and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their students;
6. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is distributed where such students receive services (e.g., schools, shelters, public libraries, and food banks);
7. Enrollment disputes are mediated through McKinney-Vento Act dispute resolution procedures;
8. The parents of homeless students, or any unaccompanied student, is fully informed of all transportation services for which they are eligible, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected;
9. School personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless students and their families are informed of the liaison's duties.



Board Policy

4.10.014-P

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The district's liaison shall coordinate and collaborate with the ODE state coordinator, community and school personnel responsible for the provision of educational and related services to homeless students.

Legal references: USED Non-Regulatory Guidance (July 27, 2016); McKinney-Vento Act – Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, as amended December 2015 under ESSA; ORS 109.056; ORS 327.006; ORS 339.115; ORS 339.133; ORS 433.267; OAR 581-021-0045 to – 0046; Adpt 8/14/18.