



**Marion County School District
Procedures for implementing the
McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless
Children and Youth Program**



Identification

Homeless students will be identified in the Marion County School District based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as homeless children or youth who

- *lack a fixed (stationary, permanent, not subject to change),*
- *regular (used on a predictable, routine, consistent basis and/or consideration of the relative permanence), and*
- *adequate nighttime residence (lawfully and reasonable sufficient; sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment),*
- *and includes Children and Youths:*
 - *Who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;*
 - *Who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;*
 - *Who are living in emergency or transitional shelters;*
 - *Who are abandoned in hospital;*
 - *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;*
 - *Who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and*
 - *Who are migratory children who live in one of the above circumstances;*

Homeless children and youth in Marion County are identified through the registration process and staff reporting. Each school in the district registers all students new to the county. The registration staff has been trained to recognize certain addresses as well as other signs which may indicate homelessness. In addition, school counselors, nurses, school social workers, bus drivers and administrators have been trained to recognize signs of homelessness. Posters detailing information regarding McKinney-Vento have been placed in all schools and community agencies to provide public notice of homeless children and youth rights. Referrals are made to the local Homeless Liaison at the Marion County School District Central Office. Each family is asked to complete the Student Residency

Questionnaire. Once the identification is made this information is entered by the School Data Clerk into Power school, the district's student information system, under the "Residency and Origin Information". The District Homeless Liaison will maintain a list of all identified as homeless within the district. The data includes a list of homeless students, their grade and school.

Services

Marion County School District provides services comparable to services offered to all children in the district including, but not limited to programs for: Title I, Special education, English language learners, Gifted, and Vocational/technical programs. Demonstrated evidence of student access to services is verified by reconciling student rosters from Nutrition services, ESOL, IDEA and other programs.

The homelessness children and youth are also provided with Opportunity to attend summer school, (if offered), needed school supplies, Free/reduced breakfast/lunch.

Marion County School District Board Policy JBC (1) provides a broad overview of the policy for homeless students. It provides for a free, appropriate public education the right of a homeless child to attend the school of origin; the right to participate in all school programs for which criteria is met including school meals, and a dispute policy.

The Marion County Schools Board Policy Code [JBC(1) regarding homeless students provides federal regulations for assuring that homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate public education and acts to remove barriers to enrollment and promote active identification of homeless children and youth. The policy defines homelessness in detail as provided by McKinney-Vento guidelines. It also details the two main sources for identifying homeless children and youth as the school registration or other system personnel and through partnership with community agencies.

School Selection

The policy also addresses school selection and enrollment. Each homeless child and youth has the right to remain at his/her school of origin or to attend school in the attendance area in which they are currently residing. If not feasible for the student to continue in their school of origin, the student shall be assigned or transported to the school in the attendance area in which the child is actually living. In that case, if the parent/guardian does not agree, the school system will provide a written explanation as required by federal law. Enrollment is to take place immediately even if a child does not have the required documents at initial contact. The homeless liaison will assist families in obtaining these documents after the child is enrolled.

Transportation

Transportation is outlined in the policy for McKinney-Vento eligible students to receive transportation to and from the school in which they are enrolled. Moreover, it details the procedure for coordinating with other counties in the event a child needs to cross county lines to attend school. If transportation is requested by a parent or guardian, the homeless liaison will consider the feasibility and make the request known to the transportation department. The length of the commute will only be considered in determining the feasibility of placement in the school of origin based on potential harm to the student. Any disputes regarding transportation shall not result in a homeless student missing school. The Homeless Liaison is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the McKinney-Vento supported activities which include but not limited to documenting all transportation request regarding homeless children and youth, conducting surveys and needs assessments annually. The liaison maintains inventory logs, meeting notification, agendas, and sign-in sheets in regard to implementing procedures of the program. This information is report to the Federal Programs Director and through an annual McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Evaluation and Continuation report to the Georgia Department of Education.

Coordination

The homeless 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 have full and equal opportunity to succeed academically and receive education services for which they are eligible.

The homeless liaison is responsible for making homeless determinations, resolving disputes involving enrollment, informing parents/guardians of all transportation services including transportation to and from the school of origin, and assisting in transportation services, conducting needs assessments, providing professional learning experiences, and that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where they receive services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Title 1 Part A

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Title 1, Part A services, regardless of the school they attend. The trauma and instability of homelessness puts students at sufficient risk of academic regression to warrant additional support. The district will reserve funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to Title 1 Part A students to children and youth experiencing homelessness who attend non-participating schools. LEAs must establish their own methods for setting aside Title 1, Part A funds for homeless students who are not attending Title 1 schools. Determining an appropriate amount requires coordination between the LEA Title 1 and Homeless education programs. Reserved funds will be used to provide educationally related support services,

both in schools and outside of school, and to remove barriers that prevent regular attendance.

Training

The liaison's role also includes relating concerns to school administrations when change is needed to implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The homeless liaison will also be cognizant of the demographic data relating to Marion County and will utilize this information to train school personnel and local community groups about the needs of homeless children and youth.

The liaison seeks staff development opportunities to ensure continued understanding as law changes and attends professional learning opportunities offered statewide and/or nationally. The homeless liaison utilizes information gathered from these professional learning opportunities to train local school staff, personnel, and community groups about education of homeless children and youth.

Disputes

If a dispute arises over any issue in this policy, the child or youth experiencing homelessness will be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student experiencing homelessness to all appropriate services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1 services while the dispute is pending.

The school where the dispute arises will provide the parent of unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will immediately refer the parent or youth to the Homeless liaison. The liaison will ensure the student is enrolled in the school of origin, receiving other services to which he/she entitled and will resolve the disputes expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution process. The homeless liaison will keep records of all disputes to determine whether particular issues or schools are repeatedly creating barriers to student enrollment and academic process.

Credit for full or partial coursework

Marion County School District will ensure that a child or youth experiencing homelessness be afforded the opportunity to receive full or partial credit for coursework. Appropriate secondary education and support services will be provided to ensure that homeless youths receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

(Revised April 3, 2018)