

McKinney Vento Handbook



K-12 Principals

2017-2018

WASHINGTON STATE MCKINNEY-VENTO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM SCHOOL STAFF RESOURCE

OVERVIEW

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, provides for the delivery of services to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. Every school district or LEA is required to implement the McKinney-Vento Act, including appointing a local homeless liaison who is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified, enrolled immediately in school, and linked to services.

School administrators, teachers, and support personnel encounter children and youth experiencing homelessness every day and play a critical role in ensuring that these children and youth are identified and served. As school personnel, you are often the ones who develop trusting relationships with students and families and can be the eyes and ears to identify vulnerable students and ensure that they are linked to services and support.

This booklet will guide school personnel in ways to support homeless families, children, and youth. Included are a summary of requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and state legislation, the role of the local liaison, and both general strategies for school personnel and strategies for specific role groups to help homeless students enroll in school, attend regularly, and succeed academically. Also included are links to additional information and resources.

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- Have contact information for the local homeless liaison on hand and contact him or her to learn about LEA procedures and policies regarding homeless students.
- When you identify a student who is or may possibly be experiencing homelessness, contact the local liaison right away to ensure that the student is linked to all needed services.
- Participate in trainings to increase your awareness of the needs of homeless students and provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act to address their needs.
- Become familiar with trauma-informed services, understanding that many homeless children and youth have experienced tremendous loss, stress, and in many cases, domestic violence.
- Be on the lookout for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as
 - chronic hunger or fatigue;
 - stress and concern about family or where they will go after school;
 - erratic attendance at school;
 - changes in behavior;
 - poor grooming or clothing that draws attention or is worn for several days in a row; or
 - reluctance to part with belongings while at school.
- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Discuss a child's or youth's possible homelessness with him or her or with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word "homeless." You should use terms like "living in a temporary situation" or "not having a stable place to live."
- Do not disclose information about a student's living situation to anyone other than the local liaison and to other school administrators and school staff only as needed.
- Ensure that the child or youth feels welcome in the school and classroom and has genuine connections to caring adults.

RESOURCES

- NCHE Training Resources (Webinars and Self-Paced Trainings)
http://center.serve.org/nche/web/online_tr.php

STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

- Promote a school climate that welcomes all students and supports students with the greatest needs.
- Ensure that posters and brochures on the educational rights of homeless children and youth are displayed in the school, and announce information on the rights of homeless children and youth at school assemblies and parent meetings.
- Ensure that you and all school staff are familiar with the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students; arrange time for school staff to view the training and awareness materials on the Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office website:
www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx
- If you are a principal of a middle school or high school that has identified more than 10 unaccompanied homeless youth, designate a building point of contact, as required by Washington's HB 1682-S3, who is responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them to the local liaison.
- Ensure that all school staff and teachers are familiar with trauma-informed services for homeless families, children, and youth.
- Welcome new students.
- Invite homeless parents or guardians to be partners in their children's education, volunteer at the school, and share their ideas for improving school services.
- Ensure that homeless students have every opportunity that nonhomeless students have for academic and extracurricular activities.
- Maintain a school supply and clothing closet on site where students may obtain items as needed to be prepared for classes and avoid being stigmatized as homeless.
- Ensure that discipline policies take into account situations over which homeless students have no control, such as absences and tardies that result from a parent's or youth's car breaking down.
- Implement discipline policies that reinforce positive behaviors and personal responsibility and that keep children and youth in their classes.
- If a homeless parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with school or district policies, discuss the issue in person to attempt to de-escalate the situation. If the individual