
Handbook
for the
Support of
Homeless
Students

Smackover School
District

2012-2013

Introduction

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized by Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

This handbook is intended to set forth procedures and policies for the Smackover School District which comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Who is Homeless? (Sec. 725)

The term “homeless children and youth” –

- (A) Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...;
and
- (B) Includes –
 - i. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - ii. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings...
 - iii. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - iv. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Local Contact Information:

Teri Philyaw, Homeless Liaison

Smackover School District
112 East 8th Street
Smackover, AR 71762

(870) 725-3132

teri.philyaw@smackover.net

Key Provisions

- The Smackover School District will develop, review, and revise their policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to attend either the school of origin, if this is in the student's best interest, or the local attendance area school.
 - *School of origin* is defined as the school that the child of youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
 - *Local attendance area school* is defined as any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- Homeless students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment, such as previous school records, medical or immunization records, proof of residency, birth certificate, proof of guardianship, or other documents.
- The term "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- The Smackover School District will address problems resulting from enrollment delays caused by immunization and medical records requirements; residency requirements; lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; guardianship issues; or uniform or dress code requirements.
 - If a student does not have immunization, or immunization or medical records, the local homeless education liaison must assist in obtaining them immediately; the student must be enrolled in school in the interim.
 - The enrolling school must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records; the student must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.
- The Smackover School District will maintain records for homeless students so that they are available quickly and can be transferred promptly, as necessary.
- Local liaisons must help unaccompanied youth select and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes.
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the school must provide a written explanation of its decision to send that student to a different school and the parent's guardian's or youth's right to appeal this decision.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment.

However, school may be the only opportunity for these children and youths to benefit from a stable environment, uninterrupted adult attention, peer relations, academic stimulation, and reliable meals.

Enrolling homeless students in school immediately provides them with needed stability and avoids disconnection them from school for days or weeks while documents are gathered.

Strategies for Implementation

The Smackover School District will...

- ✓ Review all district policies and bring them into compliance with federal law.
- ✓ Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, school counselors, and principals on the legal requirements for enrolling homeless students.
- ✓ Inform families and youth of the student's right to attend either the school of origin, if this is in the student's best interest, or the local school and to be enrolled immediately.
- ✓ Inform families and youth of the student's right to receive transportation to and from the school of origin.
- ✓ Develop clear, understandable forms to use when providing written explanations of decisions and explaining the parent's guardian's, or youth's right to appeal the school's decision.

Smackover Elementary School and Smackover High school will...

- ✓ Provide short educational assessments to place students immediately while awaiting the arrival of complete academic records.
- ✓ Accept previous school records directly from families and youth.
- ✓ Contact the previous school for records and assistance with placement decisions.
- ✓ Follow up quickly on any special education referrals or services.
- ✓ Provide needed remediation/tutoring.
- ✓ Have counselors meet with parents and students when registering.

- ✓ Include information on the educational rights guaranteed under the McKinney-Vento Act in parent handbooks so that parents will understand their children's options in the event that they become homeless.
- ✓ Establish school-level and classroom level routines for incoming and departing student transfers.

Teachers in the Smackover School District can help support students experiencing homelessness by...

- ✓ Getting to know new students with a "get-to-know-you" questionnaire or journal assignment.
- ✓ Taking time to talk to and welcome new students individually.
- ✓ Giving new students a "welcome gift" (e.g., school supplies, school clothes).
- ✓ Introducing new students to the class.
- ✓ Identifying faculty and peer mentors/buddies.
- ✓ Keeping a short, simple written list of classroom rules and procedures.
- ✓ Making sure all students have a chance to have a class job/role and to participate in extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Starting files and a portfolio of classwork for students to take with them when leaving the school.
- ✓ Maintaining a relationship with departing students by providing them with stamped, self-addressed envelopes and stationery.

Information for this handbook was taken from *McKinney-Vento-Law Into Practice* which can be retrieved from <http://www.serve.org/nche>.

For more information about supporting homeless children and youth, visit the following:

- National Association for the Education of Children and Youth at <http://www.naehcy.org/>
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty at <https://www.nlchp.org/>
- Arkansas Department of Education at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/public-school-accountability/federal-programs/homeless%20education%20services>

Checklist for Students in Transitional Housing (Homeless)

DATE _____

STUDENT NAME	
STUDENT ID NUMBER	
CAMPUS	
GRADE	
SIBLINGS (if known)	
SUBMITTED BY	

Enroll students immediately; get paper work later, including unaccompanied youth.

_____ Code the student as homeless in eSchool.

_____ Indicate category for homeless:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Burn outs
<input type="radio"/> Shelters
<input type="radio"/> Unaccompanied youth
<input type="radio"/> Doubled up
<input type="radio"/> Other (explain) _____ | <input type="radio"/> Unsheltered
<input type="radio"/> Hotels/Motels
<input type="radio"/> Migrant Homeless |
|---|--|

_____ Help students get medical records if they do not have them (30 days).

_____ The student has the right to remain in the school of origin if the parent or liaison requests.

Transportation needed from _____ to _____.

_____ Send this form to Teri Philyaw, Homeless Liaison, at Central Office. Keep a copy in the student's permanent record.

_____ When this form is sent in Teri Philyaw will notify food services so that the students will be qualified for free meals.

_____ Homeless students are entitled to all services Title 1 students receive. If your student needs services, supplies, or medical help, contact Teri Philyaw at Central Office.

_____ When a student's homeless status changes, you can leave them in eSchool, but please notify Teri Philyaw. She will notify food services and transportation as necessary.

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_____ Homeless students are guaranteed access to the same programs other students are *if* they meet the eligibility requirements, including sports, special education, 504 services, and RTI interventions.

_____ Have the school counselor provide follow up services if applicable.

All homeless coding should be dropped at the beginning of each school year and re-entered if they are still homeless. Begin a new checklist on students who are still homeless. Please check your data base. Do not leave them in from last year.

The intent of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act is to keep transitional students in school. It is a federal law that trumps state of district policy, if there is a conflict.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact:

Teri Philyaw, Homeless Liaison

Smackover School District
112 East 8th Street
Smackover, AR 71762

(870) 725-3132

teri.philyaw@smackover.net

NOTE TO SCHOOLS/LEAS: Please assist students and families filling out this form. Do not simply include this form in the registration packet, because if the student qualifies as residing in temporary housing, the **student is not required to submit proof of residency** and other required documents that may be part of the registration packet.

ENROLLMENT FORM – RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of LEA: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Student: _____

Last First Middle

Gender: Male Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Grade: ____ ID#: _____
 Female Month Day Year (preschool-12) (optional)

Address: _____ Phone: _____

The answer you give below will help the district determine what services you or your child may be able to receive under the McKinney-Vento Act. Students who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act are entitled to immediate enrollment in school even if they don't have the documents normally needed, such as proof of residency, school records, immunization records, or birth certificate. Students who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act may also be entitled to free transportation and other services.

Where is the student currently living? (Please check one box.)

- In a shelter
- With another family or other person because of loss of housing or as a result of economic hardship (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up")
- In a hotel/motel
- In a car, park, bus, train, or campsite
- Other temporary living situation (Please describe): _____
- In permanent housing

Print name of Parent, Guardian, or Student (for unaccompanied homeless youth)

Signature of Parent, Guardian, or Student (for unaccompanied homeless youth)

Date

If the student is **NOT** living in permanent housing, **proof of residency** and other documents normally needed for enrollment **are not required** and the **student is to be immediately enrolled**. After the student has been enrolled,

the district/school must contact the previous district/school attended to request the student's educational records, including immunization records, and the enrolling district's LEA liaison must help the student get any other necessary documents or immunizations.

NOTE TO SCHOOLS/LEAS: If the student is **NOT** living in permanent housing, please ensure that a Designation Form is completed.

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ATENCIÓN ESCUELAS Y DISTRITOS: Ofrezca asistencia a los estudiantes y familias para completar este formulario. No incluya este formulario en el paquete de inscripción sin advertencias apropiadas. Por ejemplo, tendrá que cambiar partes del paquete de inscripción que requieren que se entreguen prueba de inscripción antes de matricular. Estudiantes elegibles según el Acto de McKinney-Vento, no necesitan entregar prueba de residencia y otros documentos normalmente requeridos antes de matricular.

FORMULARIO DE INSCRIPCIÓN—CUESTIONARIO DE RESIDENCIA

Nombre del Distrito Escolar: _____

Nombre de la Escuela: _____

Nombre del Estudiante: _____

Apellido

Primer Nombre

Segundo Nombre

Género: Hombre Fecha de Nacimiento: ____/____/____ Grado: ____ ID# _____

Mujer

Mes

Día

Año

(jardín de infantes-12)

(opcional)

Dirección: _____ Teléfono: _____

Su respuesta abajo permitirá al distrito definir los servicios que puede aprovechar su hijo/hija según el Acto de McKinney-Vento. Los estudiantes elegibles tienen derecho a la inscripción inmediata en la escuela, aun si ellos no tienen los documentos necesarios tales como: prueba de residencia, documentos escolares, documentos de inmunización, o partida de nacimiento. Los estudiantes elegibles según el Acto de McKinney-Vento tienen además derecho al transporte gratuito y otros servicios que ofrece el distrito escolar.

¿Dónde está el estudiante viviendo actualmente? (Por favor marque una caja.)

En un refugio

Con otra familia o otra persona debido a la pérdida del hogar o a dificultades económicas

En un hotel/motel

En un carro, parqu岸, autobus, tren, o camping

Otra vivienda temporal (Por favor describa):

 En un hogar permanente

Nombre de Padre, Guardián, o
Estudiante (para jóvenes sin acompañamiento)

Firma de Padre, Guardián, o
Estudiante (para jóvenes sin acompañamiento)

Fecha

Si el estudiante **NO** vive en un hogar permanente, **no se requieren prueba de domicilio** u otros documentos normalmente requeridos para inscripción **y el estudiante debe ser matriculado inmediatamente.** Después de que el estudiante sea matriculado, el distrito o la escuela debe pedir los documentos escolares, incluyendo los documentos de inmunización, al distrito o la escuela anterior. El enlace del distrito debe ayudar al estudiante conseguir cualquier otro documento necesario o inmunización.

ATENCIÓN ESCUELAS Y DISTRITOS: Si el estudiante **NO** vive en un hogar permanente, favor de asegurarse que una Formulario de Designación sea completado.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ENROLLMENT FORM – RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose of the Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire

All LEAs are required to identify students experiencing homelessness. Additionally, all LEAs that receive Title I funds must ask enrolling students about their housing status. SED encourages all LEAs regardless of whether they receive Title I funds to do the same. To collect this information, LEAs may:

1. Use the Model Enrollment Form –Residency Questionnaire attached here,
2. Update/modify the Model Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire to address the needs of the LEA, or
3. Incorporate the housing status question from the Model Enrollment Form –Residency Questionnaire into the LEA’s Enrollment Form or other documents already used by the LEA during the enrollment process.

If an LEA elects the third option and incorporates the housing status question into the LEA’s Enrollment Form, the LEA should take steps to ensure that a student’s housing status does not become a part of the student’s permanent record, because of the sensitive nature of this information. Please see the section titled “Confidentiality” (below) for information about how and when housing information may be shared within the LEA.

Who should fill out the Enrollment Form—Residency Questionnaire?

A Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire should be filled out for all students enrolling in school and for all students who have a change of address in grades preschool-12. Preschool includes any LEA program for 3-5 year olds, such as pre-k, Head Start, or Even Start. The Form – Questionnaire should be completed by the student’s parent, person in parental relation, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, by the student directly.

Confidentiality

Student housing information should be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. This information should only be shared with LEA/school staff members who need information about housing status to ensure that the student’s educational needs are met. To this end, LEAs may share a student’s completed **Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire** with LEA personnel such as:

1. The LEA liaison,
2. The registrar,
3. The student’s teachers, and/or guidance counselor, and
4. The LEA staff member responsible for reporting data to SED

However, this information should only be shared with the above staff members to the extent that it will enable them to better meet the educational needs of the student in question and to fulfill reporting requirements mandated by SED.

Other than the above uses, housing information **should be kept confidential** and generally **should not be shared** with other LEA/school personnel due to its sensitive nature and the stigma attached to being labeled homeless. LEAs are also encouraged to seek ways of preventing Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaires and housing information from becoming a part of a student’s permanent record.

Discussing the Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire with Students and Families

In reviewing the Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire with parents, persons in parental relation, and unaccompanied youth, LEAs should emphasize that the purpose of gathering the information is to ensure that students in temporary housing arrangements are provided with the rights and services to which they are entitled under the McKinney-Vento Act. These rights and services include:

1. The right to stay in the same school the student had been attending before losing his/her housing or the last school attended (both known as the school of origin),
2. The right to immediate enrollment for students who decide to transfer schools, even if the student does not have all of the documents normally for enrollment,
3. Transportation services if the student continues to attend the school of origin.
4. Categorical eligibility for Title I services if offered in the LEA,
5. Categorical eligibility for free meals if offered in the LEA, and
6. Access to services provided with Mc-Kinney-Vento funds if available in the LEA.

The LEA should also ensure that the parent, person in parental relation, unaccompanied youth is aware that the student's housing status will be kept confidential and will only be shared with those LEA staff responsible for providing services to the student and those responsible for keeping track of how many students are identified as living in temporary housing in the LEA.

LEAs are advised to explain to parents that if a parent claims that her/his child is living in temporary housing, and the LEA wishes to conduct an investigation to verify this information, the LEA may conduct a home visit. However LEAs **cannot contact a landlord or building superintendent** to verify a student's housing status. Contacting a landlord or building superintendent may be a violation of FERPA, a federal law, and may put the family at risk of losing its housing. If the student is living in a doubled up situation, it may also lead to loss of housing for the primary tenants.

If the Parent, Person in Parental Relation, or Unaccompanied Youth Declines to Fill Out the Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire

If the parent, person in parental relation, or unaccompanied youth declines to complete the Enrollment Form – Residency Questionnaire, the LEA should note on the form that the parent, person in parental relation, or unaccompanied youth declined to provide the information requested.

Completing the Form

If a parent, person in parental relation, or unaccompanied youth enrolling in school indicates that a student is living in one of the five temporary housing arrangements, the school may not require proof to verify where the student is living before enrolling the student. The five temporary housing arrangements are listed below:

1. In a shelter,
2. With another family or other person (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up"),
3. In a hotel/motel
4. In a car, park, bus, train, or campsite, or
5. Other temporary living situation.

After the student is enrolled and attending classes, the school or LEA is permitted to verify the student's housing arrangements. However, the student must first be enrolled in school. Again, LEAs **cannot not contact a landlord or building superintendent** to verify a student's housing status. (See above for more information.)

Definitions of Temporary Housing Arrangements

"With another family or other person" (also referred to as "doubled-up")

LEAs should be aware that students who are sharing the housing of others are eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act and State law, if sharing housing is due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

"Other temporary living situation"

In addition to the four examples of temporary housing, students who lack a "fixed, adequate, and regular" nighttime residence are also covered as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act and State law. This may include unaccompanied youth who have fled their homes or were forced to leave their homes and who do not otherwise meet the definition of "doubled-up."

"In permanent housing"

Permanent housing means that the student's living arrangements are "fixed, regular, and adequate."

Next Steps for LEAs with Students Living in Temporary Housing Arrangements

If the parent, person in parental relation, or unaccompanied youth indicates that a student is living in temporary housing, the LEA must complete a Designation Form. If the LEA believes additional information is needed before reaching a final decision on the student's eligibility under McKinney-Vento, enrollment should not be delayed and a Designation Form should still be filled out. For more information about determining eligibility see the National Center on Homeless Education's Determining Eligibility Brief, available at: www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf

If a student who is identified as homeless was last permanently housed in a different school district, the district of attendance/local district will be eligible for tuition reimbursement from SED for the cost of educating the student. School districts should complete a STAC-202 form if eligible for tuition reimbursement. For more information about STAC-202 forms contact the STAC Office at 518-474-7116 or NYS-TEACHS at 800-388-2014.