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DeSoto County Schools

McKinney- Vento Procedures

The McKinney-Vento Act protects the rights of homeless children and youth for the duration of their homelessness. This means students have access to all rights and services from school year to school year if their living circumstances meet the definition of "homeless.'

Once a student is identified as homeless, under the guidelines of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, ESSA, the DeSoto County School District provides services for each identified student for one academic school year. If the students experience homelessness beyond one academic school year, all services are still accessible to these students, with a few steps to take. Students must be re-identified annually. Once they are re-identified, procedures provided to access transportation, free lunch, and additional services must be repeated.

A homeless child or a homeless youth is defined as:

(1) Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence; and includes

a) Parents are institutionalized, unsheltered agricultural migrant children, children living on the "street" (i.e., tents, vehicles, etc.),

b) Child has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised or privately operated shelter, for example: children who have been abused and/or neglected, children of domestic violence, welfare hotels, transitional housing. (Shelters)

c) Child is temporarily staying with relatives or friend because of loss of job, other income loss, housing loss ("doubled up" families).

If a student is identified as experiencing homelessness and becomes permanently housed during the school year, all rights and services remain for the full academic year. This includes the right to remain at the school of origin, request transportation, free meals, etc. Parents may choose to enroll their child in the zoned school for their new residence although decision making should be based on the best interest of the student.

The following school year in which the student is permanently housed, the student no longer meets the definition of "homeless" and must enroll in the zoned school of their permanent residence.

A student who is in a home for CPS placement or in Foster Care does not classify as homeless. (Other protections are in place for children in foster care).

Identification:

DeSoto County Schools identify students as being eligible for services under McKinney Vento by the student registration process and identification by the staff on campus.

1 . Parents are to complete the online registration process, during the registration, they may indicate their nighttime residence is not fixed, regular, and adequate.

They are then notified to contact the Director of Residency at Central Services

2. If parent/guardian is enrolling a student at the school site and cannot provide

proofs of residency or otherwise indicate homeless status, they are referred to the Director of Residency at Central Services. Also, during the current school year, counselors or teachers may notify the liaison at their site or at Central Services if they learn of a change in a student's living arrangements.

3. Once the McKinney-Vento paperwork is complete at Central Services, all other documents for registration are completed at the school site. (For example, transportation, nutrition, etc,)
4. If there are any questions regarding McKinney-Vento status, refer these to the district homeless liaison.

Enrollment:

- Once the McKinney-Vento forms are completed by the liaison and parent/guardian of the student, enrollment begins immediately or within 24 hours. Forms are to be forwarded to district liaison to be placed in the MV binder for the current school year registration.
- The school selected (school of origin or attendance zone school) will immediately enroll a homeless child, even if the child is unable to produce records during the registration process. (This is when the barriers come to place and are identified)

- The school will then contact the previous school attended to obtain the student records.
- If the child needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization/medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately contact the district homeless liaison for assistance. The district homeless liaison then will assist with coordinating with outside agencies and parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth to obtain.

Schools Selection:

The district shall, according to the child's best interest:

- Continue the child's education in the school of origin (School of origin also included the feeder school pattern "sister school" if applicable.
- Enroll the child in the attendance area of where the child physically resides.

Enrollment Disputes:

DCS district follows the guidelines of the dispute resolution process, by referring to the State Board Policy 40.1- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Procedure (See Dispute Resolution packet). All disputes are to be brought to the district liaison's attention immediately.

Transportation:

DCS provides transportation for McKinney-Vento students when living in the attendance zone. The district also provides transportation to and from the school of origin, the district transportation director will arrange. The district liaison, parent, or school liaison can request the transportation. Should a dispute arise, it should be brought to the district liaison's attention immediately.

Comparable Services:

The district will provide a homeless child with services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the child is enrolled. This includes the following:

- Transportation services.

- Educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria;
- Programs in vocational and technical education;
- Programs for gifted and talented students; and
- School nutrition programs (Homeless students are automatically eligible for free meals) Liaison's will complete and sign a free and reduced application and writes "Homeless" on the form to ensure when submitted to the office of child nutrition, no questions are asked and to guarantee the qualification for free meals the day of submission.

Coordination of Services:

The district coordinates services (and funding) with programs including Title l, Part A, Title Ill, Special Education, ELA, etc.

Should this school district receive assistance under Section 1 1432 of the Act, it shall designate a homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services. District liaison will keep updated liaison's names, should they change during the current school year.

Coordination of Preschool Programs:

DeSoto County Schools maintains a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Community Services, Inc. to provide services to preschool-age children eligible for special education who attend the Head of DeSoto County Schools and Head Start.

Barriers to Enrollment:

The district shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children.

Meeting the Needs of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth:

The district liaison will work with the school guidance counselors to make certain that students are informed of their options after high school and are college ready. Counselors provide and meet the needs of each individual in preparation for career readiness

Reserved Funds:

District liaison keeps all purchase orders/requisitions in budget/purchase folder along with other budgeted paperwork. Once order arrives, all items are accounted for and prepared to be distributed to school liaisons.

Tracking Spending:

DCS liaisons for homeless are required to sign for all items received through reserved funds. The liaison then distributes to the student based on the ongoing services of the homeless children checklist at the time of enrollment which is then forwarded to the district liaison to be kept on file.

Homeless Awareness:

Copies of flyers, handouts, written procedures for notifying stakeholders, program brochure, and/or posters that identify the homeless liaison are provided/updated annually. DCS provides updated flyers each year containing the state and local liaison to each stakeholder and school.

Contact Information

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DCS Homeless Liaison:

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