

**Clarke County Schools**  
**McKinney Vento Homeless Plan**  
**SY 20-21**

**Purpose of the Program**

Homeless children and youth will be provided the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education regardless of their residency status. The program will ensure that these students are afforded equal access to academic and other services that will allow them to meet the same challenging state achievement standards as non-homeless students.

The program provides procedural guidelines to ensure that homeless students are not denied enrollment due to the lack of registration documentation at the time of enrollment. Homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, will be enrolled immediately pending obtainment of the necessary documents. The school counselor will assist parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth in obtaining the proper documentation.

The district has a Homeless Liaison that will ensure program implementation and coordinate efforts to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, are provided the opportunity for academic success.

**Identification & Registration Procedures**

Homeless children and youth are often undetected. The school district will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless children without stigmatizing students or families. The district will use a Residency Questionnaire which is included in each school's registration packet to facilitate identity of homeless children, youth, and preschoolers. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will complete the residency questionnaire at the time of registration. The school counselor may provide appropriate assistance to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth in answering the questionnaire if necessary. The school will maintain a copy of the form in the student's permanent record. This file should be housed in the school counselor's office or in close proximity. School counselors will contact the district's Homeless Liaison if a student is suspected of being homeless as well as send the original residency questionnaire so that an eligibility determination may be made.

The school shall enroll a homeless child even if the child is unable to produce proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records. The school shall immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the child needs to obtain immunizations, or medical records, the enrolling school counselor or principal's designee will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth appropriate assistance in obtaining the necessary records and documents for enrollment. Enrollment without the required immunization records will be pending receipt

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or acquisition of immunization documentation. However, the child must be allowed to enroll and administration, school counselor, etc. should work with the student to gain the necessary immunization documentation. The existing method of assigning a student number will be employed when a student enrolls without a social security number.

An unaccompanied youth may enroll himself/herself. In this case, the school principal or designee will immediately contact the district's Homeless Liaison to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth. The school will provide the youth with proper assistance in a language that the student understands. The district's Homeless Liaison will assist the homeless unaccompanied youth in obtaining eligible educational services.

The District may require the parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.

The application process for free and reduced price meals can be expedited for homeless children and youth when applicable. Clarke County school system currently participates in the Community Eligibility Provision or CEP. The school system is qualified to participate in CEP because our district experiences high poverty and high unemployment. Through this program, all students eat all meals free. The determination for free meals may be made without completing the full p\application process source: U.S. Department of Agriculture:

<http://www.nochp.org/content/pubs/Homeless%20Students%20and%20the%20School%20Lunch%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet1.pdf>

[http://www.nochp.org/content/pubs/Basic%20McKinney-Vento%20Booklet%20\(2011\).pdf](http://www.nochp.org/content/pubs/Basic%20McKinney-Vento%20Booklet%20(2011).pdf)

## **School Placement**

The district will not segregate homeless children. The district shall make the choice regarding placement without regard to whether the child lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere. All homeless students shall be provided with services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the child is enrolled, including:

1. Transportation services;
2. Educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria;
3. Programs in career and technical education;
4. Programs for gifted and talented students; and
5. School nutrition programs.

The district will make school placement decisions in the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth. Students may continue in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year. Students may enroll in any public school attended by non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

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If the school enrollment decision is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth or youth's parent/guardian, the school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision. The complainant must file a School Enrollment Dispute (Appendix A) with the school in which the student is presently enrolled. The principal of this school will notify the district's Homeless Liaison of the dispute and take steps to resolve the dispute.

When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the district will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The Homeless Liaison will take necessary steps to resolve the dispute (See Appendix B). If the dispute cannot be settled by the Homeless Liaison, the liaison will assist the complainant in seeking technical assistance from an appropriate service agency.

The district will, to the extent possible, coordinate the provision of services to homeless children with:

1. Local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and their families;
2. Other local educational agencies, on interdistrict issues such as transportation or transfer of school records; and
3. As applicable, state and local housing agencies.

Funding for the support of services for homeless students in Title I schools will be provided through the Title I Programs at the school. At the present time, all of the schools, except Jackson High School, in Clarke County Public Schools are Title I School-wide programs and funding is available through Title I set-aside funds. The set aside funds may be used to purchase instructional supplies, provide health and medical assistance, purchase clothing and hygiene items, and any other purchases requested by the student or school personnel that can assist all homeless students in remaining in school and succeeding in the academic program, regardless of what school they attend.

Parents of homeless students are encouraged to:

- Become actively involved in making suggestions in the planning and operation of the Title I Program.
- Attend all informational meetings concerning Title I programs.
- Attend an annual public meeting to discuss the programs and activities that are carried out with Title I funds to inform the parents of their right to consult in the design and implementation of projects, to solicit parents' input, and to provide parents with the mechanism for maintaining ongoing communication among parents, teachers, and agency officials.
- Consult with teachers on an on-going basis and attend parent/teacher conferences, if at all possible.
- Provide information and ideas on the effectiveness of the assistance that the student has received.

## **Dissemination of Information**

Clarke County Public Schools understands that it is important for school personnel, as well as parents and community stake holders, to be made aware of the opportunities and services that are available to students and parents in our area who might qualify for services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

In order to accomplish these important tasks Clarke County Public Schools will employ the following methods to inform school personnel, parents, and community members:

- Each year school personnel will receive training on identification of homeless students.
- The district's Homeless Liaison will ensure that the Residency Questionnaire Form is posted in a highly visible location in the school office as well as the Board of Education. The form is used to assist in identifying homeless students. Forms are also available on each school and district website.
- Brochures that include a summary of the McKinney-Vento program, the characteristics of students who may be experiencing homelessness, and contact information will be available at the schools.
- The district will notify parents/guardians of homeless children and youth of available resources and assist them in accessing the resource as needed.
- Posters by NCHIE will be posted in all schools. These posters summarize the rights of parents and youth who may experience homelessness and provide contact information for those needing assistance
- The district's Homeless Plan will be posted to the district website in the Federal Programs section.

Clarke County Schools will conduct an annual evaluation of its Homeless Education Program to determine the effectiveness of the program through surveys, observation, and discussions. The system will adjust practices and procedures as needed to improve the effectiveness of implementation and student achievement. The plan will be reviewed and revised, if necessary, every year.