



Schoolhouse Link

Homeless Education Literacy Program

Registrar's Guide

The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** is the primary piece of federal legislation designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. It was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act includes a definition of who is considered homeless and ensures that all eligible students receive special protections.

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a “*fixed, regular, and adequate*” nighttime residence and includes –

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);
- Children and youth who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth 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;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;

Also:

- Migratory children living in these conditions
- Unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian and living in any of the above situations

If assistance in determining if a student qualifies as “homeless” under the McKinney-Vento Act is needed please contact Schoolhouse Link, the district’s homeless education literacy program. This program is a collaboration, between the School Board of Sarasota County and the Sarasota Family YMCA.

McKinney-Vento Key Provisions and Student Rights

The McKinney-Vento guarantees homeless children and youth the following:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment.
- The right to attend school in his/her school of origin (if this is requested by the parent and feasible) or in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.
- The right to receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent.
- The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student's status as homeless is strictly prohibited.
- The posting of homeless students rights in all schools and other places around the community.

The McKinney-Vento Act also requires that:

- The U.S. Department of Education must periodically collect and disseminate data and information on the number and location of children and youth in homeless situations, the educational services they receive, the extent to which their educational needs are being met, and such other data and information as is determined to be relevant.
- State Education Agencies and Local Education Agencies must develop, review, and revise their policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Every State Education Agency must designate an appropriate person to serve as a coordinator of the state's homeless education program.
- Every Local Education Agency must designate an appropriate person to serve as a local homeless education liaison.
- Each State and Local Education Agency must establish procedures to resolve disputes regarding the placement of homeless students promptly (available at www.sarasotaymca.org/schoolhouselink).

The State Homeless Education Coordinator at FL DOE is:

Lorraine Husum Allen, K-12 Bureau of Student Assistance, (850) 245-0414

Sarasota County Homeless Education Contacts:

Sherri Reynolds, Pupil Support Services, (941) 927-9000 ext. 34765

Schoolhouse Link (Sarasota Family YMCA):

Ellen McLaughlin & Milli Stepanek, (941) 923-6100

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Enrollment Process

Sarasota, FL

1. All public schools are required to display the educational rights of homeless children and youth in a public area.
2. A *Student Residency Questionnaire* is to be included in each enrollment packet.
3. Families and unaccompanied youth that answer “Yes” to questions 1 and 2 on the *Student Residency Questionnaire* and indicate that they are staying in one of the listed temporary living arrangements qualify for the protections of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
4. McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to attend the school he/she last attended, the school they attended prior to losing their housing, or the school for which they are currently zoned.
5. McKinney-Vento eligible students do not need to request school reassignment unless they are seeking to enroll at a school which is neither their “school-of-origin” or zoned school.
6. Schools may not require homeless families to provide proof of residency. Schools can use affidavits of residence or other forms to replace typical proof of residency if unavailable. Such forms should be carefully crafted, so that they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment. For example, forms should not require notarization.
7. Schools may not require the caregiver of a homeless unaccompanied youth to provide (or obtain) proof of guardianship.
8. Schools may not delay enrollment of a homeless student due to lack of records from previous schools. This includes the lack of an IEP.
9. If an enrollment dispute is made the student can continue to attend classes while the dispute is being heard and resolved.
10. The Florida Department of Education has required each district to have a procedure for handling disputes. Our procedure can be viewed at: sarasota-ymca.org/schoolhouselink
11. Disputes not resolved at the local level must be forwarded to the State Homeless Education Coordinator at Florida Department of Education.
12. Registrars are to code eligible students in the district’s TERMS database at time of identification (see coding detail on next page).
13. Codes are to remain in place for the entire school year.
14. Upon completion of the *Student Residency Questionnaire*, registrars are to complete the bottom section of each form to indicate if the student is missing any documentation and record any materials provided. Please fax a copy of any eligible student’s form to the Schoolhouse Link at: 941-923-6112.
15. In the first week of September, Schoolhouse Link will send each registrar a list of students carrying a homeless code from the previous school year.
16. Registrars will have the previously identified students and families complete a new *Student Residency Questionnaire* in August or September. Please fax or pony a copy of all of these completed forms to Schoolhouse Link (office located at the Triad Campus).
17. Schoolhouse Link staff will change codes for students no longer eligible for McKinney-Vento services.
18. Schoolhouse Link program staff will immediately authorize free meals and assist in obtaining any missing documentation.
19. Requests for “school-of-origin “ transportation arrangements must be submitted by Schoolhouse Link staff.
20. Schoolhouse Link staff can assist in determining if a student qualifies as homeless and offers a variety of free services to help homeless students and their families.
21. All schools may request free backpacks and school supplies to distribute to homeless students at the time of enrollment or throughout the school year. Program brochures, parent videos and McKinney-Vento Posters are also available throughout the school year.

Coding McKinney-Vento Students in District Database

Homeless Student Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
A	Living in emergency or transitional shelters, FEMA trailers, abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care
B	Sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; doubled up
D	Living in cars, parks, campgrounds, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, similar settings
E	Living in hotels/motels
N	Student is not homeless or has not been homeless this school year *Default*

Unaccompanied Youth

<u>Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Y	Yes, this student is homeless and not in the physical custody of parent or guardian (unaccompanied youth)
N	No, this student is homeless but not an unaccompanied youth
Z	Non Applicable. Not a homeless youth. *Default*

Sarasota, FL
Student Residency Questionnaire

Name of School: _____

Name of Student: _____
Last First Middle

Birth Date: ____/____/____ Age: _____ Sex: Male
Month Day Year Female

This questionnaire is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act. The answers to this residency information help determine the services the student may be eligible to receive.

1. Is your current address a temporary living arrangement? ____ Yes ____ No

2. Is this temporary living arrangement due to loss of housing or economic hardship? ____ Yes ____ No

If you answered YES to the above question, please complete the remainder of this form.
If you answered NO, you may stop here.

Where is the student presently living? (Check one box.)

- In a motel
- In an emergency or transitional shelter
- With more than one family in a house or apartment
- Moving from place to place
- In a place not designed for ordinary sleeping accommodations such as in a vehicle, park, abandoned building or "on the streets"
- Awaiting foster care placement

If you marked "yes" to any of the above temporary residences your child has the following rights:

- ✓ Child must be immediately enrolled in school even if you lack a permanent residence.
- ✓ Child's enrollment may not be delayed due to lack of proof of residency or other documents.
- ✓ Continued enrollment in the child's school that he/she attended before becoming homeless, or the school for which you are currently zoned.
- ✓ Child can attend classes while the new school secures previous school records.
- ✓ If enrollment dispute is made, child can continue to attend classes while dispute is being heard and resolved.
- ✓ Parent can request assistance with transportation to school.
- ✓ Child can participate in school programs with children who are not homeless.
- ✓ Child is eligible to receive free lunch.
- ✓ Schoolhouse Link can provide you with detailed information on your child's rights and assist you in accessing school and community services.

Name of Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) _____

Address _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

My signature below indicates that I have read this information and all answers I have given are correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

SCHOOL STAFF: PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO SCHOOLHOUSE LINK OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AT 941-923-6112
CHECK MISSING DOCUMENTATION: PHYSICAL IMMUNIZATION BIRTH CERTIFICATE
CHECK IF THESE MATERIALS WERE PROVIDED: PROGRAM BROCHURE BACKPACK

Sarasota, FL
Cuestionario de Residencia para Estudiantes

Nombre de la escuela : _____

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Apellido Nombre Segundo Nombre
Sexo: Masculino
 Femenino

Fecha de Nacimiento: ___/___/___ Edad: _____
 Mes Dia Año

El proposito de este cuestionario es presentar los objetivos del Acta McKinney-Vento . Las respuestas a estas preguntas ayudaran a determinar los servicios que el estudiante debe recibir.

1. Es su domicilio actual un arreglo de vivienda temporal ? ___Si ___No
2. Es este arreglo de vivienda temporal debido a la perdida de su casa, vivienda o habitacion, debido a algun problema economico (desempleo) ___Si ___No

Si usted contesto SI a estas preguntas, por favor complete el resto de este formulario. Si usted contesto NO a estas preguntas, para aqui.

Donde se encuentra viviendo el estudiante actualmente? (Marque una opcion)

- En un motel
- En un albergue o lugar de refugio
- Con mas de una familia en una casa o apartamento
- Moviendose de un lugar a otro
- En un lugar generalmente no designado para dormir (ejemplo: carro, parque o campamento)
- Esperando por un hogar temporal (foster)

Si Ud. Contesto “Si” a alguna de las preguntas de residencia su hijo/a tiene el derecho de :

- ✓ Registrarse inmediatamente en la escuela aun si no tiene una residencia permanente.
- ✓ La registracion de su hijo/a no puede demorarse aun si no tiene prueba de residencia o otros documentos.
- ✓ Continuar estar registrado en la escuela que atendio antes de quedarse desamparado, o la escuela del distrito.
- ✓ Su hijo/a puede asistir a clases mientras la escuela transfiera records de la escuela previamente atendida.
- ✓ Padres pueden solicitar transportacion escolar.
- ✓ Su hijo/a puede participar en actividades con otros ninos que no estan desamparados.
- ✓ Nuestro Program (Schoolhouse Link) puede darle informacion detallada de los derechos educacionales de su hijo/a y de los servicios en la comunidad.

Nombre del Padre/Madre/Guardian _____

Direccion _____ Zona postal _____ Telefono _____

Mi firma abajo indica que he leído la informacion y todas las respuestas que he dado son correctas.

Firma del padre o Guardian _____ Fecha _____

**SCHOOL STAFF: PLEASE FAX THIS FORM TO SCHOOLHOUSE LINK OFFICE IMMEDIATELY AT
941-923-6112**
CHECK MISSING DOCUMENTATION: PHYSICAL IMMUNIZATION BIRTH CERTIFICATE
CHECK IF THESE MATERIALS WERE PROVIDED: PROGRAM BROCHURE BACKPACK

10 things Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel Can Do for Students Experiencing Homelessness

1. Post McKinney-Vento Definition and Student Rights Fliers in visible location.
2. Utilize Residency Questionnaire. Immediately fax completed Residency Questionnaires to Schoolhouse Link for eligible students.
3. Learn to identify tell-tale signs of homelessness:
 - Erratic attendance at school
 - Attendance at multiple schools
 - Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention
 - Lack of records such as birth certificate, immunization record, preschool physical, school records, social security number or records are incomplete
 - Parent that seems confused when asked about the last school they attended
 - Low-income motel address on enrollment form
 - Statements from family when enrolling, such as:
 - “We have been having a hard time lately”*
 - “It’s a new address, I can’t remember it”*
 - “We move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place”*
 - “I don’t have any bills or lease in my name”*
4. Assure families that children can enroll if you think that they are experiencing homelessness. (This is mandated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, P.L. 107-110.)
5. Encourage family to complete forms while at school. Take the family to a private place to help fill out enrollment forms if necessary.
6. Arrange for a brief tour of your school. Inform parent of student’s teacher name and classroom location.
7. Enroll the child immediately (even without records). Ask for the name and city of the last school attended. Call that school and ask to have the records sent.
8. Provide a welcome packet with school address and telephone number, student handbook, paper, pencil, pen, and crayons (younger grades).
9. Privately and confidentially alert the child’s teacher and guidance counselor of the student’s living situation.
10. Provide Schoolhouse Link brochure and video.

Be sensitive, patient, calm and reassuring. You can make a difference!

Role of Homeless Liaison

The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other social service providers. The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youth are able to enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Local Homeless Liaisons must:

- Ensure that the educational rights of homeless children are publicly posted.
- Ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and, through coordination activities, with other entities and agencies.
- Ensure that homeless students are immediately enrolled in school and have full and equal opportunity to succeed.
- Inform parents, school personnel and others of the rights of homeless children and youth.
- Assist unaccompanied youth with enrollment, transportation, and disagreements.
- Make sure that students receive appropriate services, including transportation and free meals.
- Secure school supplies and emergency clothing for students.
- Make referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services or other care providers.
- Make sure that disagreements between students and schools are resolved.
- Network with community agencies.
- Provide resources to families and school staff.
- Ensure compliance with State and Federal law.
- Collect and submit reports to Florida Department of Education regarding students experiencing homelessness.
- Provide McKinney-Vento training.
- Advocate for students.
- In Sarasota, all requests for “school-of-origin” transportation and free meals for homeless students must go through the homeless education program, Schoolhouse Link.

Schoolhouse Link
Homeless Education Literacy Program
Triad Campus
4409 Sawyer Rd.
Sarasota, FL 34233
(941) 923-6100
Fax: (941) 923-6112
www.sarasota-ymca.org/schoolhouselink