

Belmont Charter Network A FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

Policy and Procedure Manual

**Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing
Homelessness Program**

Students Experiencing Unstable Housing

Created By: The Department of Prevention and Family Supports

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 requires all youth experiencing homelessness to have educational access, attendance, and success in school. McKinney-Vento also provides funding to states to support statewide homelessness initiatives. Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program works to ensure homeless children are provided with a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children in the state.

Definition of Homelessness

An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

- Sharing housing
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds
- Living in emergency or transitional housing
- Abandoned or runaways
- Awaiting foster care
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in the circumstances described above

Basic Education Circular (BEC)

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, (subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to aid homeless persons. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The Act explicitly includes within the definition of "homeless children and youths" those who are "awaiting foster care placement." On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted, amending McKinney-Vento. The Basic Education Circular (BEC) explains the categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of federal law. See the below link for more information;

 [BEC_Education for Homeless Youth10-1-16](#)

Unaccompanied Youth

An unaccompanied youth is a homeless child that is not in the custody of a parent or guardian. This definition also includes youth who have run away, forced to leave the home, abandoned, or living in temporary, unstable, or inadequate housing such as motels, cars, abandoned buildings, doubling up (living with someone), etc.

 [Unaccompanied Youth M.V Info Form.pdf](#)

Enrollment, Transfers, and Disputes

Public Schools must immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness even when lacking:

- Proof of residency
 - Proof of guardianship
 - Birth certificates
 - School records
 - Medical records
 - Immunization records or School uniforms.
- Homeless students who move have the right to remain in their school of origin (i.e. the school the student attended when permanently housed or in which the student was last enrolled, which includes preschools) if that is in the student's best interest.
- If it is in the student's best interest to change schools, homeless students must be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if they do not have the records normally required for enrollment.
- Transportation must be provided to or from a student's school of origin at the request of a parent, guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local liaison.
- Homeless students must have access to all programs and services to which they are eligible, including special education services, preschool, school nutrition programs, language assistance for ELL students, Title I programs, career, and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer learning, online learning, before and after school care, etc.
- Unaccompanied youth must be accorded specific protections, including immediate enrollment in school without proof of guardianship.
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth have a right to dispute an eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision.

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) and local education agencies (LEAs), including Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School, must work together to support educational stability for children and youth placed in out-of-home care. Philadelphia DHS and LEAs must collaborate to ensure that children and youth placed in out-of-home care are able to remain in their school of origin (current school) unless it is not in their best interest to do so.

Every time a child or youth is placed in out-of-home care, or their placement location is

changed, Philadelphia DHS and LEAs will internally consult about possible factors indicating it is not in the best interest of the child to remain in their school of origin. When these factors exist, there must be a joint determination by the LEA and DHS to change their school placement. Philadelphia DHS and the LEA will then work together to comply with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including working collaboratively to establish a transportation plan.

BCN Homelessness Liaison

Belmont Charter School's Homeless Liaison is the Managing Director of Prevention and Family Supports Margarita Davis-Boyer. Inquiry Charter School Homeless Liaison is Family Support Specialist Ashley Fernandez. If you are experiencing homelessness, we are here to support you. Please contact the Main Office so that we can connect you with a member of our Family Support Services team.

Uniform Procedures

Uniforms and school supplies are basic rights to help students fully participate in school. Students experiencing homelessness are eligible to receive assistance with uniforms and specified school supplies.

Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School require all students to wear uniforms to school. Our schools should be sensitive to the challenges faced by students and families experiencing homelessness. No child's education should be interrupted due to a lack of proper clothing or school supplies.

Uniform Procedures

- Uniforms are available for any student (Pre-K through 12th grade) who qualify under McKinney Vento.
- The student/parent/guardian should let the FSS know that they need help with getting a uniform.
- The FSS will obtain the sizes and general demographic information for the student(s) and then make a request to the front office. Once verbal approval is given, FSS will obtain the uniforms from the uniform closet and provide them to the family.
- The parent/caregiver signs the document stating that they received the uniforms.

SEPTA, Bussing & Transportation Policies

If students experiencing homelessness live at least one mile (1.0) away from the school, they are eligible to receive transportation assistance.

Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School and ECYEH ensure transportation is in place for students experiencing homelessness. Students are eligible if the school is one mile or more from their current residence.

STUDENT/PARENT PROCEDURES:

- You should contact your school and ask for a transportation request (known as a TAR) to be completed. If you are living in a shelter or are working with a provider, have them submit a letter verifying McKinney Vento's status. If not, the school can provide the letter in order for transportation to be set up.
- It may take up to 2 weeks for transportation to be set up. In the meantime, we can provide you with day passes. If you need that option please reach out to your school's FSS.

SCHOOL STAFF PROCEDURES:

- For grades K-12, transportation for students who qualify under McKinney Vento is to be requested on the Compass TARS System. When creating the TAR, you should attach a supporting document indicating this student qualifies under McKinney Vento. This can be a letter from a shelter or other provider or just a letter from the school. Contact the **Office of Transportation** for additional support.
- ***Students in grades K-5 who request a transpass are required to be accompanied by a parent or chaperone who is approved by the school principal.***
- The TAR must be completed and forwarded to Transportation within 48 hours. Schools will be responsible for providing the student pass if this form is not submitted within the specified time.

OUT-OF-COUNTY

- Students experiencing homelessness temporarily residing outside of Philadelphia School District boundaries are also eligible for transportation. Reach out to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator (Dr. Alfred B. Quarles, Jr.) in order to process the request. Dr. Alfred Quarles e-mail: ABQuarles@philasd.org

School Breakfast and Lunch Program

Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students a healthy breakfast and lunch at school every day. Our menu follows all nutritious meal guidelines to ensure our students are always ready to learn. Please note that we will accommodate documented dietary restrictions, medical allergies, and limited religious preferences, including no pork. Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School are able to accommodate a vegetarian diet upon request. All restrictions will be followed throughout the whole school year.

Student Health Services

Community Health Center:

Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School students and their families have access to a variety of health services offered at Belmont Charter School's Community Health Center, located inside Belmont Charter School at 4030 Brown Street. The health center operates during non-school hours for the benefit of students, families, and the broader community served by schools within our network. Primary care services are provided through a medical home model (primary care physician) or urgent care model, including CLIA-waived lab services and reproductive health care.

Student Health Services Policy:

In partnership with Family Practice and Consultation Services, Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School provides school-based health services including state-mandated screening and care coordination. The following services are provided on-site:

- Immunization, physical and dental assessment monitoring
- State-mandated health screenings, referrals, and follow-up
 - Vision Screening – All Grades
 - BMI Assessment – All Grades
 - Hearing Screening – K – 3rd
- Primary care, upon request, at the Belmont Charter School Health Center
- Documentation and reporting (SHARRS)
- Chronic health condition oversight, guidance, and management
- On-call advisement from a certified nurse practitioner

Under the supervision of a certified nurse practitioner, a medical assistant or licensed nurse will provide health screening and health record management. Assistance with insurance will be provided as needed. The nursing assistant will work with Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School staff to share relevant student health information on a *need-to-know* basis, in accordance with HIPPA and FERPA regulations. All staff will abide by strict confidentiality practices to ensure student privacy. Medical information will be stored in Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School's student information system, PowerSchool, as well as secure spreadsheets for tracking and reporting purposes. Mandated reports, including the annual SHARRS report and vaccine report for Kindergarten students, will be completed and submitted by Education Plus Health staff.

Supporting Opportunities for School Success

Every student who attends Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School should have the opportunity to achieve academic success regardless of their housing status. Every effort should be made to support the academic achievement of students experiencing homelessness.

Belmont Charter Schools and Inquiry Charter School ensure the following:

- Access to Head Start and preschool programs administered by the local education agency or within the community
- Academic support such as tutoring programs as applicable at the school
- Afterschool programs and summer programs
 - If the M.V family request financial support the LEA and/or FSS will provide support with completing a CCIS application
 - OST will waive fees for families that request financial support
 - M.V students are served throughout the year up until the end of summer programming which is the first week of August.
 - Every March, M.V LEA will collect data from OST regarding students receiving programming and conduct outreach to identify services needed for the summer.
 - Every August, M.V LEA via the M.V Identification Survey will inform OST of families interested in OST after school programming.
 - Monthly OST Managing Director and Managers will be invited to a teaming with DPFS M.V LEA's and Directors to discuss programming and provide updates on family status
- Monthly monitoring of academic progress or needs
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) referral must be made to help track

student's academic progress and needs

Emergency Funds

If you are a student experiencing an unexpected crisis that has an effect on your educational responsibilities, emergency funds are available to assist you.

The following is the procedure for requesting emergency funds. The student does NOT have to qualify under McKinney-Vento to receive these funds. The purpose of emergency funds is to offer a full array of supportive services, as needed, to students to ensure full participation in their education. These funds supplement/cover unexpected school expenses during family emergencies. Any student actively attending a School District of Philadelphia school (grades K-12) is eligible for emergency funds if they are experiencing a crisis or sudden hardship that negatively impacts the family's income. Examples are a recent loss or death of a family member, fire or other damage to personal property, the recent loss of income, sudden illness of a family member, unexpected medical bills, or theft of personal property in school.

- The school's FSS will fill out the district's emergency request google form for the student.
- They should include a detailed explanation of the request with an itemized list of items needed. Students may receive a maximum of \$100 per calendar year.
- An E-Gift Card will be emailed to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

For More Information or to request the google form:

- Contact: Nakola Cameron, Project Assistant at 215-400-5574

American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Funds (ARP-HCY)

In 2021 President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) into law. In recognition of the extraordinary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students experiencing homelessness. This is referred to as the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Fund. Local Educational Agencies (LEA's) use these ARP-HCY funds to

identify homeless children and youth, provide homeless children and families with services to address the challenges of COVID-19, and enable homeless children and youth to attend school and fully participate in school activities.

Supports provided are as follows:

- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Uniforms
- ☐ Twin/Full size bed
- ☐ Dresser
- ☐ Dining room Table and Chairs
- ☐ Laundry assistance
- ☐ Food Support
- ☐ Limited back rent support

The following is the procedure for requesting emergency funds.

- The school's Assistant Director or FSS will provide the Managing Director with the student/family need in an email. A detailed explanation of the request with an itemized list of items needed should be included in the initial email, including (child/family name, grade, address, contact information, and vendor/gift card wish list link)
- The school's Assistant Director or FSS will enter the requested information on the BCS (ARP - HCY II) AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN HOMELESS II FUNDS Spreadsheet.
 - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1joCfYi0mdufTqgbvNUwcuFm7jRqAQkNA1ehiNqV0fHY/edit#gid=0>
- If the student/family receives a cell phone, the ARP-BCN Issued Cellphone form is to be completed and submitted.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/14QVTTw1AIQhHDZK5gDed_Fh5pMZ-y0CDHfATgbHJ4Y/edit
- If the request is for rental assistance, the following forms should be completed and submitted to access approval of support.
 - BCN: ARP-HCY Rental Assistance Application
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XxC2z0QqEdb-jVavrQvgVn6PQYgFbaroQS5EsvPubNI/edit>

Resources

Student and Family Resource Guide can be found at:

<https://www.philasd.org/resources-for-families/>

ECYEH Website:

<https://ecyehpennsylvania.center-school.org/liaisons/>

McKinney Vento Identification Process and Strategies

Identification Process:

- Using information provided through survey questions, staff, or outside agencies, the FSS will contact the family to conduct a family interview and determine if the student is eligible for McKinney Vento status.
- Using the information from the interviews and gathered during communications with the family, the FSS will provide resources for addressing barriers to education, basic need requirements, and other needs covered under Title 1, McKinney-Vento set-aside budget, and ARP Funds.
- If the FSS finds that the family is still eligible, they will add the student's name and information to the ECYEH system and create a Special Programs designation in Power School. (see below for instructions).
- The FSS will open up a Family Support Case for the McKinney Vento family and create an MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) referral for the student(s) if needed.
- The FSS will also provide e-mail correspondence with the front office to ensure their awareness of the student's status.

Identification strategies:

- 1.) **Housing Surveys:** These are included in registration packets and sent out to families regularly throughout the school year. Families who complete the survey with responses indicating homeless instability will be processed for determination of McKinney Vento's status.
 - ***McKinney Vento Student/Family Identification Surveys*** are disseminated to families and students via Parentsquare 4 times a year—August/September, December/January, April/May. See the link below;

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10wyAB4DU524P6ek5VUpIQBj-lz3HI6Yc0w5KT90Hcmo/edit>

- **McKinney Vento Family Satisfaction Surveys** are disseminated to students/families to ensure we are meeting the student and families needs. This survey is sent out (2) times a year in January and June, See the link below;
- Electronic Form
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10CB8AU3Tojyt0sOfolHNDEyKYTpW4mnUrxvO5ckP658/edit>
- **Hard Copy- inserted in families back to school packet**
 - **BACS STUDENT RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m4wTHa8c0URwDRXSsqLI-PwNI5gBrWJA/edit>
 - **BCES STUDENT RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/10NMUbZD_wvAawFRxLoc3LJLQhNN-SB5V/edit
 - **BCMS STUDENT RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wtSggs03kn_h4JXaa77mbyJKJoWMSr0/edit
 - **BCHS STUDENT RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE**
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MQUoERimwfh8eP2oP0seGHjACHybGzXS/edit>

- 2.) **Teacher/Staff Referrals:** Staff should notify FSS immediately to report any evidence or concern that a student may be experiencing homelessness. The referral form for staff, students, and families links are as follows;

BACS <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Y3bLcA9UCE-1iHkBF5IQGT1vi8FtSFeAX6gydOJQAOo/edit>

ICS

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hj4HGdHfifR3GxB6lfzmfAsaJ4g9qE2PF-4zjXFdRIk/edit>

BCES

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13sRQhjjrwajz81fQTzJodWYzcFvtA6lICq2g2TtemNY/edit>

BCMS

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1irckVRtkjEfJcSdPJGyC9eONJsNoALt4k0PvJ248DLI/edit>

BCHS

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rJ_GV7OrgYLjsWzYRPGwzel0dhA8t-jg5cHI5Syixil/edit

- 3.) **Correspondence with state and local agencies:** FSS will make outreach to local shelters to identify if any mutual clients exist.