

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESS), the Central Fulton School District is attempting to identify all children with the district that may be experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied homeless youth.

The term homeless children and youth is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes individuals:

- *Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;
- *Living in motel, hotel, trailer park or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- *Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- *Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- *Living in substandard housing (no running water or working utilities, infestations, etc.).

The Central Fulton School District attempts to identify homeless students during the initial enrollment process and on an ongoing basis. If a student or family has indicated they are homeless, or if a staff member has reasonable suspicion that a student or family is homeless, they are required to alter the Homeless Liaison. All procedures in place are designed to ensure this identification does not create or exacerbate educational barriers.

Students shall not be discriminated against, segregated nor stigmatized based on their status as homeless. To the extent feasible, and in accordance with the student's best interest, a homeless student shall continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. If a student is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the Central Fulton School District Homeless Liaison will consider the views of the students in determining where they will be enrolled.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment pursuant to the Central Fulton School District policies. However, the Central Fulton School District may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information. The homeless liaison may contact the previous school for oral confirmation of immunizations, and the school shall request records from the previous district. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment.

The Central Fulton School District may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the student has been immunized, but must not be a barrier to enrollment. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to

follow within thirty (30) days. The instructional program should begin as soon as possible after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed. The Homeless Liaison will assist the parent/guardian in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization and medical records. Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other Central Fulton School District students including but not limited to: programs for students with limited English proficiency; and educational services for which students meet eligibility criteria, such as programs for disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. Homeless families will also have access to all parent involvement activities and initiatives. Students automatically qualify for free lunch services. The Central Fulton School District has staff members who will work with local community agencies to coordinate services in the student's community. The staff includes: Holly Varner, Homeless Liaison; [Stacy Duffey](#), Social Worker; and Counselors [Carleen Grissinger](#) (Elementary), [Lesley Kuhn](#) (Middle School), and [Shelly McMullen](#) (High School), as well as those involved in the Student Assistance Program. Additionally, the Central Fulton School District has a certified nurse on staff that will work to ensure necessary referrals take place to appropriate health care, dental services, and other medical services.

The Central Fulton School District will ensure the student has transportation to school related events, such as , but not limited to testing and field trips.

Placement/Dispute/Complaints: If the Central Fulton School District is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the school shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's placement.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent/guardian/student will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal. The parent/guardian/student will be referred to the Homeless Liaison who will carry out the state's grievance procedure as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the Homeless Liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

If disputes or complaints on noncompliance arise regarding the education of homeless students, the following steps may be taken:

*The person filing the complaint shall first contact the school's Homeless Liaison to present their concerns to the people closest to the situation and most likely to be able to resolve it quickly.

*If Step 1 is not successful or is not possible under the circumstances, contact should be made with the Homeless Project Education Liaison, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will accept complaints directly through the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

*Individual cases may be referred to PDE's Office of Chief Counsel and the Office of the Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, as needed, by the State Homeless Coordinator.

PDE will deliver a response within fifteen (15) business days of the receipt of the complaint. The complaint may arrive in the form of a copy of the school/district letter or on the Dispute Letter Form if given directly to a Liaison of the Homeless Initiative.

Children who are experiencing homelessness may qualify for assistance, with school supplies/materials, and/or tutoring so that they can remain in their school throughout the duration of their homeless episode.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact the Homeless Liaison Holly Varner at 717-485-7060.

If your living situation changes during the school year, and you and your children become homeless, please be sure to contact the school. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

Homeless Students

Under McKinney Vento all school districts are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them with the resources needed to ensure academic success.

Who is considered homeless - Children or youth living in a shelter, transitional housing, hotel/motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled up with friends or family due to a lack of alternate resources are considered homeless. An unaccompanied homeless youth is a child or youth that is not in the care of their parent or legal guardian and meets the definition of homeless under McKinney Vento.

Where can students experiencing homelessness attend school? - The law indicates that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin (the school they attended at the time of the homeless episode or last school attended) through the end of the school year in which they find permanent housing, provided it is in the child/youth's best interest.

If through consultation between the school and the family and/or unaccompanied youth it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest, then the student has the right to immediately enroll in the school that non-homeless students living in the attendance area in which the child/youth is actually living are eligible to attend, even if they do not have all of the required documentation. Additionally, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to immediately enroll in school, even if they do not have a legal guardian present.

What supports can school districts provide to homeless students? - Homeless students are eligible for supports and services to remove barriers to educational success. This may include transportation to the school of origin, free meals, referrals to physical/mental health providers, clothing to meet school requirements, access to school supplies and resources, assistance with credit recovery, tutoring supports, expedited evaluations and assistance to participate in school activities including parent engagement opportunities, sports, clubs, etc.

Homeless Dispute Process - If at any time there is a disagreement about homeless status or best interest for school placement, the district will notify the family in writing of their determination that the family/unaccompanied youth is ineligible for McKinney Vento services. At this time, the district will provide the family/unaccompanied youth with the ability to dispute their determination. Throughout the dispute process, the child/youth including unaccompanied youth, will continue to be educated in the school of origin or immediately enrolled in the school they are seeking enrollment until the dispute process is finalized. Transportation will continue throughout the dispute process. All disputes will be sent to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator who will issue a determination. If any party is unhappy with the determination, they can elevate the dispute to the state coordinator.

What if I think that I am eligible for services under McKinney Vento? - For a student within the Central Fulton School District, they would contact the Homeless Liaison Mrs. Holly Varner at 717-485-7060 or email her at hvarner@cfsd.info.