

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education



Wilson County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability in admission to, access to and treatment in its programs and activities.
Wilson County Schools is an equal opportunity employer.

WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Guidelines for Educating Homeless Students

Pursuant to the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, Article 10, or more commonly referred to as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, all children meeting the criteria outlined in the statute as homeless must have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including preschool education, provided to housed children and youth. This shall be the policy of the Wilson County Public School system as stated in board policy 6020.3.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness will be provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and state student performance standards to which all students are held without being stigmatized or isolated. Wilson County Schools will make every effort to provide homeless children and youth with a stable school environment by enrolling students in the school of origin and providing them with transportation to and from the school of origin as required in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act unless the parent/guardian declines transportation services.

Parents, guardians or unaccompanied youth may decline enrollment in the school of origin if they determine it is not in the student's best interest. The school may decline enrollment in the school of origin if they determine that doing so is well beyond what is reasonably feasible for the student's best interests (for example, the student is staying sixty miles away from the school of origin which would be an unreasonable amount of time for the student to commute).

The enrollment of children meeting the statutory definitions of homeless shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Student does not reside with their parent or guardian due to some identified reason

In the event any of these documents are lacking, the student will be immediately enrolled and school personnel will continue to follow up to assist in obtaining necessary documentation.

The Wilson County School system will increase the awareness of the Homeless Education program through posting of posters in schools where students and parents can read them, as well as ensuring staff are trained on the definitions and policy and procedure for identification and ensuring students have equal access to a quality education.

Section 721 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act considers penalizing a student in relation to their homelessness as creating a barrier to that student's education. In the event retention due to absences or suspension of a student experiencing homelessness is being considered, a manifestation determination review will be done to determine if the absences or conduct in question had a direct or causal relationship to the student's homelessness. This

process will be documented on the Wilson County School McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Manifestation Determination form.

Wilson County Schools shall evaluate its Homeless Education program regularly to determine the effectiveness of the program. The system will adjust practices and procedures as needed to improve the effective implementation of the statutory requirements and the achievement of such students.

Definitions

For identifying children and youth who are homeless, the Wilson County School System shall use the McKinney-Vento Act's definition. The Act defines children and youth 21 years of age and younger who are homeless as:

- Children and youth 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 similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
 - ❖ Living in motels hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - ❖ Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - ❖ Abandoned in hospitals; or
 - ❖ 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.
- Migratory Children who qualify due to situations described above.
- “Unaccompanied youth” which includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing, children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to as “throwaway” children and youth), living with boyfriends and school-age unwed mothers living in homes for unwed mothers who have no other housing available.

The *school of origin* is the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Identification and Registration Procedures

Students who experience homelessness often go undetected. The district will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless students without stigmatizing terminology. Embedded in the district enrollment form and procedures will be items to help identify homeless children and youth. The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth will complete the enrollment form at the time of registration.

An unaccompanied youth may enroll himself or herself. In such cases, the data manager will immediately contact the appropriate Wilson County Schools school counselor to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth so that he/she may assist the school and the youth with obtaining eligible educational and community services of which he/she may have need. The Homeless Liaison can be contacted should assistance be needed that neither the school counselor nor the school social worker can provide. Using the Wilson County Schools McKinney-Vento Homeless Education form, school counselors and school social workers should report all students experiencing homelessness to the Homeless Liaison.

The application process for students who have been identified as homeless can be expedited. The determination for free meals may be made without completing the full application process. (source: US Department of Agriculture: http://www.nlchp.org/FA_Education/new_usda_memo.pdf).

Identification of Homeless Preschoolers

The Homeless Liaison will collaborate with local community agencies and school personnel to identify homeless preschoolers. The district will also include homeless preschoolers and homeless children in Title 1 programs and in the “Child Find” process as required by the Individuals with Disability Education Act. All preschool programs within the public school prevue will adhere to all McKinney-Vento policies.

School Placement

The school system will make placement decisions in the “best interest” of the student who has been identified as homeless. Students will continue in the *school of origin* for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Students may also enroll in any public school that the non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

When a dispute arises regarding enrollment in a school, the student who is homeless will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and the enrolling data manager will refer the parent to the school administrator who will pursue a resolution of the dispute. The enrolling data manager will forward the Declaration for Missing Enrollment Documentation Form, if relevant, to the school

counselor. The school counselor and school social worker should be enlisted to assist in investigating details to resolve the dispute. Consultation with the Homeless Liaison may also be helpful. Based on details of the investigation, the school administrator will make a decision on the student's enrollment that is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. The school shall assist the parent in notifying The Wilson County Homeless Liaison of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youths desire to appeal the school's decision. The Wilson County Schools Homeless Liaison shall expeditiously take steps to understand and resolve the dispute.

Dispute Resolution Process

Below are six key points for resolving disputes regarding school selection and enrollment for homeless children and youth:

- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute [PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)(iv)]. Enrollment is defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities."
- School personnel such as the school counselor, school social worker and any other appropriate staff will investigate the details of the student's residence status and report their findings to the school administrator using the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Declaration Form in addition to any other relevant information. Based on information collected, the school administrator will make a decision on the student's enrollment that is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- A written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal [PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand. This decision will be provided no later than 30 days from the time of the appeal.
- In the event the student, parent, or guardian is not satisfied with the school's decision, the school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to Wilson County Schools Homeless Liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.
- If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, then the Wilson County Schools homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the state homeless liaison with the NC Department of Public Instruction.

School districts must enroll students experiencing homelessness immediately. If, after enrollment, it is determined that a student is not homeless as defined in the law, school districts should follow the district policies that are in place to address any types of issues of fraud. Written notice should be given to the parent, guardian, or youth, including his or her right to appeal the decision.

When working with parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth, schools should:

- Inform parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their positions about school selection or enrollment.
- Provide a simple dispute form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute resolution process.
- Provide a copy to the parents, guardians, or youth for their records when the dispute form is submitted to the school.
- Provide a copy to the parents, guardians, or youth for their records of the outcome of the dispute, even when the dispute is immediately resolved satisfactorily without a referral to the district Homeless Liaison.



Summary of Procedure for Identification and Enrollment of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students identified as homeless after already enrolled in a school should be referred to the school counselor who will notify the Homeless Liaison and the school social worker.

Students identified as homeless during the enrollment process:

If there is no enrollment dispute, the data manager will e-mail the school counselor to notify him/her of the student and forward to the school counselor the Declaration for Missing Enrollment Documentation Form if not all documents are available at the time of enrollment.

In the event there is an enrollment dispute:

- The student who is homeless will be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and the enrolling data manager will refer the parent to the school administrator, notifying the school administrator of the referral.
- The school administrator will pursue a resolution of the dispute, enlisting the assistance of the school counselor and school social worker as needed.
- The school's designated transportation/bus coordinator will contact the Transportation Department regarding the student's transportation needs and complete the Transportation Agreement.
- The school counselor and school social worker will assist the school administrator in investigating details to resolve the dispute, consulting with the Homeless Liaison as needed.
- The school counselor will submit to the school administrator the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Declaration Form in addition to any other relevant information.
- Based on details of the investigation, the school administrator will make a decision on the student's enrollment that is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth would like to appeal the school's decision, the school shall assist the parent in notifying the Homeless Liaison who will assist in resolving the dispute

With all Students Experiencing Homelessness:

The enrolling data manager will forward the Declaration for Missing Enrollment Documentation Form to the school counselor if not all documents are available at the time of enrollment.

The school's transportation/bus coordinator will contact the Transportation Department regarding the student's transportation needs and complete the Transportation Agreement with the parent/guardian.

Students experiencing homelessness will be enrolled in the Free and Reduced Lunch program.

The school counselor will submit the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education student documentation form to the Homeless Liaison.

DECLARATION FOR MISSING ENROLLMENT DOCUMENTATION FORM

(PLEASE PRINT)

STUDENT NAME: _____ D.O.B. ___/___/___

MALE ___ FEMALE ___ SCHOOL OF ATTENDANCE: _____

The above-named student has been enrolled in school. The following documents are still needed to complete the enrollment process (check one or more if applicable):

- Proof of Residency (utility bill, letter from shelter, hotel/motel receipt, resident affidavit)
- Immunization/Health Records (records from school or social service, exemption form)
- Birth Certificate (birth certificate, baptismal record, passport, immigration certificate)
- School Records (telephone or fax from previous school)

Name of parent/guardian/other enrolling student: _____

Relationship to student: _____

How may we contact the parent/guardian? Telephone: _____

Address:

Street address	City	Zip Code
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The above information is true and correct. I authorize Wilson County Schools to obtain any and all educational related records that will facilitate proper placement in the most appropriate educational setting for the above-named student.

Signature _____ Date _____

TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Birth date: _____

School: _____ Teacher: _____

Current Address: _____

Address History: _____

Phone: _____

Siblings at Same School:

Grade:

Birth date:

Siblings at Same School:	Grade:	Birth date:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

District of Residence: _____

Transportation Plan:

Plan has been communicated to the family _____

Date

I agree to have my child on time and to attend school every day. I also agree to notify the district if our address or situation changes.

Parent's Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

School/District Signature: _____ Date: _____

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Declaration Form

I declare that this family meets one of the following conditions for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: (Please check all that apply)

- Lack a fixed, regular nighttime residence
- Live with a friend or relative because they cannot afford housing (Doubled-up)
- Live in a motel / hotel
- Live in an emergency shelter, transitional shelter, or domestic violence shelter
- Live in a car, trailer, park, or campground
- Other _____

Name of Parent / Guardian _____

Address / Current Location: _____

Phone: _____ Emergency Contact: _____

Please list the full name of each child below and the corresponding school site

Student	Birth Date	School	Grade

Signature of School Counselor

Date

Wilson County Schools
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education
Manifestation Determination Assessment Summary
(Consideration of suspension)

Student Birth date School
Current Educational Placement Identified Homeless

Alleged behavior resulting in this assessment:

Date of incident Today's Date

Was the conduct in question caused by, or did it have a direct or causal relationship to the student's homelessness? yes , no, Please explain

If it is determined that the behavior is related to the student's homelessness, what plan will be put in place to address the issues which led to the incident?

What resources will be put in place to assist the student and family?

Was the family a part of this assessment and plan?

If not, how will they be notified?

Date notified Notified by

If it is determined that the incident in no way was the behavior related to the student's homelessness, all relevant disciplinary actions may be applied unless there are other applicable statutory requirements.

Name of Person conducting assessment

Date