

***North Pike School District  
Homeless Plan  
2019-2020***

***Meeting the Needs of Homeless Students  
Policies, Procedure, and Helpful Tips***

**NPSD Homeless Committee and School Contacts**

**Loren Harris.....Assistant Superintendent**  
**Glenda Leonard..... Curriculum Director**  
**Theresa Brumfield.....Counselor, NPES**  
**Lora Stone.....Counselor, NPMS**  
**Crystal Whatley.....Counselor, CTC**

## ***Meeting the Needs of Homeless Students***

Twice, in August and January of each school year, counselors in each school in the North Pike School District will review the Homeless statuses of their students. The school counselor is responsible for meeting with students and their parents/guardians to assess their current situation to determine if all of the students' needs are being met. This information is then submitted to the school principal and the district's Homeless Liaison, who, in turn, reviews the data and takes actions to ensure that each student has a positive, productive school experience.

The homeless liaisons duties include:

1. Helping unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes.
2. Informing unaccompanied youth of their rights to transportation and assisting youth in accessing transportation.
3. Providing unaccompanied youth with notice of their right to appeal school or school district decisions and ensuring that youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes.

School personnel will be made aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth. School employees are responsible for meeting these needs. This includes:

### **Identifying Unaccompanied Youth**

1. Principals must train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, school counselors, and teachers on the definition of unaccompanied youth.
2. School staff must highlight the warning signs of homelessness (e.g. frequent absences, declines in academic achievement, disengagement, stress), and principals must encourage staff to regularly talk to students about what's going on in their lives.
3. School staff must be creative and utilize new techniques, such as involving social workers, surveying peers, and using enrollment questionnaires. (In employing different methods of identification, always remember that youth may be living in a variety of situations (e.g. shelters, doubled-up, in cars, on the streets, etc.) and that they deserve to have their privacy and dignity respected.

### **Disseminating Information**

1. The district will develop materials such as posters, brochures, pamphlets, and fliers that explain McKinney-Vento rights information to youth and make these items available in school attendance offices and distribute them to youth service providers.
2. The district's Homeless Liaison will train school and school district personnel on the education rights of unaccompanied youth and should require them to distribute informational materials and discuss their contents with the unaccompanied youth they identify.

***Who is homeless?  
(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)***

*The term “homeless children and youth”— (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and (B) includes — (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;(ii) children and youths 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...(iii)children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus train stations, or similar settings; and (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).*

## **Enrollment Procedures**

1. Ensure that the enrollment staff in all schools are familiar with McKinney-Vento requirements and procedures related to enrolling unaccompanied youth.
2. Train school and school district staff to distinguish between “throwaway” and runaway youth
3. Ensure that enrollment procedures are carefully crafted so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment. For example, identifying a caregiver is not a prerequisite to enrollment.

## **Ensuring Appropriate Educational Services**

1. Revise LEA policies, such as those related to attendance, to ensure that they remove barriers to academic success for unaccompanied youth.
2. Revise or develop LEA policies to address issues related to who signs for unaccompanied youth to participate in field trips or extracurricular activities.
3. Provide unaccompanied youth the opportunity to enroll in diversified learning opportunities such as vocational education, yet ensure that they are integrated with the mainstream school environment, including extracurricular activities, as much as possible.
4. Develop strategies to continue educating students who have been suspended or expelled from school.

## **Assisting With Non-Educational Needs**

1. Provide a “safe place” at school that includes trained mentors, school counselors, or social workers that unaccompanied youth can access as needed.
2. Contact relevant social service agencies and gather information, pamphlets, and applications concerning valuable services such as food stamps. Make such materials available to identified unaccompanied youth.
3. Meet with and coordinate with relevant social service and medical agencies to develop policies and procedures to facilitate an unaccompanied youth’s access to services and treatment with sensitivity and urgency.
4. Develop a list of referrals that includes shelters, youth hotlines, and other youth services providers. Various national organizations and agencies are useful resources for youth and those trying to assist them:

Covenant House Runaway Hotline: 1-800-999-9999 (24 hrs)

[www.covenanthouse.org](http://www.covenanthouse.org)

National Network for Youth: 202-738-7949

[www.nn4youth.org](http://www.nn4youth.org)

National Runaway Switchboard Runaway Hotline: 1-800-621-4000 (24 hrs)

[www.nrs Crisisline.org](http://www.nrs Crisisline.org)

Stand Up for Kids

1-800-365-4KID

[www.standupforkids.org](http://www.standupforkids.org)

## **What Can Liaisons and Service Providers Do to Assist Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Access Financial Aid?**

Under the Higher Education Act, other youth who meet the definition of “independent student” can apply for federal aid without parental information or signature, including youth who are orphans, wards of the court, veterans, graduate students, married, or have a dependent. A financial aid administrator at a college can also designate a student as independent due to “other unusual circumstances.”

McKinney-Vento school district liaisons, service providers, and unaccompanied homeless youth should work with financial aid administrators to streamline access to financial aid. In addition, unaccompanied youth may need assistance overcoming common barriers that students face in trying to fill out the FAFSA, such as not having all the documents they need, not knowing how to fill out the form, and being overwhelmed by the amount of information the application requests. Strategies and resources are provided below.

1. Inform unaccompanied homeless youth that they can go to college, even without parental financial support. Too often, unaccompanied youth assume that college is not an option for them because they are unaware of processes to access financial aid.
2. Support unaccompanied homeless youth throughout the financial aid process, including by connecting them to College Access organizations and events. Navigating the financial aid system can be difficult for students with parents - young people who are homeless and trying to survive on their own will need caring adults to help guide them and encourage their persistence.
3. Help youth go to college, and stay in college, by assisting them to find scholarships for which they are eligible. [www.FinAid.org](http://www.FinAid.org) and Student Aid on the Web are two excellent places to begin a search for scholarships.
4. Share information about the needs of unaccompanied youth, and the current and pending higher education law provisions, with high school counselors, social workers, and community service providers, so that they are informed and able to assist unaccompanied youth.
5. Develop relationships with local financial aid administrators to inform them about unaccompanied homeless youth, the role of school district liaisons in identifying and assisting these young people, and the provisions of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007. Such relationships may ease the process for future unaccompanied homeless youth who wish to go to these colleges.
6. Locate and develop a relationship with a state or local college access organization in your community. College access organizations provide counseling, advice, and financial assistance.

### **Mississippi Administrative Procedure for Complaints or Appeals under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) guidelines**

#### **What must be included in a complaint?**

When a complaint cannot be resolved at the LEA level, the complaint must be submitted in writing to the Mississippi Department of Education, Federal Programs Office. Persons issuing verbal complaints will be asked to complete a written complaint form prior to any official investigation, or assisted with the completion of the complaint form.

The complaint must include the name and address of the person submitting the complaint and a description of the complaint. The complaint must also include a statement which assures that to the best of the complainant's knowledge, the agency has violated a requirement of a federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program. In addition, the facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated must be included.

#### **Where should a complaint be sent?**

The mailing address is: Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Innovative Support, Suite 162 Central High School, Post Office Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771. The office may also be contacted via telephone at (601) 359-3499.

## What happens to complaints after they are received by the Federal Programs Office?

### A. Complaint Review

- a. In the first level of review, a complaint shall be answered by the Bureau Director, with assistance from staff.
- b. The Bureau Director shall determine whether additional information is necessary, if so appropriate program staff will notify the agency involved, and conduct an on-site review investigating the complaint.
- c. The Bureau Director shall determine whether additional information is necessary. If there are serious violations, verified after the on-site review, then the information gathered will be forwarded to other appropriate offices or organizations.
- d. Once the investigation has been completed, the Federal Programs Office will issue a letter stating the findings of facts. The letter stating the findings of fact shall be mailed no later than 60 calendar days from the date the Federal Programs Office receives the complaint in writing.
- e. If areas of noncompliance are found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion indicated. All parties will be informed of the areas of noncompliance and the required corrective actions.
- f. The Federal Programs Office may extend the 60-day timeline, if exceptional circumstances exist. Examples of exceptional circumstances may be, but not limited to:
  - ✓ The complexity of the issues;
  - ✓ The need for additional information; and/or
  - ✓ The unavailability of any of the necessary parties.

### B. Appeals

- a. An individual may appeal an administrative determination of the Bureau Director. The individual must submit the appeal in writing to the address above. The appeal must be postmarked no later than 25 calendar days after the date the Bureau Director's determination is made.
- b. A final decision on the complaint shall be made after consulting with the State Superintendent of Education or designee.
- c. The State Superintendent of Education shall provide written notification to the individual who submitted the complaint about the disposition of the complaint no later than 30 days after final action.
- d. The complainant has the right to request the Secretary of Education to review the decision of the State Department of Education. This review is at the Secretary's discretion.
- e. In matters involving violations of section 9503 (participation of private school children), the complainant has the right to request the Secretary of Education to review the decision of the Mississippi State Department of Education. The Secretary will follow the procedures in section 9501(b). For additional information on complaint procedures for participation of private school children, visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg111.html#sec9503>

**District:** North Pike School District  
**Section:** J - Students  
**Policy Code:** JQN - Education for Homeless Children and Youth

## **EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Homeless students in the district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the district to carry out duties as required by law.

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

The superintendent or designee will produce written guidelines for distribution to each school that explains the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities of the schools to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. This information shall also be disseminated in writing and by other means designed to raise awareness of these rights and responsibilities to staff, homeless families and students, the public, and homeless service providers.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this policy, children are deemed to be homeless under the following conditions:

1. A child who is lacking a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, a temporary residence prior to being placed in an institution, or a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
2. A child who is living in a transitional or emergency shelter.
3. A child who is temporarily living in a trailer park or camping area due to lack of adequate living accommodations.
4. A child who is living in doubled-up accommodations due to loss of housing or other similar situation.
5. A migratory child who is staying in accommodations not fit for human habitation.
6. A child who has run away from home and lives in a runaway shelter, abandoned building, the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
7. A child who is placed in a state institution because s/he has no other place to live.
8. A child who has been abandoned by his/her family and is staying in a hospital.
9. A child whose parents or guardian will not permit him/her to live at home and who lives on the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
10. School-age unwed mothers or expectant mothers who are living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other available living accommodations.

## SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990, 42USC11431, it shall be the policy of this school district, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.
2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils, and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the "school of origin" or the school serving the "place of abode" will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by this school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district; and in a manner consistent with S1232g of Title 20.
6. Should this school district receive assistance un S11432 of the Act, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.
7. Should this school district receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to insure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district; and, homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. This school district has and will continue to review and revise, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above.
10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.
11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for

that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Coordinator of the Homeless Program  
Mississippi Department of Education  
P. O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205

LEGAL REF.: McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

CROSS REF.: Policies JAA - Equal Educational Opportunities  
JBCCA - Assignment of Pupils  
IB - Instructional Goals

Last Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Review History:[1/1/1900][1/1/1901]

**Adopted Date:** 7/1/2018  
**Approved/Revised Date:** 7/1/2018

## Written Notification of Decision

**This form is to be completed by the school when a disagreement arises between the school and a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth over McKinney-Vento eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a school.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

In compliance with 42 U.S. C. § 11432(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the following written notification is provided to:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

After reviewing your request regarding eligibility, or school selection or enrollment in a school for the student(s) listed above, the request is denied. This determination was based upon:

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this form or by contacting the school district's local homeless education liaison.

Name of local liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal communication(s) to support your position regarding the student's enrollment in the requested school. You may use the form attached to this notification.
  - You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education if further help is needed or desired. Contact information for the State Coordinator: *You may seek the assistance of advocates or an attorney. A copy of our state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness is attached.*

## Written Notification of Decision

**To be completed by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises. This information may be shared verbally with the local liaison as an alternative to completing this form.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I may be contacted at (phone or e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

I have been provided with (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ A written explanation of the school's decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ The contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison.

\_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness.

Optional: You may include a written explanation in the space below to support your appeal or you may provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a copy of this form when I submitted it. \_\_\_\_\_ (Please initial.)

## Appendix 8.B Dispute Review Guide

Case:  
 Date Initiated:  
 Date Resolved:  
 Summary of Dispute:  
 Resolution:

Issue	Before		
	✓	What Went Well	What Needs Improvement
All school and LEA staff were trained on the McKinney-Vento Act.			
The local homeless liaison was familiar with the State and local homeless dispute resolution policy.			
All school and LEA staff were trained on what is required when a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth initiates a dispute.			
Timelines were clear and reasonable.			
The written notice was reviewed for appropriateness.			
School and LEA staff were trained in ways to diffuse disagreements and to treat parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth respectfully.			
The local liaison implemented the dispute process according to LEA and SEA policies.			

Issue	During		
	✓	What Went Well	What Needs Improvement
Parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth was provided written notice of the LEA's decision.			
Local homeless liaison or school staff explained the dispute process.			
Local homeless liaison ensured that parent or guardian was able to meet deadlines or was provided assistance or flexibility, and addressed other barriers for the parent to implement the process.			
Parent or guardian was referred to advocate or attorney for assistance.			
Local homeless liaison assisted unaccompanied youth with the process.			
School immediately enrolled student in the school where enrollment was sought and provided full services.			
Local liaison obtained information and documentation in appropriate ways.			
Local liaison compiled sufficient information and documents for the State Coordinator or other third parties.			
All necessary parties were apprised of the resolution and their role in its implementation.			
If the dispute was not found in the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth's favor, the local liaison discussed the outcome with and worked with the			

complainant on strategies to implement the solution while keeping the best interest of the child at the forefront.			
--	--	--	--

After			
Issue	✓	What Went Well	What Needs Improvement
The local liaison reviewed the case with all parties involved at the LEA and SEA level for lessons learned.			
Appropriate changes in procedures and policies were implemented.			
School and LEA staff received further training as needed.			

**Dispute Policy Improvement Action Plan**

What Needs to be Done	Person Responsible	Deadline