

Augusta Public Schools



McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS PROGRAM GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES

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Table of Contents

Page 3 - Statement of Philosophy

Page 3 - Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

Page 4 - Enrollment

Page 4 - Guardianship

Page 4-5 - Residency

Page 5 - Lunch Waiver

Page 5 - Fee Waiver

Page 6 - Comparable Services

Page 6 - Transportation

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

It is the belief of the Augusta Public School District that all students can and will learn. The McKinney-Vento Homeless program removes barriers to learning for homeless children and youth. All homeless children and youth will be served using all resources available to the district.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The term ‘homeless children and youths’ means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship.

It includes children and youth who:

- are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- are living in emergency shelters
- are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- are runaway children or children who are abandoned

Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) will be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents or in the case of unaccompanied youth by the program social worker and/or district program liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of Augusta School forms such Affidavit of Residency Form, McKinney-Vento Referral Form and/or through direct contact with school staff.

ENROLLMENT

The terms ‘enroll’ and ‘enrollment’ are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

Augusta School shall immediately enroll the child/youth, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school.

Homeless students who do not live with their parents or guardians may enroll themselves in school.

GUARDIANSHIP

For purposes of school placement, any parent, guardian or person in loco parentis who has legal or physical custody of a homeless child or youth shall enroll that child or youth directly in Augusta Public Schools.

Once a child or youth is enrolled in and attending the Augusta Public Schools, an Affidavit of Residency form must be completed within a reasonable period of time for those children or youth who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

RESIDENCY

A homeless child or youth is a resident if the child is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently.

The child or youth shall be considered a resident when living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis not solely for school purposes or for participation in extra-curricular activities.

1. Homeless children, youth and unaccompanied youth will be enrolled immediately, even if they lack immunizations and/or records ordinarily required for enrollment. Documents and records that cannot be used for enrollment delays include but are not limited to:
 - A. transcripts/school records
 - B. immunization, health, medical records
 - C. birth certificates
 - D. proof of residency
 - E. proof of guardianship

Residency cont.

2. Once the student is enrolled it is the responsibility of the school to contact the previous school and request records.
3. The program social worker should be contacted as soon as possible to assist the family with supplies and other needs. This can be done through the building contact for homeless or by contacting the program social worker directly.

LUNCH WAIVER

1. When a student is identified as homeless they are automatically waived with or without paperwork. This is at the INITIAL point of identification.
2. The free status stays with that student the entire school year until the student is "permanently" housed. Then they must complete the paperwork/application.

FEE WAIVER

Student fees for the purposes of serving homeless children include but are not limited to: fees for field trips, fees for Art courses/projects, Foods courses, Technical Education courses/projects, and yearly class fees. These fees are to be automatically waived. The waiving of fees will be done directly by the program social worker and/or a building administrator.

To encourage all homeless students to participate in all school activities, payment of all student fees will be waived if the student is identified as homeless.

If necessary, the Homeless Donation Account may provide reimbursement to schools for field trips that are out of pocket expenses for homeless students. This account may also be used to pay for expenses such as packets for picture day, book fairs, etc... These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the program social worker, and are dependent upon a number of factors which may include available funds in the Donation Account.

COMPARABLE SERVICES

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as

- School supplies
- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria such as special education programs
- Programs for “At Risk” students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs
- Title I services

TRANSPORTATION

1. At the request of a homeless child’s parent/guardian or the program social worker in the cases of unaccompanied youth, transportation to the school of origin will be provided to homeless children and youth for the duration of homelessness, following best interest provisions (outlined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act under Local Education Agency Requirements).
 - A. In order for transportation to be set up, the program social worker will determine with the family the best means of transportation.
 - B. If it is determined that the student would be best served (especially younger children) on a school bus, an alternate form of transportation is immediately arranged until school bussing can be arranged through the transportation department.
 - C. When permanent housing is secured, the parent/guardian may choose to keep the child or youth in the Augusta Public Schools until the end of the academic year but the parent/guardian is then responsible for transportation. At this point, parents/guardians can choose to enroll the child in the school in the attendance area in which they live.
2. When the child, youth or unaccompanied homeless student’s temporary residence and school of origin are two different school districts, the districts will collaborate on the method and cost of transportation. The districts will share the cost of transportation.

3. Refugee students who are not independently housed may be considered homeless unless families choose to not be considered so. The homeless social worker/interpreters will discuss McKinney-Vento with families to determine if they are homeless. It will be determined based on where the student resides and where the program is for the refugee students if transportation is necessary. If it is deemed unsafe or too far for a non-English speaking homeless student to walk or arrange for their own transportation, then they will be transported the same as other homeless students. The guidelines listed above will be followed in those situations as well.