

## **Patrick County Public Schools Homeless Education Plan**

Patrick County Public Schools will follow the requirements of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to ensure that all children receive a free, appropriate education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act specifically guarantees school enrollment for any child who does not have a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence. A homeless liaison is appointed for the school division to assist in the implementation of this policy.

Information regarding this policy will be distributed to all students upon enrollment and will be posted in a visual location in every school in the district. In addition, materials are posted in the school board office, as well as other community services agencies within the school district.

### **Definitions**

The McKinney-Vento act defines homeless students as: children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting
- Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

A child or youth will be considered “homeless” for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above.

*Unaccompanied youth:* a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is “homeless” as defined above.

### **Identification**

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the local liaison will identify homeless children in the district. The local liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as in transition, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison. The local liaison will also instruct school personnel to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the local liaison.

## **Enrollment**

Due to the realities of homelessness and mobility, students in transition may not have school enrollment documents available readily. The school selected for enrollment must enroll any homeless child immediately. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment. The school should refer the family to the local liaison to assist with obtaining missing immunizations and/or other medical records if necessary. Unaccompanied youth must also be enrolled immediately. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison.

## **School Selection**

Homeless children have the right to remain at their school of origin or to transfer to the school that houses students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living. School selection will be a child-centered determination, based on the needs of the particular student. If a student remains at their school of origin, they may remain there the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed.

If the school of origin is different from the locality of the nearest school location, transportation will be provided to and from the school of origin. The length of the commute will be considered only in determining the feasibility of placement in the school of origin based on potential harm to the student.

## **Comparable Services**

Homeless children will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school they attend including: transportation, Title 1, Part A services, educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria (special education, English language learners, etc.), vocational and technical programs, gifted and talented programs, etc.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that all homeless children are eligible for free meals. The local liaison will provide a list of all homeless students to the food services department each month.

Homeless students should receive priority enrollment in preschool programs.

## **Enrollment Disputes**

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the homeless child will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The school where the dispute arises will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will refer the parent or unaccompanied youth to the local liaison immediately. The local liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled in the requested school and receives services to which he or she is entitled. The local liaison will resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The local liaison will keep records of all disputes.

## **Appeal Process**

Oral complaint- In the event that a parent or unaccompanied youth disagrees with a school's decision, they should orally present their position to the division's homeless liaison.

Written complaint- If the disagreement is not resolved within five (5) school days, the parent or unaccompanied youth may present a written complaint to the homeless liaison. The written complaint must include the following information: the date the complaint is given to the homeless liaison; a summary of the events surrounding the dispute; the name(s) of the school division personnel involved in the enrollment decision; and the result of the presentation of the oral complaint to the homeless liaison. Within five (5) school days after receiving the written complaint, the homeless liaison will reach a decision regarding the contested enrollment and shall provide a written statement of that decision, including the reasons, to the parent or unaccompanied youth. The liaison will inform the Superintendent of the formal complaint and its resolution.

Appeal to Superintendent- If the parent or unaccompanied youth is not satisfied with the written decision of the homeless liaison, they may appeal that decision to the Superintendent by filing a written appeal. The homeless liaison shall ensure that the Superintendent receives copies of the written complaint and the response thereto. The Superintendent or designee shall schedule a conference with the parent or unaccompanied youth to discuss the complaint. Within five (5) school days of receiving the written appeal, the Superintendent, or designee, shall provide a written decision to the parent or unaccompanied youth including a statement of the reasons therefore.

## **References**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § § 11431 - 11436.

Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § § 6311 - 6315.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § § 1400 et seq.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, 42 U.S.C. § § 1751 et seq.

June 5, 1992 Policy of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.