

HOMELESS STUDENTS AND UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the school system will work with homeless children and unaccompanied youths and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Using the Student Enrollment Questionnaire, special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths not currently attending school in a manner that will not stigmatize or segregate them on the basis of their status as homeless. Homeless students will be provided comparable system services for which they are eligible, including, but not limited to, Head Start and pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, educational programs for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Every child of a homeless individual and unaccompanied youth are entitled to equal access to the same free, appropriate public education and transportation as provided to other students. The system will immediately assign and admit a child who is homeless or is an unaccompanied youth to a system school regardless of residence or whether the homeless child is able to produce records normally required for enrollment.

Explicitly, the School System is committed to meeting the needs of all homeless children and unaccompanied youths who reside inside and outside of Richmond County, but whose school of origin is located within the Richmond County School System. The means of transportation of such youth shall be handled on an individual basis. If the student in transition is living in this system but attending school in another or attending school in this system but living in another, this system will coordinate with the neighboring system to arrange for appropriate transportation.

The Superintendent will review and revise as necessary rules or procedures that may be barriers to enrollment of homeless children and youths. In reviewing and revising such procedures, the Superintendent will consider issues of transportation, immunization, residence, birth certificates, maintenance and transfer of school records and other documentation.

The Superintendent will appoint a liaison for homeless children.

A "homeless child" is defined as provided in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Anyone having a concern or complaint regarding placement or education of a homeless child or youth may initiate the resolution process directly at the principal's office of the school in which enrollment is sought or at the system homeless liaison's office, either of which shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. If the dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth shall be enrolled immediately in the school in which he/she is seeking admission, pending resolution of the dispute. Decisions at the school level may be appealed to the homeless liaison, whose decisions may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools and then to the Board. If the dispute remains unresolved at the system level, the parent may request a review of the dispute and the Board's decision by the Georgia Department of Education, in accordance with Dispute Resolution Guidelines and Procedures included in the Georgia Department of Education's publication "Implementing Title

I in Georgia Schools: A Handbook for Title I Directors", which is available on the Department's web site.

Legal References:

Georgia Code	Description
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O.C.G.A. 20-02-0150	Eligibility for enrollment
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O.C.G.A. 20-02-0293	Student attending school in system other than system of student's residence
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O.C.G.A. 20-02-0690.1	Mandatory education for children between 6 and 16
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O.C.G.A. 20-02-0694	Administration/enforcement of attendance reqts.
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Rule 160-5-1-.28	Student Enrollment and Withdrawal
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US Code	Description
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42 USC 11431	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
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Adopted: September 11, 2008

Revised: October 16, 2010

ADMISSIONS/WITHDRAWALS: HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

The Richmond County School System ("System") seeks to ensure that all homeless children and unaccompanied youth have equal access to the same, free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other System students. The following procedures are designed to facilitate the identification, enrollment, transportation and withdrawal of such students as well as provide an efficient and effective dispute resolution process.

RULE:

A. IDENTIFICATION OF HOMELESS STUDENTS:

1. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Act), 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2) et seq., defines homeless students as those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Children and unaccompanied youth who:**
 - (1) Share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - (2) Live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - (3) Live in emergency or transitional shelters; or
 - (4) Are abandoned in hospitals.
 - b. 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;
 - c. Children and youth who live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
 - d. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances set forth in Items 1, 2, and 3 above.
2. The parent/guardian of a student who demonstrates evidence of living in a homeless situation will be given a [Form JBC\(1\)-1](#) (Student Enrollment Questionnaire) to complete and send to the System's Homeless Liaison to determine eligibility according to the above definition.

B. SCHOOL SELECTION:

1. **Enrollment Options:**

Homeless children and unaccompanied youth may:

 - a. Enroll in the school serving the attendance zone where the student temporarily resides; or
 - b. Continue enrollment in the school of origin, when feasible. The school of origin is the school the student attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled.
2. Determining which school the child attends will be based upon the student's best interest. Every effort shall be made, to the extent feasible, to keep the student in

- his/her school of origin unless doing so is against the wishes of the parent/guardian. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison will assist in the placement and enrollment decisions ([Form JBC\(1\)-2](#) [School of Origin Request Form]).
3. A homeless student and unaccompanied youth who attend his/her school of origin in accordance with Paragraph 1 above may:
 - a. Attend that school for the duration of homelessness;
 - b. Stay in the school for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year; or
 - c. Attend their school for the duration of homelessness if the student becomes homeless between academic years.

C. TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation will be provided to and from the school of origin if requested by the parent/guardian where required by federal law at 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii). In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the transportation request will be made by the Homeless Liaison ([Form JBC\(1\)-3](#) [Procedure for Transportation]).

D. DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

1. If the System denies the school of origin request, the parent/guardian shall be provided with a written explanation of the System's decision, including the right to appeal. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison will provide written notification to such youth including the right to appeal ([Form JBC\(1\)-4](#) [Written Notification and Dispute Resolution Form]).
2. If a parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disputes the System's decision:
 - a. The student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute;
 - b. The dispute shall be referred to the System's Homeless Liaison who will consult with the Executive Director for Student Services for resolution within 7 business days of receipt of the Dispute Resolution Form;
 - c. If the matter is not resolved at that level, the Superintendent shall issue the System's decision within 10 business days of second dispute by parent/guardian.
 - d. If the matter is not resolved at that level, the local Board of Education shall issue a decision within 10 business days of third dispute by parent/guardian.
 - e. If the matter is not resolved at that level, the parent/guardian may contact the Georgia Department of Education state homeless coordinator.

E. ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL OF HOMELESS STUDENTS INCLUDING UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH:

1. A homeless student should be enrolled immediately even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment.
2. The Principal or designee shall notify the Homeless Liaison when a homeless student is identified by having a parent/guardian complete a [Form JBC\(1\)-1](#) (Student Enrollment Questionnaire).
3. The school shall provide the parent/guardian a copy of [Form JBC\(1\)-5](#) (Information for Parents).
4. If a homeless student arrives at school without a parent/guardian, the unaccompanied youth shall be enrolled immediately and the designated School Social Worker (SSW) notified. The SSW shall contact the parent/guardian and complete the enrollment process. Students must meet the State's age eligibility criteria for enrollment.
5. Homeless students qualify for free breakfast and lunch ([Form JBC\(1\)-6](#) [Procedure for Free Lunch])

6. When students enroll without records (i.e., transcripts/grade reports, birth certificate, immunizations/health records) the Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Contact the former school to request the student's records and discuss immunization information and tentative placement;
 - b. Create a cumulative record if it is determined that the records are not available;
 - c. Refer the student to public health and provide follow-up to ensure that the student has been immunized, if there are no immunization records; and
 - d. Contact the Homeless Liaison for additional assistance.
7. Parents/guardians shall provide the school with contact information.

8. **Withdrawal:**

Homeless students, including unaccompanied youth, often leave school without officially withdrawing. If the school is contacted by another System for a homeless student's records, requested information shall be provided and school records sent within 15 days to the receiving School System.

F. ROLE OF THE HOMELESS LIAISON:

The role of the System's Homeless Liaison is to ensure that:

1. Homeless students and unaccompanied youth:
 - a. Are timely identified by school personnel;
 - b. Are immediately enrolled in and have an equal opportunity to succeed in school;
 - c. Receive educational services for which they are eligible;
 - d. Are referred to the designated SSW, if other support resources are needed.
2. Parents/guardians of homeless students are made aware of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with a meaningful opportunity to participate in their children's education;
3. Public notices of the educational rights of homeless students are disseminated in schools and such places as family shelters;
4. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the System's procedures;
5. Parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth are informed of the transportation services provided by the System, including transportation to the school of origin, when required;
6. Students who do not have immunization or medical records are assisted;
7. Collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.
8. Students receive credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school.

Adopted: October 16, 2010

STUDENT ENROLLMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SCHOOL REFERRAL FORM

NOTE: The following document is provided to allow pertinent information to be gathered. It is NOT to be used to deny enrollment to the student.

School _____ Date _____

Name of Student _____ Grade _____

Current Address _____ Telephone _____

Last Permanent Address _____

Parent/Guardian/Adult Registering Child _____

Relationship to Student _____

Other Contact (s) _____

Are the following enrollment documents available?

Yes No Verification of Residency

Yes No Birth Certificate

Yes No Social Security Card

Yes No Verification of Guardianship

Yes No Georgia Immunization Certificate

Yes No Georgia Eye, Ear & Dental Certificate

Yes No Report Card

Please check any that apply:

Do not have permanent address and/or permanent housing

Share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason

Live in motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations

Live in emergency or transitional shelter

Are abandoned in hospital

Are awaiting foster care placement.

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;

___ Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or

___ Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances set forth above.

School personnel completing referral form:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

**Please return completed form to:
Richmond County Board of Education
School Social Work Services
864 Broad Street, First Floor
Augusta, GA 30901
Telephone 706-826-1139/Fax 706-826-4625**

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN REQUEST FORM

This form should be completed by the school for each homeless child or sibling group seeking enrollment at their school of origin. The school administrator or Homeless Liaison will make the best interest determination for school placement. Contact the Student Services Department at 706-826-1129 with questions.

Date: _____

Name of student(s) (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Birth Date(s) _____ Grade(s) _____

Current living situation:

- Do not have permanent address and/or permanent housing
- Share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Live in motels, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Live in emergency or transitional shelter
- Are abandoned in hospital
- Are awaiting foster care placement.
- 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;
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances set forth above.

Current Address: _____

Name of parent/guardian (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Telephone Number: _____

If not available, phone number of someone who can be contacted and their relationship, if any.

Anticipated length of stay at the above location: _____

Are there known personal safety issues? Yes No

If yes, explain: _____

Is there a need for special instruction? (Special Education or related services) _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, explain: _____

Are there other issues to be considered when determining school selection? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, explain: _____

School of Origin: _____ Enrollment Date: _____

Has student been withdrawn? _____ If so, what was the withdrawal date? _____

Time remaining in the school year: _____

Approximate distance in miles to the school of origin: _____

- The principal has allowed the student to be immediately enrolled at the school of origin and is forwarding this information to the Department of Student Services for review and final decision.**
- Principal or designee has provided to parent Form JBC(1)-5, Information for Parents, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

-----**School System Use Only**-----

Best Interest Determination: (Administrator checks one)

[Fax completed form to Student Services Department at 706-826-4626](#)

_____ Request approved to remain in School of Origin. Is transportation needed? _____

_____ Request denied. Student to attend _____. Complete Written Notification Form (JBC(1)-4).

Signature of Administrator or Homeless Liaison: _____ Date: _____

PROCEDURE FOR TRANSPORTATION

1. Parent/guardian, with assistance of school personnel as necessary, will complete Student Enrollment Questionnaire (Form JBC(1)-1) which will be faxed to the Student Services Department at 706-826-4626 by school personnel. The Homeless Liaison will determine eligibility of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
2. Schools should verify eligibility of homelessness with the homeless Liaison/Case Manager and complete the School of Origin Request (Form JBC(1)-2). Completed form shall be faxed to the Student Services Department at 706-826-4626 to determine feasibility of transportation options.
3. If the student is eligible for transportation services, the Homeless Liaison/Case Manager will contact the System's Transportation Department to request appropriate transportation.

WRITTEN NOTIFICATION FORM

This form should be completed by a school administrator or Homeless Liaison when the parent's/guardian's or unaccompanied youth's request to return to the school of origin is denied. Fax completed form to the Student Service Department at 706-826-4626 and give original to the parent/guardian along with Form JBC(1)-4 (Dispute Resolution Form, page 2).

Date: _____ School: _____

Name and Title of Person Completing Form: _____

In compliance with Section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, the following written notification is provided to:

Parent/Guardian: _____

Student(s): _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied. This determination was based upon:

Please have parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth sign and date below to indicate that they have received a copy of this form.

Parent/Guardian or Unaccompanied Youth Signature Date

- You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the attached Dispute Resolution Form or provide your explanation verbally to the System's Homeless Liaison at 706-826-1
 - Resolution by the Homeless Liaison will be made within 7 business days of receipt of Dispute Resolution Form.
 - If the matter is not resolved at that level, the Superintendent shall issue the System's decision within 10 business days of the second dispute by parent/guardian.
 - If the matter is not resolved at that level, the local Board of Education shall issue the a decision within 10 business days of the third dispute by parent/guardian.
 - If the matter is not resolved at that level, the parent/guardian may appeal this decision by contacting the Georgia Department of Education Homeless Education Coordinator (see contact information below).
- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school, including full participation in all school activities pending resolution of the dispute.
- You may contact the State Coordinator if further help is needed:
 - State Coordinator for Homeless Education
 - Georgia Department of Education
 - Office - 404-656-2004
 - FAX – 404-651-9111
- You may seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION FORM

This form is to be completed by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises over school enrollment. The information may be shared verbally with the Homeless Liaison instead of completing this form. The Homeless Liaison can be contacted at 706-826-1139.

Date submitted: _____

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: _____

School: _____

I have been provided with a written explanation of the school's decision (check one):

_____ Yes _____ No

You may include a written explanation to support your appeal in this space, or you may provide your explanation verbally.

Signature of person submitting dispute: _____

Return completed Form to school or Student Services Department.

-----**For School Use**-----

Fax a copy of this completed form to the Student Services Department at 706-826-4626.

Give a copy to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Maintain the original at school

Date received by Homeless Liaison: _____

Information for Parents

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

If your family lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and is forced to live in any of the following situations:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (example: evicted from home, etc.).
- In a motel, hotel, campground or similar setting due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- In an emergency or transitional shelter.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans.
- In a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or a similar setting.

Then your children have the right to:

- Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunization, school records, or other documents.
- Choose between the local school where you are living or the school last attended before becoming homeless, when feasible.
- Receive transportation to school.
- Attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Receive all the school services available to other students.

Richmond County School System Homeless Liaison:

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706-826-1139

State Coordinator for Homeless Education:

Georgia Department of Education

404-656-4148

PROCEDURE FOR FREE LUNCH

Homeless children and unaccompanied youth are immediately eligible for free lunch when authorized by the Homeless Liaison. Free lunch for homeless students will extend to the end of the school year.

To obtain free lunch for a homeless student complete the following steps:

1. Parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth must complete and sign a [Form JBC\(1\)-1](#) (Student Enrollment Questionnaire).
2. Completed Student Enrollment Questionnaire indicating a homeless situation should be faxed to the Student Services Department at 706-826-4626. If “none of the above” is marked on the Student Enrollment Questionnaire, the student does not qualify as homeless under the federal definition. The Homeless Liaison will determine eligibility of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
3. Upon receipt of the Student Enrollment Questionnaire indicating a homeless situation, the Homeless Liaison will contact the school Cafeteria Manager and Food and Nutrition Services about the student’s immediate qualification for free lunch.

Contact the Student Services Department at 706-826-1129 with any questions.