

**PROCEDURES FOR  
IDENTIFYING AND  
SUPPORTING  
HOMELESS  
STUDENTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to clarify the processes and individual roles related to identifying and supporting students experiencing homelessness.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently reauthorized in 2016 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youths have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. It ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

These rights and protections include:

- School stability
- School access
- Support for academic success

The McKinney-Vento Act states, “Local education agencies (LEAs) will designate an appropriate staff person as a local education agency for homeless children and youth.” WSSD’s Home and School Visitor serves as the Homeless Liaison for the district.

The Homeless Liaison has the following responsibilities:

- Ensure that school staff are aware of these rights
- Provide public notice to homeless families (at shelters and at school)
- Facilitate access to school, community-based and transportation service.

## ENROLLMENT OF NEW STUDENTS

If a student or family registers in the school district and self-identifies as homeless, or if registration staff have reason to believe a student or family may be homeless, the LEA must immediately enroll the child despite lack of records. “Enroll” and “enrollment” are defined to include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

### Following Enrollment

- The Educational Data Systems Manager will complete a referral in School Daily requesting Homeless Assessment/Supports and Services  
<https://wssd.school-daily.com/?mb=185&hmb=EECCA5B6365D9607EE5A9D336962C534&gotourl=/forms/approvals.cfm?&MPR=204.13.204.162>

## WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS

Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence can be considered homeless and are eligible for supports.

This includes students and families who are:

- Sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters or agencies
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or a similar setting
- Migratory children: Children living in similar circumstances (above)
  - The term migratory children means children who are, or whose parent(s) are migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers, or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work
- Unaccompanied children and youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)
  - Children and youth who have run away, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned, or separated from their parent for any other reason (abuse)
  - Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings

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## SUSPECTED HOMELESSNESS OF CURRENT WSSD STUDENT

- Staff members, families, and community-based agencies should contact the student's School Counselor immediately if they know that a student has become homeless or suspect that there is housing instability.
- The School Counselor will gather additional information and if homelessness or housing instability is confirmed a referral in School Daily requesting Homeless Assessment/Supports and Services must be completed.

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- The Director of Student Services who oversees Homelessness will review the referral
  - If the referral is denied, there may be a request for additional data
- Once the referral is approved, it will be assigned to the Homeless Liaison, or designee
- The Homeless Liaison will contact the family to gather additional information
  - Conduct a home visit
  - Complete the **WSSD Housing Assessment**
  - Attach the completed Housing Assessment to clinical notes in School Daily
- After gathering all available information, the Homeless Liaison may consult with the Director of Student Services to make an official determination of the homeless status

## IF A STUDENT MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR HOMELESSNESS

- The Homeless Liaison will notify the School Administrator and School Counselor of the student's change of status via email
- The Homeless Liaison will update the **WSSD Ongoing Homeless Data file**
- [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-qIzZ7fG1oavpHRL2I4yEJnN4\\_dM1bBkL1gZ59vTBvI/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-qIzZ7fG1oavpHRL2I4yEJnN4_dM1bBkL1gZ59vTBvI/edit#gid=0)
- The Homeless Liaison will notify the Educational Data Systems Manager and the Business Office of the addition or change to the WSSD Ongoing Homeless Data file via email. The Director of Student Services and the Assistant to the Superintendent will be copied in the email
  - The Educational Data Systems Manager will indicate homeless status and change of address in the SIS and contact the Supervisor of Transportation or a designee in order to arrange transportation.
  - When transportation has been arranged, the Supervisor of Transportation or designee will email the Homeless Liaison of the outcome. The email will be copied to the Director of Student Services, the Educational Data Systems Manager and the Assistant to the Superintendent
  - The Business Office will set up free lunch services
- The Homeless Liaison will enter the required information into the ECYEH Database
- The Homeless Liaison will work with the family and any other supporting agencies to develop the **WSSD Housing Improvement Plan**
  - Provide the parent/guardian with a copy of the WSSD Housing Improvement Plan
  - Attach the completed WSSD Housing Improvement plan to the clinical notes in School Daily

- The Homeless Liaison will make quarterly home visits to each family listed in the WSSD Ongoing Data file and update the WSSD Housing Improvement Plan if appropriate
  - Provide the parent/guardian with an updated copy of the WSSD Housing Improvement Plan
  - Attach updated WSSD Housing Improvement Plan to clinical notes in School Daily
- The Homeless Liaison will maintain contact and coordinate services among school-based staff and community-based agencies, contacting the PA Regional Homeless Coordinator when necessary

**IF STUDENT DOES NOT MEET THE CRITERIA FOR HOMELESSNESS**

- The Homeless Liaison will notify the School Administrator and School Counselor of the student’s status via email
  - The Homeless Liaison will notify the Educational Data Systems Manager if the WSSD Housing Assessment indicates the family has a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence within another district.
    - The Educational Data Systems Manager will withdraw the student in the SIS and notify the parent of the withdrawal
- OR**
- The Homeless Liaison will notify the Educational Data Systems Manager if the WSSD Housing Assessment indicates the family has a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence within WSSD boundaries
    - The Educational Data Systems Manager will update the address in the SIS

**IF HOMELESS STATUS CANNOT BE DETERMINED**

- The Homeless Liaison will contact the Educational Data Systems Manager via phone and email
  - The Educational Data Systems Manager will request updated residency information from the family and then assign the district Private Investigator if necessary
  - The Educational Data Systems Manager will contact the private investigator via email and will copy the Director of Student Services and the Assistant to the Superintendent
- The Homeless Liaison will collaborate with the Director of Student Services to determine next steps

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Every district is required to have a prompt resolution process for disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children

- The Homeless Liaison will provide written notice to families concerning school selection and enrollment decisions and provide enrollment in the school of choice while a dispute is being resolved
  - This written notice should be attached to the clinical notes on School Daily
- The Homeless Liaison will provide a written disposition to family within 20 business days of receiving the referral on School Daily explaining basis for the decision
  - The Director of Student Services, The Education Data Systems Manager, the Assistant to the Superintendent and the PA Regional Coordinator should be copied on the written notice
  - This written notice should be attached to the clinical notes on School Daily
- The Homeless Liaison will advise parents/guardians of their right to appeal if the parent/guardian is dissatisfied with the LEA's decision
  - The family may file a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento Site or PA Regional Coordinator or State Coordinator
  - The State Coordinator may assist in the mediation of disputes directly and may also invite those involved to have the dispute mediated at any time in the process



## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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State Coordinator  
Sheldon Winnick  
Pennsylvania's Education for Children and  
Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program  
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