

# Walthall County School District

## Procedures for Identifying and Enrolling Children Based on McKinney -Vento Homeless Definition

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

1. The District Homeless Liaison and other Central Office personnel will train personnel in procedures for identifying and enrolling homeless students and youth. The school of origin will provide transportation, and free and reduced-price meals will be offered.
2. All students who attempt to enroll without proper documentation will meet with school staff.
3. The staff will interview the family and coordinate with the Homeless liaisons to determine if the family qualifies for McKinney-Vento (MV) designation. The McKinney-Vento Student Identification for Referral and Eligibility Form will be completed. Upon identification, students will be enrolled immediately.
4. If a student's living arrangement changes during the school year, resulting in the student's temporary housing being located outside of the home school zone, all efforts will be made to keep the student in the home school if the parent chooses. Transportation will be arranged and provided to the extent possible. If the move crosses school district boundaries, the FCSD will work with other districts to best meet the student's needs, including transportation.
5. The principal's office will notify the cafeteria of the student's MV status so free and reduced-price meals can be offered.
6. Counselors and administrative staff will be notified of the student's MV status. They will work with the school administration and district office to identify and eliminate barriers for homeless students. Counselors on the secondary level will work with students and prior schools to provide full or partial credit for eligible coursework..
7. The principal at each school will be the designated homeless liaison.
8. The counselors will monitor student attendance and ensure that students are present for all district-wide assessments and state assessments.
9. The student's academic progress will be monitored, and they will be provided with tutoring assistance as needed to ensure that students demonstrate academic progress in the content area. Parents will be provided with academic progress reports.
10. The school principal will mentor each homeless student and provide a stable environment for the student. The principal will monitor the student's attendance and conduct follow-ups as necessary.
11. School liaisons will initiate and develop a relationship with the students and families of students identified as homeless. The school liaison will work with the families of identified

students to inform parents of their McKinney-Vento rights, provide them with information that enables them to make informed decisions about the child's educational stability, and offer assistance with transportation as needed for parent conferences and meetings. Additionally, they will encourage families and provide stability for students. In addition, the school liaison and mentor will identify the necessary services and support, and offer or refer to services that promote stable homes.

Students will be provided with services such as tutoring, school supplies, school uniforms, personal hygiene products, assistance with extracurricular activities, and other expenses, as needed.

12. Students identified as homeless will receive specialized and comparable educational services as needed. A student's special educational needs (e.g., IEP, Gifted, ELL, Vocational) will be identified through various methods (needs survey, contacts with prior schools, conversations with families, etc.), and services will be implemented immediately upon identification.
  13. Title I funds will be allocated for homeless services to be provided to students in schools, shelters, and other designated locations. The District Homeless Liaison will oversee the implementation of services in the schools and other sites.
  14. Walthall County School District will identify preschool-eligible children through its enrollment procedures by identifying younger siblings of school-age children and working with shelters and other agencies. In addition, the LEA will maintain contact with other preschools and agencies, such as Head Start.
  15. Walthall County School District will communicate with agencies, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and shelters, to coordinate the needs of homeless unaccompanied youth. Walthall County School District and school liaisons will keep open communication with agencies involved with unaccompanied youth identified as homeless to ensure students are provided with the necessary services and a stable environment needed.
  16. The Walthall County School District, school liaisons, and other sources will conduct professional development for school faculty and staff to understand the identification of, the rights of, and the services available to students who meet the definition of homeless. The district will provide professional development to teachers to increase their understanding and sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and youth.
  17. The Walthall County School District Homeless Liaison will collaborate with all Walthall County School District departments, such as Special Education, Food Services, and Transportation. In addition, the district will also collaborate with established community services, including shelters, child welfare agencies, housing authorities, and health services. This collaboration will help provide the services needed for homeless children and youth. Walthall County Schools will ensure that McKinney-Vento posters and information are disseminated and posted in the schools and throughout the community.
  18. If, for any reason, a parent or guardian of a student identified as eligible for homeless services does not agree with a placement decision or services provided by Walthall County School
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District, the individual has a right to appeal. The appeal process and forms are attached to these procedures.

19. The District McKinney-Vento Liaison will also meet with each student and their family to assess needs, ensure students receive appropriate services, and provide assistance to the families as feasible.
20. The district will review and revise its procedures annually to identify and remove any barriers that impede the education of homeless students. In addition, the school liaison will identify needed services and support and provide or refer to services that encourage stabilized homes.

Walthall County Public Schools 814A  
Morse Ave.  
Tylertown, MS 39667

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent:

As the parent of a student identified as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, you and your child are entitled to certain procedural safeguards, as indicated on page 2 of this memo. We will do our best to properly identify those eligible for M-V Services, and to make the best placement decisions possible for the academic success of your student.

If the parent of a student identified as homeless ever disagrees with a placement decision, the parent has the right of appeal. In the event of appeal, the student will be and remain immediately enrolled pending the resolution of the dispute.

You have indicated that you wish to appeal a specific decision of this district, as follows:

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For the appeal to be resolved, we will ask you to follow the steps outlined herein. You will be notified as soon as possible. In the meantime, you should contact the District Homeless Student Liaison (undersigned) for progress or additional information, at 601-876-5687.

Robin Duncan Homeless Student Liaison

EDUCATION OF THE HOMELESS  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION  
PROCEDURE

## District Resolution Procedure

1. A parent/guardian/unaccompanied student wishing to dispute the school placement decision (or other point of dispute) shall contact the District Homeless Student Liaison to file an appeal.
2. The Homeless Student Liaison shall notify the Superintendent of the appeal, and the Superintendent shall take measures necessary to immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which s/he is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute.
3. The Homeless Student Liaison shall provide a written response to the appeal within five school days of the receipt of notification.
4. The decision of the District Homeless Student Liaison may be appealed to the Board of Trustees; such appeal should be received no later than 10 school days prior to the next scheduled board meeting.
5. The Board will decide based on feasibility and the student's best interest. When making this determination, the Board shall at least consider the following criteria:
  - The age of the student.
  - The distance of the commute.
  - The impact of the commute on a student's education.
  - The student's safety.
  - If the student has special needs and which school best serves those needs.
  - The amount of time left in the school year.
6. The Board shall issue a placement determination within 30 days of receiving the appeal request. The determination shall be made in writing and issued to the parent/guardian/unaccompanied student who initiated the appeal.
7. If the parent wishes to dispute the WCSD School Board decision, the parent may file a dispute with the Mississippi Department of Education Federal Programs Office. Please contact the State Homeless Education Coordinator at 601-359-3499.