

Long County Schools Homeless Procedures/Guidelines

In accordance with the Education For Homeless Children and Youths: Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.), the Long County Board of Education adheres to the guiding principle that all eligible children and youth who reside within the Long County School District are entitled to a free, appropriate public education. The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the Long County School System's liaison for homeless students and their families. Students identified as "homeless" or "in transition" will be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards and will be included in state- and district-wide assessments and accountability systems. The Long County school district will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Any information regarding each student's homeless status shall be handled in a confidential and professional manner by school and system personnel.

Definitions:

In accordance with the Act and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.28 (JBC), the term "Homeless Child and Youth" is defined as individuals 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 similar reasons;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodation;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- Sleeping in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations; and,
- Migratory- who qualify as homeless living in the circumstances described above.

A child or youth shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above.

- Unaccompanied- not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
- School of Origin - the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Identification:

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the district homeless liaison will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness within our school district. The liaison will inform school principals and staff on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information concerning homelessness to the district homeless liaison. School registrars and/or secretaries will inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of students, and then contact the liaison for identifying.

School Selection:

Each child and youth experiencing homelessness has the right to remain at his or her school of origin, or to attend any school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend whichever is in the student's best interest as determined by the school district. A student may remain at his/her school of origin the entire time of "homelessness", and until the end of the academic year in which he/she becomes permanently housed.

Enrollment:

Long County School System personnel shall request proof of residency of all students enrolling in the Long County School System. If a student is identified as homeless by definition, the school will enroll the student immediately. School personnel will contact the Homeless Liaison immediately upon enrollment of any student experiencing homelessness. Homeless students may be enrolled by a parent or the district's liaison. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to lack of any document normally required for enrollment including, but not limited to, the following:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunization or immunization/health/medical/physical records
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth Certificate
- Any other document requirements
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to dress codes
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Services:

The Long County School System's Homeless Liaison and the district's Parent/ Family Engagement Coordinator shall coordinate with any/all local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other local school systems on the transfer of student records; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including:

- Transportation - Homeless students are entitled to transportation to his/her school of origin or the school where he/she is to be enrolled.
- Title I Services
- Educational services for which the student meeting eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
- CTAE education programs and extracurricular activities
- Gifted and talented programs
- School nutrition programs and automatic eligibility for free meals
- Before-school and after-school program when applicable
- Parent/ Family Engagement Activities

The Long County School District Title I plan will be coordinated with McKinney-Vento services, through collaboration between the program directors, the Homeless Liaison, and the Parent/ Family Engagement Coordinator. Children and youth experiencing homelessness will be assessed, reported on and included in accountability systems, as required by law and U.S. Department of Education regulations and guidance.

An informal needs assessment will occur upon becoming McKinney-Vento eligible in collaboration with the Homeless Liaison through completion of the system's intake form. Additional needs at a later date will be addressed promptly.

Disputes:

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition shall be enrolled immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The student shall also have the same rights to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I services while the dispute is pending. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the Long County School System's decision and the appeal rights in writing. The System's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute. If the matter is not resolved at the local level, the parent may request to exercise the right for a review of the dispute and decision by the Georgia Department of Education in accordance with Dispute Resolution Guidelines and Procedures provided by the Georgia Department of Education which are available on the Georgia Department of Education's web site.

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