

Rights under the McKinney-Vento Act include the following:

- Right to immediate enrollment of school
- Right to the choice to either attend the school of origin or in the attendance area where the family currently resides
- Right to be provided with comparable services including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs
- Right to receive transportation to school of origin if requested by parents and in best interest of the child
- Right that no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school or program for homeless children or youths
- Right that homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel
- Right to appeal if the local school sends the homeless child or youth to a school other than the school or origin requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

If I become homeless during the school year what should I do?

Ask to speak to your child’s counselor or a Homeless Children and Youth Social Worker. There are several ways in which they can be of assistance.

Who can I call if I need assistance?

Contact the Homeless Children and Youth Social Worker who serves your child’s school:

Gwinnett County Schools Homeless Liaison
David Johns 678.301.7270

State Coordinator for Homeless Education
Joanna Johnson 404-656-2004

How you as a parent can help

- Make sure that your child comes to school every day and on time. Send a note or proof of a doctor’s appointment if your child has an excused absence.
- Keep a folder or bag where you keep all of your child’s important records (grades/progress reports, immunizations, birth certificate, IEP, etc.)
- Attend parent/teacher conferences, meetings, and events at school. If you cannot attend let your child’s teacher know. Try to reschedule the meetings.
- Communicate your needs to school staff. They can help!

Resources

Helpline for Referrals:770-995-3339

Ministries: The following can help with rent, emergency housing, utility bills, clothing and food. Call the ministry in your area.

- Duluth Cooperative Ministry 770-623-9563
- Lawrenceville Coop. Ministry 770-339-7887
- Lilburn Cooperative Ministry 770-931-8333
- Norcross Cooperative Ministry 770-263-8268
- North Gwinnett Ministry 770-271-9793
- Southeast Ministry 770-985-5229
- St. Vincent de Paul 770-458-9607
- Bread of Life (Food) 770-513-0492

Impact: - Help with rent and transitional housing:
678-808-4477

Health Department: 770-638-5700

Department of Family & Children’s Services
Food Stamps, Medicaid, Peachcare, TANF
Lawrenceville Office 678-518-5500
Buford Office 770-614-2500
Norcross Office 770-441-8800



GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education of Homeless Children and Youth

A Guide For Parents

What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

A law passed in 1987 and re-authorized in 2002 under the No Child Left Behind Act. This Act removes barriers to access or success of homeless children in school.

How does the law define homelessness (McKinney-Vento Definition)?

“Homeless” - An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes those:

- Sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc. or places not designated for accommodation of human beings
- Migratory children living in above circumstances

Enrollment Disputes

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school;

- The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.
- Any enrollment dispute of a homeless student shall first be presented to the school principal to be resolved.
- The parent / guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment.
- If the matter is not resolved at that level, the dispute shall be brought to the homeless liaison that shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure the youth is immediately enrolled in the school pending resolution of the dispute.

If a parent/guardian of a homeless student requests enrollment of their child in the school district that the student had been attending prior to becoming homeless (school of origin), the student will be immediately enrolled. The parent/guardian must complete the school of origin form which is sent to the homeless liaison for determination of local school enrollment. The decision will be based on the best interest of the student. If the request for school of origin by the parent/guardian is denied by the homeless liaison, the parent/guardian may dispute the decision through the following process:

Step 1 – Parent/guardian must respond in writing within five days from the receipt of decision to deny enrollment in the school of origin to both the homeless liaison and the GCPS Executive Director of Academic Support. Failure to appeal in writing within five days will be considered to be acceptance of the enrollment decision. The written request of resolution must include consistent information originally presented to the enrolling school.

Step 2 - The GCPS Executive Director of Academic Support will make a final school system determination of enrollment for the homeless student and respond in writing to the parent/guardian of the homeless student.

Step 3 - If the parent/guardian does not agree with the decision of the GCPS Executive Director of Academic Support, the parent/guardian must immediately appeal to the Georgia Department of Education to make a final determination of the dispute.

State Coordinator for Homeless Education

Joanna Johnson 404-656-2004