



## Plan for the education of Homeless Children and Youth

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, signed into law on July 22, 1987 and reauthorized on January 8, 2003, provides comprehensive federal emergency and long-term assistance for homeless persons. Title X, Subtitle C of the Act, Education of Homeless Children and Youth, establishes appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, which would be provided to children of the residents of the state and are consistent with state school attendance laws. It further provides that residency requirements as a component of compulsory school attendance laws, regulations, practices or procedures, be reviewed and steps undertaken to assure these laws do not prohibit children and youth from school attendance. Homelessness alone is not a sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream of the school environment. Homeless children and youth should have access to the education and other services that such children and youth need to ensure that such children and youth have the opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. Homeless children and youth will be provided the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education regardless of their residency status. The program will ensure that these students are afforded equal access to academic and other services that will allow them to meet the same challenging state achievement standards as non-homeless students.

The Fort Payne City Schools Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth is based on the guidelines established by the State Department of Education as outlined in the Alabama Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. This plan is designed to ensure that all services are administered in compliance with the Act and the State Plan.

The program provides procedural guidelines to ensure that homeless students are not denied enrollment due to the lack of registration documentation at the time of enrollment. Homeless students have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have the required documents. The enrollment of homeless children shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization of health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements

The program provides for a homeless liaison who will ensure program implementation and coordinate efforts to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, are provided the opportunity for academic success.

The homeless education program makes every effort to provide homeless children and youth with a stable school environment by enrolling students in the *school of origin* and providing them with transportation to and from the *school of origin*. Provisions are made for parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth to decline enrollment in the *school of origin*.

**I. Goal Of The Plan**

The goal of the Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in Fort Payne City is to provide a framework to assure that equal educational access shall be given to homeless children and youth, in compliance with the State Plan and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 2002.

**II. Identification and Registration Procedures**

For the purpose of identifying homeless children and youth, the Fort Payne City Schools shall use the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless children and youth. The Act defines homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - abandoned in hospitals
- 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.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above. The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the Act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. This includes youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing; children or youth denied housing by their families; and teen parents living in shelters or other facilities for pregnant and parenting teens who have no other housing available.

Homeless children and youth are often undetected. The system will conduct training sessions with the appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless children without stigmatizing terminology. The system will use the Student Housing Information Form to facilitate identifying homeless children and youth, as well as preschoolers. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will complete the Student Housing Information Form at the time of registration. The system registrar and/or school counselor may provide appropriate assistance to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth in answering the questionnaire if necessary.

A copy of the Student Housing Information Form must be submitted to the Central Office Homeless Liaison. The school will maintain the original form in a file separate from the student's permanent record for audit purposes during the year. This file should be housed in the school counselor's office.

The parent or guardian may enroll a homeless child or youth with or without proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records. The district registrar and homeless liaison will work jointly to provide the parent, guardian or unaccompanied

youth appropriate assistance in obtaining the necessary records and documents for enrollment. Enrollment without the required immunization record will be pending receipt or acquisition of immunization documentation. The existing method of assigning a student number will be utilized when a student enrolls without a social security number.

An unaccompanied youth may enroll himself/herself. In this case, the school principal or designee will immediately contact the Homeless Liaison to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth. The school will provide the youth with proper assistance in a language that the student understands. The Homeless Liaison will assist the homeless unaccompanied youth in obtaining eligible educational services.

### **III. Educational Placement**

The school system will make school placement decisions in the “best interest” of the homeless child or youth. Students will continue in the *school of origin* for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Students may enroll in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

If a school enrollment decision is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth’s parent/guardian, the school will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The complainant must file a School Enrollment Dispute Form (Appendix C) with the school in which the student is presently enrolled. The principal will notify the Homeless Liaison of the dispute and take steps to resolve the dispute.

When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The Central Office Homeless Liaison will expeditiously take steps to resolve the dispute (See Appendix D). If the dispute cannot be settled by the Homeless Liaison, the liaison will assist the complainant in seeking technical assistance from an appropriate service agency.

### **IV. Automatic Eligibility for Free School Meals:**

The application process for free and reduced priced meals can be expedited for homeless children and youth. A school meal application marked as homeless and initialed by a school official will be sufficient to approve the child’s eligibility for free school meals.

### **V. Services Provided to Homeless:**

Fort Payne City Schools will provide services to every homeless child or youth that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school. Funds will be set aside in Title I, Part A to help provide services to identified homeless students. Such services include, but are not limited to tutoring, cost of field trips, classroom supplies, clothing, transportation, eye glasses, dental work, etc. Each school maintains a list of homeless students in their school. A verbal or written request for services is made to the Homeless Liaison. There are no barriers within the school system either in the form of school board policies, procedures, or practices that would inhibit a homeless student’s full participation in all phases of the school program.

## Duties of the Homeless Liaison

The homeless liaison shall work to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschoolers are identified, enrolled in school, and receive all eligible services to facilitate student academic success. The responsibilities listed below are not all inclusive but shall be primary duties of the liaison.

The homeless liaison shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the system;
- Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, and preschool programs administered by the school system, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- Transportation cost disputes between the school system and school system of enrollment are resolved;
- Sensitivity and confidentiality training is provided to transportation and school personnel regarding the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;
- Public notice of educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services under Act;
- Required reports concerning the homeless education program are submitted to appropriate agencies and the State Department of Education; and
- Evaluation of the homeless education program is conducted annually and necessary program and implementation adjustments are made in a timely manner.

## Student Housing Information Form

Your answers will help determine if the student meets eligibility requirements for services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Is this address Temporary or Permanent? (circle one) Yes No

Please choose which of the following situations the student currently resides in (you can choose more than one):

- \_\_\_\_\_ House or apartment with parent or guardian
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motel, car, or campsite
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shelter or other temporary housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ With friends or family members (other than or in addition to parent/guardian)

If you are living in shared housing, please check all of the following reasons that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Living with boyfriend/girlfriend
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic situation	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of employment
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporarily waiting for house/apartment	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian is deployed
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide care for a family member	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please explain)

Are you a student living apart from your parents or guardians? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

### Housing and Educational Rights

Students without fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residences have the following rights:

1. Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the local school where they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations;
2. Transportation to and from the school of origin for the regular school day;
3. Access to free meals, Title I and other educational programs, and transportation to extra-curricular activities to the same extent that it is offered to other students.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and understand the above rights.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Parent/Guardian/Unaccompanied Youth* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of McKinney-Vento Liaison* *Date*

## McKinney-Vento Assistance Request Form

Student's name:	School:
Clothing: (include sizes)	Classroom Materials/Supplies Needed:
Non-Instructional Materials:	Health/Hygiene Needs:  List service(s), name and place of service provider.
Field Trip/Conference Travel Assistance Needs/Amount Request: (attach agenda/registration)  Make Check Payable to:	School Fees/Amounts Requested:
Other Needs (describe):	
Counselor Signature/Date:	Homeless Coordinator Signature/Date:

# Fort Payne City Schools

## Free and Reduced Lunch Procedures for Homeless Children and Youth

If the parent/guardian is present when enrolling a student who meets the definition of homeless they can:

- Complete an application for Free and Reduced Lunch
- The lunchroom manager can immediately input the students in the system so he/she can take part in the lunch program immediately.

If the parent/guardian is not present when enrolling a student who meets the definition of homeless or they are unable to complete the Free and Reduced application, you should submit the following information to the Fort Payne City Schools Homeless Liaison:

- Student's name
- Notation of "homeless" on application
- Principal's Signature
- Date

### **AND**

The lunchroom manager should *immediately* input the student's name into the system for immediate access to free meals.

**Fort Payne City Schools**  
**Caregiver Authorization Form**

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian; however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

**Instructions:** Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete the following:

1. Name of minor: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Minor's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Caregiver's name (adult giving authorization): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Caregiver's home address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Caregiver's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Caregiver's driver's license or state identification card number: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Caregiver Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Unaccompanied Youth Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeless Liaison Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Fort Payne City Schools

### Dispute Resolution Policy

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for the transfer of records.
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student's status as homeless is prohibited.

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1 Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

Persons with complaints, grievances, or requests should present them for resolution to the local liaison for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. The receiving school who denied enrollment must complete the Written Notification of Enrollment Decision and provide to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and the homeless liaison within 3 days of the decision. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth then has the right to appeal the enrollment decision by completing the School or District Enrollment Dispute Form or by verbally contacting the district's homeless liaison within 5 days after the receipt of the school's decision. The district liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled in the requested school and receiving other services to which he/she is entitled and will resolve the dispute as outlined in the Fort Payne City Board of Education's Grievance Procedures within the Policies & Procedures Manual. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate in this process.

\*\*In the event the dispute cannot be resolved locally, the parent or guardian will be referred to the State's Dispute Resolution Process.

## Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the receiving school when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice or by contacting the school district's local homeless education liaison.

Name of local liaison: Dr. Laran Adkins

Title: Homeless Liaison

Phone number: 256-845-9288

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal communication(s) to support your position regarding the student's enrollment in the requested school. You may use the form attached to this notification.
- You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education if further help is needed or desired. Contact information for the State Coordinator: LaDonna Rudolph (334) 242-8199

## Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I may be contacted at (phone or email): \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

I have been provided with (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ A written explanation of the school's decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ The contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison.

\_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the district's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness.

Optional: You may include a written explanation in the space below to support your appeal or you may provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a copy of this form when I submitted it. \_\_\_\_\_  
(initial)

## Best Interest Determination

Factors to be considered when making team decisions regarding school placement(s):

1. How long has the student attended this school? How well is she/he performing academically?
2. How many schools has the student attended over the past few years? This year? How have the past school transfers impacted the student?
3. How is the current school serving the student's academic needs, including gifted or special education, vocational opportunities and other interests? How could the new school serve these needs?
4. What are the student's academic and career goals? How would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, proceed to the next grade, graduate on time, or receive an industry credential?
5. How is the current school serving the student's social, emotional, and cultural needs? Does the student access school-based supportive services? How could the new school serve these needs?
6. Describe the nature, quality, and duration of the student's relationship in the current school. Specifically consider whether the student has a meaningful and supportive relationship with an adult at the school of origin. Consider where the student goes to school.
7. Does the current school climate support the student's needs? Does the student have peer support? Is he or she involved in extracurricular or other activities?
8. Is the student's new living arrangement to be short or long term? How is this impacted by school selection?
9. How would the commute to the current school impact the student? Consider the child's age and developmental functioning as well as the commute with various modes (e.g., car, school bus). Note: The cost of transportation cannot be a factor when determining best interest.
10. If the student must change schools, is it possible to time the transfer so it coincides with a logical time on academic calendars of the new school and the current school?
11. What other factors did the team consider when making this decision?

## Best Interest Determination

### Initial Placement or Changes in Placement

\_\_\_\_\_ It is in the best interest of the student to ***remain*** in the school of origin.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is in the best interest of the student to ***not remain*** in the school of origin.

\_\_\_\_\_ The student will be immediately enrolled in the new school.

\_\_\_\_\_ The new school will request the student's records the same day, from the school of origin. Enrollment means attending and actively participating in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ The school of origin will send the student's records within a timely manner.

<input type="checkbox"/> The student will remain in the same school.	<input type="checkbox"/> A change in school placement is needed.
Transportation will be provided by: _____  Responsible party/parties for transportation cost: _____ _____	Enrollment in the new school must take place without interruption. The student will be enrolled in: _____ (school) _____ (system) _____ on (date)  The person responsible for enrolling the student in the new school is: _____

**SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM**

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPLAINANT INFORMATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_

Current Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

911 Address

Name of school that complainant chooses student to be immediately enrolled in/or transported to/from until dispute is resolved: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this the school of origin? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, what is the student's school of origin? \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for complaint \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Signature

Date

**SCHOOL USE ONLY**

Principal's Action on the Compliant:

Taken within \_\_\_\_\_ school day(s) after receiving notice of the complaint.

Date Central Office Liaison was notified of the dispute \_\_\_\_\_.

Action taken by the Principal to resolve the dispute:

Was the dispute resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

**DISTRICT ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_  
School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**DISTRICT ACTION ON COMPLAINT**

Taken within \_\_\_\_\_ school days after receiving notice of the complaint. Was the complaint resolved at the district level? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If the dispute was resolved at the district level, describe the action taken by the system homeless liaison to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of the complainant:

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If the dispute was not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, did the system homeless liaison convene a meeting of the interested parties to attempt resolution of the dispute?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, when and where did the meeting take place?

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Describe the outcome of the meeting.

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If no, will a meeting be held for resolution purposes? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, state when and where.

If a resolution cannot be derived at the district level, the system homeless liaison should assist the complainant in contacting service organization(s) to provide technical assistance to the complainant. Did the system homeless liaison assist the complainant in this manner?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Name of service organization(s) contacted for assistance \_\_\_\_\_

Was the dispute resolved? \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the resolution.

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Complainant Signature

System Homeless Liaison

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