

Alcester-Hudson Education of Homeless Children Policy

McKinney - Vento Act & Rights of Homeless Students

Reauthorized In December 2015, as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) every student experiencing homelessness is entitled to:

- - A free, appropriate public education.
 - Education in a mainstream school environment.
 - Participation in the school food service program.
 - Prompt resolution of disputes regarding educational placement.
 - No isolation or stigmatization due to their homeless status.
 - Placement in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.
 - Consideration of parent's requests regarding placement at the school of origin or the zoned school.
 - Educational, social, athletic, and recreational services offered to other students.

Who is homeless?

Any child or youth (Pre-K-12th grade) who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence:

- - Living in emergency or transitional shelters, FEMA Trailers, abandoned in hospitals.
 - Sharing in the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason; doubled-up.
 - Living in cars, parks, temporary trailer parks, or campgrounds, due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
 - Living in hotels or motels.

Unaccompanied Youth:

Any child or youth who meets the definition of an individual experiencing homelessness and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

School Selection:

The Alcester-Hudson School District shall make reasonable efforts to identify homeless children within the boundaries of the school district and immediately enroll the homeless student even if he or she is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, including academic records, immunization records, proof of residency or other documentation

Children and youth experiencing homelessness can stay in their school of origin or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, according to their best interest.

School of Origin-means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.

Best interest- keeps the student in the school of origin but considers student-centered factor to determine the best placement for students.

If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the parent of its decision and the right to appeal.

Enrollment:

The Term “enroll” and “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

- - Have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents or, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents.
 - Students identified as homeless shall be provided services comparable to other students of the district which includes, but not limited to, Special Education services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, such as education programs for disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, gifted students, vocational and technical programs, preschool programs, and programs for students with limited English proficiency.
 - Lack of school uniforms cannot delay a student's immediate enrollment.
 - Enrolling schools must obtain school records from previous school and students must be enrolled while obtaining records.
 - Federal law supersedes state and local laws where there is a conflict (U.S. Constitution, Article V).
 - The Alcester-Hudson School District shall make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from information available. The Alcester-Hudson School District shall arrange for students to receive immunizations through health agencies and at district expense if no other recourse is available. Immunizations may, however, be waived for homeless youth only in accordance with provisions of the school district policy on immunizations. The Alcester-Hudson School District may require a parent or guardian of a homeless student to submit contact information.

Transportation:

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- Transportation must be provided to and from the homeless student's school of origin upon request of parent or guardian.
- In addition, the district must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to non-homeless students.
- The Alcester-Hudson School District administration shall attempt to remove or eliminate any stigmatization or segregated services and/or remove or eliminate any other existing barriers to school attendance or educational programs which may exist in district policies or practices, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws. Enrollment requirements, fees and charges may be waived at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- School districts must eliminate barriers to the school enrollment and retention of students experiencing homelessness.

Food Service:

All students considered to be homeless shall be entitled to FREE status for all meals served within the school district's academic school day.

Unaccompanied Youth:

- - District Liaison or designee must be willing to assist the unaccompanied youth to choose and enroll in a school.
 - Inform the youth of his/her appeal rights and the rights under the law.
 - School personnel must be aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth

Preschool-Aged Children:

- - District Liaison must ensure that families and children experiencing homelessness receive a public preschool program.