

## McKinney Vento

### **McKinney-Vento Compliance Procedure**

The Prep Charter enrollment packet contains the request for proof of residency as is instructed by the State of Pennsylvania and the Charter Schools Office within the School District of Philadelphia.

The proof of residency is required for any subsequent changes in address. If a parent and child are living in a house where the parent's name is on a gas, water or electric bill and that address matches the Parent or guardian's State ID, driver's license or other form of identification it is deemed that the child has a regular nighttime domicile as described in McKinney-Vento.

Should a child's proof of residency not reflect the above, Prep Charter requires a notarized letter signed by the owner of the home in which the child lives stating that the child resides with the parent/guardian or a letter by the parent designating that person as guardian as the case may be. Note that the failure to procure such documents should a child be homeless will not impede the registration process. The district will have to be notified as the enrollment packet specifically asks for this information.

In the case of the latter, one of our counselors will set up a meeting with the child and parent to make sure that the circumstances do not fall within the definition of homeless as set forth in McKinney-Vento.

As an extra precaution, the self identified income form is sent home every September. This form alerts the school to parents and children who fall below the poverty line. Added to the form will be the question "do you need homeless assistance"? Our website will carry a page that describes the available services for homeless or unaccompanied youth.

As children are identified, the counselor will take the lead and meet with the Principal about applying for aid through the Title one funds coordinator or McKinney-Vento Grants. The Nurse will give information on clinics and hospitals that specialize in free or reduced care. The Pims coordinator will be notified for reporting purposes. Transportation will be considered should the student be staying outside the district. As our district is all of Philadelphia and the School District of Philadelphia provides transposes for children who live further than 1.5 miles from the LEA this will rarely be an issue. Free lunch and Breakfast are school wide.

Other school staff will be notified by list within the schools google drive. School staff will participate in Professional Development that documents guidance according to McKinney-Vento. Every staff member is made to understand that their eyes and ears are critical in helping to identify homeless youth or unaccompanied youth. They are required to bring any suspicions to the counselor for further review.

McKinney-Vento Act Basics At-a-Glance:

**Tip Sheet for Parents & Guardians**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iJ-J2jBEJqni7lZVxNKvFiuCpx0vkff5/view?usp=sharing>  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iJ-J2jBEJqni7lZVxNKvFiuCpx0vkff5/view?usp=sharing>

**The Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CYLfwS1TrEC3zurQXCCcwYj6ij7DQZnu/view?usp=sharing%20A0>

**Link to Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) website-**

**Link to Homeless Page:**

<https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Homeless%20Education/Pages/default.aspx%20A0>

**Link to Family Resources Page:**

<https://www.education.pa.gov/about/Resources/ResourcesFamilies/Pages/default.aspx>

*What is the definition of a “homeless youth” under McKinney-Vento?*

“Homeless” is defined as “anyone lacking a fixed, adequate, regular nighttime residence.”

*What situations fit this definition?*

- Staying in the home of other people due to unavailable housing, financial hardship, or similar circumstances
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks (in some instances – examples: leaking roof, no heat, etc.), public places, or campgrounds due to unavailable suitable housing options
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Unaccompanied (not living in direct care of legal parent or guardian) or runaway youth
- Refugee and migrant youth

*How does McKinney-Vento help these students?*

The law makes sure that these students receive a free and suitable public education by removing barriers to school enrollment and full, basic, daily participation in school activities. This includes:

- Immediate enrollment
- Free and Reduced School Lunch
- Help from school with any necessary enrollment documents
- Help from school setting up transportation service (if the student qualifies)
- Help from school with getting basic uniform clothing
- Help from school with basic school supplies
- Help from school with any basic clothing needs
- Help from school with basic high school graduation needs and expenses

*Where can I find more information for Pennsylvania?*

You can visit the [PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) site.

### ***Enrollment, Transfers & Admissions***

Students experiencing homelessness have the legal right to either remain in their school of origin or enroll in the neighborhood school/district of their current temporary living address.

- If the student/parent/guardian opts to stay in the school of origin and the distance between the temporary address and the school is one (1.0) mile or more, the counselor will work with the [Office of Transportation](#) and the school's transportation specialist to make sure that the student receives the proper transportation assistance needed to attend school.
- If you are NEW to the School District of Philadelphia WITH access to technology:
  - You should complete the online registration (OLR) through the [Office of Student Enrollment and Placement](#). You can choose [New Student Registration](#) or [Kindergarten Registration](#).
  - Our team will create a Homeless Verification Letter and email it to you OR you can use a letter from a shelter or other community provider. You will use this letter for all required documentation sections of the application for which you do not possess documentation.
- If you are NEW to the School District of Philadelphia WITHOUT access to technology:
  - Our team can work with you to complete the application over the phone or you can make an appointment to come to our office.
- If transferring within SDP:
  - You will not need to fill out an online registration (OLR) since you are already in the system.
  - You will only need to contact the school and request the transfer based on your status under McKinney Vento. Our team can help with that too.
- If you do not have enrollment documents such as valid ID, birth certificate, transcripts, immunization records, etc., the school is still required to enroll you immediately and help you get the other documents afterward. The school is not allowed to stop or hold-up enrollment; however, if you have any of the requested enrollment documents, it helps move the process move along. If a concern arises during this process, please contact our office.
- If you are an unaccompanied youth (meaning you are not living with your legal parent or guardian), you can fill out your own OLR and enroll yourself into school. When it asks for parent/guardian you should enter one of the following:
  - your own name
  - the name of an adult caring for you
  - the name of a staff person/social worker working with you

*Enrollment Disputes- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school:*

- The student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which the enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;
- The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or student to appeal the decision;
- The student, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the district's homeless liaison who shall carry out the appeal process as quickly as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
- In the case of unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

- The School District shall inform the parent or the unaccompanied youth of the right to appeal. The District shall provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with written notice including the contact information of the ECYEH Regional Coordinator [Dr. Alfred B. Quarles, Jr.](#)

## Uniform Procedures

**Uniforms and school supplies are a basic right to help fully participate in school. Students experiencing homelessness are eligible to receive assistance with uniforms and specified school supplies.**

Prep Charter requires all students to wear uniforms to school. Each school should be sensitive to the challenges faced by students and families experiencing homelessness. No child's education should be interrupted due to lack of proper clothing or school supplies.

### Uniform Procedures

- Uniforms are available for any student 9th through 12th grade who qualify under McKinney Vento.
- The student/parent/guardian should let the Counselor know that they need help with getting a uniform.
- The Counselor will obtain the sizes and general demographic information and ensure this information is shared with the principal.
- The uniforms, along with a book bag and school supplies, will then be given to the student.
- Shelters and other homeless providers are also able to place uniform orders.

## SEPTA & Transportation Policies

**If students experiencing homelessness live at least one mile (1.0) away from the school, they are eligible to receive transportation assistance.**

ECYEH ensures transportation is in place for students experiencing homelessness. Students are eligible if the school is one mile or more from the current residence.

### *STUDENT/PARENT PROCEDURES*

- You should contact the school and ask for a transportation request to be completed. If you are living in a shelter or are working with a provider, have them submit a letter verifying McKinney Vento status. If not, the school can provide the letter in order for transportation to be set up.
- It may take up to 2 weeks for transportation to be set up. In the meantime, we can provide you with day passes. If you need that option please reach out to our front office or your Counselor.

### *SCHOOL STAFF PROCEDURES*

- Transportation passes for students who qualify under McKinney Vento are to be requested in the front office.. When creating the request, you should attach a supporting document indicating this student qualifies under McKinney Vento. This can be a letter from a shelter or other provider, or just a letter from the school counselor verifying qualification.

## *OUT-OF-COUNTY*

- Students experiencing homelessness temporarily residing outside of Philadelphia School District boundaries are also eligible for transportation. Reach out to the ECYEH Regional Coordinator ([Dr. Alfred B. Quarles, Jr.](#)) in order to process the request.

## **FAQs**

### **Are school districts responsible for identifying youth experiencing homelessness?**

**Yes.** The School District of Philadelphia works with our office to have a liaison or assigned lead to ensure the McKinney-Vento Act law is upheld for students experiencing homelessness. This person helps school staff identify these youth and direct them toward needed resources and support through connection to other services and agencies.

### **If a child's temporary residence is located in a different county or state from the school of origin, which school district is responsible for the child's education?**

The law does not assign financial responsibility. The School District of Philadelphia will work with the other districts to ensure education stability for the child.

### **If a student finds temporary housing across state lines, does the McKinney-Vento Act still apply?**

**Yes.** The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law and applies in any situation. The student has the right to stay in their school of origin unless the parent/guardian wishes otherwise or it is not possible given the specific circumstances. The School District of Philadelphia will work with the other district to ensure education stability for the child.

### **Does providing/arranging for transportation mean "door-to-door" service in similar manner as special education students?**

Generally, no. For students who fit the qualifying distance (at least 1.0 mile), transportation assistance comes in the form of SEPTA student passes. However, *for distinct special circumstances*, if there is a yellow bus on the route of the temporary address, an exception can be made. If the student is in special education and their IEP states "door-to-door," then service must be arranged.

### **How "immediate" is immediate enrollment?**

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to enroll students experiencing homelessness immediately (standard dictionary definition: "without delay"), even if the student is unable to produce documents normally required for enrollment. "Enroll" means permitting the student to attend classes and fully participate in school activities. Generally this would be same day or the following day.

### **If a student is enrolled without requiring immunization proof, isn't the entire school at risk?**

McKinney-Vento requires immediate enrollment. As the majority of youth experiencing homelessness have been vaccinated and it is often difficult for families experiencing homelessness to obtain and keep copies of records, the school should work with the family to do so. If more help is needed, the school should contact the previous school (if applicable) or the Department of Health in the state of original residence. Un-immunized children should receive initial doses as soon as possible, unless there are philosophical, religious, or medical exemptions.

### **How can a school determine what classes or services to provide for a student if there are no school records?**

Following immediate enrollment, the receiving school must contact the previous school for records. If records cannot be transmitted immediately, class schedule information can be obtained from the parent/guardian or youth. The school can also input procedures for a quick assessment to determine class placement and any recommended supportive services.

### **Must schools immediately enroll unaccompanied youth, even without proof of guardianship?**

**Yes.** Lack of guardianship papers cannot delay or prevent school enrollment for unaccompanied youth. The School District of Philadelphia allows youth to enroll themselves with assistance from our office.

**If Prep Charter does not follow the law, is there a penalty?**

**Absolutely. States are required to ensure that their school districts comply with the McKinney-Vento Act. Therefore, the state can sanction noncompliance by withholding federal funds or other means from the offending school district.**

**What duty does the receiving school have to a student who has not been in school and enrolls mid-semester to give them credit for the work they do in the rest of the semester?**

**The law requires the School District of Philadelphia to remove barriers to retention in school. Since inability to earn credits is an obstacle to remaining in school, the school must address that problem. Any necessary adjustments to the student's schedule must be made to permit the student to obtain partial or prorated credit for their work.**

**What duties do charter schools have to students experiencing homelessness and must they appoint a homeless liaison?**

**Yes and yes. Public charter schools have the same responsibilities under McKinney-Vento as other public schools and school districts. If a student experiencing homelessness attempts to enroll in a charter school, the school must enroll them as long as other students living in the same area would be eligible to attend the school, unless there is overcrowding or a specialized selection process. If the school has specific skills-related entrance requirements, for example, artistic ability requirements for a fine arts school, the student must meet them. Charter schools considered their own LEA (local education agency) should appoint a liaison to work with students experiencing homelessness.**