

**Who is homeless? (Sec.2 57)**

The term “homeless children and youth”—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ...; and

(B) includes—

(i) children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) 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 ...

(iii) children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

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WHO IS HOMELESS?

- ❖ Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and lack of preparedness for class.
- ❖ Welcome the student and the family let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.
- ❖ Make sure the child enrolls in the free meal programs.
- ❖ Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for after-school activities and in-school programs.
- ❖ Let parents know of their child's educational rights.
- ❖ Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- ❖ Hold school meetings, such as the PTA meeting, in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility to school events.
- ❖ Encourage parents to volunteer. Discuss their interests and offer suggestions that allow them to use their expertise. Many parents will help if invited to do so.
- ❖ Support the school staff as they work with the student.
- ❖ Contact the school district homeless liaison for additional support.
- ❖ Show that you care about the student!

#### **ADMINISTRATOR**

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#### **ADMINISTRATOR**

1. **Immediate Enrollment**-The right to be enrolled immediately in school, without medical or academic records, regardless of district policy.
2. **Choice of School** – The homeless child has three choices:
  - School of Origin- the school the child last attended;
  - Local Education -the school the child attended when he/she became homeless;
  - The school closest to the shelter or other temporary housing.
3. **Transportation**- Homeless children are entitled to the same rights to transportation as other children in their district. If the parent or guardian chooses the school of origin and it is in another district, the districts must agree on how to divide responsibility and cost of providing transportation or share both equally. \*
4. **Service**-Homeless children are entitled to the same services, such as tutoring, that are available to other children in their districts.
5. **Dispute Resolution**-If problems arise between the school and parents or between districts, the parent shall be referred to an ombudsperson in each Regional Office of Education. In the meantime, the child must remain in school and receive transportation.

## PRINCIPALS

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## PRINCIPALS

1. Learn to identify the following tell-tale signs of homelessness:
  - Chronic hunger or tiredness;
  - Erratic attendance at school;
  - Attendance of multiple schools;
  - Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention;
  - Lack of records, such as birth certificate, immunization record, pre-school physical, and school records, or incomplete records;
  - Parents who seem confused when asked about the last school attended;
  - Low-income motel address on enrollment form;
  - Statements from family when enrolling, such as; "It's a new address. I can't remember it." "We've been having a hard time lately." "We move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place."
2. Assure families that children can enroll if you think that they are experiencing homelessness. (This is mandated by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, P.L. 107-110.)
  - Enroll the child immediately (even without records). Ask for the name and city of the last school attended; then call that school and ask to have the records sent.
  - Arrange for the child to take a placement test if records are not available. \*
3. Take the family to a private place to fill out enrollment forms.

#### SECRETARY & ENROLLMENT PERSONNEL

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#### SECRETARY & ENROLLMENT PERSONNEL

4. Offer to assist with filling out the enrollment forms. Hesitation may indicate an inability to read.
5. Assist with filling out free meal program forms. Arrange for lunch that day.
6. Have copies of the school/class supply lists.
7. Provide a welcome pack with paper, pencil, pen, and crayons (younger grades).
8. Privately and confidentially alert the child's teacher and guidance counselor of the student's living situation.
9. Before a student leaves, prepare a parent pack with photocopies of the student's records (scholastic, social security, immunization, etc.). Share with the family and be prepared to share records with the new school quickly to expedite appropriate placement.
10. Be sensitive, patient, calm, and reassuring. YOU can make a difference!

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- ❖ Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless so you can recognize them. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, attendance and transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class.
- ❖ Assist other students in being sensitive to stereotypes of homeless people.
- ❖ Adjust assignments so children not living in permanent settings can complete them. (Such children may not have a place to perform a science experiment or the resources to cut out an article for current events.)
- ❖ Make sure the child enrolls in the free meal programs.
- ❖ Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for after-school and in-school programs.
- ❖ Communicate with the parents about school performance.
- ❖ Connect the child with tutoring and remediation services, if needed. \*
- ❖ If you have a snack break, keep a store of snacks for students who don't bring one.
- ❖ Do not take away the child's possessions. They may need the security of having their "stuff" in hand.
- ❖ Hold the child accountable for what she or he can control, (e.g. behavior or attitude) not what is in the child's inability to control (inability to watch a news program or purchase a poster board for a project).
- ❖ Before you receive a new student:
  - Prepare a list of your class routines and procedures;
  - Prepare a new student file with information for parents & guardians;
  - Maintain a supply of materials for students to use at school;
  - Prepare a "getting-to-know you" activity available for the class to do when a new student arrives;
  - Have the class schedule visible.

TEACHER

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TEACHER

- ❖ Assist parents with the completion of all necessary medical records. Some parents may lack the sufficient skills for comprehension, reading, and writing.
- ❖ Contact the previous school in order to obtain immunization records and health records.
- ❖ Ask parents if they know the name of clinics where their child has received medical attention. Assist parents in obtaining child's medical information from clinics.
- ❖ Alert principal, counselor and teachers of any serious medical condition of the child. Teamwork and sharing of information is very important, especially if the child's stay in the school is short.
- ❖ A parent may not be at home in the shelter during the day, so assist in contacting the shelter staff or your School District Homeless Liaison to make arrangements should a sick child need to leave the school.
- ❖ When the student is ill and must be sent "home", remember that the place he or she may be going to may not be stable or quiet.
- ❖ Be familiar with the common characteristics of homeless children, so that you may recognize and assist them without delay.
- ❖ Contact your School District Homeless Liaison and the student's teacher(s) when you identify a homeless student in the school, so that other services (lunch program, tutoring, etc.) may be made available without delay. \*
- ❖ Be familiar with the requirements of the Illinois Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act and the Illinois State Board of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Be able to explain these requirements to other school staff.

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## NURSE

### **Continuing Care**

- Follow-up on all children who have been excluded from school due to incomplete immunizations and suspected communicable illness. The law requires that students be admitted regardless of immunization history. Work with parent and school personnel to get the student into school and to a resource for free or low-cost health service.
- Contact parent and/or shelter staff if child is absent for three or more days to find out if assistance is needed. Often, the parent is not motivated to send the child to school, especially if the family is not in a supervised shelter setting.
- Offer the child emotional support and reassurance that homelessness is a temporary condition and that the family will find stable housing. Reassure the child that this situation is not his or her fault.
- Be available, accessible, and compassionate to the concerns, needs and feelings of the homeless families. Try to boost the self-esteem of these children and their parents by conveying concern, respect, kindness and compassion. Be a good listener and be empathetic.

### **Expanding Outreach**

- Develop reliable, accessible sources of medical and dental care for the homeless families. Share your discoveries with the School District Homeless Liaison.
- Serve as a contact person for referrals to help homeless families. Get to know the best resources to connect families for things like housing, counseling, food, and transportation.
- Make personal visits to local shelter(s). Stress importance of school attendance with parents and shelter staff. Help to set up workshops for parents and shelter staff on such topics as nutrition, stress, and general health needs.

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- ❖ Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and lack of preparedness for class.
- ❖ Introduce yourself as someone who works as an advocate for the child's success in school.
- ❖ Arrange a follow-up meeting with parents a couple of weeks after enrollment.
- ❖ Ask if the child has participated in any after-school activities or had special classes at a previous school, then work to connect the child with similar resources if they are available.
- ❖ Make sure the child enrolls in the free meal program.
- ❖ Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for after-school activities and in-school programs.
- ❖ Let parents know of their child's educational rights.
- ❖ Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- ❖ Offer support for the physiological needs of the student (food, clothing) as well as the social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
- ❖ Train peer buddies to orient students to the school.
- ❖ Show that you care about the student!

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

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- ❖ Ensure that transportation is being provided to homeless children. Assist parents in communication services with the transportation department at school. \*
- ❖ Ensure that the homeless students are afforded **every** opportunity that non-homeless students have, including in-school programs as well as after-school activities.
- ❖ Be familiar with the requirements of the **Illinois Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act** and the **Illinois State Board of Education policy on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.**
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SUPPORT STAFF

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SUPPORT STAFF

Use this form when:

- [Referral and One-One Tutoring Plan](#) (ISBE 83-4A)
- ▶ [Transportation Fund Request](#) (ISBE 83-04B)
- ▶ [Homeless Student Alert Form](#) (ISBE 83-04C)
- ▶ [Student Enrollment/Withdrawal Form](#) (ISBE 83-04D)
- ▶ [Homeless Family Request for Assistance - ISBE](#) (ISBE 83-04E)
- ▶ [Dispute Resolution Process Form - School District](#) (ISBE 83-04F)
- ▶ [Liaison Assessment Tool](#) (ISBE 83-04G)
- ▶ [Homeless Affidavit](#) (ISBE 83-04H)
- ▶ [Referral to Homeless Education Liaison](#) (ISBE 83-04I)
- ▶ [Caregivers Authorization Form](#) (ISBE 83-04J)
- ▶ [School Placement Feasibility](#) (ISBE 83-04K)

These forms may be found at:  
<http://www.isbe.net/homelss/default.htm>

FORMS

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FORMS

Homeless Liaison Training

The McKinney-Vento Act requires all School Districts have a liaison for homeless children and youth in place. The School District's liaison is properly trained on the duties and requirements of the Act as well as being available to assist the student and their family.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_  
Building \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the above information to:  
Kim Gehrke, Program Assistant  
Fax: 618-283-9833  
E-mail: kgehrke@fayette.k12.il.us

**\* Your school district may be reimbursed for applicable services with prior approval. Call your local liaison for more details.**

TRAINING REQUESTS

Homeless Liaison Training

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TRAINING REQUESTS

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Educational Services Division  
Lead Liaison for Area V**

**Regional Office of Education #3 \* Educational Services Division  
1805 W. Fletcher, Suite B  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
Phone 618-283-IROE(1763) \* Fax 618-283-9833**

**Ann M. Schwarm, Director  
[aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us)**

**Kim Gehrke, Program Assistant & Regional Liaison  
[kgehrke@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:kgehrke@fayette.k12.il.us)**

**Brenda Sprague, Administrative Assistant  
[bsprague@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:bsprague@fayette.k12.il.us)**

**Brenda Benton, Project Coordinator  
[bbenton@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:bbenton@fayette.k12.il.us)**

Kim Gehrke is the Regional Liaison  
serving schools in Bond, Fayette, Effingham,  
Christian, Montgomery, Calhoun, Jersey & Greene Counties.  
Contact Kim to fulfill your technical assistance and training needs.  
[kgehrke@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:kgehrke@fayette.k12.il.us) ~ 618-283-1763

*The above information has been modified from the  
National Center for Homeless Education Liaison Kit*

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Educational Services Division  
Lead Liaison for Area V**

**Regional Office of Education #3 \* Educational Services Division  
1805 W. Fletcher, Suite B  
Vandalia, IL 62471  
Phone 618-283-IROE(1763) \* Fax 618-283-9833**

**Ann M. Schwarm, Director  
[aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us](mailto:aschwarm@fayette.k12.il.us)**

**Kim Gehrke, Program Assistant & Regional Liaison  
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