



Fall River Public Schools

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"Fall River the Scholarship City"

HOMELESS EDUCATION POLICY & PROCEDURES

The goal of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is to ensure that each homeless child or youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education. To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable Pre-School programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs. The Fall River Public School's Homeless Education Policy addresses the following key components of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youth" are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or have a primary nighttime residence in a supervised, publicly or privately, operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

This definition shall include:

- 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 adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- 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; and
- unaccompanied youth – a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian;
- Migratory children living in conditions described above

Designation of a Homeless Education Liaison

(A current list of Liaisons is available on the Department of Education (DOE) web site: www.doe.mass.edu)

The Fall River Public Schools (FRPS) will designate a staff person whose role will be in part to ensure that homeless students enroll in school and that they receive the educational and other services for which they are eligible and ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies;
- Parents or guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities, (i.e., providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens), access to school nutrition programs available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children
- Enrollment disputes are mediated and resolved;
- Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including to the school of origin and are assisted in accessing needed transportation services; and
- Assistance is provided to children and youth who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.
- Amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students are reviewed and recommended.

The Fall River Public School's Homeless Education Liaison is Diane Gouveia and can be contacted at 508-675-8420, extension 421.

Enrollment/School Selection

The school selected shall immediately enroll homeless students even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, (i.e., school records, medical records or proof of residency). The Homeless Liaison will assist families if needed in obtaining the required records.

To the extent possible:

- Homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless (unless parent or guardian objects) or to attend school where they are temporarily residing;
- Students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they obtain permanent housing;
- Enroll the child or youth in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend;
- Parents/ guardians may request their child attend, if possible, any school in the Fall River School District

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the Homeless Liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

Transportation

Homeless students are entitled to transportation at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison) to their school of origin or the school where they are enrolled.

Also, transportation will be provided:

- If the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin and;
- If the districts cannot agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally

The FRPS will provide transportation services to homeless children and youth that are comparable to those received by other students.

Disputes

If there is a school selection or enrollment dispute, the student shall immediately be enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The FRPS District's Homeless Liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule.

Resources:

More information regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act can be found at:

- Department of Education (DOE) website: www.doe.mass.edu
- National Coalition for the Homeless website: www.nationhomeless.org
- United States Department of Education website: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf