Department of Education

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

Students in Temporary Housing – Guide for Parents & Youth

TOPIC	IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Children living in the following situations are considered homeless for the purpose of education rights under the McKinney-Vento Act:	• In a shelter, transitional shelter, motel, campground, abandoned in a hospital, or awaiting foster care. • In a car, park, public place, bus, train, or abandoned building. • Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing.
Unaccompanied Youth	• Youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, and who meets the definition of homelessness set forth in the explanation above. *Unaccompanied homeless youth have the same rights as homeless students who reside with a parent or guardian.*
Students who fall under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless have the following rights:	• To a free public education. • To immediate enrollment in the zoned school. • To attend school no matter how long they have lived at their current location. • To stay in their school of origin (school attended before becoming homeless or the last school attended) or choose to attend their new zoned school. • To transportation services to and from school. • To not be denied immediate school enrollment just because of their situation or because they lack enrollment documentation. • To not be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless. • To receive free school meals.
Important Information:	• Each borough Integrated Service Center (ISC) has at least one Students in Temporary Housing (STH) Content Expert who serves as the STH liaison and manages programs and services designed to help children who are homeless pursue their education. The STH Content Expert supervises a team of Family Assistants. • Each Children First Network (CFN) has a designated STH liaison available to assist children who are homeless with their educational needs. • Additionally, District 75 and District 79 each have a designated STH liaison available to assist children who are homeless with their educational needs. • Family Assistants are located at shelters and in some schools. They are responsible for assisting homeless parents and their children with their educational needs. • Family Assistants are available to assist the child's parent/guardian with school enrollment, obtaining immunizations, school records, and arranging transportation to and from school. School staff should not hesitate to contact their STH liaison for individual questions, to arrange training, or to assist unaccompanied youth.
School Selection:	• Schools must allow parents/guardians to choose the child's school when their child is homeless. The parent/guardian may choose among the following: a) The school the child attended when permanently housed (school of origin); b) The school in which the student was last enrolled; or c) Any school available to a permanently housed child residing in the area where the homeless student is currently residing.
School Enrollment: (Apply only if your child is not currently enrolled or you want to change school)	• Elementary School – register your child at your zoned school. If you are currently residing in a NYC Department of Homeless Services shelter, the family assistant at your shelter will be able to assist you, if needed. If there is no family assistant in your shelter or if you are not residing in a shelter, please contact your STH liaison for assistance. • Middle School – same procedure as elementary school except where your district does not have zoned middle schools, then you must report to the Borough Enrollment Center. For the location of your Borough Enrollment Center, please call 311. • High School – all high school students must register at the Borough Enrollment Center. For the location of the nearest Borough Enrollment Center, please call 311.
Enrollment Disputes:	• If a dispute arises over the school selection or enrollment, your child must be immediately admitted to the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute. • The parent/guardian must be provided with a written explanation of the school decision on the dispute, including the right to appeal, and referred to the STH Family Assistant or STH liaison for assistance.
Transportation	• Students who are defined as homeless by the McKinney-Vento Act are entitled to transportation to and from school, if necessary. • If available, busses will be provided to students in grades K-6; if not available, they are eligible for a student MetroCard. • For students in grades Pre-K-6 who are eligible for transportation and receive a student MetroCard, their parents/guardians are eligible for public transportation assistance (MetroCard) to accompany the child. • Students in grades 7-12 are eligible for student MetroCard.

For more information, please contact your borough Integrated Service Center or your Children First Network to speak to a STH liaison or call 311.