

## **Homeless Education**

The McKinney-Vento Act ensures educational rights and protection for youth and children experiencing homelessness.

### **Who is considered homeless?**

Anyone who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence is considered homeless. You qualify if you are:

- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Living in a motel, hotel or campground due to economic hardship or lack of housing
- Sharing housing with relatives or others due to economic hardship or lack of housing
- Living in a car, park, public place, bus or train station or an abandoned building

### **Services Provided by Gloucester County Public Schools**

If a student is found eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the school district can provide the following services:

- Immediate school enrollment
- Transportation
- Free meals
- Referrals to community resources for food, clothing, shelter, etc.

### **What Families Experiencing Homelessness Need to Know**

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have a right to attend school.
- You do not need a permanent address to enroll your child in school.
- 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 zone are eligible to attend, whichever circumstance proves to be in their best interest.
- Schools must provide you with a written explanation if a placement dispute occurs. Contact your local Homeless Liaison for assistance in handling a placement dispute.
- Your child cannot be denied school enrollment because school records or other enrollment documentation is not immediately available.
- Your child may have the right to transportation services to and from the school of origin if determined feasible.
- Your child has the right to participate in extracurricular activities and all federal, state, or local programs for which he/she is eligible. Transportation may not be available for these activities.
- Unaccompanied youth have these same rights. (Contact your local Homeless Liaison.)

*Legal Reference: The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S. C. 11431 et seq.) at Subtitle B of title VII. (Reauthorized 2002)*

### **Who are "Unaccompanied Youth?"**

They are youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian including:

- Young people who have run away from home.
- Young people who have been forced to leave their homes.

Their possible living situations include:

- Living with friends (couch surfing).
- Living in shelters.
- Living in cars, at campgrounds, in abandoned buildings or on the streets.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires immediate enrollment of these students and protects their right to attend school without parental involvement. Schools must immediately enroll "unaccompanied youth" even if they do not have the documents that are usually required, such as proof of residence, school records, medical records, or guardianship papers. Transportation assistance must be provided if the student needs transportation to the school or origin.

Parents/Guardians/Students who think they may qualify for services under McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Act should contact the Office of Student Services. 6099 T.C. Walker Road Gloucester, Virginia, 23061. Office (804) 693-7856 or Fax (804) 693-7859.

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[Project HOPE](#) is the office of the State Coordinator for Homeless Education in Virginia. It is located at the College of William and Mary.