



CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS

285 CHURCH STREET • P.O. BOX 120 • CLAY, WEST VIRGINIA 25043
Telephone (304) 587-4266 • Fax (304) 587-4181 • www.claycountyschools.org

WHO IS HOMELESS ? Do You Need Assistance?

The **McKinney-Vento Act** defines the term “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- 1. 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; or are abandoned in hospitals.
- 2. 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:
- 3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- 4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living circumstances described in clauses (1)-(3).

Educational Rights

West Virginia public schools shall provide an educational environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. Every student experiencing homelessness or transition shall have access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless. This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children, youth, and unaccompanied youth, applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth have the right to:

- ▶ Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- ▶ Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- ▶ Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- ▶ Enroll in the local school; or continue attending the school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), according to each student’s best interest.

If the school district believes that the school selected is not in the student’s best interest, the district must provide a written explanation of its position and inform the parent, guardian, or youth of the right to appeal its decision.

- ▶ Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested and plausible.
- ▶ Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's needs.

***Dispute Resolution:** *If you disagree with school officials about enrollment, transportation, or fair treatment of a homeless child or youth, you may file a complaint with the school district homeless liaison. The school district must respond and attempt to resolve it quickly. During the dispute, the student must be immediately enrolled in the school and provided transportation until the matter is resolved. The McKinney Vento Liaison will assist you in making decisions, providing notice of any appeal process, and filling out dispute forms.*

Enrollment Forms

If you live in one of these situations, as for all students enrolling in West Virginia schools, you may enroll in school without the following documents in hand; however, your full cooperation is needed with county and school personnel in trying to obtain these documents as soon as possible.

- Proof of residency
- School records
- Certified birth certificate
- Legal guardianship papers
- Immunization records and/or a TB skin test result (in-state students only)

However, if you are coming from out of state without proof of at least the first series of immunizations and a TB skin test result, you will be enrolled, but homebound instruction will immediately be provided until appropriate immunizations and TB test results can be obtained.

When you move, the following should be done:

- Contact the school district's liaison for help in enrolling in a new school or arranging to continue in the school you have been attending.
- Contact the new school and provide any information necessary to assist the teachers in helping you adjust to new circumstances.

Ask the local liaison, shelter staff, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

If you need assistance with enrolling in school, or have any additional questions, contact your local homeless specialist/liaison listed below:

Crystal Gibson

Homeless Specialist
Clay County Schools
P.O. Box 120
285 Church Street
Clay, WV 25043
304 587-4266
crystal.gibson@k12.wv.us