

Frequently Asked Questions

If I lose permanent housing, should I keep my child in the school of origin or transfer my child to the local school?

Moving from one school to another can be very upsetting for children. They have to leave the friends and teachers they know and get used to new friends, teachers, and classes. Because of this, it is usually best for your child to stay in his/ her same school (the school of origin), even if you move to a different area.

Here are some questions to think about when deciding whether your child should stay in the same school or move to the new school where you're living:

- How old is your child?
- How permanent is your current living arrangement? Do you plan to move back close to the school of origin or do you think you'll stay near your current living arrangement?
- Is your child attached to his/her school of origin? An older child who feels very connected to his/her school of origin and/or is about to graduate might have a harder time changing schools.
- How anxious is your child because you have had to move? Would changing schools be overwhelming?
- Would changing schools cause your child to fall behind in school and receive bad grades?
- Is this a good time of year for your child to change schools, such as at the end of a semester or school year, after testing, or after an event that is important to your child?
- How much time would your child have to spend going back and forth to the school of origin? A long ride might have a negative impact on your child's schoolwork.
- Are there safety issues to think about in choosing which school your child should attend?

Northwest Area School District

McKinney Vento Guide for Students, Parents and Families

The McKinney-Vento Act Basics: If you lost your housing and now live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, camping ground, on the street doubled up with family or friends or in another type of temporary or inadequate housing, you or your child might be able to receive help through a federal law called the McKinney-Vento Act.

For Information Contact:

Joanne Wagner

Northwest Area School District Educational Liaison

570-542-2146 x5005

Joanne.Wagner@nasdedu.org

Mr. Jeff Zimmerman

Region 7 Coordinator PA ECYEH

570-718-4613

jzimmerman@liu18.org

What if the school and I disagree on where my child should go to school?

If you and the school disagree, the school district has to tell you in writing why it thinks your child should go to a different school than the one you want. The district also has to tell you in writing how you can appeal this decision. Your child can still enroll in, attend, and participate fully in the school you think is best for him or her while the disagreement is being settled.

Information for Parents

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

In a shelter, motel, vehicle or campground, on the street, in an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or doubled up with friends or relatives, because you cannot find or afford housing, then, your preschool aged and school aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act. Your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended, if you or a guardian request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school programs because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrolling your children.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

Whom can I contact to help with my or my child's education?

Every school district has a local homeless education liaison. This person can help you decide which school would be best for your child and communicate with the school. The local liaison also can help your child get school supplies, supplemental services, and free school meals; set up transportation to and from the school of origin; and help you find community supports.

When you enroll your child in a new school, you should ask to meet his/her teacher(s). You should also talk to your child's teacher(s) every so often to talk about how he or she is doing. Know at least one teacher at your child's school well enough to ask questions about your child's schoolwork and to give him or her information that will help your child learn.

The school counselor can help your child deal with changes and challenges. Share with this person any information about how your child is acting at home or things he or she is dealing with that might affect his/her schoolwork.

Other good people to know are the school principal, attendance officer, bus driver, school social worker, and school nurse.

When you move, you should do the following:

Contact the school district's local Liaison for Homeless Education, for help in enrolling your child in a new school or arranging for your child to continue in his or her former school. Contact the school and provide any information you think will assist teachers in helping your child adjust to new circumstances. Ask the local Liaison for Homeless Education, for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.