



## Dearborn Height School District No. 7

### **McKinney- Vento Homeless Assistance Act Education of Homeless Children and Youth Policy and Procedures**

In compliance with federal law, it is the policy of the Dearborn Height School District No. 7 Board of Education to provide a free, appropriate education for all children as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Homeless children and youth must be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. The Dearborn Height School District Board of Education will ensure that homeless children and youth are free from discrimination, segregation and harassment because of their homeless status.

Dearborn Heights School District No. 7 provides assistance to identified homeless families and unaccompanied youth. The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act is an integral part in aiding students and families in these situations to prevent academic failure and promote success through graduation.

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

Homeless, as defined by the McKinney Vento Homeless Act, means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes families that are doubled-up and youth not living with a biological parent or legal guardians.

#### **What causes homelessness?**

Natural disasters, divorce, death, illness, poverty, and abusive situations all contribute to homelessness.

Students that are identified as homeless or suspected of being homeless by staff or community will be referred to the McKinney –Vento Homeless Liaison. In Dearborn Heights School District No. 7 that Liaison is also the Director of Special Education. Building administration will be advised of students identified as homeless in order to determine any appropriate education programs and/or services that may be needed.

#### **What can the school do to assist those in homeless situations?**

The district has an identified McKinney -Vento Liaison. The district's homeless liaison can assist identified homeless students with free breakfast and lunch, transportation, school supplies, enrollment in school and programs, and information regarding area support organizations. In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations Dearborn Heights School District No. 7 will work to proactively identify homeless children and youth in the district indicating homelessness to the local liaison.

A homeless individual is someone who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes anyone who, due to lack of housing, lives:

- in emergency or transitional shelters,
- in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals,
- in cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings,
- doubled up with relatives or friends,
- migratory children living in these conditions.

Serving the homeless students in the District is a coordinated effort of the District and the Wayne RESA Homeless Education Program. The objective is to ensure that all students are provided with seamless educational services regardless of their current housing situation.

Students eligible for support are those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and may include:

- Those living on the streets, in a car in an abandoned building, etc.
- Those living in shelters and transitional housing programs, those living in campgrounds, motels and hotels.
- Those who are doubled up with family or friends due to loss of housing
- Those who have run away or otherwise are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Students in the above living situations may attend school where they attended prior to losing their housing, with transportation provided, or they may immediately enroll in the district where they are temporarily staying (even if they lack enrollment documents such as birth certificates, immunizations, and proof of residency).

### **What are the provisions of McKinney Vento?**

McKinney-Vento is federal law that aims to protect homeless students and insure them fair access to public education. The McKinney-Vento laws says that children who have lost their housing under circumstances identified by the law can:

- Continue in the school they went to before losing their housing or in the school they were last enrolled (called "school of origin") even if they move out of the school district, if that is feasible.
- Go to the local school in the area they are living. The school must immediately let students enroll and attend classes, and fully participate in school activities, even if the students do not have a parent or guardian with them or documents such as proof of residency, immunizations, other medical records, or school documents.
- Go to school with children who are not in temporary housing and be free from stigmatization. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because of their housing.
- Have disagreements with the school settled quickly and go to the school they chose while disagreements are settled.
- If a child lacks Immunizations or medical records parents should be referred to the district McKinney Vento Liaison for assistance.
- If a dispute arises the child is immediately enrolled pending dispute resolution. Disputes will be identified to the district McKinney -Vento Liaison for the expeditious implementation of the dispute resolution process.
- Parents will be given written decision on dispute decisions.
- Districts will have policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided to and from the school of origin, if feasible and/or the district in where the student currently is living.
- Homeless pre-school children will be provided equal access to the educational services for which they are eligible including pre-school programs, and Headstart programs administered by the district.

### **What Homeless Families Need to Know**

Homeless children have a right to attend school.

- You do not need a permanent address to enroll your child in school.
- Homeless children have the right to stay in their home school if the parents choose and it is feasible.
- Your child cannot be denied school enrollment just because school records or other enrollment documentation are not immediately available.
- Your child has the right to transportation services to and from the school of origin.
- Your child has the right to participate in extra-curricular activities and all federal, state, and local programs for which s/he is eligible.
- The district is not prohibited from requiring parent/guardians to provide contact inform

### **What Your Family Can Do Before You Move**

- Tell your child's teacher and principal that your child is moving, and give them the new address
- Let school officials know if you want your child to stay in his/her home school while you are getting the family stabilized.
- Ask for a copy of your child's school records, including immunizations.

### **Tips for Families Who Move Often**

- Keep a copy of birth certificates and school records accessible.
- Safeguard all health and immunization records.
- Have a reliable person keep a second copy of the child's birth certificate, school records, and health information.
- Enroll children in school as soon as possible.

### **Dearborn Heights School District No.7 staff will assist with access to programs and services such as**

- Free breakfast and lunch programs
- Free transportation for children to remain in their home school
- Special education programs, especially if the student has previously received special education services
- Tutoring programs
- Before and After School Programs
- Programs to help children learn English
- Vocational programs
- Summer school programs
- Pre-school programs
- Homeless assistance programs

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It is the policy of Dearborn Heights School District No. 7 that no discriminatory practices based on sex, race, religion, color, National Origin, disability, height, weight, or any other status covered by state federal or local law be allowed in providing instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or policy governing student conduct and attendance.