

FREMONT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

McKinney-Vento Program Guidelines and Procedures
for
Homeless Children and Youth in Transition

2019-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Purpose and Philosophy	2
Definition of “Homeless” Under McKinney-Vento	2
Residency and Enrollment	3
Intake and Needs Assessment	3
School Stability	4
Free and Reduced Meals	4
Fee Waivers	4
Services for Homeless Children and Youth in Transition	4
Transportation	5
Dispute Resolution	5
Community Resources	5
Appendix A: Student Intake and Needs Assessment	7
Appendix B: Free Lunch Form	8
Appendix C: District Policy JLG - Homeless Children	9

Statement of Purpose and Philosophy

Fremont County School District #1 believes all children can learn at high levels, and it is the responsibility of district personnel to figure out the right combination of services and supports that will enable each student to be successful. Students who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless face unique educational challenges that may require involvement from teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, classified staff, and community partners. The purpose of this document is to outline the district's obligations under the McKinney-Vento Act and provide clarification on district procedures as Fremont #1 seeks to meet those requirements in pursuit of positive educational outcomes for every student.

The district administration shall meet annually to review and revise policies and procedures to ensure no barriers exist for homeless students. This handbook will document practices that are available to staff to remove barriers to student success. Additionally, administration will ensure coordination all programs serving students in transition. (Indicator A.14 & 20)

The district liaison shall be the Director of Student Services. The liaison will receive training by attending the Wyoming Department of Education's STAR conference or completed online training provided by the WDE at least once every 2 years. (Indicator A.15)

The liaison will provide use this document to provide annual professional development and support for relevant staff. Ensure the district provides public notice of educational rights to school personnel, community agencies and preschools that serve families in transition. (Indicator A.16-17)

Definition of "Homeless" Under McKinney-Vento

"Homeless children and youth" is a broadly defined term under the McKinney-Vento Act¹. It refers to any student who lacks a "fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence." For the purposes of education, the Act clarifies further that a homeless student is one whose living situation is described by any of the following:

- Living in an "unsheltered location"
 - "...a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings"
 - "...living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings"
- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground--**only if due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations**

¹ Quotations in this section taken directly from the McKinney-Vento Act, Section 725(2); 42 U.S.C. 11435(2); for more information, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf>.

- Living with another family or sharing the housing of others (also known as “doubled up”)--**only if due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason**

Inadequate housing is generally understood to mean any housing that is partially open to the elements, lacks a functional bathroom or kitchen, or lacks one or more basic utilities.

In addition, “unaccompanied youth” may meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless if they are not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian. However, unaccompanied youth are not considered homeless if, out of convenience, they choose not to live with a parent or guardian (i.e. staying with friends who live in town to avoid long commutes to/from school, staying with a relative while the parent is traveling, etc.).

Determining whether a particular student meets the McKinney-Vento definition is a decision made in cooperation with parents (if they can be located) and the local liaison. (Indicator A.18)

Residency and Enrollment

A homeless child or youth is a resident of Fremont #1 if they are personally present within district boundaries and intend to remain (not necessarily permanently). Furthermore, a homeless child or youth shall be considered a resident of Fremont #1 when his/her living situation meets the definition described in the preceding section, even when the parent or legal guardian is known to live within another school district’s boundaries.

Homeless children and youth in transition must be enrolled immediately, even if they lack documentation that is typically required for enrollment. The following documents and records are among those that cannot be used as barriers to immediate enrollment:

- Transcripts or other records from the previous school
- Immunization, health, and/or medical records
- Birth certificates
- Proof of residency (i.e. state-issued identification, utility bills, etc.)
- Proof of guardianship

Once the student is enrolled, it is the school’s responsibility to ensure Infinite Campus records are accurate and to request records from the student’s previous school. In addition, the Fremont #1 local liaison should be contacted to confirm eligibility, assist the family with school supplies (if needed), and introduce them to other community resources. Please note: once the student is enrolled, he/she cannot be excluded from any school activity or opportunity that is otherwise available to students in the same grade. (Indicator A.18)

Intake and Student Needs Assessment

When a student has been determined to be homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, a staff member in the student's school must fill out the Fremont #1 "Student Intake and Needs Assessment" form (Appendix A). This form serves two purposes: 1) to facilitate state reporting on the WDE-684, and 2) to officially notify the local liaison of any needs that may require district attention. The one-page form must be completed and returned to the local liaison as soon as possible following an eligibility determination. (Indicator A.18)

School Stability

In many school districts, it is necessary to make placement decisions with regard to which school a homeless child or youth in transition will attend. In Fremont #1, however, homeless children and youth attend school at the same grade-level campus they would attend if they were not homeless. Special circumstances may exist for a homeless child who would otherwise attend Jeffrey City Elementary: if/when this situation arises, please contact the local liaison for assistance.

School Meals

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, students who are homeless are automatically eligible for free school lunches, and they continue to be eligible for free lunches until their living situation no longer meets any of the criteria described under the "Definition of Homeless" section above. When a student is found to meet the McKinney-Vento definition, the school must notify the district's Food Service Director using the "Free Lunch Form," which is located in Appendix B of this document.

Fee Waivers

To encourage homeless students to participate fully in all school activities, Fremont #1 will waive all student fees for any homeless child or youth in transition. These fees include but are not limited to:

- Fees for field trips
- Materials fees for classes
- Activity fees
- ID card fees
- Preschool enrollment fees

Library fines or the cost of replacing a lost Chromebook will not be covered, however.

Fremont #1 has a limited amount of funding that may be used to pay other expenses for homeless children and youth (such as school photos, books from school book fairs, etc.).

These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and are coordinated by the local liaison, school principal, and other relevant school staff members. Availability of funds is the predominant factor in this decision-making process.

The Title I coordinator and the Homeless liaison will collaborate each year to determine the typical number of students identified as Homeless or in transition. This will determine the amount of Title I funds to be set aside for the consolidated grant application. (A.20.1)

Services for Homeless Children and Youth in Transition

If the student otherwise qualifies, Fremont #1 will provide services to homeless students without regard to their McKinney-Vento status. These services include but are not limited to the following:

- Title I services
- Programs for students with disabilities
- Programs for English Language Learners
- Programs in career and technical education
- Intervention and enrichment programs
- Health screenings
- Before-school and after-school programs (Lights On)
- Preschool (A.22.3)
- FAFSA applications (A.23.1)
- Summer school programs

Transportation

Homeless children and youth in transition who need transportation to/from school may be accommodated in various ways. When a homeless student requests school transportation, the local liaison, district Transportation Supervisor, and school staff will evaluate each situation on a case-by-case basis. If at all possible, the student will be encouraged to use a regular bus route and an existing bus stop. However, if the student does not live near an existing bus stop, Fremont #1 will assess whether it is in the best interest to add an additional stop or make other arrangements to ensure the student's regular school attendance. (A.27.2)

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in Fremont County School District #1's Policy JLG concerning homeless children (Appendix C), the child or youth in transition will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is being sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1 Part A services while the dispute is pending. (A.26.3)

The school in which the dispute arises will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will refer the parent or youth to the local liaison immediately. The local liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled in the requested school and receives services to which he or she is entitled. The local liaison will also work to resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The local liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues or schools are delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth in transition repeatedly.

The parent, unaccompanied youth, or other school district may appeal the school district's decision as provided in the Wyoming Department of Education's dispute resolution process.

Community Resources

Almost Home Wyoming

The mission of Almost Home Wyoming is to provide safe and secure housing for persons who are homeless and desire to work towards their own home.

www.almosthomewyoming.org

(307) 332-6127

Care and Share Food Bank

Provides emergency food assistance to those in need regardless of income.

www.landerfoodbank.org

281 Garfield St. (Lander)

(307) 332-7364

First Stop Help Center

Serves as a compassionate resource to empower Fremont County residents experiencing an emergency need or seeking to attain or sustain financial self sufficiency.

www.firststophelpcenter.org

860 S. 3rd St. (Lander)

(307) 332-2877

Lander United Methodist Church

Offers a free meal every Friday evening and operates a thrift store behind the church.

www.landerumc.org

262 N. 3rd St. (Lander)

(307) 332-3188

Book	District
Section	J - Students
Title	HOMELESS CHILDREN
Code	JLG
Status	Active
Adopted	February 18, 2014
Last Revised	December 20, 2016

It is the policy of Fremont County School District No. 1 that every child will have equal access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). Children who are homeless have the same rights to FAPE as do other children, and the District is committed to assuring that those rights are fully protected and honored. Any person or agency who is aware of any child of school age who meets the definition of a homeless student, or in the event of the enrollment of a student who meets the definition of a homeless student, the person, agency, or principal of the school where the student may be enrolled is requested to inform the District's Homeless Liaison. The Homeless Liaison will respond to the referral to assist in developing an action plan to provide the students with a free appropriate public education.

Homeless is defined as an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes, but is not limited to, an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:

- a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
- an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

The terms "homeless" or "homeless individual" do not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained. In determining whether a child or youth is homeless, the relative permanence of the living arrangements should be considered. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis. In general, children or youth living in welfare hotels, transitional housing shelters, the streets, cars, abandoned buildings and other inadequate accommodations will be considered homeless.

Children and Youth in Transitional or Emergency Shelters

If children or youth are placed in a transitional or emergency shelter because there is nowhere else to send them, and they are awaiting placement in a foster home or a home for neglected children, they will be considered homeless while in the emergency or transition shelter. Once placed in a foster home or a home for neglected children or youth, they will no longer be considered homeless.

Children and Youth Living in Trailer Parks and Camping Grounds

Children and youth staying temporarily in trailer parks or campgrounds because they lack adequate living accommodations will be considered homeless. Those living in trailer parks or camp areas on a long-term basis in adequate accommodations will not be considered homeless.

Doubled-Up Children and Youth

Children and youth who are living in “doubled-up” accommodations, that is, are sharing housing with other families or individuals, will be considered homeless if they are doubled-up because of a loss of housing or other similar situation. Families living in doubled-up accommodations voluntarily to save money generally will not be considered homeless.

Foster Children and Youth

In general, children and youth in foster homes will not be considered homeless. Many foster children are in the care of a public agency, awaiting placement in more permanent situations. The foster home, although temporary, serves as a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Children placed in foster homes for lack of shelter space, however, will be considered homeless.

Incarcerated Children and Youth

Children and youth that are incarcerated for violation or alleged violation of a law will not be considered homeless even if prior to their incarceration they would have been considered homeless because they are living in inadequate accommodations. Children and youth that are under care of the state and are being held in an institution because they have no other place to live will be considered homeless. Once these children are placed in more permanent facilities, they will no longer be considered homeless.

Children and Youth in Migratory Families

Children will not be considered homeless simply because they are children of migratory families. To the extent that these children may be staying in accommodations not fit for habitation, they will be considered homeless.

Runaways

Children or youth who have run away from home and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the street, or other inadequate accommodations will be considered homeless, even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them.

School-Age, Unwed Mothers

In general, if school-age, unwed mothers or expectant mothers are living in homes for unwed mothers, and they have no other available living accommodations, they will be considered homeless. However, if they are staying in such a home only temporarily to receive specific health care or other services and intend to move to other adequate accommodations, they will not be considered homeless.

Sick or Abandoned Children and Youth

There are instances where children and youth remain in a hospital beyond the time that they would normally stay for health reasons because their families have abandoned them. These children and youth will be considered homeless because they have no other place to live. Children and youth who were homeless prior to hospitalization will be considered to be homeless while they are in the hospital, unless regular and adequate living accommodations will be made available to them upon release from the hospital.

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is being sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title 1, Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

The school where the dispute arises will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written and/or oral explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will refer the parent or youth to the local liaison immediately. The local liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled in the requested school and receiving services to which he or she is entitled and will resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The local liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues or schools are delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth in transition repeatedly.

The parent, unaccompanied youth, or other school district may appeal the school district's decision as provided in the Wyoming Department of Education's dispute resolution process.