

Big Beaver Falls Area School District Student Handbook Addendum 2020-2021

Homelessness A Definition of Homelessness

A family or student is considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition if they are in any of these places or situations:

- Public or private shelters
- Public or private places not designated for, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations such as vehicles, parks, motels, campgrounds, etc.
- Living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter
- Living with relatives or friends due to lack of housing
- Living in transitional housing programs
- Runaway children (under 18 years of age) and children and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers (unaccompanied youth). These children may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies, or may live alone on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends or acquaintances
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care

McKinney-Vento Eligibility and Identification

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” However, because the circumstances of homelessness vary with each family’s or unaccompanied youth’s situation, determining the extent to which the family or youth fits the definition must be applied on a case by case basis. The liaison must gather and analyze information from the family or youth and make an appropriate determination of eligibility. Expedient determination of eligibility and immediate school enrollment are critical to the child’s educational continuity and future success.

Per the McKinney-Vento Act, Pennsylvania’s primary goal for its ECYEH Program is to educate local education agencies (LEA) and other entities who work with children, youth and families, on the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. They should also work collaboratively to eliminate barriers that may impede enrollment, attendance, or receipt of services that support academic success – including special student populations such as preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness, unaccompanied youth and out-of-school youth experiencing homelessness. The ECYEH Program provides support for activities or services that enable these children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

School District Homeless Liaison

Per the federal law, every school district must assign a person (a liaison) to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified, enrolled and able to succeed in school. The liaison is responsible for identification of

McKinney-Vento eligible students and supporting the needs of these students. The liaison also acts as a resource to school staff to inform, facilitate and support appropriate services.

At BBFASD, the Homeless Coordinator is the *Director of Student Services*, who works with the school *guidance counselors*. These district staff members work together to provide support and services for students experiencing homelessness.

Please contact your child's school or visit the BBFASD website at www.tigerweb.org for more information.