



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

McKinney-Vento Enrollment Checklist

The federal McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to immediately enroll children and youth experiencing homelessness, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation, and even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.¹ In addition, the law requires school districts to review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of McKinney-Vento students in school, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.² “Enroll” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.³

This checklist is designed to help schools ensure immediate enrollment for McKinney-Vento students. If you have questions about how to use this checklist, please contact OSPI at homelessed@k12.wa.us.

If you know an enrolling student is McKinney-Vento eligible, follow this checklist. If a student seeks to enroll without typically-required documents, that may be a sign of homelessness. Determine if the student is eligible by talking with the student or parent. You may use a housing questionnaire as well, although completing a housing questionnaire cannot be required for enrollment or services. Consult your McKinney-Vento building point of contact or district liaison with any questions.

- **Does the student/parent lack proof of residency?**

Ask students or parents where they are staying currently and use that address for immediate enrollment. Sometimes, students and parents may be unable or unwilling to share an address due to safety or privacy concerns. In that case, ask for emergency contact information and enroll the student immediately.

¹ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(i).

² 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I).

³ 42 U.S.C. §11434a(1).

- **Is the student/parent unable to provide school records?**

Enroll the student immediately. Ask for the name and location of the student's last school. Contact that school immediately to obtain records.⁴ If the school refuses to provide records immediately, inform them the student is McKinney-Vento eligible and that they must transmit records immediately, regardless of unpaid fines or other concerns.⁵ Contact your McKinney-Vento liaison for support, if necessary.

- **Is the student/parent unable to produce immunizations or other health records?**

Enroll the student immediately. Most McKinney-Vento students have been enrolled in school before and have immunization records as part of their school records. Most foreign countries also have immunization rates similar to, or higher than, those in the United States. [Former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders](#) emphasized that the McKinney-Vento Act's attendance requirements do not present a significant health risk to the student body or school community. For students who have not been immunized, your McKinney-Vento liaison must assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, screenings, or records, as needed.⁶

- **Does the student have a life-threatening health condition?**

Enroll the student immediately. Washington state law requires students to present a medication or treatment order addressing life-threatening health conditions before they can attend school. The law requires that children be excluded from school until they provide an order if they have a life-threatening health condition that may require medical services to be performed at school.⁷ While this law is an important safety measure, schools must follow the federal law and provide McKinney-Vento students with immediate enrollment, regardless of life-threatening health conditions. The liaison, family, and student should work together to obtain needed medication or treatment orders as quickly as possible. In the meantime, school is the safest place for a student with a serious health condition who is struggling with homelessness.

⁴ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(ii).

⁵ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(D); §11432(g)(1)(I).

⁶ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(iii).

⁷ RCW §28A.210.320.

- **Is the student enrolling without a parent or legal guardian?**

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to enroll unaccompanied youth immediately, as well as assisting the youth with placement or enrollment decisions and giving priority to the views of the youth. If school staff are concerned about trafficking, school is the safest place for the student. Staff can observe the youth and over time, talk to the youth about safety concerns. School staff may wish to consult the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#). Staff should not contact law enforcement or child welfare without a specific reason that triggers such a report. Reporting can present a barrier to enrollment and retention in school for the student, which would violate the McKinney-Vento Act.

- **Does the student or parent owe fines or fees at a prior school?**

Since the McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to remove enrollment barriers related to outstanding fees or fines, the student must be enrolled immediately. Outstanding fines or fees can be waived, paid with appropriate federal funds, or paid with donations. However, they cannot delay attendance or full participation in school activities.

- **Has the student been out of school for an extended period of time?**

Since the McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to remove enrollment barriers related to absences, the student must be enrolled immediately. The school counselor should contact the previous school to calculate and award any partial credits and determine the best educational option for the student to get back on track. Consult the memo "[On-Time Grade Level Progression and Graduation for Highly Mobile Students—A Guide to Implementing RCW 28A.320.192](#)" for guidance. Connect the student to an adult and peer mentor at school and help ease the transition.