Anyone can become displaced

Merced Union High School District Commitment

It is the District’s goal to be proactive in meeting the needs of its homeless population. Although funds and resources are limited, MUHSD is committed to:

- Being sensitive to your situation and needs
- The immediate enrollment of your child
- Ensuring equal access to all educational and activity programs
- Providing parents and students with information necessary for success in school
- Providing services per the student’s needs and availability
- Connecting families to other resources in the community

McKinney-Vento Act & What You Need to Know

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the McKinney-Vento Act of 2001 ensure educational rights and protections for children experiencing homelessness.

Even if students have:
- Uncertain housing
- A temporary address
- No permanent physical address

If you lost your housing and now lack fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence (i.e. living in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, or live with family/friends) your child might be able to receive help through the federal law, the McKinney-Vento Act.

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**No Child Left Behind Act**

In accordance with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, Merced Union High School District ensures that homeless children and youth have access to the same free and appropriate education provided to other children within the District.

The District shall provide homeless students with access to education and other services necessary for these students to meet the same challenging performance standards as other students. Students shall not be segregated into a separate school or program based on their status as homeless, nor shall homeless students be stigmatized in any way.

**Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:**

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin (based on the best interest of the child)
- Receive transportation assistance to and from school of origin
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records, parent or legal guardian (Unaccompanied Youth), or permanent address
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school gathers records
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students

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**What is considered displaced?**

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, a student is considered homeless if he/she is experiencing any of the following living conditions:

- In a shelter (family, domestic violence, youth shelter, or transitional living program)
- In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
- Doubled-up with another family or individual due to economic hardship, loss of housing, foreclosure, or similar reason
- In an abandoned building or house, in a car, at a campground, or in the street
- In substandard housing (without electricity, water or heat)
- With friends or family because the student is a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
- *Awaiting* foster care placement
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above

In an effort to provide services in a confidential manner the district has revised the enrollment form to include residence information. This gives families an opportunity to provide the information for possible and additional assistance as well as follow-up.

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**Dispute Resolution**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child/youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute. Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.”

The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the local educational agency’s homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.

A written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment must be provided if a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disputes such a school selection or enrollment decision, including the right to appeal. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the district homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the homeless liaison at the County Office of Education.

If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed, the County Office of Education homeless liaison shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the State Homeless Coordinator.