

GATEWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

**What You Should Know About
Children Who Are Homeless**



A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

LAWS COVERING SERVICES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS

In 1887, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act became law. This as the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness in America. In 2001, that Act was included in *No Child Left Behind* and is now titled “The McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.”

In 1988, the Pennsylvania Department of Education established the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.

The key mandate of these laws is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children.

WHO IS HOMELESS?

“Homeless children and youth” means children who have no fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. They may be found in the following situation:

- 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.
- Individuals and/or families living with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing.
- Living in transitional housing programs.
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing.
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care.
- Runaway children (under age 18) and children and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of the home by parents or other caretakers. They may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies, or may live along on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends, or acquaintances. This also includes such youth from 18-21 of age who may still be eligible for educational services in regular or special education.
- School-aged, unwed mothers or expectant mothers living in houses for unwed mothers when they have no other available living accommodations.

THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS

• School Choice

If a student becomes homeless during the academic year or between academic years or becomes permanently housed within the academic year, they may continue in their ‘school of origin’ for the rest of that year if this is in the best interest of the student.

If a homeless student comes to enroll, he/she will be enrolled immediately. The rules for determining residency do not apply and immunization verification can be obtained by telephone. The enrolling school will contact the school last attended immediately for academic and other records.

• Enrollment without delay

• Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunches

• Eligibility for Title I support services

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A HOMELESS STUDENT IS ENROLLED IN GATEWAY?

District funds are used to help support homeless children with the following services:

- Home visits by Home/School Visitor to support the family.
- Transportation services arranged by Gateway School District.
- Service referrals are made to assist the family.
- Coordination between Community Organizations in Monroeville/Pitcairn and the family.
- A team of school professionals meet to address needs of the child.
- Programs that may be accessed by the family include: Instructional Support, support groups, Student Assistance, counseling, and social services.
- Information regarding the Allegheny Link for Housing Resources.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP?

When initially enrolling the student, the parent should speak with the building principal, guidance counselor, or social worker.

Michele Majcher, Gateway School District, Homeless Liaison - 412-858-3421
Nicole Anderson - Allegheny Intermediate Unit - 412-394-5700
The PA Dept. of Education Homeless Children and Youth Program - 717-783-6466