



THE LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

EMPOWERING LITTLE LEARNERS TO BECOME LITTLE LEADERS

Educating Missouri's Children Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees children and youth who are unhoused an education equal to what they would receive if they were not.

Criteria for qualifying as Unhoused:

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, unhoused children and youth include individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes the following situations:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are unhoused. According to the act, an unaccompanied youth is not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

Which School Can an Unhoused Child Attend?

There are two choices for an unhoused student: The school of origin and the school of residency. The school of origin is the school the child attended when permanently housed or where the child was last enrolled. The residency school serves the area where the child or youth is physically dwelling. When determining the school of best interest, an unhoused child or youth should remain in the school of origin (to the extent feasible) unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian or the wishes of the unaccompanied youth.

Enrollment

The McKinney-Vento Act requires the immediate enrollment of unhoused children and youth. These children must be allowed to attend school even if



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they cannot produce previous academic records, immunization, medical records, proof of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation that is usually required. Families in transition have 30 days after the start of the school year to provide immunization records or an exemption card.

Transportation

School districts must provide transportation for unhoused children and youth to the school of best interest ([transportation policy](#)). Districts must also provide transportation during the resolution of any pending disputes. While disputes over enrollment, school selection, or eligibility are being resolved, students must be transported to the parent's or unaccompanied youth's school of choice.

Access to Education and Activities

Students have the right to access all programming, activities (before and after school hours), and field trips without exclusion due to financial constraints or transportation limitations. Students will be provided with financial assistance for field trips and other activities with fees with a donation. Families can request support, and the school will offer support to families during activities (ex. Book Fair: Students receive a donation to purchase a book).

The Homeless Liaison

The school's homeless liaison ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that every school district appoint a homeless liaison who serves as the link between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and social service providers. For more information, please contact **Keisha Seymour, TLS Chief Experience Office and Homeless Liaison, at kseymour@tlsstl.org or (314) 492-2301. To speak with Missouri's Homeless Liaison, call (573) 522-8763.**