

Education of Homeless Children & Youth

The McKinney-Vento Act defines children and youth who are homeless (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason) sometimes referred to as double-up);
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals; or
- awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

If you are personally aware of or are acquainted with any children who may qualify according to the above criteria, the School District of West Salem provides the following assurances to parents of homeless children:

- There shall be immediate enrollment and school participation, even if educational and medical records and proof of residency are not available.
- All educational opportunities and related opportunities for homeless students (preschool to age 21), including unaccompanied youth, shall be the same as for the general student population.
- Enrollment and transportation rights, including transportation to the school of origin. “School of origin” is defined as the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. Written explanation of a child or youth’s school placement, other than school of origin or the school requested by the parent, with the right to appeal within the local dispute resolution process.
- Meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children. These shall include: special notices of events, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, and access to student records

Please contact Heidi Hortont, Homeless Liaison for the School District of West Salem at (608) 786-1064 or horton.heidi@wsalem.k12.wi.us for additional information about the rights and services described above.