

Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care Policy Guide



Effective Date: July 31, 2026

PurposePurpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities for identifying, supporting, and serving students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and students in foster care. This policy ensures that eligible students at Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia (VPAWV) receive equal access to educational opportunities, school stability, transportation services, and other supports necessary to promote academic success and remove barriers to enrollment, attendance, and participation in school activities.

1. General 1. General

VPAWV is committed to working collaboratively with families, caregivers, child welfare agencies, and community partners to ensure that students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care receive the educational services and support necessary for success. Below are the definitions and general information for both populations of students.

McKinney-Vento Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provides educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Students may qualify for services if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This can include children and youth who are:

- Living in shelters or transitional housing.
- Sharing housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship.
- Living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or public spaces.
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, or other inadequate accommodations.
- Unaccompanied youth who are not living with a parent or guardian.
- Residing in emergency or transitional shelters.

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



VPAWV will ensure that eligible students receive equal access to educational opportunities, school programs, academic support, and extracurricular activities. Educational decisions will prioritize stability and the student's best interest. Eligible students may receive support such as immediate enrollment, transportation assistance, school stability, access to educational services, community resources, and assistance with removing barriers to school participation.

Students in Foster Care

Students in foster care are children and youth placed in the legal custody of the West Virginia Department of Human Services or another authorized child welfare agency through court action. Foster care includes children and youth placed in out-of-home care, including foster homes, kinship care, group homes, and other approved placements. Students in foster care are entitled to educational stability and support under federal and state laws.

VPAWV recognizes that students in foster care may experience frequent transitions and disruptions. The school shall work collaboratively with caregivers, caseworkers, and educational partners to minimize disruptions and support educational continuity. The school shall work collaboratively with caregivers, caseworkers, and educational partners to minimize disruptions and support educational continuity.

Students in foster care may receive:

- Assistance with school stability and remaining in their school of origin when it is in their best interest.
- Transportation support when necessary.
- Prompt enrollment in a new school if a school change is required.
- Timely transfer of educational records.
- Coordination between school personnel and child welfare agencies to support the students' educational needs.

2. Identification2. Identification

Mckinney-Vento Students

- Students may be identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento services during the enrollment process. The enrollment packet includes questions designed to identify students who may be experiencing homelessness or an unstable housing situation. Responses indicating a potential lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence will be flagged for further review.

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



- Students who are already enrolled may be identified through an annual residency questionnaire. Families are asked to complete a yearly questionnaire to provide updated information regarding their current living situation. Responses that indicate a potential homeless or unstable housing situation will be reviewed by the McKinney-Vento Liaison to determine eligibility for services. A sample residency questionnaire is available [here](#). In addition to the residency questionnaire, school staff may refer students they believe may be experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
- Referrals may also be made by parents/guardians, students, community agencies, or other individuals familiar with the student's living situation [here](#). Families are encouraged to notify the McKinney-Vento Liaison at any time if their housing circumstances change during the school year so that appropriate support and services can be provided.
- An unaccompanied youth must meet the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to be eligible for services and protections provided by the law. An unaccompanied youth is defined as a child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. These students may be living with friends, relatives, or others due to loss of housing, family conflict, economic hardship, or other circumstances that result in homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Liaison will work with unaccompanied youth to ensure immediate enrollment, access to educational services, assistance with school participation, and connection to appropriate community resources. Unaccompanied youth have the same rights and protections as other students experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- When a student is flagged, the McKinney-Vento Liaison will contact the family to gather additional information and determine eligibility for services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Referrals may also be made by school staff [here](#), community agencies, parents/guardians, or students themselves [here](#) at any time during the school year if housing circumstances change.

3. Enrollment3. Enrollment

McKinney-Vento Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures the immediate enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness, even when required documents such as

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



academic records, immunization records, proof of residency, or other documentation are unavailable at the time of enrollment. Immediate enrollment includes attending classes and fully participating in all school programs and activities without delay. As a public virtual school, VPAWV is committed to removing barriers to enrollment and ensuring that students experiencing homelessness have equal access to educational opportunities. All staff involved in enrollment and student support must follow McKinney-Vento requirements when enrolling and serving eligible students. The WV VPAWV McKinney-Vento Liaison can assist families with obtaining necessary documentation, connecting to community resources, and coordinating services to support student success. Upon enrollment or identification of a student experiencing homelessness, the student's status must be accurately documented in the school's Student Information System Power School and WVEIS. Proper identification and coding are essential for state and federal reporting requirements and help ensure students receive services and supports for which they are eligible, including transportation assistance, meal benefits, and other educational supports.

Foster Care Students

VPAWV is committed to ensuring educational stability and uninterrupted access to learning for students in foster care. In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Fostering Connections Act, students entering foster care must be enrolled immediately, even when standard enrollment documents are not available at the time of registration. Immediate enrollment means that a student may begin participating in classes and school activities without delay while necessary records and documentation are obtained. Missing documents, such as birth certificates, immunization records, academic records, or proof of residency, must not prevent a student from enrolling. To support educational continuity, VPAWV will collaborate with child welfare agencies, foster families, and other educational institutions to obtain required records and facilitate a smooth transition. Whenever possible and in the student's best interest, efforts will be made to maintain school stability and minimize disruptions to the student's education. Upon enrollment or identification of a student in foster care, the student's status must be accurately documented in the Student Information System. Proper identification and coding support compliance with state and federal reporting requirements and help ensure access to educational support and services available to foster care students. VPAWV Foster Care Liaison will work with families, caregivers, and child welfare agencies to address barriers to enrollment, coordinate services, and support the student's academic success and well-being.

4. Process4. Process

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



Managing services after student identification to ensure that McKinney-Vento students and students in foster care are promptly enrolled, connected to the educational supports, and services necessary for school stability and academic success. Through collaboration with child welfare agencies, caregivers, and school personnel, the school will verify McKinney-Vento or foster care status, assess educational needs, facilitate timely records transfer, and coordinate appropriate services (when needed). This process is designed to minimize educational disruption, promote continuity of learning, and uphold the protections afforded to McKinney-Vento students (under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) and students in foster care (under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)).

McKinney-Vento Students & Students in Foster Care Intake Process

1. Initial Outreach

- a. Students are identified as a foster care student or eligible for support through the McKinney-Vento Act during the school enrollment process, through student/family disclosure, or staff referral.
- b. Within 1 week of identification, the Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC)/McKinney-Vento Liaison, contacts the caregiver, foster parent, caseworker, or responsible adult.

2. Educational Records Review

- a. Upon student enrollment, the Registrar and Academic Counselors request and review the student's educational records, including transcripts, attendance records, special education documents, Section 504 plans, and other relevant information to support a seamless enrollment transition.
- b. The FRCC reviews both the school application and WWEIS. The responsible adult can indicate either student distinction on the VPAWV school application. The student may also be identified in the WWEIS student record from a previous school. If either is the case, the FRCC adds a "MKV" notation on the student's PowerSchool account, an internal confidential, student record system accessible by all school staff.

3. Assessment and Questionnaire

- a. Within 1 week of identification, the FRCC emails a *Notification of Rights* to the student's responsible adult or unaccompanied youth.
- b. In the same email, the *Youth & Family Needs Assessment* and *Housing Questionnaire* are attached for the student's responsible adult or unaccompanied youth to complete. The documents assess the student's academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and basic needs.
- c. A follow-up, intake meeting is scheduled within 1 week of identification and held to review information provided; which is conducted either through

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



phone or video call. If the responsible adult or unaccompanied youth is non-responsive to the FRCC's outreach, ongoing attempts (at least bi-weekly) will be made, using the contact information provided in PowerSchool and/or WVEIS.

- d. During the intake meeting, the FRCC ensures that all questions found within the Youth & Family Needs Assessment and Housing Questionnaire are answered. Any systematic updates are made within WVEIS and PowerSchool.

4. Connection to School and Community Supports

- a. During the intake meeting, and subsequent interactions with the FRCC, the student, caregiver, and/or responsible adult are connected to available state, national, and school-based resources.
- b. Necessary purchases are made based on need and available funding.
- c. Students and their responsible adult and/or family are connected to external resources. If a student needs services which require an application, application fee, appointment transportation, and/or other support, the FRCC will help facilitate.
- d. A follow-up email at the conclusion of the intake meeting is sent by the FRCC which includes a summary of conversation topics, next steps, resources, and a reminder of date for follow-up contact.

Managing Services After Intake for McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Students

1. Staff Notification and Collaboration

- a. All staff can see the "MKV" notation on a student's record in PowerSchool (which is added by the FRCC). In addition, the Contact Management section of PowerSchool will indicate the best point of contact for all foster care students.
- b. If additional school collaboration or staff notification is needed, appropriate school personnel are informed. Primary staff contacts may include the student's Special Education Case Manager, Advisory teacher, school Counselor, and/or school Principal.
- c. Newly enrolled McKinney-Vento or foster care student enrollment is provided to all school staff by the 1st day of the student's attendance; notification is provided via a weekly Staff Bulletin. A student tracker is available to all school staff and emailed by the Head of Schools on Monday of each week.
- d. All staff notifications and collaborations are conducted while maintaining as much student privacy and confidentiality as possible.

2. Ongoing Monitoring and Support

- a. The FRCC serves as the primary point of contact for all support related to a student's McKinney-Vento and foster care status.

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



- b. The FRCC conducts follow-up meetings with the student, caregiver, and/or child welfare representative on an ongoing monthly basis (unless more frequent follow-up is needed). The follow-up meetings are conducted via phone or video call.
- c. If a student or responsible adult becomes non-responsive to FRCC or other school outreach, a welfare check may be conducted.
- d. During follow-up meetings, the FRCC provides data related to the student's academic progress, identified barriers, services rendered, and ongoing needs. All available support is offered to ensure continued educational stability and success.

5. Referrals5. Referrals

The purpose of staff referrals is to ensure that students who may be experiencing homelessness or who are in foster care are promptly identified and connected to the educational protections, community resources, school services, and supports available to them under federal and state laws. Because school staff often have direct contact with students and families, they play a critical role in recognizing potential indicators of housing instability or foster care placement.

Timely referrals allow the designated school contact, such as the Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC), to conduct an eligibility review, provide enrollment and educational support, coordinate services, and connect students and families with community resources. The referral process helps remove barriers to learning, promotes educational stability, protects student rights, and ensures that students receive the academic, social-emotional, and family support needed to achieve success in school. Information regarding McKinney-Vento, foster care students, and a link to the McKinney-Vento and Foster Care referral are accessible to all staff via the Staff Hub. Staff also receives a yearly training on McKinney-Vento and Foster Care student identification and VPAWV procedures/expectations.

Within 1 week of a referral receipt, the FRCC will follow up with the student and/or family to determine eligibility. Every effort is made to ensure the student/family information provided by school staff remains confidential. Staff are encouraged to proactively contact the FRCC with questions. The FRCC will contact the referring staff to inform them that referral has been received, and contact will be made.

6. Student Data & Reporting6. Student Data & Reporting



VPAWV is committed to maintaining accurate data regarding students experiencing homelessness and students involved in foster care to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements and to support student success.

McKinney-Vento Students

Upon identification of a student experiencing homelessness, the student's status must be entered into WVEIS and PowerSchool, in accordance with state and federal reporting guidelines. Accurate coding allows VPAWV to:

- Monitor enrollment, attendance, academic performance, and graduation outcomes.
- Ensure eligible students receive appropriate educational services and support.
- Fulfill reporting requirements established by the West Virginia Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.
- Identify and address barriers to educational access and success.
- Support program evaluation and continuous improvement efforts.

The Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC)/McKinney-Vento Liaison is responsible for reviewing, verifying, and disseminating McKinney-Vento data related to students experiencing homelessness. The FRCC is also tasked with ensuring that records are updated when a student's living situation changes. The FRCC conducts monthly audits of PowerSchool and WVEIS McKinney-Vento data. If changes in McKinney-Vento student eligibility are determined, the FRCC will update PowerSchool and WVEIS within 2 school days. PowerSchool and/or WVEIS errors are also monitored and communicated to the FRCC by the VPAWV Operations Manager, via a daily WVEIS Error Report. Errors will be corrected within 2 school days.

Students in Foster Care

Students identified as being in foster care must also be accurately documented within WVEIS and PowerSchool. Proper identification supports compliance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and state reporting requirements.

Data collected for students in foster care may include:

- Foster care status and placement information, when applicable.
- Enrollment and withdrawal dates.
- Attendance and academic progress.
- School stability and transition information.
- Participation in educational programs and support services.

Foster Care identification in PowerSchool is housed in the Contact Management section (identified with the primary contact's foster care relationship type), updated following all child

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



welfare agency communications. The FRCC is responsible for coordinating with child welfare agencies to ensure that student records are maintained accurately and confidentially.

7. Confidentiality and Data Security

Information regarding a student's homelessness or foster care status shall be treated confidentially and shared only with school personnel who have a legitimate educational interest in the information. Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia (VPAWV) will maintain all records in accordance with applicable federal and state privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

8. Annual Review and Reporting

Although daily (via WVEIS Error Report-disseminated by the Operations Manager) and monthly audits (facilitated by the Family Resource and Communication Coordinated) are conducted, the Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC) and Operations Manager will review McKinney-Vento and foster care data at the end of each academic year, when a student is disenrolled involuntarily, or withdrawn voluntarily from Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia (VPAWV). Data is reviewed both in PowerSchool and WVEIS to ensure accuracy and compliance with state and federal reporting requirements. Students transferring to an alternative educational institution will receive data reporting from VPAWV's Registrar.

Data may be used by external agencies, the FRCC, and/or Title Program Manager to evaluate program effectiveness, identify service gaps, manage monetary allotments, and inform decision-making. Student data will be accessed only by approved individuals, working to best support students experiencing homelessness or within the foster care system.

9. Dispute Resolution: McKinney-Vento

If a student's responsible adult or an unaccompanied youth disagrees with school officials about enrollment or fair treatment of a homeless child or youth, they may file a complaint with Virtual Preparatory Academy of West Virginia's (VPAWV) McKinney-Vento Liaison. VPAWV will respond and attempt to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible.

During the dispute resolution process, the student must be permitted to remain enrolled at VPAWV until the matter is resolved. The McKinney-Vento Liaison will assist students and their responsible adults with decision-making, providing notice of any appeal process updates, and assisting with the *Dispute Resolution Form* submission (if needed). Dispute Resolution is the formal process used to address disagreements regarding a student's rights under the

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, including disputes related to eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment. In West Virginia, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provides a dispute resolution process to address disagreements regarding school selection, enrollment, or other services for homeless students. This process emphasizes resolving disputes at the local level through the school's homeless education liaison. If unresolved, the dispute can be escalated to the state level for the State Homeless Coordinator's review.

Eligibility Disputes

Eligibility disputes concern whether a student qualifies for McKinney-Vento rights and services. Determinations are based on whether the student's living situation meets the federal definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act. Examples may include students living in temporary housing, sharing housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship, residing in motels, shelters, cars, campgrounds, or other inadequate living situations.

School Selection Disputes

School selection disputes occur when there is disagreement about whether it is in the student's best interest to attend:

- The school of origin (the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled), or
- The local attendance school serves the area where the student is currently residing.

School selection decisions must be made on an individual basis and focus on the student's educational stability, academic needs, safety, and overall best interest.

School Enrollment Disputes

School enrollment disputes involve a student's ability to enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in school activities. Under McKinney-Vento, enrollment includes:

- Attending classes
- Participating in academic programs
- Accessing extracurricular activities
- Receiving all educational services for which the student is eligible

Students experiencing homelessness must be allowed to enroll immediately, even if they are missing typically required documentation such as proof of residency, immunization records, school records, or other enrollment documents.

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



When any of these disputes occur, the student must remain enrolled in the school requested and receive all educational services and support while the dispute is being resolved through the VPAWV McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process.

Dispute Resolution Process-Initial Dispute Notification (School Liaison)

1. Any concerns regarding a homeless student's education, including school selection or enrollment, should be initially referred to the school's Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC)/McKinney-Vento Liaison.
2. The liaison informs the student's representative of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act as well as outlining the dispute resolution process.
3. The FRCC provides the *Dispute Resolution Form*, assisting the student's responsible adult with submission (if needed).
4. With the assistance of the school administrative team (including the Head of Schools), FRCC decides on the reported concern within two weeks of receiving the *Dispute Resolution Form*.
5. If the school's final determination is not accepted by the student's representative, mediation is offered. All mediation is focused on resolving the dispute at the school level.
6. If mediation fails at the school level, the dispute can be appealed by the student's responsible adult.

Dispute Resolution Process-Appeal (State Homeless Coordinator)

1. Review: The State Homeless Coordinator reviews the dispute, considering information provided by the school district and the appealing party.
2. Decision: The State Homeless Coordinator issues a decision, typically within ten days of receiving the appeal.

All policies and procedures are applied without discrimination or stigma. The student's responsible adult may appeal further to their local county and state-level Department of Education.

Eligibility Disputes

Eligibility disputes concern whether a student qualifies for McKinney-Vento rights and services. Determinations are based on whether the student's living situation meets the federal definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act. Examples may include students living in temporary housing, sharing housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship, residing in motels, shelters, cars, campgrounds, or other inadequate living situations.



School Selection Disputes

School selection disputes occur when there is disagreement about whether it is in the student's best interest to attend:

- The school of origin (the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled), or
- The local attendance school serves the area where the student is currently residing.

School selection decisions must be made on an individual basis and focus on the student's educational stability, academic needs, safety, and overall best interest.

School Enrollment Disputes

School enrollment disputes involve a student's ability to enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in school activities. Under McKinney-Vento, enrollment includes:

- Attending classes
- Participating in academic programs
- Accessing extracurricular activities
- Receiving all educational services for which the student is eligible

Students experiencing homelessness must be allowed to enroll immediately, even if they are missing typically required documentation such as proof of residency, immunization records, school records, or other enrollment documents.

When any of these disputes occur, the student must remain enrolled in the school requested and receive all educational services and support while the dispute is being resolved through the state's McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process.

10. Dispute Resolution: Foster Care

If a dispute arises regarding a foster child's school enrollment, transportation, or best interest determination, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) dictates specific resolution protocols:

- **Level 1 (School Liaison):** Contact the Family Resource and Communication Coordinator (FRCC) and formally appeal to a decision in writing within 10–15 days of the determination.
- **Level 2 & 3 (Local County and/or State):** Unresolved local education disputes are escalated to the Head of Schools and ultimately, to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Foster Care point of contact.

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



- **Student Rights:** While an educational dispute is being resolved, the child is legally entitled to remain in their "school of origin" and receive all appropriate services, including transportation.

11. Exiting Homelessness and Foster Care

McKinney-Vento Students

When a student exits homelessness or secures permanent housing, the Family Resource and Communications Coordinator (FRCC)/McKinney-Vento Liaison will complete a final review of the family's needs to determine whether any additional support or community resource referrals are needed. The student will then be removed from a McKinney-Vento status in PowerSchool and WVEIS, as appropriate. Although the student will no longer be identified as experiencing homelessness, the FRCC/McKinney-Vento Liaison will continue to monitor the student's progress and remain available to provide support, as permitted under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Students in Foster Care

When a student in foster care achieves permanency through reunification with their parent or guardian, adoption, guardianship, or by aging out of foster care, the Family Resource and Communications Coordinator (FRCC)/Foster Care Liaison will follow up with the student and family to ensure a smooth transition and determine whether any additional supports or community resources are needed.

The FRCC/Foster Care Liaison will update the student's foster care status in PowerSchool and WVEIS to reflect the change. The FRCC will also communicate with appropriate school staff to ensure student records are accurate and that any necessary support or services are adjusted (based on the student's needs).

12. Contacts & Resources

- VPAWV Housing Questionnaire
- VPAWV Youth & Family Needs Assessment
- [VPAWV West Virginia Resource Map](#)
- [West Virginia Department of Education](#)
 - [Education Stability for Homeless Children and Children in Foster Care](#)
 - [Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [West Virginia DHS Family Support Services](#)
 - [Directory](#)

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care



- [Programs](#)
- United States Department of Education
 - [Students in Foster Care](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)
 - [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#)
- VPAWV School Contacts
 - Jessica Bailey
 - McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Liaison
 - Family Resource and Communication Coordinator
 - jbailey@vprepww.org
 - Danyelle Schoonmaker
 - Title/MTSS Coordinator
 - dschoonmaker@vprepww.org
 - Sabrina Smith
 - Student Services Manager
 - ssmith@vprepww.org

McKinney-Vento & Foster Care