



South Tippah School District

Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Policy

Board Approval Date: June 17, 2025

Implementation Date: July 1, 2025

Superintendent: Tony Elliott

School Board President: Tim Clark

Federal Programs Director: Kelly Gates

Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Liaison: Kelly Gates

Education for Homeless Children and Youth – South Tippah School Board Policy JQN

Homeless students and unaccompanied youth in the district will have access to the education and other services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held. A liaison for students in homeless situations will be designated by the South Tippah school district to carry out duties as required by law.

The district will ensure that homeless students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their status as homeless. A homeless student or unaccompanied youth will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent and in accordance with the student's best interest. Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students.

The superintendent or designee will produce written guidelines for distribution to each school that explains the rights of homeless students and unaccompanied youth and the responsibilities of the schools to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. This information shall also be disseminated in writing and by other means designated to raise awareness of these rights and responsibilities to staff, homeless families and students, unaccompanied youth, the public and homeless service providers.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, children are deemed to be homeless under the following conditions:

1. Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1));
2. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
3. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C));

4. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
5. Migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described in numbers 2-4 above.

SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

1. Pursuant to and in compliance with the requirements of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1990, 42USC11431, it shall be the policy of the South Tippah School District, to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by state law, that each eligible child of a homeless individual and each eligible homeless or unaccompanied youth will have access to a free appropriate education comparable to the education provided the children of district residents who are non-homeless, without isolation or stigma.
2. The placement of an eligible homeless child or youth will be made according to Policy JBCCA C Assignment of Pupils, and will take into consideration the best interests of the homeless child or youth and placement requests made by a parent.
3. The choice of placement in either the “school of origin” or the school serving the “place of abode” will take place regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parent(s).
4. Provided the homeless child or unaccompanied youth meets eligibility criteria, he/she will be provided transportation services; compensatory education programs for the disadvantaged; educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meals programs.
5. Any and all records ordinarily kept by the South Tippah school district, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, evaluations for special services and programs shall be kept on homeless children and unaccompanied youth and shall be forwarded in a timely fashion should a child or youth enter a new school or school district; and in a manner consistent with S1232g of Title 20.
6. Should the South Tippah School District receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall coordinate with local social service agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or unaccompanied youth and their families.
7. Should the South Tippah School District receive assistance under S11432 of the Act, it shall designate a homelessness liaison to insure that homeless children and unaccompanied youth enroll in and succeed in the schools of their district and, homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

8. The homelessness liaison shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaison.
9. The South Tippah School District will review and revise, on an annual basis, any policies that may create barriers to the enrollment and full participation of homeless children and unaccompanied youth in schools, in accordance with applicable state education requirements and federal law.
10. In reviewing and revising such policies, to the extent practicable under the requirements relating to education established by state law, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation and guardianship.
11. Disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or youth will be promptly resolved according to the provisions of Policy JBCCA C Assignment of Pupils. Other issues or disputes will be directed to the attention of the school official responsible for that particular matter for prompt resolution. If this dispute cannot be resolved locally, any aggrieved party may make written request for a review of the matter to:

Coordinator of the Homeless Program
Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205

LEGAL REFERENCE: McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

CROSS REFERENCE: Policies JAA Equal Educational Opportunities, JBCCA Assignment of Pupils, IB Instructional Goals

Original Adopted Date: 4/13/2022

Status: Adopted



South Tippah School District
Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Plan

1. The South Tippah School District shall appoint and retain a homeless liaison.
2. The South Tippah School District shall annually conduct professional development for secretaries and counselors who are involved with enrolling new students. This training will include:
 - a. The McKinney-Vento definition of homeless children and unaccompanied youth.
 - b. The requirement that students be enrolled in school immediately, even if they lack required documents.
 - c. Homeless students' automatic eligibility for Title I, including the law's requirement that students enrolled in non-Title I schools.
 - d. FERPA rules governing who may, and who may not, receive copies of student records or personally identifiable information, and when parental consent is required.
 - e. The requirement that students have access to all school programs available to all students, and the prohibition on segregating or stigmatizing students in any way.
 - f. How to put homeless families in touch with the district's homeless liaison for assistance in accessing other services.
 - g. Steps that are to be taken when a student is suspected of being homeless.
3. The South Tippah School District shall annually conduct professional development training for all faculty members that includes:
 - a. The McKinney-Vento definition of homeless children and unaccompanied youth.
 - b. The signs of homelessness.
 - c. The steps to take when it is suspected that a child is or is becoming homeless.
 - d. The need to avoid isolation or stigma of a homeless student, family or unaccompanied youth.
4. All schools in the district shall adhere to the following procedure when homelessness is suspected and when a student attempts to enroll who is determined to be homeless or unaccompanied:

- a. When a teacher, assistant, administrator, school nurse, bus driver, or secretary suspects that a student is or is becoming homeless, that person will fill out the Suspicion of Homelessness form (see Appendix A), send a copy to the homelessness liaison and give the form to the school Guidance Counselor.
- b. The guidance counselor shall meet with the student or the parent of the student and shall determine homelessness using the Homelessness Eligibility Guide (Appendix B).
- c. If the student is determined to be homeless the guidance counselor shall:
 - i. Ensure that the homeless “at risk” factor is noted on MSIS
 - ii. Inform the Homeless Liaison of the status of the student
 - iii. Immediately enroll the homeless child or unaccompanied youth (if the student is new to the district) even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or birth certificates.
- d. The Homeless Liaison shall:
 - i. Inform the Food Services Director of the student’s status so the Director will know to change the student’s eating status to “Free.”
 - ii. Send a written notice of rights, in the family’s native language, when possible, to the parents or guardians of the student. Parents will be provided a written explanation of the district’s decision to send that child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, together with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision. A dispute resolution form is available upon request from parents.
 - iii. Request a meeting with the parent, teacher and guidance counselor of the student. During that meeting, school placement and transportation and student rights will be discussed.
 - iv. Ensure that the child or unaccompanied youth’s education continue in the students school of origin for the duration of homelessness or during the remainder of the academic year unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth’s parent or guardian.

- v. Ensure that the student is enrolled in any tutorial or remedial program that is available, as needed.
- vi. Refer parents to appropriate health care services, dental services, mental health services and other appropriate community services that may offer the family assistance (Appendix C).
- vii. Resolve any disputes which may arise regarding the assignment of a homeless child or unaccompanied youth (Appendix D).
- viii. Ensure that there are no barriers that would prevent the student from participating in all educational services and programs that the student is eligible for including services for students with disabilities, programs for students with limited English Proficiency, vocational education, programs for gifted and talented students, before and after school programs, school nutrition programs and transportation (Appendix E).
- ix. The South Tippah Pre-K Program will hold one spot for any Pre-K age student who enrolls as homeless in the district. Homeless students will be given priority access to any additional available spaces in the South Tippah School District's Pre-K program, with enrollment offered on a first-come, first-served basis until capacity is reached.
- x. Provide basic school supplies when necessary.

Appendix A

South Tippah School District

Suspicion of Homelessness

Name of Student: _____ Grade _____ School _____

Name of person filling out form _____ Date _____

Position (teacher, nurse, librarian, etc.) _____

Please explain in the space below why you suspect that this student is or is becoming homeless:

Fax a copy of this form to Kelly Gates at 662-837-1362

Give form to the Guidance Counselor at your school

Signature of Guidance Counselor

Date

Appendix B

South Tippah School District

Determination of Homelessness

Name of Student _____ Date _____

School _____ Name of Interviewer _____

Adult being interviewed _____ Relationship to the student _____

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youths as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

Fixed – A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change

1. Is this a permanent arrangement or just temporary? _____
2. Are you looking for another place to live? _____
3. Why are you staying in your current place? _____
4. Where were you living right before this place? _____
5. Why did you leave _____
6. Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are? _____
7. Are you staying with friends / relatives just for a little while? _____
8. Did you and your friends / relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term? _____
9. Or is this a temporary situation for you? _____
10. Could your friends / relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to? _____
11. Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home? _____

Regular – A regular residence is one that is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis

1. Do you stay in the same place every night? _____
2. Do you have a key to the place where you are living? _____
3. Do you move around a lot? _____
4. How long have you been at the place you are living in now? _____
5. How long do you plan to stay? _____
6. How long did you live in your last place? _____

Appendix B – Continued

Adequate – An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

1. How many people are living in the home? _____
2. How many bedrooms / bathrooms does it have? _____
3. Are you and your children sharing a room? _____
4. How many people are staying in one room? _____
5. Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom, or public area? _____
6. Does the home have heat? _____ electricity? _____ running water? _____
7. What condition is the home in? _____ Does it keep out rain and wind? _____ Is it safe?
_____ Is it warm and dry? _____ Do the windows have glass panes? _____
8. Can you come and go as you please?

Notes:



South Tippah School District Homeless Family Referral Form

Purpose: This form is intended to connect homeless families with community supports and resources to address their immediate and long-term needs.

Date of Referral: _____

Student Information

- **Student Name:** _____
- **Date of Birth:** _____
- **Grade Level:** _____
- **School Attending:** _____

Family Information

- **Parent/Guardian Name(s):** _____

Living Situation (Check One):

- Shelter
- Motel/Hotel
- Doubled-Up (staying with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship)
- Unsheltered (car, park, campground, etc.)
- Other (please describe): _____

Referral Information

- **Reason for Referral (Check all that apply):**
 - Housing Assistance
 - Food Assistance
 - Mental Health Services
 - Educational Support
 - Clothing/Personal Needs
 - Other (please specify): _____

Brief Description of Family Needs:

Community Supports to Consider:

- **Local Shelters:** _____
- **Food Banks/Pantries:** _____
- **Health Services:** _____
- **Employment Resources:** _____
- **Other Resources:** _____

For questions or additional assistance, please contact:

Homeless Liaison Name: _____ **Phone**
Number: _____ **Email Address:**

Appendix D

South Tippah School District Homeless Dispute Resolution Form Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

This form is to be completed by the District Homeless Education Liaison when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: _____

Person Completing the form: _____ Job Title: _____

In compliance with Section 722(g) (3) (E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001, the following written notification is provided to:

Parent or Guardian: _____

Student(s): _____

Regarding Enrollment Request:

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied based on the following:

You have the right to appeal the decision by contacting the South Tippah School District Superintendent regarding the appeal process (STSD Policy JBCCA):

Mr. Tony Elliott
South Tippah School District
402 Greenlee Avenue,
Ripley, MS 38663
(662)837-7156

Please Note:

- The student(s) listed above have the right to immediately enroll in the school of residency or the school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute.
- You may contact the state coordinator for homeless education:
LaDewayne Harris
Mississippi Department of Education
PO Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205
Telephone: (601)359-3499

Appendix E

Initial Homeless Form

South Tippah School District

School _____ Counselor _____

Student's First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Grade _____ MSIS Number _____

Date that student was enrolled in MSIS as homeless _____ by _____

Give a brief description of the student's situation: _____

Services Provided	Au	Se	Oc	No	De	Ja	Fe	Ma	Ap	Ma
Addressing needs related to domestic violence										
Assistance with participation in school programs										
Before, after-school, mentoring, summer programs										
Clothing to meet a school requirement										
Coordination between schools and agencies										
Counseling										
Early Childhood Programs										
Emergency assistance related to school attendance										
Expedited evaluations										
Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment										
Parent education related to rights and resources for children										
Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services										
Referral to other programs and services										
School supplies										
Staff professional development and awareness										
Transportation										
Tutoring or other instructional support										

Comments: