



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 21, 2020

To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

Route To: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Building Principals, Business Administrators, Directors of Special Education Services

From: Peggy McDonald Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

Enrollment of Students Displaced (Homeless) by Natural Disasters

The following information is being provided to facilitate a smooth enrollment process for students displaced by natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.) to enable those students to resume their education as efficiently as possible. Natural disasters throughout the nation often lead to an increase in the number of displaced families seeking shelter in New Jersey. Pursuant to the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) (McKinney-Vento), students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless and are eligible for services. [Section 725](#) of McKinney-Vento further defines criteria for students experiencing homelessness.

Enrollment/School Records

The typical documents normally needed for school enrollment are waived for homeless students. Consequently, districts cannot delay the enrollment of displaced students and must enroll these students immediately even if they do not have any school records. Children unable to produce enrollment records, such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, residency affidavits, or other documentation, should still be immediately enrolled (McKinney-Vento Act §721(2); §722(g)(3)(C). Districts are also responsible for translating a student's school records if the records are in a language other than English.

For more information regarding students' enrollment/school records see [N.J.A.C. 6A:17-1.1](#).

Required Health Services

Pursuant to [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.2\(l\)](#), students entering a New Jersey school for the first time are required to have an entry medical exam, screenings of vision, hearing, blood pressure, height, weight, and, if age 10 to 18, a scoliosis screening. Also, in accordance with [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.2\(g\)](#), the entry medical examination must include a review of the immunizations pursuant to [N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.1](#) through 4.24 and the medical history, including allergies, past serious illnesses, injuries, operations, medications, and current health problems. If a student does not have a medical home, as defined at [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3](#), the school district shall provide the entry medical examination at the school physician's office or other comparably equipped facility, pursuant to [N.J.S.A. 18A:40-4](#).

Under New Jersey regulations ([N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.5\(e\)](#)), children transferring into a New Jersey school, preschool, or child-care center from out-of-state or out-of-country shall be allowed a 30-day grace period in order to obtain past immunization documentation before the child is placed on provisional status. If the student's past immunization documentation is not provided before the expiration of the 30-day grace period, the student shall be granted provisional admission in compliance with the specific requirements set forth in [N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.5](#). Additional requirements regarding a student's provisional status are available on the New Jersey Department of Health [website](#).

Tuition and Transportation

Pursuant to *N.J.A.C. 17-2.8(c)2*, when a student's district of origin/residence is outside of New Jersey, the state of New Jersey assumes fiscal responsibility for the student, and pays the school district in which the child is currently enrolled.

For information regarding the process for tuition reimbursement for state responsible homeless students, please see the [Tuition Reimbursement for State Responsible Homeless Children and Youth Guidance](#).

District Homeless Liaisons

District homeless liaisons are central to the enrollment process for displaced children and youth. Liaisons should work in collaboration with district enrollment personnel, school counselors, parents and other student support services personnel to ensure all children are enrolled, are receiving health services and being provided educational continuity.

Please contact Pheobie Thomas, State Coordinator, Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program, at (609) 984-4974 or pheobie.thomas@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Kevin Dehmer, Interim Commissioner of Education
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Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
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