



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 14, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Principals, School Nurses, District Staff with Enrollment Responsibilities
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Enrollment of Students Displaced (Homeless) by Natural Disasters

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

Enrollment/School Records

The documents typically needed for school enrollment are waived for students experiencing homelessness. Consequently, local educational agencies (LEAs) must enroll displaced students immediately and cannot delay the enrollment even if students do not have 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). 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 LEA 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 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 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.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.6, all immunization records submitted by a parent or guardian in a language other than English are required to be accompanied by a translation sufficient to determine compliance with the immunization requirements. For additional information, please refer to the May 31, 2023 [Translation of Student Immunization Records broadcast](#).

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 LEA 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](#).

Homeless Liaisons

Homeless liaisons are a crucial component of the enrollment process for displaced children and youth. Homeless 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.

For questions or clarification, please visit the New Jersey Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth [webpage](#) or e-mail us at McKinney.Vento@doe.nj.gov.

- c: Members, State Board of Education
- NJDOE Staff
- Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
- Garden State Coalition of Schools
- NJ LEE Group