

RICHARD MILBURN ACADEMY

POLICY: Homeless Children and Youth

McKinney Vento-Law:

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized by Title x, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. <http://www.serve.org/nche>

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as “*individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence*”¹ and includes children or youth whose living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law including:

1. sharing the housing of other person due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
2. living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
4. abandoned in a hospital;
5. awaiting foster care placement
6. living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
7. living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting
8. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses 1 through 7 above.

¹ National Center for Homeless Education. <http://www.serve.org/nche/Best Practices in Homeless Education> “Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act”.

Richard Milburn Academy Homeless Policy:

Richard Milburn Academy (RMA) charters shall provide educational and related services to homeless children and youth in a manner that does not segregate or stigmatize students on the basis of their homeless status.

The schools shall be provided guidelines that detail the rights of homeless students and the responsibilities that schools have to meet their needs and eliminate barriers to school attendance. These guidelines shall emphasize the right of homeless students to:

1. Have equal access to all educational programs and services, including transportation if provided.
2. Continue attending their school of origin for the duration of homelessness;
3. Attend regular public school with non-homeless students; and
4. Continue to receive all services for which they are eligible (i.e., special education, gifted and talented, limited English proficient).

Each RMA campus shall designate an appropriate staff person to serve as a local education liaison to homeless children and youth. The homeless liaison will ensure that:

1. Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel. It is up to the local liaison, enrollment staff, and/or other school personnel to be sensitive and discreet.
2. Students experiencing homelessness enroll, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed, in school. Delaying the enrollment of a homeless student violates federal law and may place the student in danger. Students shall be allowed to enroll, even when the students identified as homeless lacks normal paperwork required for enrollment, such as school records, proof of guardianship, a birth certificate, immunization or other health records, and proof of residence. All efforts in confirming the details of the student's living situation will be grounded in sensitivity and respect, keeping the academic well-being and best interest of the student in the forefront. Homeless verification can be handled in such a way that it does not violate privacy or jeopardize housing arrangements.
3. Families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness receive educational services for which they are eligible.
4. Parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness are informed of educational and related opportunities.
5. Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated.
6. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the McKinney Vento Act. The RMA charter school dispute form will be available in the RMA Texas State office.

Richard Milburn Academy Homeless Procedural Guidelines:

1. If a student's McKinney-Vento eligibility is in question, enroll the student immediately and contact the RMA charter school's homeless liaison for guidance.
2. Student Enrollment Packet received and completed
 - ENROLL: Help unaccompanied children and youth choose and enroll in an RMA charter school campus 9-12th grades. Ensure that unaccompanied children and youth are enrolled in school pending any disputes.
 - GUARDIANSHIP: Student placement is made regardless of whether the children or youth live with the homeless parents or have been temporarily placed elsewhere.
 - IMMUNIZATIONS: Upon enrollment, RMA will allow a homeless student 30 days to produce immunization records or proof that immunization process has begun. Assist homeless children and youth obtain immunization records. RMA charter personnel will obtain immunization records and assist in reviewing immunization records. Once determination is made, necessary referrals will be made to area community facilities.
 - RECORDS: Students are enrolled while records are being obtained. Records will be obtained through Texas Record Exchange (TRES) and PID searches will be made on students to identify prior school enrollment. School records are kept by each campus consistent with Section 444 of the General Education Provision Act (20 U.S.C 1232 g).
 - PROOF OF RESIDENCY: Do not press. The RMA Homeless Liaison may contact the student's prior school to determine if the student was identified as homeless there. The RMA Homeless Liaison will talk with parents and youth identified "homeless" about their living situation using terms such as "Are you in a temporary living arrangement?"
3. The RMA homeless liaison will review the SRQ (Student Residency Questionnaire) and once determination is made, the parent will be contacted. Determination will be made by the designated campus.
4. During enrollment, and twice during the year while the child is enrolled in the charter school, the charter school shall provide written notice to the parent or guardian of the child that is then signed by the parent or guardian and sets forth the child's rights under the McKinney-Vento Act. The notice must be in a manner and form understandable to the parent or guardian.
5. Parents will be informed of services available to them under the McKinney Vento Act such as:
 - Assist with uniforms, clothing, hygiene and school supplies. District vouchers will be provided for the acquisition of school uniforms. Clothing, hygiene and school supplies will be provided to the students.
 - Parents can come by the district business office to obtain vouchers. If parents are unable to travel to the business office, the district homeless liaison will meet with parents at their home campus.
 - Collaborate with local service centers in the school's region for the provision of education and related services to children in homeless situation.
6. Provide district wide professional development in the McKinney-Vento Act.
7. Provide procedural guidelines and implementation in the student-parent handbook.
8. Provide an overview of the McKinney-Vento Act on the website for public information.
9. Each campus will provide their own McKinney-Vento 101 information on their website.

Resources available for the RMA Homeless Liaison:

The following resources are available to RMA staff for additional input about a student's eligibility for McKinney-Vento services:

- Contact your school district's local homeless education liaison
- Contact your State Coordinator for Homeless Education.
- Contact the NCHE Helpline at 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org.
- Post a question to the NCHE Homeless Education Listserv to solicit input from other homeless education practitioners. (Contact homeless@serve.org to learn how to join the listserv.)

Richard Milburn Academy Nondiscrimination Statement:

Richard Milburn Academy is a free, nonsectarian, open enrollment charter school. RMA does not discriminate in admissions based on gender, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic, or athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend. RMA will exclude students from admission that have document histories of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under TEC Chapter 37, Subchapter A as authorized in TEC Section 12.111(a)(6).

It is the policy of RMA not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of RMA not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

RMA will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

Richard Milburn Academy (RMA) integrates technology throughout its high school curriculum and offers approved career pathways, including career and technology education clusters, to meet graduation requirements in the State of Texas. Enrollment in these courses is based upon a student's completion of the appropriate prerequisite coursework and ability to meet criteria identified in the course description. Activities, programs, and privileges are made equally accessible to all students. Admission to RMA is based on the availability of student slots at the public charter high school. RMA educates students who have had difficulty in the traditional public school setting by offering small class sizes, flexible scheduling and certified teachers dedicated to meeting the individual needs of students. RMA does not charge tuition or fees.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Section 504 Coordinator, Dr. Norm Hall, Superintendent at 1263 Terminal Loop, McQueeney, TX 78123, Telephone Number (830) 557-6181.