

Experiencing homelessness? Your child has the right to stay in the same school

If you are...

- staying in a shelter or motel,
- doubling up with friends or family,
- staying someplace people are not meant to live, or
- having trouble finding a place to stay...

You have the right to choose your child's school

Your child can keep going to the **same** school, or
 You can choose a **new** school for your child.

My child needs to stay in the same school



The school must pick your child up at her new home or shelter, if it is not too far away.

The school **must** provide transportation if your child:

- is younger than first grade, and the school is 45 minutes or less from where you are staying, or
- is in first grade or older, and the school is 1 hour or less from where you are staying.

If the school is more than 1 hour away, tell the school why it is important for your child to stay at her school. If your child has a disability, tell the school.

How do I set up transportation?

Call the school or 781-338-6330 and ask for your school district's Homeless Education Liaison. Ask the school's Liaison to set up transportation. The school should provide transportation within a few days.

If the school delays, ask them to pay the cost of getting your child to school until they can arrange transportation.

What if the school does not provide transportation?

The school must give you a letter that explains its decision.

Appeal - write to the school. List the reasons why you disagree with their decision.

If you appeal, the school must provide transportation until your appeal is decided.

If you choose a new school, the school must enroll your child right away

Tell the school you are homeless. You do not need to give the school proof of where you live. The school can get any papers they need after your child is already going to school.

What are my child's rights if she has a disability or she is dealing with trauma?

Your child has the right to **all** the same services and school programs as other children, like special education, after-school programs, and early childhood education services.

Your child's new school must follow her IEP.

- Write to your child's old school. Ask for her Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- They must send all her records to the new school within 2 weekdays.
- If your child's IEP includes transportation, the school **must** transport your child to school even if it is more than 1 hour away.
- You have the right to challenge any change the school wants to make to your child's IEP.

Your child has the right to a **free** special education evaluation. The school has 30 days to do the evaluation after you ask for it.



How can I get help?

MA State Coordinator for Homeless Education

781-338-6330: Ask for your school district's **homeless education liaison** or ask for help with an appeal.

Children's Law Center of Massachusetts

1-888-KIDLAW8 (1-888-543-5298)

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless

781-595-7570

The law that protects your child's right to school is the McKinney-Vento Act.