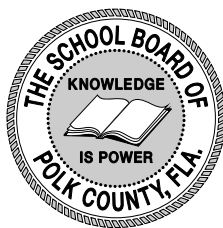


## School Board Members

Hunt Berryman, District 1  
Lori Cunningham, District 2  
Hazel Sellers, District 3  
Dick Mullenax, District 4  
Kay Fields, District 5  
Debra Wright, District 6  
Tim Harris, District 7

**Superintendent**  
Kathryn M. LeRoy



Tami Ray (863) 534-0801  
Dee Dee Wright (863) 534-0755  
Karen Mehler (863) 534-0629  
Nakita Scott (863) 534-0202

Visit the School Board's website at:  
[www.polk-fl.net](http://www.polk-fl.net)  
search words: Homeless and/or Hearth

# HEARTH

Homeless Education Advocates Restoring the Hope

## RESOURCE GUIDE



Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
Dee Dee Wright - Homeless Liaison

**Polk County Public Schools**  
P.O. Box 391  
Bartow, Florida 33831  
(863) 534-0801  
Fax (863) 534-0210

*The mission of Polk County Schools is to  
provide a quality education for all students.*

## McKinney-Vento

### Homeless Definition

The term "homeless children and youths"—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and

(B) includes—

- children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (doubled up);
- are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- are living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- are abandoned in hospitals;
- are awaiting foster care placement;
- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.
- "unaccompanied youth" (students not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle.

### Educational Rights of Homeless Students

- Free, appropriate public education, no matter where the student lives;
- Immediate school enrollment when missing certain documentation (physical, immunization, birth certificate, school records, guardianship, and proofs of residency) and attendance in school while obtaining those necessary documents;
- Remain at the school of origin (school last enrolled in or attended), when in the best interest of the student;
- Transportation to and from school of origin;
- Same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs;
- Free breakfast and lunch.

#### Homeless Liaison and School District must ensure:

- Homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- Students experiencing homelessness enroll in school and receive educational services for which they are eligible.
- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have proper documentation for school enrollment.
- Help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youths' wishes.
- Inform parents or guardians of homeless students of the educational rights, including transportation to the school of origin, along with other educational and related opportunities available to their children.
- Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act.

The School District of Polk County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability or marital status in its educational programs, services or activities, or in its hiring or employment practices. The district also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other patriotic youth groups, as required by the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act. Questions, complaints, or requests for additional information regarding discrimination or harassment may be sent to: Equity & Compliance Analyst, P.O. Box 391 Bartow, Fl. 33831; (863) 534-0513 or (863) 534-0781.

# Resources

United Way: 800-881-8929/863-648-1515/www.uwcf.org

Aunt Bertha Resource Guide: <http://heartland.auntbertha.com>

## ABUSE: CHILD & ADULT

Abuse Hotline ..... 800-962-2873  
Guardian Ad Litem Program ..... 534-4605  
Gulf Coast Community Care ..... 904-3000  
Peace River Center Domestic Violence Shelter  
-Women, Men & Families ..... 413-2700

## ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE

ACTS ..... 428-1520  
Alcoholics Anonymous ..... 687-9275  
Al-Anon ..... 687-3800  
Toll Free ..... 866-539-3030  
Drug Helpline ..... 800-662-4357  
InnerAct Alliance ..... 802-0777  
Narcotics Anonymous Helpline ..... 683-0630  
Peace River Center ..... 248-3311  
Talbot House Ministries ..... 687-8475  
Lakeland Grace Academy ..... 647-1944  
Tri-County Human Services ..... 533-4139

## CRISIS INTERVENTION

Behavioral Health Division ..... 800-723-3248  
Peace River Mental Health Crisis ..... 519-3744  
Rape Crisis ..... 413-2707  
Tri-County Human Services ..... 533-4139

## CHILD CARE

Early Learning Coalition of Polk. County ..... 577-2450  
Toll free ..... 800-843-9780  
Head Start ..... 648-3051

## DENTAL CLINICS

Polk County Health Department Dental Clinics  
Auburndale ..... 965-6333  
Lakeland ..... 413-2636

## COUNSELING & MENTAL HEALTH

Bethany Center (Good Shepherd) ..... 968-1707  
Behavioral Health Adult Counseling ..... 297-1702  
Outpatient Counseling ..... 294-7062  
Fla. Division of Blind Services ..... 499-2385  
Catholic Charities—Lakeland ..... 686-7153  
Catholic Charities—Winter Haven ..... 299-7983  
Florida Epilepsy Services ..... 686-5880  
Fl. Diagnostic and Learning Resource ..... 647-4258  
Frostproof Care Center ..... 863-635-5555  
Help of Fort Meade ..... 285-6600  
Innovations in Counseling ..... 294-8845  
Help of Fort Meade ..... 285-6600  
Innovations in Counseling ..... 294-8845  
Lake Wales Care Center ..... 863-676-6678  
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill ..... 450-2943  
Neighborhood Service Center ..... 294-5860  
Peace River Center - Lakeland ..... 248-3300  
Polk County Veterans Services ..... 534-5220  
Salvation Army - Lakeland ..... 682-8179  
Tri-County Human Services ..... 709-9392  
W.H. Hospital Behavioral Health Division ..... 294-7062  
Women's Resource Center Winter Haven ..... 294-5318  
Youth & Family Alternatives ..... 499-2430

## EDUCATION RESOURCES

Fl. Diagnostic & Learning Resource ..... 647-4262  
Learning Resource Center ..... 688-9477

## EMPLOYMENT & JOB TRAINING

Career Source—Polk ..... One Stop Centers  
Lakeland ..... 683-5627  
Displaced Homemakers ... 683-5627 ext. 3114  
Winter Haven ..... 508-1100  
Vocational Rehabilitation – Lakeland ..... 680-5534  
Winter Haven ..... 291-5280

## FOOD, MEDICINE, FINANCIAL AID

Agricultural & Labor Program (ALPI) ..... 956-3491  
Toll Free ..... 800-330-3491  
Catholic Charities – Lakeland ..... 686-7153  
Winter Haven ..... 299-7983  
Church Service Center ..... 533-5822  
Dept of Children & Families – Access Florida  
(WAGES, Food Stamps, Medicaid) .. 866-762-2237  
Family Emer. Service Ctr. of WH ..... 294-1939  
Frostproof Care Center ..... 863-635-5555  
Help of Fort Meade ..... 285-6600  
H.O.P.E. Center ..... 683-8182  
Lake Wales Care Center ..... 863-676-6678  
Lighthouse Ministries ..... 687-3705  
Mulberry Community Service Center ..... 425-1523  
Polk County Health Department ..... (863) 519-7900  
Polk Co. Social Services ..... 534-5387  
Salvation Army – Lakeland ..... 682-8179  
– Winter Haven ..... 291-5107  
Talbot House Ministries ..... 687-8475  
WIC (Women, Infants & Children) ..... 519-7542  
Women's Resource Center ..... 294-5318

## HOMELESS SERVICES

Lighthouse Ministries ..... 687-3705  
Talbot House Ministries ..... 687-8475  
Salvation Army – Lakeland (Family) ..... 682-8179  
Winter Haven (Women & Children) ..... 291-5107

## HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Housing Authority  
Bartow ..... 533-6311  
Haines City ..... 294-7369  
Lake Wales ..... 863-676-7414  
Lakeland ..... 687-2911  
Winter Haven ..... 294-7369  
Section 8 Housing ..... 534-5240  
HUD ..... 813-228-2026

## HOUSING – EMERGENCY & TRANSITIONAL

George Harris Youth Shelter (Under 18) ..... 595-0220  
Lake Wales Care Center (Families) ..... 863-676-6678  
Lighthouse Ministries ..... 687-3705  
Talbot House Ministries ..... 687-8475  
Tri-County Human Services ..... 299-7003  
Salvation Army – Lakeland ..... 682-8179  
– Winter Haven (Women & Children) ..... 291-5109  
Women's Care Ctr. (Women & Children) ..... 534-3844

## LEGAL SERVICES

Dept. of Revenue (Child Support) ..... 800-622-5437  
Florida Rural Legal Services (Civil) ..... 688-7376  
Heart of Florida Legal Aid Society  
(Divorce) ..... 519-5663

## TRANSPORTATION

Citrus Connection ..... 688-5491  
Handy Bus ..... 688-5438  
Polk County transportation ..... 534-5500

\*\*\* Information courtesy of United Way Quick Guide \*\*\*