

Lisbon School Department

McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS PROGRAM GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES

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STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

It is the belief of the Lisbon School Department that all students can and will learn. The McKinney-Vento Homeless program removes barriers to learning for homeless children and youth. All homeless children and youth will be served using all resources available to the district.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The term 'homeless children and youths' means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship.

It includes children and youth who:

- are temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- are living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- are living in emergency shelters
- are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- are runaway children or children who are abandoned

Migratory children and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) will be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents or in the case of unaccompanied youth by the program social worker and/or district program liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of forms such Affidavit of Residency Form, McKinney-Vento Referral Form and/or through direct contact with school staff.

ENROLLMENT

The terms 'enroll' and 'enrollment' are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school.

Homeless students who do not live with their parents or guardians may enroll themselves in school.

GUARDIANSHIP

For purposes of school placement, any parent, guardian or person in loco parentis who has legal or physical custody of a homeless child or youth shall enroll that child or youth directly in a Lisbon school.

Once a child or youth is enrolled in and attending a school, the McKinney-Vento form must be completed within a reasonable period of time for those children or youth who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

RESIDENCY

A homeless child or youth is a resident if the child is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently.

The child or youth shall be considered a resident when living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis not solely for school purposes or for participation in extra curricular activities.

1. Homeless children, youth and unaccompanied youth will be enrolled immediately, even if they lack immunizations and/or records ordinarily required for enrollment. Documents and records that can not be used for enrollment delays include but are not limited to:
 - A. transcripts/school records
 - B. immunization, health, medical records
 - C. birth certificates
 - D. proof of residency
 - E. proof of guardianship
2. Once the student is enrolled it is the responsibility of the school to contact the previous school and request records.
3. The program social worker should be contacted as soon as possible to assist the family with supplies and other needs. This can be done through the building contact for homeless or by contacting the program social worker directly.

SCHOOL SELECTION

Placement in a school shall, according to the child's best interest,

- Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of the academic

year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.

- Enroll the child or youth in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- Parents/guardians may request their child attend any school in the Green Bay Area School District and to the extent feasible the district will try to comply with these requests.

In determining the best interests of the child or youth, to the extent feasible the child or youth will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, for the duration of homelessness.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the program liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

The school of origin means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or guardian or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

LUNCH WAIVER

1. When a student is identified as homeless they are automatically waived with or without paperwork. This is at the INITIAL point of identification.
2. The free status stays with that student the entire school year until the student is "permanently" housed. Then they must complete the paperwork/application.

FEE WAIVER

Student fees for the purposes of serving homeless children include but are not limited to: fees for field trips, fees for Art courses/projects, Foods courses, Technical Education courses/projects, and yearly class fees. These fees are to be automatically waived. The waiving of fees will be done directly by the program social worker and/or a building administrator.

To encourage all homeless students to participate in all school activities, payment of all student fees will be waived if the student is identified as homeless.

If necessary, the Homeless Donation Account may provide reimbursement to schools for field trips that are out of pocket expenses for homeless students. This account may also be used to pay for expenses such as packets for picture day, book fairs, etc... These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the program social worker, and are dependent upon a number of factors which may include available funds in the Donation Account.

COMPARABLE SERVICES

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as

- Preschool programs
- School supplies
- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the child or youth meets eligibility criteria such as ELL or special education programs
- Programs for “At Risk” students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs
- Title I services

TRANSPORTATION

1. At the request of a homeless child’s parent/guardian or the program social worker in the cases of unaccompanied youth, transportation to the school of origin will be provided to homeless children and youth for the duration of homelessness, following best interest provisions (outlined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act under Local Education Agency Requirements).
 - A. In order for transportation to be set up, the program social worker will determine with the family the best means of transportation.
 - B. If it is determined that the student would be best served (especially younger children) on a school bus, an alternate form of transportation is immediately arranged until school bussing can be arranged through the transportation department.
 - C. At the time of a cab being set up, the program social worker will email the transportation department to request bussing. Once a bus is arranged, the transportation department will email the program social worker to stop cab service due to bussing being arranged.

School and family are informed by the program social worker. If there is no bus available, a cab continues unless a more economical and appropriate option can be worked out between the program worker and family.

- D. When permanent housing is secured, the parent/guardian may choose to keep the child or youth in the school of origin until the end of the academic year but the parent/guardian is then responsible for transportation. At this point, parents/guardians can choose to enroll the child in the school in the attendance area in which they live.
- 2. When the child, youth or unaccompanied homeless student's temporary residence and school of origin are two different school districts, the districts will collaborate on the method and cost of transportation. The districts will share the cost of transportation.
- 3. Refugee students who are not independently housed may be considered homeless unless families choose to not be considered so. The homeless social worker/interpreters will discuss McKinney-Vento with families to determine if they are homeless. It will be determined based on where the student resides and where the program is for the refugee students if transportation is necessary. If it is deemed unsafe or too far for a non-English speaking homeless student to walk or arrange for their own transportation, then they will be transported the same as other homeless students. The guidelines listed above will be followed in those situations as well.

COMPLAINT/DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

The No Child Left Behind, Title X, Part C, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act acknowledges that disputes may arise between the school district and homeless students and their parents or unaccompanied homeless youth, when the student is denied enrollment in school or is placed in a school other than the one requested by students/parents/guardians. The purpose of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is to ensure that homeless students enroll in school immediately and continue their education with as little disruption as possible. The Act includes dispute resolution among the required duties of the local education agency (LEA) liaison. Lisbon has developed a dispute resolution process as required by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Districts should bear in mind that disputes related to school selection or enrollment should be initiated at the request of the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth and not at the request or convenience of the school district. It will be understood that use of the word parent will always also include legal guardian. Additionally, issues related to the definition of homelessness, the responsibilities of the school district to serve homeless children and youth, and/or the explicit rights of homeless

children and youth are addressed in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Disputes related to the school placement and enrollment of homeless children and youths shall be resolved within the parameters, and not to be used in an effort to circumvent or supersede any part of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The following procedures are specified in the Act:

Enrollment: If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

Written Explanation: The district must provide a written explanation (Form A) of the school placement decision to the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, to the unaccompanied homeless youth. The written explanation must include a description of the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's right to appeal the decision.

Liaison: The designated LEA homeless liaison is assigned to carry out the dispute resolution process in an expeditious manner.

Responsibility: The school district, usually the district's homeless liaison, is responsible to inform the parent of the homeless student(s) or the unaccompanied homeless youth of the dispute resolution process.

In a case where a dispute occurs regarding the enrollment of a homeless child or youth, the following process must be used:

- Level I: Appeal goes to the district's homeless liaison. If unresolved,
- Level II: The case is appealed to the district's Superintendent of Schools. If unresolved,
- Level III: The case is appealed to the Department of Education State Coordinator

Initiation of the Dispute Resolution Process

If a school district seeks to place a homeless child or youth in a school other than the school of origin, the school requested by the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth, the child's/youth's parent or unaccompanied homeless youth shall be informed in a language and format understandable to the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth of their right to appeal the decision made by the school district and be provided the following:

1. Written contact information for the LEA homeless liaison and State Coordinator, with a brief description of their roles.
2. A simple, written detachable form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied homeless youth can complete and turn into the school to initiate the dispute process (the school will then copy the completed form and return the copy to the parent, guardian, or youth for their records).
3. A written step-by-step description of how to dispute the school district's decision.
4. A written notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute.
5. A written notice of the right to appeal to the State if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory.

Level I ~ LEA Homeless Liaison Communication

If a parent or unaccompanied homeless youth wishes to appeal a school district's decision related to a school's placement:

1. The parent or unaccompanied homeless youth must file a request for dispute resolution with the district's homeless liaison by submitting a form (Form B) that initiates the dispute resolution process. The request for dispute resolution must be submitted by the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth to the district liaison within fifteen business days of receiving notification that the district intends to enroll the student in a school other than that requested by the family or the unaccompanied homeless youth. The parent or unaccompanied homeless youth may submit the request directly to the homeless liaison or they may submit the request to the school where the dispute is taking place. If the request is submitted to the school where the dispute is taking place, the school shall immediately forward the request to the district's homeless liaison. In the event that the district's homeless liaison is unavailable, a school district designee may receive the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's request to initiate the dispute resolution process.
2. The homeless liaison must log their receipt of the complaint, including the date and time, with a written description of the situation and the reason for the dispute, and a copy of the complaint must be forwarded to the school's principal and the district superintendent.
3. Within five business days of their receipt of the complaint, the liaison must make a decision on the complaint and inform the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth in writing of the result. It is the responsibility of the district to verify the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's receipt of the written notification regarding the homeless liaison's Level I decision.
4. If the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth disagrees with the decision made at Level I and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to Level II, the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth shall notify the

district's homeless liaison of their intent to Level II within ten business days of receipt of notification of the Level I decision.

5. If the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth wishes to appeal the liaison's Level I decision, the district's homeless liaison shall provide the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth:
 - a. A copy of the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's complaint which was filed with the district's homeless liaison at Level I
 - b. The decision rendered at Level I by the LEA liaison, and
 - c. Any additional information for the parent, unaccompanied homeless youth and/or homeless liaison

Level II ~ LEA Superintendent Communication

(If the dispute remains unresolved after a Level I appeal) ~ Form D

1. If a parent or unaccompanied homeless youth disagrees with the decision rendered by the district's homeless liaison at Level I, the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth may appeal the decision to the local school district's superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, (the designee shall be someone other than the district's homeless liaison) using the appeals package provided at Level I.
2. The superintendent, or the superintendent's designee, will arrange for a personal conference to be held with the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth. The personal conference will be arranged within five business days of the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's notification to the district of their intent to proceed to Level II of the dispute resolution process. Once arranged, the meeting between the superintendent, or superintendent's designee, and the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth is to take place as expeditiously as possible.
3. The local superintendent, or superintendent's designee, will provide a decision in writing to the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth with supporting evidence and reasons, within five business days of the superintendent's or superintendent's designee, personal conference with the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth. It is the responsibility of the district to verify the parent's or unaccompanied homeless youth's receipt of the written notification regarding the superintendent's Level II decision.
4. A copy of the appeals package, along with the written decision made at Level II is to be shared with the district's homeless liaison.
5. If the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth disagrees with the decision made at Level II and wishes to move the dispute resolution process forward to Level III, the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth shall notify the district's homeless liaison of their intent to Level III within ten business days of receipt of notification of the Level II decision.
6. If the dispute remains unsolved, the process moves to Level III.

Level III ~ State Department of Education Communication
(If the dispute remains unresolved after a Level II appeal) ~ Form E

1. The district's superintendent shall forward all written documentation and related paperwork to the DOE homeless education coordinator, or designee, within five business days of notifying the parent or unaccompanied homeless youth of the decision rendered at Level II.
2. The entire dispute packaged including all documentation and related paperwork is to be submitted to the DOE in one consolidated and complete package via hard copy mail delivery. It is the responsibility of the district to ensure that dispute packages are complete and ready for review at the time they are submitted to the DOE.
3. The DOE homeless education coordinator, or designee, shall make a final decision within twenty business days of receipt of the complaint.
4. The final decision will be forwarded to the local school district's homeless liaison for distribution to the parent and the local superintendent.
5. The decision made by the DOE shall be the final resolution for placement of a homeless child or unaccompanied homeless youth in the district.
6. The office of the school district superintendent shall maintain a record of all disputes related to the placement of homeless children and youths. These records shall include disputes resolved at Level I, Level II, and Level III and shall be made available to the DOE upon request.