



## **Homeless Students Policy**

The Board of Directors (“Board”) of Baton Rouge College Preparatory Charter School (“Charter School”) recognizes its obligation to ensure that homeless students have access to the same educational programs and services provided to other Charter School students. The Board shall make reasonable efforts to identify children experiencing homelessness, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and other federal and state law regulations.

The Board may waive policies, procedures, and administrative regulations that create barriers for enrollment, attendance, transportation, and success in charter schools of homeless students, based on the recommendation of the School Director.

### **Definitions**

#### *Homeless Students*

Homeless students are defined as individuals lacking a fixed, regular, and night-time residence, which include the following conditions:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations, or similar settings
- Living as migratory children in conditions described in previous examples
- Living as run-away children
- Abandoned or forced out of homes by parents or caretakers
- Living as school age unwed mothers in houses for unwed mothers if they have no other living accommodations

#### *Migratory Children*

The term “migratory children” means children who are, or whose parent or spouse are, migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers, or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain or accompany such parent or spouse, in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work.

### **Student and Family Rights**

Under McKinney-Vento, eligible students have the right to the following:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrolment
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents
- Enroll in a local school or continue attending the Charter School (school of origin), if that is your preference and is feasible
- If it is determined that the school selected is not in the student’s best interest, the Charter School will provide a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal the Charter School’s decision
- Receive transportation to and from the Charter School, if requested

- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your needs as a student

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Board designates the School Director or his/her designee to serve as the Charter School's Liaison for homeless students and families.

### The Charter School's liaison shall coordinate with:

- Local service agencies that provide services to homeless children, youth and families.
- School districts on issues of records transfer, per pupil allocation, transportation and special education programs to ensure that homeless children who are in need of special education and related services are located, identified, and evaluated.
- State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

### The Charter School Liaison has the following responsibilities:

- Identify homeless children and youth;
- Inform parents or guardians of educational rights and related opportunities available to their children, and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where children and youth receive services under the Act and forms to such places as schools, family shelters, and food pantries;
- Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with the Enrollment Dispute section and ensure immediate enrollment pending resolution of disputes;
- Inform the parent/guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, of all transportation options, including to the school of origin, and assist in accessing these transportation services;
- Assist children and youth who do not have immunizations or immunization or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records;
- Understand the Louisiana Department of Education guidance issues for the education of homeless students in order to distribute information on the subject as well as to present workshops for school personnel, including office staff.

### Best Interest Determination

The Charter School ensures that the best interests of students and families experiencing homelessness are in mind. This means that homeless students shall remain at the Charter School (school of origin), unless it is determined that it is not in his/her best interest. If remaining at the Charter School is not in his/her best interest, the transfer of school records shall be carried out by the Charter School to ensure the student's immediate enrollment in a new school.

## **Dispute Resolution**

### *Level 1: A dispute may be raised with an LEA.*

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth involved must immediately be admitted to the school in which they are seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth should contact the Charter School Liaison for individuals experiencing homelessness as soon as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. If the person initiating the dispute does not contact the Charter School Liaison directly, the Charter School shall be responsible for contacting the Liaison regarding the dispute as soon as possible and referring the family or youth involved to the liaison.

The Charter School liaison shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled, explain the dispute resolution process to families and help them to use it. The Charter School shall issue a written disposition of the dispute within in 20 business days after the Charter School liaison is notified of the dispute. The disposition shall be provided to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall explain the basis for the decision and advise the parent, guardian or youth of the right to appeal.

The Charter School should use and maintain copies of LDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form which ensures that all LEAs (a) inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection; (b) notifies families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute and (c) explains the procedures for challenging the decision of the LEA.

*Level 2: A complaint may be filed with a McKinney-Vento coordinator.*

If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with the LEA's disposition of a dispute or would like to raise any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance, they may file a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento regional or state coordinator. In lieu of filing an appeal with a McKinney-Vento coordinator, a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth may elect to appeal the LEA decision directly to a court of competent jurisdiction. Participation in the appeal procedure is not required prior to taking legal action.

A regional coordinator with whom a complaint or appeal is filed must notify the state coordinator immediately. Upon being notified, the state coordinator will review the complaint or appeal and assign it to a regional coordinator for disposition. The coordinator to whom the appeal is assigned may contact, interview, and accept documentation from any individual or LEA involved, and shall issue a written disposition within 20 business days after the complaint or appeal has been assigned. The disposition shall be provided to the LEA and the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth involved. The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is resolved or until a disposition from a McKinney-Vento coordinator is received.

The state coordinator may assist in the mediation of disputes directly and may also invite those involved to have the dispute mediated at any time in the process through XXXXX. This is a voluntary informal process through which a trained mediator assists in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

Participating in mediation is not a waiver of the right to file a lawsuit nor is participation in mediation required prior to taking legal action.

Note: Any dispute raised by a homeless family or youth concerning school enrollment or any other right under the McKinney-Vento Act whether received via telephone, letter or any mode of communication shall be treated as a complaint.

