

## Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School

### MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS POLICY and PROCEDURES

Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School shall meet all of its obligations as required by the McKinney-Vento Act in every respect for all Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School students.

Pennsylvania Charter School Law and Enrollment Procedures:

In addition, Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School (Lincoln) adheres to the Pennsylvania Charter School law. Students who wish to enroll at Lincoln are required to submit a pre-enrollment Inquiry form. This form contains the students name, address, grade, and sending District. The address provided by the parent is accepted on its face as the home address of the student.

Lincoln also adheres to the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

In terms of procedure, Lincoln will integrate and use the McKinney Vento Act with Pennsylvania Charter School Law and its' Enrollment requirements.

Consistent with Charter School law, Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School does not ask any information in the pre-enrollment Inquiry or application that could result as a barrier, bias or rejection of an applicant, including whether or not a student is homeless.

Admissions Lottery: Charter School law requires Charter Schools to conduct a random lottery when it receives more applicants than the amount of seats that are available. Once the number of available seats are filled, the remaining students are be placed on a waiting list. This is a completely blind process.

At the point that a parent is notified that the child has been accepted, the parent would provide a release to request school records, proof of

residence, immunizations, an IEP, or if the child has been expelled or adjudicated. It is at this point in the process where the school will learn whether a student is homeless. Once a student has been accepted, the student cannot be rejected for any reason.

Through the Enrollment process, Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School will assess whether a student meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness. Lincoln will use a brief Enrollment Housing Survey to make that determination.

If yes, the family is referred to the School's homelessness Liaison. The student and family will be informed of their McKinney-Vento rights and that the student has a right to remain at Lincoln irrespective of the student's address, or non-address.

If the student was a "McKinney-Vento" student at his or her prior school and wants to remain at Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School, the sending school district will be notified of the student's McKinney Vento designation and the student will remain at **Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School.**

In every instance, when a child is registered at Lincoln Leadership Academy, the sending school will be required to pay the student's tuition, even if that student was designated a McKinney-Vento student in that district or a prior district.

All School districts are required to pay (or forward the cost-per-pupil-funding-allocation) to the Charter School for each student that is accepted. Once Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School informs a sending school district that one of their students has enrolled at Lincoln, the sending school district has the right to investigate whether or not the new Lincoln student actually resides in their district.

If the student did not live in that District, it has the right to refuse to pay for the student's tuition, unless the student can prove that he/she does or did reside in that district.

**Irrespectively, once a student is accepted at Lincoln and was previously**

**designated as a McKinney Vento student prior to coming to Lincoln, or become homeless after enrolling at Lincoln, the student and the family will be provided all of the services that are available to McKinney-Vento students.**

**I. General Policy Statement:**

Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School shall ensure that homeless children and youths shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.

**I. Definitions:**

"School of Origin" shall mean the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. School of origin shall also include any designated receiving school for the next grade level for all feeder schools when a student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin.

"Homeless children and youths" shall mean any individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes:

- (i) Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- (ii) Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- (iii) Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in (i-iii).

"Unaccompanied youth" shall mean a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

**II. School Stability:**

- A. School Selection: Each school shall presume that keeping a homeless child or youth enrolled in the child's or youth's school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth.

To overcome the presumption that a child or youth should remain in his/her school of

origin, the school shall consider student-centered factors including; the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youth, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth.

- B. Enrollment: Once the school is selected in accordance with the child's or youth's best interest, that child or youth shall be immediately enrolled even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment including, but not limited to, previous academic records, immunization or other health records, proof of residency or has missed any application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- C. Transportation: If the child or youth continues to attend his or her school of origin, transportation shall be provided promptly even if there is a dispute pending regarding which school is in the child's or youth's best interest to attend. Transportation will continue to be provided to and from the school of origin for the remainder of any academic year during which the child or youth becomes permanently housed.

### **III. Records**

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained:

- A. Such that all records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enrolls in a new school or school district;
- B. Any information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a confidential student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information; and
- C. In a manner consistent with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act.

### **IV. Services:**

Local Education Agency Liaison: Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School shall identify an appropriate staff person to be the Local Educational Liaison (LEL) for all homeless children and youth attending Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School. The LEL responsibilities shall include, but are not limited to:

- A. Ensure homeless children and youth are identified through outreach and coordination activities including coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Education Homeless Education Liaison, community, and school personnel responsible for education and related services to homeless children and youths;
- B. Receive appropriate time and training in order to carry out the duties required by law and this policy;
- C. Ensure homeless families and homeless children and youths are referred to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing and any other appropriate services;
- D. Ensure that homeless children and youths:

- i. Are enrolled in school which includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities;
- ii. Have a full and equal opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards as other children and youths;
- iii. Receive individualized counseling from counselors to prepare and improve their readiness for college, including college selection, application, financial aid, and on-campus supports.
- iv. Unaccompanied youths are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and may obtain assistance from the LEL to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- v. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights, and available transportation services, of the homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such youths, and unaccompanied homeless youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form that is easily understandable.
- vi. Ensure the dispute resolution process identified below is carried out in accordance with the law and district policy.

**V. Dispute Resolution:**

- A. The dispute procedure must be available for disputes over eligibility, as well as school selection or enrollment.
- B. In the event of a dispute regarding where a child or youth should enroll, the child or youth shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. Lincoln Leadership Academy Charter School shall immediately provide the child's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth a written explanation of the decision made regarding the school selection including the right to appeal such decision. Said writing shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and also include the LEL contact information.
- C. See PDE Basic Education Circular (BEC) Dispute Resolution Process, Level I and Level 2
- D. The LEL shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled, explain the dispute resolution process to the families and help them use it, 42 U.S.C. section 11432(g)(3)E(iii).