

**International School of Louisiana
Homeless Students Service Plan
2020-21**

Homeless Services

WHAT HOMELESS FAMILIES NEED TO KNOW:

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to attend school.
- A permanent address is not needed to enroll in school.
- Children in homeless situations have the right to stay in the school they attend before becoming homeless or where they last enrolled (school of origin) if the parent or guardian so chooses.
- Schools must provide a written explanation if a dispute regarding eligibility for services occurs; parents/guardians may appeal the campus-level decision to the Head of School.
- A homeless child cannot be denied school enrollment just because school records or other enrollment documentation are not immediately available and must be enrolled immediately.
- A homeless child has the right to participate in extracurricular activities and all federal, state, or local programs for which he/she is eligible
- A homeless child is entitled to free breakfast and lunch, transportation assistance and to receive Title I services.
- Unaccompanied youth (homeless youth not living with a parent or guardian) have these same rights.

McKinney-Vento

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

A homeless student is one who:

- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Live in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, sub-standard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Sharing housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or abandoned in hospitals
- Living in primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Considered an unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless

LIAISONS

ISL's Homeless Liaison is Anne Bachrach, LCSW-BACS. She can be contacted by email at abachrach@isl-edu.org or phone at 504-654-1088. Each campus Social Worker serves as the point of contact for Homeless Student services at their location:

Uptown Campus - Anne Bachrach, abachrach@isl-edu.org, 504-654-1088

Dixon Campus -

Westbank Campus - Nikia Magee, nmagee@isl-edu.org, 504-274-4571

ENROLLMENT

International School of Louisiana will immediately enroll homeless students, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment — such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, discipline records, or birth certificate. Students who do not have these documents can contact our Admissions office for assistance.

Luz Miranda, Admissions Representative: lmiranda@isl-edu.org 504-229-4391

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for homeless students will be provided according to ISL's transportation guidelines and the McKinney-Vento act. A homeless student has the right to transportation to and from their school of origin, as long as they continue to attend that school,

- If an ISL student who is or becomes homeless moves within Orleans Parish and more than one mile from ISL, the student qualifies for transportation under ISL's regular policy.
- If the homeless student moves outside of Orleans Parish and continues to attend ISL, the student is entitled to transportation from their location to and from the school. ISL (the school of origin) and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. If the districts cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

ACCESS TO COMPARABLE SERVICES

Homeless students will be provided the same services and educational program as other students. Homeless students will be enrolled immediately in the free breakfast and lunch program.

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

Unaccompanied youth are youth who are homeless not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, and not on the custody of a state agency. This definition includes youth living on the street in inadequate housing, denied housing by their families, those who have left home voluntarily, even when their parent(s) want them to return home and youth doubled with friends or relatives. ISL will provide targeted support to unaccompanied homeless youth and work with community and state agencies to support unaccompanied youth.

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Children in foster care are entitled to remain at their school of origin (the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care) unless it is determined that it is not in the child's best interest to do so.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

International School of Louisiana is a single-site LEA serving students from any Louisiana parish, and as such will not encounter internal disputes over student enrollment. If a dispute arises, for unforeseen reasons, over enrollment of a student who has been identified as homeless, the International School of Louisiana will immediately enroll the homeless student, pending resolution of the dispute and must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with both a written statement of the school placement decision and a notice of the right to appeal the decision to the Head of School.

If a dispute arises over eligibility for other services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the Homeless Liaison will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with both a written statement of their decision regarding eligibility and a notice of the right to appeal the decision to the Head of School.

In such cases, the Homeless Liaison will refer the unaccompanied youth, parent or guardian to Susan Chapman, Chief of Staff, who will facilitate the dispute resolution process through the Head of School's office. Disputes that cannot be resolved within the school will be referred to the Louisiana Department of Education.

Susan Chapman, Chief of Staff, schapman@isl-edu.org, 504-654-1088

SERVICE PLAN

Identifying Homeless Students

ISL will use a variety of formal and informal methods to identify homeless students throughout the year. We recognize that because of the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, families may experience higher levels of economic uncertainty, leading to a greater number of homeless students in our community. We will be diligent in seeking to serve these students and throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

The Louisiana Student Residency Questionnaire is included with ISL's online registration process, required for all new and returning students. A paper copy of the Student Residency Questionnaire is also sent to all families within the first month of school via their children's backpack or Home-School Connection folder. Contact information for families whose forms indicate that they are homeless is provided to the Homeless Liaison and homeless point of contact at each campus (school Social Workers). These employees follow up with families to assess their needs and ensure they are aware of services and supports available to them, as well as their students' educational rights. ISL will make use of social media, email, and weekly family newsletters on a regular, on-going basis to ensure that families are aware of the services available to them. Informational posters in English and Spanish will be posted in the offices of all ISL campuses, and links to information regarding homeless student rights will be posted to the ISL website.

Employees who suspect that a student may meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless will provide the student's name to their campus social worker, who will follow up with the student or family and Homeless Liaison as appropriate.

Staff Training

All staff will receive annual training that fulfills the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act via ISL's online professional development platform. Completion of this training will be mandatory and tracked by individual supervisors and ISL's Human Resources staff. Documentation of completion for each employee will be held centrally. ISL's Homeless Liaison will serve as an additional resource for questions and support, and will provide specific and targeted training if the need arises. ISL's Homeless Liaison will complete annual training regarding their responsibilities and requirements under McKinney-Vento.

Services for Homeless Students and Their Families

The Homeless Liaison will maintain a central file of records for all services provided to homeless students. ISL has nurses and social workers on staff full-time at each of our three campuses. In the 2020-2021 school year, we will also partner with Children's Hospital to provide in-school virtual health care to students. Each campus has a Family Liaison who helps connect families with opportunities to be involved at school and/or the appropriate staff person to help them with their needs. Homeless students and their families will be provided with referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services as needed. ISL uses federal funds to purchase supplies and uniforms for homeless students in needs.