

## Homeless Scholars' Educational Procedures

In accordance with the Education for Homeless Children and Youths: Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) Excelsior Village Academies adheres to the principle that all eligible children and youth, including the homeless, are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.

Scholars identified as homeless or “in transition” will be given full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards and will be included in state and district wide assessments and accountability systems. Our school will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Homeless scholars will be provided all district services for which they are eligible, including limited English proficiency, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs, and after school programs where applicable.

**Definition:** In accordance with the Act and State Board Rule 160-5-1-.28, the term “homeless child and youth” is defined as individual who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
3. Who are living in emergency shelters.
4. Who are abandoned in hospitals or are awaiting foster care placement.
5. Whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
6. Who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
7. Migratory scholars who qualify as homeless because the children are living in any of the above-described circumstances.
8. Unaccompanied and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Definitions:

- A child or youth shall be considered to be experiencing homelessness for as long as he or she is in a living situation as described above.
- Unaccompanied youth mean a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above.
- Immediate means without delay
- School of origin means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

**Identification:** In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the school’s homeless liaison (School Counselor) will identify children and youth experiencing homelessness within our school. The liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as experiencing homelessness, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the liaison. The liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every scholar and to forward information indicating homelessness to the liaison. Community partners in identification may include family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other local social

services agencies, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

**Admission of Homeless Scholars:** Scholars are immediately admitted to Excelsior Village Academies even if the scholar is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. Excelsior Village Academies will make all efforts to update and keep these records current. Unaccompanied youth must also be immediately enrolled in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or Excelsior Village Academies' homeless liaison.

**Education of Homeless Scholars:** All scholars, including those scholars who are homeless or in transition have a full and equal opportunity at Excelsior Village Academies. Parents and guardians of homeless scholars are informed of the educationally related opportunities available to their children and are provided with the opportunities to participate in the education of their children. Homeless families and scholars will receive educational services for which all scholars are eligible. Referrals to health care and immunization services, dental services, health services, and other appropriate services will be made available to all families and scholars.

**Disputes and Resolution of Complaints:** Any complaints will be submitted in writing to the Governing Board who will resolve the issue. The parent and the scholar will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The district liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues are delaying or denying the enrollment of homeless children and youth repeatedly.

#### **Program Procedures:**

1. Excelsior Village Academies is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison (School Counselor).
2. Homeless scholars will be identified based on the definition prescribed by McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a numeric code in the school's scholar information system. All staff in the school will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless scholars.
3. The homeless liaison will provide annual training for all school staff having contact with homeless scholars.
4. School leadership will receive annual training on the identification and needs of homeless scholars.
5. The school will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the Homeless Liaison contact information.
6. Services for homeless scholars will be evaluated based on scholar academic achievement.

#### **Enrollment/Withdrawal**

Enrollment of Homeless scholars occurs at the appropriate grade level. The School Operations team is trained and attentive to the identification of homeless scholars during the enrollment process. Any identification of a homeless scholar/ family will be immediately identified to the Homeless Liaison for investigation. If Excelsior Village Academies is contacted by another school for a homeless scholar's records, requested information will be provided and sent to the requesting school district within 10 days of receiving the request.

#### **Program Training and Information Dissemination**

The Homeless Liaison or designee annually conducts training and sensitivity/awareness activities each fall to heighten the awareness of the following personnel of the specific needs of unaccompanied and homeless youth: School Leadership, teachers, and support personnel. Homeless liaison will lead and coordinate the schools' compliance with this policy and will receive training annually. Meeting documentation includes the PowerPoint presentation, agenda, and sign-in sheets. The Homeless Liaison or designee distributes posters and brochures throughout the school and in the Family Resources center in the lobby. Posters and brochures are also distributed to the community throughout the year at various locations including but not limited to the following: Department of Family and Children Services, Community Centers, Local Churches, Health Department, Fire Department, Hospital, Soup Kitchen, Local Law Enforcement, Safe Haven, and Local Doctor Offices.

### **Transportation**

Excelsior Village Academies will put into place a transportation plan for any identified homeless scholars.

### **Academic Credit**

A scholar's homeless status shall not be a barrier to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.