

SARALAND CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM HOMELESS EDUCATION PLAN

Purpose of Saraland City School System's Homeless Education Program

Homeless children and youth will be provided the opportunity to receive a free and appropriate public education regardless of their residency status. The program will ensure that these students are afforded equal access to academic and other services that will allow them to meet the same challenging state achievement standards as non-homeless students.

The program provides procedural guidelines to ensure that homeless students are not denied enrollment due to the lack of registration documentation at the time of enrollment. Homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, will be enrolled immediately pending obtainment of necessary documents. The school counselor will assist parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth in obtaining proper documentation.

Saraland City School System's homeless education program makes every effort to provide homeless children and youth with a stable school environment by enrolling students in the *school of origin* and providing them with transportation to and from the *school of origin*. Provisions are made for parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth to decline enrollment in the *school of origin*.

The Central Office Homeless Liaison will ensure program implementation and coordinate efforts to ensure that homeless children and youth, including preschool age children, are provided the opportunity for academic success.

Identification and Registration Procedures

Homeless children and youth are often undetected. The school system will conduct training sessions with appropriate school personnel to inform them of methods of identifying homeless children without stigmatizing terminology. The system will use a *Residency Questionnaire* (Appendix A) to facilitate identity of homeless children and youth, as well as preschoolers. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth will complete the *Residency Questionnaire* at the time of registration. The school counselor may provide appropriate assistance to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth in answering the questionnaire if necessary.

A copy of the *Residency Questionnaire* must be submitted to the Homeless Liaison. The school will maintain the original form in the student's permanent record for auditing during the school year. This form will also be housed in the school counselor's office and in the school nurse's office.

The parent or guardian may enroll a homeless child or youth with or without proof of residency, birth certificate, social security number, immunization record, or school records. The school counselor will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth appropriate assistance in obtaining the necessary records and documents for enrollment. Enrollment without the required immunization record will be pending receipt or acquisition of immunization documentation.

A homeless, unaccompanied youth may enroll himself/herself. In this case, the school principal or designee will immediately contact the Homeless Liaison to report the enrollment of an unaccompanied youth. The school will provide the youth with proper assistance in the language that the student understands. The Homeless Liaison will assist the unaccompanied youth in obtaining eligible educational services (Appendix B).

The application process for free and reduced priced meals can be expedited for homeless children and youth. The determination for free meals may be made without completing the full application process.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture

http://www.nlchp.org/FA_Education/new_usda_memo.pdf

Identification of Homeless Preschoolers

The Homeless Liaison will collaborate with local community service agencies (e.g. Head Start, Department of Human Resources, Health Department, faith-based organizations, the court system, etc.) and school personnel to identify homeless preschoolers. The Saraland City School System will include homeless preschoolers and children in the "Child Find" process as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

School Placement

The Saraland City School System will make school placement decisions in the "best interest" of the homeless child or youth. Students will continue in the *school of origin* for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years, during an academic year, or for the remainder of the academic year if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Students may enroll in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

If a school enrollment decision is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent/guardian, the school will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The complainant must file a School Enrollment Dispute Form (Appendix C) with the school in which the student is presently enrolled. The principal of this school will notify the Homeless Liaison of the dispute and take steps to resolve the dispute.

When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously take steps to resolve the dispute (Appendix D). If the dispute cannot be settled by the Homeless Liaison, the liaison will assist the complainant in seeking technical assistance from an appropriate service agency.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT RESIDENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act 42 U.S.C. 11435. The answers to this residence information help determine the services the student may be eligible to receive.

SECTION A:

_____ Student's Name (Print)	_____ Age	_____ Grade	_____ Student's ID#
_____ Parent/Guardian Name (Print)	_____ School		
_____ Current Address	_____ Current Phone/Cell #		_____ Work Phone#

List other siblings attending Saraland City Schools: _____

Check one:

1. Is your current address a temporary living situation? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
2. Is this temporary living situation due to loss of housing/eviction or economic hardship? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

******If you answered YES to one of the above questions, complete the remainder of this form. ******

*******If you answered NO, stop and return to school personnel. *******

SECTION B:

1. Reason for loss of housing: _____
2. The student lives in the following situation (please check one):
 - ☐ **TS 1 - Shelters/Transitional Housing Programs** (This would include any children living with a parent in Penelope House, Salvation Army Women's Shelter, Family Promise/IHN, Alabama Baptist Children's Home, Volunteers of America Transitional or Disability Housing, Catholic Social Services Disability Housing)
 - ☐ **TS 2 - Doubled-Up** (living with family, friends, etc. on a temporary basis) _____
(Name of Person)
 - ☐ **TS 3 - Unsheltered** (i.e., cars, parks, abandoned buildings, etc.)
 - ☐ **TS 4 - Hotels/Motels** (includes regular hotels/motels and those pay-by-the-week motels)
 - ☐ **TS 5 - Unaccompanied Youth** (usually high school students who have been kicked out or left home for a variety of reasons)
 - ☐ **TS 6 - Permission for Emergency Enrollment** (missing parents, incarcerated parents, military parents, DHR removal, etc.)
3. Has this student been expelled from his/her prior school? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

I hereby attest that the information above is true and correct, and I understand that if I intentionally falsely enroll the student named above in a school not in his/her proper attendance zone, the student may be denied any credit for school work completed while improperly attending the out-of-district school.

_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian	_____ Date
---------------------------------------	---------------

APPENDIX B

The Homeless Liaison shall work to ensure that homeless children, youth, and preschoolers are identified and enrolled in school. The liaison will ensure these individuals receive all eligible services to facilitate student academic success. The responsibilities listed below are not all inclusive but shall be primary duties of the liaison.

The Homeless Liaison shall ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the system;
- Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, and preschool programs administered by the school system, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services;
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- Transportation cost disputes between the school system and school system of enrollment are resolved;
- Sensitivity and confidentiality training is provided to transportation and school personnel regarding the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;
- Public notice of educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where children and youth receive services under Act;
- Required reports concerning the homeless education program are submitted to appropriate agencies and the State Department of Education; and
- Evaluation of the homeless education program is conducted annually and necessary program and implementation adjustments are made in a timely manner.

APPENDIX C

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM

School Name _____

School Address _____

School Telephone Number

School Fax Number

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Current Address _____

911 Address

Telephone Number _____

Name of school that complainant chooses student to be immediately enrolled in/or transported to/from until dispute is resolved _____

Is this the school of origin? _____

If no, from which school was the student transferred _____

Reason for complaint _____

Complainant Signature

Date

SCHOOL USE ONLY

Principal's Action on the Compliant

Taken within _____ school day(s) after receiving notice of the complaint.

Date Central Office Liaison was notified of the dispute _____.

Action taken by the Principal to resolve the dispute:

Was the dispute resolved? _____

APPENDIX D

DISTRICT ENROLLMENT DISPUTE FORM

Student's Name _____ Student Number _____

School Name _____ Grade _____

DISTRICT ACTION ON COMPLAINT

Taken within _____ school days after receiving notice of the complaint. Was the complaint resolved at the district level? Yes _____ No _____

If the dispute was resolved at the district level, describe the action taken by the system Homeless Liaison to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of the complainant:

If the dispute was not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, did the system Homeless Liaison convene a meeting of the interested parties to attempt resolution of the dispute? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when and where did the meeting take place?

Describe the outcome of the meeting.

If no, will a meeting be held for resolution purposes? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, state when and where.

If a resolution cannot be derived at the district level, the system Homeless Liaison should assist the complainant in contacting service organization(s) to provide technical assistance to the complainant. Did the system Homeless Liaison assist the complainant in this manner? Yes _____ No _____

Name of service organization(s) contacted for assistance _____

Was the dispute resolved? _____ Date _____

Describe the resolution.

Complainant Signature _____

System Homeless Liaison _____