



Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc.  
A System of Charter Schools for Lake Wales, Florida

### Homeless Students Policy

Florida law requires that all children have access to a free public education.

- I. Purpose: Under federal law (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act), homeless children (otherwise known as children and youth in transition) must have access to appropriate public education, including preschool, and be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state and district-wide assessments and accountability systems.
  
- II. Lake Wales Charter Schools, Inc. is a Local Educational Agency (hereafter "LEA"). It is a not-for-profit system of charter schools for the community of Lake Wales. The System consists of six of the nine public schools in the greater Lake Wales area: Lake Wales High, Edward W. Bok Academy, Dale R. Fair Babson Park Elementary, Hillcrest Elementary, Janie Howard Wilson Elementary, and Polk Avenue Elementary.

The LEA will: 1) ensure that all children and youth receive a free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth, and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in school; 2) remove any barriers that affect the enrollment and retention (attendance) of homeless students in the LEA's schools; 3) follow the requirements of the McKinney- Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and 4) ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment. Homeless students shall not be stigmatized or segregated or separated into other educational programs on the basis of their status as homeless.

- A. Definition: Homeless children and youth (otherwise known as children and youth in transition) means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free, public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:
  1. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters and abandoned in hospitals.
  2. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
  3. Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
  4. Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

- B. School Selection: Children and youth in transition have the right to remain at their school of origin (the school in which the child or youth attended while permanently housed or the school last attended or enrolled) or to attend any school that housed students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
- C. Enrollment: Children and youth in transition have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents, including:
1. Transcripts/school records
  2. Medical records such as school physical, immunization records
  3. Proof of residency or guardianship
  4. Birth Certificate
  5. Unpaid school fees
  6. Any factor related to the student's living situation
- D. Transportation: Children and youth in transition have the right to receive transportation to and from their school of origin at the request of a parent or guardian, or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the Local Liaison.

If the homeless child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin, but begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEA's cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth in transition will also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed students.

- E. Services: Children and youth in transition will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the selected school, including:
1. Transportation (as described above)
  2. Title I, Part A, services
  3. Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
  4. Vocational and technical education program
  5. Gifted programs
  6. Before- and after-school programs

- F. Disputes: If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment with respect to movement between the LEA and another LEA, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school of origin or assigned zone school as requested by the parent or guardian and transportation provided to and from the school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian of the student shall be provided with a written explanation of the decision of the LEA and the other LEA regarding school selection, including the rights of the parent, guardian or student to appeal the decision through the LEA's enrollment dispute procedure and the Florida Department of Education's appeal process. The student, parent or guardian shall be referred to the Homeless Education Liaison, who shall ensure the resolution process is carried out as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied student, the Homeless Education Liaison shall ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- G. Nutrition: Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for free meals as determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- H. Liaison:
1. The local Liaison, designated by the school System, must ensure that:
    - a. Children and youth in transition are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
    - b. Students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
    - c. Families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and pre-school programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services.
    - d. Public notice of the educational rights of students in transition is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
    - e. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of McKinney-Vento.
  2. The local Liaison will:
    - a. Train school and LEA staff of possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth as in transition, procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison, and assistance available to the children and youth in transition. The trainings and activities will be designed to increase staff awareness, facilitate immediate enrollment, ensure compliance with this policy, and increase sensitivity to children and youth in transition.
    - b. Keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the LEA; where they are living; their academic achievement (including performance on state- and LEA -wide assessments); and the reasons for

any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

Statutory Authority: Florida Statutes, 1001.42, 1001.43, 1003.01(12), 1003.21, 1003.22

Laws Implemented:

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§11431 -11436.  
Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§6311 - 6315.  
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 , .S.C. §§1400 *et seq.*

Adopted:

  
May 7, 2013



  
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Cassandra L. Denmark  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Updated:  
January 22, 2018



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Jimmy Nelson, Chair  
Board of Trustees

ATTEST:

  
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Marie Cherrington-Gray  
Corporate Secretary