

Chicago International Charter School

Student in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) Policy

Introduction:

Chicago International Charter School (CICS) is a network of campuses located across the city of Chicago. We are considered one “school” by the state with multiple “campuses”. CICS prides itself on the inclusion of all students and makes every effort possible to ensure all students and families that apply and are accepted through our lottery are welcome at our schools.

All CICS campuses serve families who are homeless and the students have equal access to all CICS campuses. Our faculty and staff have years of experience working with students and families at-risk and in crisis. CICS is a city-wide school, we have the ability to transfer accepted students between campuses if requested by family members because of a change in housing. As parents tell us of their situation we work together to meet the needs of their child. In other situations, CICS personnel recognize the signs of stress in a child’s academic performance or behavior and speak with the child or family members to identify means of support.

Each CICS campus employs at least one licensed social worker. The social worker will have responsibility for monitoring the needs of any student identified as homeless. CICS social workers meet regularly with classroom teachers to support their understanding of risk factors and behaviors that may indicate crisis situations. Students and families are encouraged to meet with the school social worker as needed.

CICS will allow a homeless student to return to a CICS campus that was their last school of origin if the seat is available (last school of origin; last school enrolled or the school they attended when they first became homeless). If a seat is not available, CICS will offer the student a seat at another CICS campus that has availability.

Policy:

Enrollment: When a child has been accepted from the lottery and is identified as homeless, the staff has three priorities:

1. To determine if the child and family have a safe place to stay while searching for permanent housing
2. To determine if the child’s physical needs are being met (i.e., adequate food, place to bathe, clean clothing)
3. To determine how to support the child in continuing his/her education at CICS while the family searches for permanent housing.

The school staff will work with parents and children to satisfy priorities one and two. Parents will be referred to appropriate social service agencies as one way to identify temporary housing or shelters and to find resources for nutritional meals for families (priority three). If requested by parents or if contacted by the agency directly, school staff will work cooperatively with the Department of Children & Family Services, Department of Public Aid, or Department of Children and Youth Services.

When a family is homeless, students will not be penalized due to homelessness.

- All school fees are waived for the student, including those for field trips, participation in after school activities, and special events
- If a student violates the CICS Code of Conduct, the consequences to those actions are weighed in accordance with the family's living situation
- If the child is in need of a place to bathe or clean clothes, the school staff will discreetly arrange that for the student. The campus, if needed, will supply additional uniforms
- Transportation vouchers will be issued if the family cannot use the same manner of transportation to and from school used previously

Other: Any other issues that arise because of STLS Policy that are not addressed in this policy can be directed to the enrollment office at (312) 651-5000 and the Chief of Staff at CICS for further discussion.