

## Henry County Schools Foster Care Plan

### \*List Agencies in Collaboration:

Henry County Schools

DHR

\*Policy Review and Revision (Describe how each agency in collaboration reviewed policies and the revisions made to policies as a result of reviews.)

We met to review the policies that were in place. Revisions could be made at the meeting but none were needed at this time. Either agency can call a meeting throughout the year as needed.

\*Describe Collaboration and Coordination with Agencies (Include a list of team members, positions, signatures, and agencies.):

Jill Barber, Federal Programs Henry Co Schools  
Catherine Arnold, Henry Co DHR  
Hope Laudicina Nichols, Henry County Schools Mental Health Services Coordinator  
Tina Gibson, HCVC Principal  
Scharona Dawkins, Abbeville Elementary Counselor  
Randy Davis, Henry County Transportation Director

2 C. F. R. §§ 200.331(d), 200.328(a); 34 C.F.R. §76.770; ESSA SECTION 1111(1)(e) - LEAs must implement the Title I educational stability requirements of children in foster care, including ensuring that:

- A child in foster care remains in his or her school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in that child's best interest;
- If it is not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin the child is immediately enrolled in the new school even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment; and
- That the new (enrolling) school immediately contacts the school of origin, to obtain relevant academic and other records.

Describe procedures for implementing the above provisions.

1. Students will be admitted to Henry County Schools regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs, national origin, ethnic group, disability, or other protected status.
2. Foster Care students will be admitted within the Henry County attendance zone regardless of residential status. Special emphasis will be placed on maintaining school of origin, including transportation. Foster Care enrollees do not have to provide any documentation items at time of enrollment. School personnel will assist them in immediately obtaining school records, immunization forms, etc. Foster Care students will not be withdrawn because of lack of ability to obtain documents.
3. The school office or Attendance Supervisor will provide the address of the Henry County Health Department and directions to assist in securing the required records of immunizations.
4. The Attendance Supervisor will assign a number to in-coming students who do not have a Social Security number.
5. Henry County Schools will maintain a complete list of all Foster Care students.
6. The Henry County Schools' policies and procedures regarding Foster Care students will be communicated to all school personnel at the beginning of each school year using the LEA and school websites, email, and staff meetings.
2. ESSA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i) – A description of how the LEA in collaboration with the local child welfare agency will ensure that in determining whether it is in the child's best interest to remain in his or her school or origin, and LEA takes into consideration all factors relating to a child's best interest.  
Description of how the LEA will work with child welfare agencies to develop a clear policy or

protocol on how to make best interest determinations including making every effort to gather meaningful input from relevant parties, in addition to required child welfare and school representatives, in deciding what school placement is in a child's best interest. Include a description of protocols in this description.

#### Best Interest Determination Factors to Consider When Writing Education Stability for Students in Foster Care Plan

1. The child's preference
2. The views of the parents or the person with education decision-making rights
3. The child's attachment to school and staff
4. The placement of the child's siblings
5. The availability and quality of services in the current and potential schools to meet the child's education and social/emotional needs
6. School climate/safety
7. The impact of a school transfer, including the commute
8. The child's special needs

\*\*Remember the cost of transportation cannot be a factor in determining the child's best interest.

#### Possible Supporting Documentation for Best Interest Determination

1. Report cards
2. Progress reports
3. Test Scores
4. Attendance Data
5. IEP or 504 Plan
6. E-mails from individuals consulted during the best interested determination process.

#### Key Considerations to Include in Best Interest Determination When Writing Education Stability for Students in Foster Care Plan

1. How will best interest decisions be made in a timely manner?
2. How will best interest decisions be revisited if needed?
3. How will accurate information be gathered in a timely manner to contribute to the best interest decision?
4. Who should be involved or consulted about the decision? (LEA, DHR, other relevant parties such as the child, foster parents, biological parents when appropriate, education decision maker, other relatives for their perspective) Remember the best interest determination should be consistent with the child's case plan. Consultations do not have to be in a face to face meeting. Consultations can take place via e-mail or phone calls. Be sure to document all consultations.

ESSA Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Description of transportation protocols and procedures to include how additional costs for transportation will be calculated and funded as well as a policy for LEAs to resolve best interest disputes and interagency disputes related to transportation costs. Description must include how transportation and transportation costs will be monitored. (Include LEA and welfare responsibilities for providing transportation.)

#### Description of Dispute Resolution Policy

Henry County Schools will collaborate with the Henry County DHR agency on a case-by-case basis to provide transportation for foster care students based upon the best interest of the students. DHR will utilize volunteers and foster parents to provide transportation where appropriate and Henry County Schools will also provide transportation as appropriate. Additional costs for transportation will be calculated based upon mileage, fuel costs, and personnel needed to meet the needs of the foster care students. Short term LEA bus costs will be funded by the LEA and long-term costs will be shared by the LEA and DHR with reimbursement of costs made on a quarterly basis.

For every type of dispute regarding a child in foster care, the Henry County Schools and Henry County DHR will make every effort to resolve the dispute collaboratively at the local level. If necessary, the Foster Care Dispute Process (pages 5 – 16) in this document will be used.

Henry County Schools and the Henry County DHR will collaborate to ensure that all transportation needs/costs are provided based upon best interest determinations on a case-by-case basis. DHR will utilize volunteers and foster parents to provide transportation where appropriate and Henry County Schools will also provide bus transportation as appropriate. Additional costs for transportation will be calculated based upon mileage, fuel costs, and personnel needed to meet the needs of the foster care students. Short term LEA bus costs will be funded by the LEA and long-term costs will be shared by the LEA and DHR. Reimbursement of transportation costs will be made on a quarterly basis. Transportation and transportation costs will be monitored on on-going

ESSA Section 111(g)(1)(E)(ii)-(iii) Describe protocol for a child in foster care to be immediately enrolled in a new school.

basis to ensure that all foster care students are attending school based upon their best interest.

Henry County Schools will immediately enroll a child in foster care in our schools. The guidance counselors and administration will ensure that there are no barriers to their enrollment. Henry County and the Henry County DHR will collaborate to ensure that a child in foster care seeking to enroll in school, whether he or she is enrolling in a school for the first time or is transferring following a change in foster care placement and a determination that the transfer would serve his or her best interest. To begin the enrollment process, the child's DHR case worker will notify Henry County Schools (principal or counselor) of the intent to enroll a child who is in foster care in their school. Other adults, as permitted by Henry County DHR may be required or permitted to assist with the enrollment of the child, but the DHR caseworker will direct the process and be the primary contact for the school system staff. DHR need not produce the child's school record at the time of enrollment in order to enroll the child in school. The school records may later be requested by the enrolling school if the records are not available at the time of enrollment.