# Indian River County Schools

**Foster Care Requirements as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care**

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Indian River County Schools (IRCS) in collaboration with Devereux Community Based Care (CBC) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) have outlined the appropriate processes and procedures to follow in order to ensure educational stability for children who have been placed in foster care settings as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

These agreed upon guidelines are effective immediately and have been developed with the best interest of the child in mind in order to maintain the child in their school of origin whenever possible. That determination must be based on all factors relating to the child’s best interest including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

## POINTS OF CONTACT

Indian River County Schools has identified as its Point of Contact (POC) for Foster Care placements as the Coordinator of School Assignment. Devereux CBC has identified the Clinical Director as the POC and the POC for the Division of Children and Families is the Community Development Administrator.

## AGENCY COLLABORATION

IRCS in collaboration with Devereux CBC and DCF will ensure school-based and other school district staff are provided professional development opportunities regarding implementation requirements under ESSA relating to the educational stability for students in foster care, how to make best interest determinations, and how decisions should be made in order to meet the transportation needs of the student in foster care.

## IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

The Department of Children and Families and Devereux CBC will notify IRCS POC each Monday morning of all students currently enrolled in foster care. The Coordinator of School Assignment will collaborate with DCF and Devereux CBC to ensure that all placements are current or active placements.

For some students in foster care, transportation is needed to allow them to remain in the same school of origin. The IRCS, Devereux CBC, and the DCF will collaborate, governing how transportation, to ensure school stability, will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the children’s time in foster care in a cost effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of child welfare law that permit the use of certain Title IV-E funds for school stability transportation.

IRCS will ensure that children in foster care remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is **not** in the best interest of the child to remain in the current setting. IRCS will provide transportation to maintain children in foster care in the school of origin if that is the best interest determination.

## BEST INTEREST DETERMINATIONS

The LEA (IRCS), through collaboration with the Department of Children and Families and Devereux CBC, will ensure what will be in the best interest of the child, to leave the child in the school of origin or transfer the child to a different school. Prior to making any determinations for the child to leave the school of origin, a conference to consider what is in the best interest of the child will be held with all designated staff from the LEA, DCF, and Devereux CBD. When making the best interest determinations the team will address the following:

* Preferences of the child;
* Preferences of the child’s parents or education decision makers;
* The child’s attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
* Placement of the child’s siblings;
* Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety;
* The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child’s educational and socioemotional needs;
* History of school transfers and how they have affected the child
* How the length of the commute would impact the child based on their developmental stage;
* Whether the child is a student with a disability under IDEA who is receiving special education and related services or a student with a disability under Section 504 who is receiving special education or related aids and services and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin; and
* Whether the child is an ELL (English Language Learner) and is receiving language services, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin.

Teams should understand that the list is not exhaustive when making best interest determinations, and should consider any information provided by other parties may have specific knowledge or expertise about the child and who possess information that will assist the team in making the best interest determination.

## DOCUMENTATION FOR ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOL

IRCS will work collaboratively with both Devereux CBC and the Department of Children and Families to obtain any needed documentation required for all students enrolled in or enrolling in IRCS. For students in foster care who leave the school of origin, the LEA will ensure that the enrolling school shall immediately contact the last school attended to obtain the child’s educational records and any health records that may be pertinent to enrollment. The LEA will ensure that students in foster care who leave a school of origin, are allowed to immediately enroll in the new school even if they do not currently have the required documentation for enrollment. The LEA will ensure that the enrolling school contacts the school last attended to obtain the child’s records.

## TRANSPORTATION

The LEA (IRCS) will make every effort to provide transportation in order to maintain children in foster care in their school of origin within the current jurisdiction. IRCS Transportation Department will review the current routes in existence when making the determination about transporting students. IRCS alone cannot absorb the full burden of cost if the transportation is across county lines or if the cost of adding an additional route for an individual student is warranted the IRCS will follow the district’s McKinney-Vento Act procedures for cross county transportation.

The LEA (IRCS), Devereux CBC and DCF, will share the excess costs associated with transporting and maintaining children in foster care when deemed in the student’s best interest to remain in their school of origin.

**INTERAGENCY DISPUTE**

In the event of an Interagency dispute arising from the interpretation or implementation of this agreement the follow steps shall be taken:

a. Step 1 is resolution of the dispute among the staff who surfaced the issue; and

b. Step 2 resolution of the dispute among the signatories to this agreement.

A review of these terms will occur at least, yearly.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Lillian Torres-Martinez Date

Executive Director of Student Services and

Exceptional Student Education

Indian River County Public Schools

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Robert McPartlan, Community Development Date

Administrator, Circuit 19

Florida Department of Children and Families

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Carol DeLoach, Chief Executive Officer Date

Devereux Community Based Car of Okeechobee

and the Treasure Coast

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jennifer Idlette Date

Director of Transportation

Indian River County Public Schools

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Mark J. Rendell Date

Superintendent of Schools

Indian River County Public Schools