

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County is committed to establishing a system of public schools that educates the students of Howard County and promotes the general welfare of Howard County residents. The Board recognizes the need to regulate and manage student eligibility, residency, enrollment, and assignment in prekindergarten through grade 12.

**II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for determining eligibility to attend school in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), for admitting/enrolling students in schools, and for reassigning students.

**III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Assigned School – The school that a student physically attends.
- B. Bona Fide Residence – The person’s principal residence maintained in good faith. It does not include a temporary residence or a superficial residence established for the purpose of attendance in the HCPSS. Evaluation of a person’s bona fide residence is a factual one and will be made on an individual basis.
- C. Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student – A living arrangement in which an adult relative of a child whose parent is not a resident of Maryland and who is not in the care, custody, or guardianship of the local department of social services, provides for the care and custody of the child due to a serious family hardship, and is a bona fide resident of Howard County.
- D. Deferred Admission – The option provided to parents to request that students meeting the state’s age requirement for kindergarten be granted a one-year attendance waiver.
- E. Designated School – The school appointed by virtue of a student’s attendance area.
- F. Early Admission – The option for parents to request that students be admitted to prekindergarten, kindergarten, or first grade one year earlier than the state’s age requirements.

- G. Emancipated Student – A student who meets one or more of the following conditions:
1. The student is under age 21 and married.
  2. The student is under age 18 and has been declared emancipated by the court.
  3. The student is age 18-21 and is living independently of the student's parents.
- H. Extracurricular Activities – HCPSS-sponsored activities available to students beyond the regular school day, which are voluntary and not required for the satisfactory completion of a particular class.
- I. Homeless Student – A student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, whether or not the temporary housing is located in Howard County including:
1. Students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or to economic hardship, or due to a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, transitional housing, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; are runaways, living in shelters or other inadequate accommodations; or awaiting foster care placement.
  2. Students who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
  3. Students who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
  4. Migratory students as defined under federal law who qualify as homeless because they are living in the circumstances above.
- J. Informal Kinship Care – A living arrangement in which an adult relative of a child, who is not in the care, custody, or guardianship of the local department of social services, provides for the care and custody of the child due to a serious documented family hardship. The caregiver must be a resident of Howard County.
- K. International Exchange Student – A student who holds a J-1 Visa and is participating in an approved exchange program.
- L. Interscholastic Athletics – Approved athletic competitions between or among two or more high schools.

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- M. Junior Status – The situation in which a student has earned a minimum of 10 credits, including English 9 and English 10.
- N. Nonresident Student – A student who meets any criteria listed in Section IV.G. below.
- O. Open School – A school designated by the Board as one that is open to enrollment by students living in other school attendance areas because there is available space.
- P. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  2. Adoptive Parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  3. Custodian – A person or agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian, as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101 (c) (Informal Kinship Care).
  6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- Q. Prekindergarten – The grade level prior to kindergarten. It is offered through a variety of programs and is available to eligible students who are four years old by September 1.
- R. Residency – Establishing bona fide residence.
- S. Resident Student – A student who meets any criteria listed in Section IV.E. below.
- T. School-Aged Student – Student who has met the age requirement for admission to a Maryland public school.
- U. School Attendance Area – Geographic area from which a school's students are drawn.

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**IV. Standards**

- A. Any decision made under this policy may be rescinded or altered if found to have been issued based on substantive information that was erroneous or false.
- B. In order to enroll in the HCPSS, students and/or parents will meet all legal standards related to age, immunization, authority to make educational decisions, and residency.
  - 1. Exceptions are made for homeless students (see Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth).
  - 2. A student's or family's citizenship or immigration status has no impact on their enrollment eligibility.
- C. HCPSS will follow the state mandated school attendance for students of a prescribed age, and has defined minimum and maximum age eligibility for education services from local public school systems. These mandates and requirements include:
  - 1. Prekindergarten is available for and limited to children who meet eligibility requirements established by the state, with first priority given to families who meet income-eligibility criteria.
  - 2. Kindergarten is mandatory in Maryland for children reaching the compulsory attendance age established by the state. Children must be five (5) years old on or before September 1 to attend kindergarten.
  - 3. Parents may request deferred admission of their child to kindergarten for one (1) year due to the child's level of maturity.
  - 4. Parents may request early admission of children to prekindergarten, kindergarten, or first grade one year earlier than the state's age requirements if their child's birthday falls within six weeks of the September 1 deadline established by the state. (See assessment procedures in the Implementation Procedures Section IV.D.)
  - 5. Students will not begin a school year if they are 21 years of age or older.
- D. All children will have the required immunizations in order to attend school. A limited number of exceptions may apply.
- E. A school-aged student meeting any of the following conditions will be considered a resident student and will be admitted to the HCPSS without the payment of tuition except as noted elsewhere:
  - 1. A student whose parent(s) has/have established bona fide residence in Howard County.

2. A student whose parents live apart and the parent to whom custody is awarded by the court has established bona fide residence in Howard County.
  3. A student whose parents live apart and are provided joint or shared custody by a court and one of whom has established a bona fide residence in Howard County.
  4. An emancipated student who has established an independent bona fide residence in Howard County.
  5. A student with a court-appointed guardian who has established bona fide residence in Howard County.
  6. A student whose parent(s) has/have established bona fide residence in Howard County, and who has been placed in a foster or group home in Howard County by a licensed private, county, or state child placement agency. Residence for purposes of admission and assignment is the address of the foster or group home.
- F. Admission will be denied to students in the following circumstances:
1. The student does not meet age, eligibility, residency, immunization, or enrollment requirements.
  2. The student is currently expelled or on an extended suspension from another school system for a length of time equal to that expulsion or extended suspension, in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-305(e)(5) and COMAR 13A.08.01.11C.(8).
  3. The student has already completed requirements to earn a diploma or certificate of attendance in another school district, state, or country.
- G. A school-aged student who does not qualify as a resident student under the provisions of Section IV.E. is considered a nonresident student. Nonresident students will be admitted to the HCPSS only under the following circumstances. In some cases, payment of tuition may be required.
1. A nonresident student whose parent(s) are in the process of establishing bona fide residence in Howard County and have presented a contract to build, buy, or lease a home may be admitted to the HCPSS. The student may attend school tuition free for up to 90 calendar days. After 90 calendar days, if the parent(s) have not presented documentation of residency in Howard County, parent(s) must apply for an extension.
    - a. If the extension is granted, tuition will be assessed beginning on the first day of the extension.

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- b. If the extension is not granted, the student will be required to attend school in the district of current residence.
  2. A student who becomes a nonresident, because the parent(s) with whom the student resides move out of Howard County during the school year, must submit a request in order to complete the current school year at the school in which the student is enrolled. Tuition will be assessed based on the following:
    - a. If the student becomes a nonresident prior to the fourth marking period, the student will be allowed to remain for the duration of that school year and tuition will be assessed.
    - b. If the student becomes a nonresident during the fourth marking period, the student may attend for the rest of that school year tuition free.
    - c. For a student who becomes a nonresident after achieving Junior status, the student will be allowed upon request to remain at the student's current school through graduation upon payment of tuition.

A student will retain eligibility for extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics. Parents will be required to provide transportation.

3. A nonresident student who is placed in a foster or group home in Howard County by a licensed private, county, or state child placement agency can attend school subject to HCPSS being reimbursed for tuition by the placement agency or placing state or jurisdiction.
4. A nonresident student living with caregiver(s) due to documented hardship (see Implementation Procedures Section III.B.) may be admitted to the HCPSS and have tuition waived by satisfying one of the following conditions:
  - a. Informal Kinship Care.
  - b. Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student.
5. An international exchange student who comes for one year of study through an approved exchange program and who resides with a host family with established bona fide residence in Howard County may be admitted, and tuition is waived.
  - a. Each high school may enroll up to five such students each year. A high school principal in collaboration with his/her supervisor may approve the enrollment of more than five such students in a year if there are sufficient resources.
  - b. Residence for purposes of admission and assignment is the address of the host family.

- c. A student whose host family assignment changes during the school year will be transferred to the school serving the new host family's residence.
- 6. A nonresident student whose parent is a full-time, school-based HCPSS employee may be admitted to the HCPSS and enrolled in the school to which the parent is assigned, upon payment of tuition. If the employee leaves full-time employment, the nonresident student may complete the current school year only.
- H. Students who are determined to be homeless by the Office of Pupil Personnel, under the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act, will be immediately enrolled in the HCPSS (see Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth).
- I. Tuition rates will be determined annually and approved by the Board.
  - 1. Tuition is effective from a non-resident student's first day of attendance or the date upon which a student no longer resides in the county.
  - 2. Tuition is payable in advance. Requests for tuition waivers or for revised payment schedules based on financial hardship will be submitted to the Superintendent/Designee, along with supporting documentation, and evaluated on a case by case basis. Financial accommodations will be provided only during the period the financial hardships are shown to exist. Eligibility status is subject to review.
- J. All schools will have attendance areas determined by the Board. A student attending a public school in Howard County will attend the designated school serving the school attendance area in which the parents have bona fide residence unless reassignment is granted or administrative placement occurs.
- K. Subject to the conditions outlined in Standard L., a resident student may be reassigned from the student's designated school when:
  - 1. A student who has a change of bona fide residence within the county during the school year may submit a request to complete the current school year at the school in which the student is enrolled. The student must enroll for the next school year in the newly designated school. An exception will be made for a student who has a change of residence after achieving Junior status. Upon request, the student will be allowed to remain at the current school through graduation. A student reassigned under this standard will retain eligibility for extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics.
  - 2. A resident student whose parents have presented a contract to build, buy, or lease a home in a different school attendance area than that of the student's designated school may request reassignment to a school in the projected attendance area. If the student is not in the projected home within 90 calendar days of the student's attendance, an extension may be granted by the Superintendent/Designee. If there

are no approved extensions, the student will be returned to the original designated school.

3. A resident student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, or at least one parent who is currently active duty military personnel is reassigned for the purposes of redistricting may request reassignment to remain at their current school until the completion of that school level. The process outlined in Section V. of the Policy 9000 Implementation Procedures will be used for the reassignment request.
  4. A resident student who is the child of a full-time, school-based HCPSS employee may be enrolled in the school to which the parent is assigned.
  5. In rare circumstances, the Superintendent/Designee, in consultation with school-based administrators, may grant parent requests for individual exceptions to the student reassignment standards based on documented unique hardship situations. Eligibility for extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, and provision of transportation for students reassigned under this standard will be determined by the Superintendent/Designee.
  6. Reassignment will not be granted for the following reasons:
    - a. The need for a particular schedule or class.
    - b. Requests for siblings to remain enrolled at the same school.
    - c. Addressing the impact of redistricting decisions, except for students with an IEP, 504 Plan, or those with at least one parent who is currently active duty military personnel.
    - d. Accommodating childcare arrangements.
- L. The conditions that follow apply to requests by parents for student reassignments. Transportation will not be provided by HCPSS and parents will agree to provide transportation unless transportation is included in a student's IEP or 504 plan:
1. Parents initiating a request for reassignment will agree, in writing, to register the student for the complete school year, or the remainder of the school year, in the school for which the application is made.
  2. A student who is reassigned to a school need not reapply for reassignment for that same school on a yearly basis except as noted elsewhere. However, reassignment decisions will be subject to annual review.
  3. While an application for reassignment is pending, an applicant will remain in attendance at the student's designated school.



4. When a student is reassigned because of an extraordinary hardship situation, the student will be reassigned, when appropriate, to another school that is under capacity in the geographic proximity to the designated school. The Superintendent/Designee may make exceptions on a case by case basis.
5. A student who is reassigned at the request of parents, and who does not meet expectations described in the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct (including, but not limited to attending regularly and on time, showing academic commitment, and following behavioral expectations), may be returned to the student's designated school at any time during the school year. Such decision is made by the current principal after due consideration and proper notification to the student, parents, the principal of the designated school, and the Superintendent/Designee.
6. Student eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities is subject to Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities.

M. Open School Designation (General)

The Board may identify schools that, because they have available space, are open to enrollment by a student not living in the schools' attendance areas. Parents may request a student's reassignment to an open school according to established procedures. The request is subject to approval by the Superintendent/Designee. A student reassigned under this standard will be eligible for extracurricular activities, except the student will not be eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics for a period of one year effective the date of transfer. The parent may be required to provide transportation.

N. Open School Designation (Directed)

The Board may identify schools that have a programmatic initiative where there are fewer applicants than openings and direct that they are open to enrollment by a student not living in the programmatic initiative schools' attendance areas. Parents may request a student's reassignment to a directed open school according to established procedures. The request is subject to approval by the Superintendent/Designee. A student reassigned under this standard will be eligible for extracurricular activities and participation in interscholastic athletics. Transportation may be provided.

O. A resident student may be administratively placed in a school/program for any of the reasons listed below. Administrative placements are permanent, subject to the review of the Superintendent/Designee. A student placed in a school under this standard will be eligible for extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics, in the assigned school unless determined otherwise by the Superintendent/Designee.

1. The Superintendent/Designee may administratively place a student in a school other than the assigned/designated school as part of a disciplinary consequence. Transportation will not be provided by HCPSS and parents will agree to provide transportation.

2. The Superintendent/Designee may administratively place a student in a school other than the assigned/designated school when there is concern for the physical, mental, or emotional well-being or educational welfare of the student, other students, or school system personnel. Transportation may be provided by HCPSS.
  3. An IEP team may administratively place a student receiving special education services in a school other than the assigned/designated school when the IEP team determines the placement change is necessary in order to implement the student's IEP and provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Transportation will be provided in accordance with the student's IEP.
  4. Placement of a student in the Teenage Parenting and Childcare Program will be implemented in accordance with entrance and exit guidelines for that program. Transportation will be provided by HCPSS.
  5. Parents may request administrative placement of a student into the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program. Decisions will be made by the Superintendent/Designee. Regardless of grade level, a student will be immediately returned to his/her designated school if withdrawing or removed from the JROTC program. Transportation will not be provided by HCPSS and parents will agree to provide transportation.
  6. Parents may request administrative placement into Board identified eligible programmatic initiative(s). Acceptance decisions will be made by the Superintendent/Designee. Transportation may be provided by HCPSS.
  7. Prekindergarten programs, available to eligible students from any attendance area, are only located at selected school sites. A prekindergarten student will attend the school to which the student is assigned and transportation will be provided by HCPSS. The student will attend kindergarten in the student's regularly designated school regardless of where the student attended prekindergarten.
- P. Individuals who disagree with the decisions of the Superintendent/Designee with regard to enrollment and assignment may appeal to the Board of Education pursuant to the requirement of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-205(c)(3). The appeal must be received in writing within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

## **V. Responsibilities**

- A. The Board will establish tuition rates annually.
- B. The Superintendent/Designee will ensure that procedures related to enrollment and school assignment are published annually to staff, parents, and the community.

- C. The Finance Office will bill responsible parties and collect tuition payments.
- D. Pupil Personnel Workers and the School Security Office will investigate the residency or custody status of students seeking to meet enrollment requirements, determining whether circumstances exist which constitute hardship where appropriate, investigate reports of suspected fraudulent residency or custody, and reporting findings to school and central office staff for appropriate action.
- E. School-based staff and Pupil Personnel Workers will ensure that students assigned to their school are properly enrolled.
- F. Parents or emancipated students are responsible for providing documentation required for enrollment in the HCPSS.

## VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy.

## VII. References

- A. Legal
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400, et. seq.
  - Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-109(c),  
Geographical Attendance Areas
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Sections 4-122 and  
4-122.1, Funding for Education of Children Out-of-County Living and Education  
of Child in Informal Kinship Care Relationship
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-205(c)(3)
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-101, Admission of  
Students; Location; Kindergarten Programs
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-301, Compulsory  
Attendance
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 7-305, Suspension and  
Expulsion
  - COMAR 13A.06.02, Prekindergarten Programs
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.02, Age of School Attendance
  - COMAR 13A.08.01.11C.(8), Disciplinary Action
  - COMAR 13A.08.05, Informal Kinship Care
  - McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B COMAR 13A.05.09,  
Programs for Homeless Children
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 5200 Pupil Transportation
  - Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas
  - Policy 8010 Grading and Reporting: Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8

Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular  
Activities  
Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities  
Policy 9200 Student Discipline  
Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth

- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
  - Kindergarten Waiver
  - Multi-Family Disclosure
  - Student Reassignment Request form

### **VIII. History**

ADOPTED: July 24, 1980  
REVIEWED:  
MODIFIED:  
REVISED: November 14, 1991  
May 21, 1998  
October 27, 2005  
March 12, 2009  
May 9, 2013  
March 8, 2018  
EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2018

**STUDENT RESIDENCY, ELIGIBILITY,  
ENROLLMENT AND ASSIGNMENT**

Effective: July 1, 2018

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**I. Definitions**

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Home Instruction – The education of children at home typically by parents or tutors, rather than in other formal settings of public or private school.
- B. Unaccompanied Youth – A homeless student not in the physical custody of a parent.

**II. General Enrollment Procedures**

- A. A student will be registered by a parent who has established bona fide residence in Howard County. The following documentation will be presented at the time of registration. All documents will be originals. (Exceptions are made for homeless students; see Policy 9300, Homeless Children and Youth.)

- 1. Proof of student's date of birth

Acceptable documents include a birth certificate, hospital or physician's certificate, church/baptismal certificate, passport/visa, or parent's affidavit.

- a. Age for admission to public schools has been established by the state. A child must be:
    - i. Four years old by September 1 to attend prekindergarten.
    - ii. Five years old by September 1 to attend kindergarten.
    - iii. Six years old by September 1 to attend first grade.
  - b. Application for exception to the age requirement may be made under the provisions of Sections IV.C. and IV.D. below.
- 2. Additional documentation of completion of an approved kindergarten program for a student enrolling in first grade (see Section IV.B. below).

3. Proof of parent identity

Acceptable documents are driver's license with photograph, passport/visa, Motor Vehicle Administration identification, or other legal form of photographic identification.

4. Proof of parental relationship or custody

- a. Acceptable documents include birth certificates that identify the parents, court orders, separation or divorce decrees. In cases of deployment a military power of attorney is acceptable. Individuals seeking to rely on foreign court decrees, orders, and/or judgments will have them enrolled as a foreign decree in a Howard County court.
- b. In cases of separation or divorce, when primary physical custody has been awarded, documents regarding the bona fide residence will reflect that of the parent with primary physical custody unless a modification of the custody order is provided. Court orders or parent statements notarized by both parents can be used as proof of the modification of a custody agreement, for the purposes of this policy.
- c. If parents who are separated or divorced have joint legal custody with no primary custody designated, documents regarding the bona fide residence will reflect that of the parent with whom the student lives for a majority of time.
- d. Parent name(s) on proof of identity document(s) will be consistent with the name(s) on document(s) providing proof of custody.

5. Proof of emancipation when applicable

6. Proof of current student immunization

- a. Parents are responsible for providing proof of immunization to the school prior to the student attending. Proof of an appointment for necessary immunizations within 20 calendar days may be acceptable.
- b. In certain cases, exemptions to student immunizations may occur. Proof of exemption will be presented as:
  - i. A medical contraindication (exemptions for specific immunizations) form, signed by a physician.
  - ii. A lost or destroyed record statement signed by a parent. Proof of measles and rubella immunization by a blood test must be presented. Revaccination may be required.

- iii. A religious exemption statement signed by a parent.
  - iv. Lack of documentation due to homeless status.
7. Proof of residency
- a. Homeowners must provide a deed or a deed of trust that has all required signatures, along with any one of the following issued within the previous 45 days of registration: a cable television or internet service bill, bill for land line telephone, gas and electric bill, or current water and sewer bill. If a home was just purchased and no deed is available, signed settlement papers may be submitted. Within 30 days of enrollment, the parent will submit a deed or a deed of trust with all required signatures.
  - b. Renters will provide an original, current lease with all required signatures, along with a gas and electric bill, or water and sewer bill issued within the previous 45 days of registration. If utilities are included in the rent payments, as stipulated in the rental agreement, a cable television or internet service bill, or bill for a landline telephone issued within the previous 45 days of registration may be substituted.
  - c. Shared housing – See Multiple Family Determination (Section III.C.).
- B. The full registration process only needs to be completed once when enrolling in the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), not when students change schools or levels. However, proof of residency must be submitted if a student changes schools within the HCPSS due to a residency change or if there is cause to suspect that a change in residency has occurred.
- C. The International Student Registration Center (ISRC) will support registration processes when:
- 1. Parents need language support and there is no liaison that speaks the parent's language to assist with registration at the school.
  - 2. The student's primary language is one other than English as determined by the language survey on the HCPSS registration form and the student has been in a U.S. school for less than two years from the current calendar date (grades 1–12 only).
  - 3. The student is of high school age with a foreign transcript.
- D. If there is a question about the accuracy or completeness of the enrollment information, or if the parent cannot provide all of the required information, a Pupil Personnel Worker will be contacted to assist in completing the enrollment process.

- E. Pupil Personnel Workers will investigate suspected fraudulent residency or custody documentation. If documents used to establish enrollment are determined to be fraudulent, the school principal/designee will notify the parent in writing of the intent to withdraw the child(ren).
- F. Appeals of decisions to withdraw students based on fraudulent residency or custody documents will be addressed to the Superintendent/Designee. Appeals must be filed within ten (10) school days of the date of the letter notifying the parent(s) of withdrawal. Students may remain in their current school pending a decision of the appeal.
- G. If a student is in state supervised care (including foster care), enrollment procedures are governed by COMAR 13A.08.07. Students in state supervised care will be enrolled by the assigned Pupil Personnel Worker.

### **III. Enrollment Responsibilities of Pupil Personnel Workers**

#### **A. Investigation**

At the request of a school administrator, the Office of Pupil Personnel will investigate the residency or custody status when a student seeks to meet enrollment or eligibility requirements or when there is cause to suspect an unreported change in residency or an enrollment that does not satisfy the criteria of this policy, and will report the findings. The Office of Pupil Personnel will utilize the services of the School Security Office for record searches, investigative follow-up, or other actions necessary to residency investigations.

#### **B. Hardship**

When seeking enrollment for a student under the hardship provisions described below, the parent or potential caregiver may be required to provide documented evidence of hardship subsequent to the student's immediate enrollment in school. The assigned Pupil Personnel Worker will meet with the parent and/or caregiver to complete the appropriate enrollment forms.

1. Informal Kinship Care – A nonresident student whose parent(s) are residents of the state of Maryland and are currently experiencing a hardship may be eligible for Informal Kinship Care enrollment. The relative who is assuming kinship care responsibilities must be a resident of Howard County. Applicable tuition costs may be reimbursed by the Maryland school system of origin. The hardships considered under this provision are:
  - a. Death or serious illness of a parent.
  - b. Drug addiction of parent.
  - c. Incarceration of parent.



- d. Abandonment by parent.
  - e. Active military deployment of parent.
2. The following procedures are required of the relative providing informal kinship care in order to complete and maintain an Informal Kinship Care Enrollment:
- a. The relative will provide evidence of bona fide residence.
  - b. The relative will verify the informal kinship care relationship through a sworn affidavit and provide documentation of hardship to the Office of Pupil Personnel upon request. A new affidavit and supporting documentation will be provided each year at least two weeks before the beginning of the school year.
  - c. The relative will notify the Office of Pupil Personnel, in writing, within 30 days of any change that occurs in the care of the student or in the serious family hardship of the student's parent.
  - d. The relative providing informal kinship care will make the full range of educational decisions for the student. The parent of the student in an informal kinship care relationship will have the final decision-making authority regarding the educational needs of the student.
  - e. The Office of Pupil Personnel may verify the facts given by the relative providing informal kinship care. If fraud or misrepresentation is discovered during an audit, the student will be withdrawn from the HCPSS. Any person who willfully makes a material misrepresentation in the affidavit will be subject to a penalty payable to the HCPSS for three times the pro rata share of tuition for the time the student fraudulently attends an HCPSS school.
3. Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student – A nonresident student whose parents reside outside of the state of Maryland and are currently experiencing a hardship may be eligible for Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student status enrollment. The adult relative who is assuming caregiver status must be a resident of Howard County. The hardships considered under this provision are:
- a. Child abuse or neglect.
  - b. Death or serious illness of a parent.
  - c. Incarceration of parent.
  - d. Abandonment by parent.

- e. Active military deployment of parent.

Procedures for Caregiver for Non-Maryland Resident Student Status enrollment (see Section III.B.1. above) are similar to those for establishing and maintaining an Informal Kinship Care enrollment, but may require additional documentation.

### C. Multiple Family Determination

Guest families residing with host families may establish residency through the completion of the Multiple Family Disclosure form.

#### 1. Multiple Family Determination with Hosts Leasing a Property

- a. Guest families living with host families who are leasing a property will complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form at a meeting with the school's Pupil Personnel Worker. One member of both the guest and host family will attend. The host and guest must each bring photo identification for the purpose of notarization. The representative of the host family must be listed on the lease as a leaseholder.
- b. The host family will provide an original, current lease with all required signatures, along with a gas and electric bill, or water and sewer bill issued within the previous 45 days. If utilities are included in the rent payments, as stipulated in the rental agreement, a cable television or internet service bill or bill for a landline telephone issued within the previous 45 days of registration may be substituted.
- c. Guest families will provide two proofs of residency within 14 days of enrollment, including but not limited to a pay stub, Post Office change of address label, credit card statement, tax statement, or bank statement. Any other official mail documents not listed are subject to approval by the assigned Pupil Personnel Worker.
- d. Guest families who are able to have their names and the names of their children added to the lease of the host family are considered occupants/tenants and are not required to complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form.

#### 2. Multiple Family Determination with Hosts Owning a Property

- a. Guest families living with host families who own a home will complete a Multiple Family Disclosure form at a meeting with the school's Pupil Personnel Worker. One member of both the guest and host family must attend. The host and guest will each bring photo identification for the purpose of notarization. The representative of the host family will be listed on the deed as an owner.

- b. The host will provide a deed or a deed of trust that has all required signatures, along with any one of the following issued within the previous 45 days of registration: cable television or internet service bill, bill for land line telephone, gas and electric bill, or current water and sewer bill. If a home was just purchased and no deed is available, signed settlement papers may be submitted. Within 30 days of enrollment, the host must submit a deed or a deed of trust with all required signatures.
- c. Guests will provide two proofs of residency within 14 days, including but not limited to a pay stub, Post Office change of address label, credit card statement, tax statement, or bank statement.

3. General Conditions of Multiple Family Determination

- a. All guest families will provide updated proofs of residency annually for as long as the multiple family living situation continues. Failure to provide updated proofs of residency will result in the students of that guest family being withdrawn from school.
- b. Multiple family enrollments are subject to investigation at any time. A finding that falsified information was used to establish a multiple family enrollment will result in the student(s) of the guest family being withdrawn from school. Tuition will be charged from the first date of entry to the date of withdrawal.
- c. Decisions to withdraw students based on false claims of multiple family enrollment may be appealed to the Superintendent/Designee within 10 school days of the notification of withdrawal.

D. Homelessness

A student who is homeless will be enrolled by a Pupil Personnel Worker (see Policy 9300 Homeless Children and Youth).

E. Foster Care

A student in a foster care placement will be enrolled by a Pupil Personnel Worker.

**IV. Additional Considerations for Enrollment in Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade**

A. Prekindergarten

Prekindergarten is provided to any child who meets first priority criteria and whose parents seek enrollment. When space allows, as determined by the Superintendent/Designee per countywide enrollment projections, additional children who meet second priority criteria may be enrolled.

1. First priority category includes students who are either:
  - a. Income eligible.
  - b. Homeless.
  - c. In foster care.
2. Second priority category includes students who are either:
  - a. English Language Learners.
  - b. Have health concerns.
  - c. Have a history of receiving other services (Child Find, special education, social services).
  - d. Have a family history of learning difficulties.
3. Children with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) may attend prekindergarten programs as determined through the IEP process, even if income and/or age requirements are not met.
4. Registration/enrollment for prekindergarten occurs at the designated school site. An application will be submitted by parents, including documentation needed to verify eligibility. Upon determination of eligibility, the student may be enrolled.
5. Parents may apply for the Learning Together Program, a fee-based, inclusive educational opportunity that has a limited number of spaces available for children without disabilities who are not of school-age. Children who attend this program must meet the minimum age requirement when entering kindergarten.

B. Transfers

1. A student may not transfer from a nonpublic kindergarten during the kindergarten year unless the student meets the minimum age requirement for admission to the HCPSS kindergarten program.
2. A student may transfer from a public kindergarten in another state during the kindergarten year regardless of age. Close monitoring of progress will occur if the student was not five years old by September 1.
3. A student who meets the age requirements and is transferring from a private school or from another jurisdiction to enroll in first grade will provide

documentation to show that the mandatory kindergarten attendance requirement was met by one of the following options:

- a. Completion of a kindergarten educational program in a public or nonpublic (approved or church-exempt) program.
  - b. Regular attendance in an alternative program setting (full time in a licensed child care center or registered family day care home, or part-time in a Head Start 5-year-old program).
  - c. Supervised home instruction that has been registered with the HCPSS Office of Home Instruction.
4. A student transferring from another state after successful completion of a public kindergarten program may enroll in first grade pending receipt of school records, regardless of age. Close monitoring of progress will occur if the student was not six years old by September 1.
  5. If a child has not met the mandatory kindergarten requirement but is of age to attend first grade, the school team will utilize grade-appropriate assessments to determine the best placement.

C. Deferred Admission

A child whose parents believe that a delay in school attendance is in his or her best interest may be exempted from mandatory school attendance for one year. The parents must file the Kindergarten Waiver form to the Superintendent/Designee.

1. Following the one-year waiver, a child must be registered for kindergarten.
2. If a student is enrolled in kindergarten but the parent feels that it is in the best interest of the student to be withdrawn from kindergarten, the parent may file the Kindergarten Waiver form for a waiver in order to delay kindergarten attendance until the following school year.
3. Children for whom admission to kindergarten has been deferred are not eligible for prekindergarten, except in cases when the child's development is severely delayed and a decision is made by the Superintendent/Designee that prekindergarten may be a more appropriate placement than kindergarten.
4. The request for delay or withdrawal will be approved or denied in writing within five (5) working days from the date of its receipt.

D. Early Admission

Children whose birth dates miss the established deadline for school attendance may have educational needs or demonstrated capabilities that warrant early admission to prekindergarten, kindergarten or first grade. Early admission is open only to children whose birthdays fall within a six-week window of the established deadline by the state of Maryland, specifically between September 2 and October 13, inclusive. Students born on or after October 14 are not eligible for early admission under any circumstances. All early admission placements will be made before the start of the school year. Other eligibility requirements differ depending on the grade level:

1. Early admission for prekindergarten may be warranted if a child demonstrates a need for early education which is defined by at-risk developmental factors that critically impact potential success in kindergarten.
  - a. Early admission to prekindergarten is available only to children who are economically disadvantaged or homeless or in foster care.
  - b. Parents may obtain information and application packets, March through June, from the Office of Early Childhood Programs.
  - c. Applications require inclusion of one developmental screening tool to be completed by the parent(s) and one developmental screening tool to be completed by a teacher or if a teacher is unavailable, a non-related adult knowledgeable about the child. All information will be submitted to the Office of Early Childhood Programs between April 1 and the last business day in June.
  - d. The Office of Early Childhood Programs will review application materials and results and make a decision regarding eligibility for admission by the end of July. Parents will be notified of the decision in writing. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/Designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
  - e. Families who move into Howard County from another state after the application window may apply for early admission to prekindergarten using the above procedures up until the end of the business day one week prior to the start of the school year.
  - f. Students who are eligible for early admission to prekindergarten may have to wait for placement, which is dependent upon available space at the start of the school year.
  - g. Students granted early admission to prekindergarten may be

considered for promotion to kindergarten after successful completion of prekindergarten.

2. Early admission to kindergarten may be warranted for children who display an exceptionally high degree of academic, social, emotional and physical readiness to attend kindergarten.
  - a. Parents may obtain information and application packets, January through March, from their designated school or on the HCPSS website.
  - b. Applications require inclusion of one developmental checklist to be completed by the parent(s) and one checklist to be completed by a teacher or if unavailable, a non-related adult knowledgeable about the child. All information should be submitted to the Office of Early Childhood Programs between February 1 and the last business day in March.
  - c. Students for whom completed applications are received will be assessed by the HCPSS using a standardized process.
  - d. The Office of Early Childhood Programs will review application materials and make a decision regarding admission by the end of May. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/Designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
  - e. For families who move into Howard County from another state after the application window, the kindergarten early admission procedures will be extended to the end of the business day one week prior to the first day of school.
3. Early admission to first grade may be warranted for students who display an exceptionally high degree of academic, social, emotional and physical readiness and who have completed kindergarten in a Maryland state-approved program.
  - a. Parents may obtain information and application packets, January through March, from their designated school or on the HCPSS website.
  - b. Applications require inclusion of one developmental checklist to be completed by parent(s) and one developmental checklist to be completed by a kindergarten teacher. All information should be submitted to the designated school between March 1 and the last business day in May.
  - c. Once a completed application is received, a student will be evaluated by a trained assessor using a standardized process at the student's designated school.

- d. The school administration will review application materials and make a decision regarding admission before the end of the school year. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision. Parents may appeal the decision to the appropriate Superintendent/Designee within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of notification.
  - e. For parents who move to Howard County from another Maryland county after the application window, the first grade early admission procedures will be extended to the end of the business day one week prior to the first day of school.
  - f. A child who has not attended kindergarten, or one who has attended a private program that is not Maryland state-approved, will first enroll in kindergarten. During that placement, the student will be observed and assessed to determine if acceleration to first grade is necessary (per Policy 8010 Grading and Reporting: Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade 8).
4. Student admission under the early admission process is subject to a 30-calendar day trial period. Parents of students for whom continuation is not recommended will be notified in writing at the end of the trial period. Parents may appeal the decision of non-continuation to the appropriate Superintendent/Designee within ten (10) calendar days after receipt of the non-continuation notice.

**V. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents**

- A. Parents requesting reassignment of students will submit the Student Reassignment Request form, with appropriate supporting documentation, to the Superintendent/Designee for Residency and Reassignment.
- B. The Superintendent/Designee will approve or deny the request based on the provisions of this policy.
- C. While the application is pending, the student will remain in attendance in the student's assigned/designated school.

**VI. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents under Standard M. (Open School Designation-General)**

All schools will have attendance areas determined by the Board. A student attending public schools in Howard County will attend the designated schools serving the attendance area in which their parents have bona fide residence unless reassignment is granted or administrative placement occurs. In the event that the Board identifies schools that are open to enrollment by students not living in the schools' attendance area, student reassignment may be initiated by parents in accordance with the following procedures:



- A. Parents requesting reassignment to an open school will submit the form, Request for Student Reassignment, during a designated period, to the Superintendent/Designee.
- B. In any school(s) where there are more applicants than openings, a lottery will be conducted.
  - 1. The lottery will be administered by the Superintendent/Designee.
  - 2. A timeline will be established which includes: announcement of the lottery, the lottery registration window, the date on which the lottery will be held, and deadlines for selected students to exercise their options.
  - 3. Each student's name will be given a number. The affected parents and students will be invited to attend an open meeting at which the lottery is held. Numbers will be drawn to fill the available slots in the open enrollment school. Additional numbers will be drawn to establish a list of alternates.
  - 4. In the event that students selected by the lottery do not exercise their option by the established lottery deadline, alternates will be extended the option in the order drawn until a given deadline or until the number of available slots is filled, whichever comes first.
- C. If no lottery is necessary, the Superintendent/Designee will approve or deny the request.
- D. Students reassigned under this provision will be ineligible for participation in interscholastic athletics for a period of one year, effective the day of transfer.

**VII. Student Reassignment Initiated by Parents under Standard N. (Open School Designation-Directed)**

In the event that the Board identifies schools with a programmatic initiative that are open to enrollment by students not living in the programmatic initiative schools' attendance area, student reassignment may be initiated by parents in accordance with the procedures described in Section VI.A-C of these implementation procedures. When conducting the lottery, sibling information will be taken into account.

**VIII. Administrative Placements into the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC)**

For admission to the JROTC program:

- A. Students whose designated school offers a JROTC program are eligible to enroll in the JROTC program at their designated school. Students who do not have a JROTC program offered at their designated school are eligible to apply to any JROTC program of interest.

- B. Applications must be received by the established deadlines.
- C. Students who transfer into the school system during the school year or during the summer months and were not in a JROTC program, may apply by the established deadline for the following school year.
- D. Students who transfer into the school system during the summer months, or during the school year and were in a JROTC program, are eligible to apply if a favorable recommendation is received from the previous JROTC instructor and space is available in the program to which the student is applying.
- E. Decisions regarding acceptance into the JROTC program and school placement are made by the program leader and administrative staff at each school.
- F. Exceptions may be made if the JROTC program is at risk for being eliminated due to low enrollment.

**IX. Administrative Placements into a Programmatic Initiative Specified by the Superintendent**

One or more schools may be identified by the Superintendent to house various programmatic initiatives.

- A. The Superintendent will identify the schools whose students are eligible to apply for admission into the programmatic initiative.
- B. Decisions regarding acceptance into the programmatic initiative will be made by the Superintendent/Designee.
- C. The Superintendent/Designee will establish a process for determining acceptance into the programmatic initiative and administrative placement when multiple schools house the programmatic initiative.
- D. Completed applications from students attending schools identified in Section IX.A. must be received by the established deadline.

**X. History**

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