

PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE TITLE: ADMISSION AND ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: June 21, 2018	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: August 12, 2021	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY:		

I. Purpose and Scope

To establish procedures for admitting students into the Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) and assigning them to school attendance areas.

II. Definitions

- A. **Caretaker** means a person who is domiciled in Harford County and with whom a child resides who has a bona fide non-educational reason to reside with the caretaker.
- B. **Child** means a person under the age of eighteen (18) who is not fully emancipated.
- C. **Conditional Admission** means the enrollment of a prospective student subject to the submission by the parent or prospective student, within 45 days of enrollment, of required proof of domicile documentation. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of the student.
- D. **Domicile** means the place of residence of a person with an intent to continue to reside there and which is his or her true, fixed permanent home, habitation and principal establishment without any present intention of moving therefrom. It does not include a temporary or superficial residence established for the purpose of free school attendance in HCPS.
- E. **Emancipated Student** means a prospective student who is under the age of 18 and has been declared emancipated by a court.
- F. **Foreign Exchange Student** means a prospective student who holds a J-1 Visa and is under an approved exchange program.
- G. **Foster Home** means a family home in which a child is placed by a licensed public or private agency or by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- H. **Homeless Student** means a student lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as set forth in COMAR 13A.05.09.02B4.

- I. **Informal Kinship Care** means a living arrangement in which a 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 parent/guardian of the child must be a Maryland resident and the caregiver must be a resident of Harford County.
- J. **International Student** means a prospective student without U.S. citizenship.
- K. **Parent** means any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for a child:
1. **Biological parent** means a person legally identified as the natural parent and who has not had parental rights terminated.
 2. **Adoptive parent** means a person who has legally adopted a child.
 3. **Custodian** means a person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of a child.
 4. **Guardian** means a person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of a child.
 5. **Caretaker** means a person who is domiciled in Harford County and with whom a child resides who has a bona fide non-educational reason to reside with the caretaker.
 6. **Foster parent** means 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 section 5-507 of the Family Law Article.
- L. **Prospective Student** means a child, emancipated child, or individual under the age of 22 who seeks enrollment in HCPS.

III. Procedures

- A. Admissions Standards
1. A prospective student who has not obtained a Maryland high school diploma, an equivalent out-of-state diploma, a GED, or completed the requirements for a Maryland high school certificate of completion and is under the age of 22 shall be

admitted into HCPS without the payment of tuition under any of the following circumstances:

- a.. The child is residing with a parent or legal guardian who is domiciled in Harford County.
 - b. The individual is eighteen (18) years of age or emancipated pursuant to Maryland law and is domiciled in Harford County.
 - c. The child is in, or is entering his or her senior year of high school, attended a HCPS school the previous school year tuition-free, whose parents moved outside of the county, and continues to-live in Harford County.
 - d. The child has been placed in a foster home or residential facility in Harford County by a state agency, a child placement agency licensed under Section 5-507 of the Family Law Article of the Maryland Code, or pursuant to an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.
 - e. The child lives with a caretaker who is domiciled in Harford County.
 - f. The child was previously domiciled in Maryland with the child's parent, and lives with a relative providing informal kinship care in Harford County pursuant to Section 7-101 of the Education Article.
 - g. A foreign exchange student who-will be living in the USA for one year of high school study through an approved exchange program and who resides with an authorized host family which is domiciled in Harford County.
 - h. Homeless/Unaccompanied homeless students shall be admitted to HCPS in accordance with applicable law, regulation, and Board policy.
 - i. When a child or individual is otherwise permitted by law, regulation, or Board Policy to attend HCPS without the payment of tuition.
2. Prospective Students Not Within the Scope of III.A.
- a. Prospective students who do not come within the scope of III. A. above may be admitted into HCPS only:

- (1) Upon written approval of the Superintendent/Designee; and,
- (2) Upon receipt of payment of tuition by the person legally responsible for such child or individual, unless such payment is waived in whole or in part by the Superintendent/Designee due to extenuating circumstances.

B. General Admission Procedures

1. The school shall make photographic duplicates of all required documentation described in III.B.2. at the time of registration.
2. The following documentation must be presented, in original form, at the time of registration.
 - a. Proof of prospective student's date of birth.
Acceptable documents are:
 - (1) Birth certificate
 - (2) Hospital or physician's certificate
 - (3) Church/baptismal certificate
 - (4) Passport, or birth registration.
 - (5) Parent Affidavit of Birth approved by PPW.
 - b. Proof of parent identity. Acceptable documents are:
 - (1) Driver's license with photograph
 - (2) Passport
 - (3) Motor Vehicle Administration identification
 - (4) Other legal form of photographic identification.
 - c. Proof of parental relationship or custody (as applicable).
Acceptable documents are:
 - (1) Birth certificate that identifies the parents
 - (2) Court order
 - (3) Separation or divorce decree
 - (4) Other legal identification.
 - d. In third party custody or guardianship cases, a signed court order awarding full or sole legal and physical custody to the adult who is intending to enroll the prospective student in HCPS.

- e. Proof of current prospective student immunization
- f. Student's social security number (requested but not required)
- g. Proof of domicile
 - (1) When registering for admission into any Harford County Public School, proof is required that the prospective student and parent are domiciled in Harford County.
 - (2) The following documents are required:
 - (a) A current monthly utility bill (turn off notices not accepted)* – internet, cable, landline, gas and electric (usage detail page required);
OR
 - (b) Homeowner's Deed, most recent mortgage payment*, signed settlement agreement, or current signed lease agreement, signed by the parent as the lessee, plus one (1) of the following documents is required.
 - (i) Pay stub*
 - (ii) W-2 form
 - (iii) Car, Homeowner, or Renter's Insurance Declaration page
 - (iv) Government or official correspondence
 - (v) Change of address card from MVA or Post Office
 - (vi) Credit Card Statement*
 - (vii) Cell Phone Bill*

* These documents must be dated within 30 days from date of enrollment.

- 3. In cases in which the school questions the accuracy or completeness of the enrollment information or if the parent cannot provide all of the necessary information, the parent is directed to contact the school's Pupil Personnel Worker ("PPW") to assist with the admission process.

4. On-site Domiciliary Verification
 - a. Domiciliary investigation by the PPW can be used in special circumstances where limited or no documentation is available to establish proof of domicile.
 - b. The PPW will conduct an on-site domicile inspection and complete the Domiciliary Verification Form.

- C. Termination of Admission
 1. If a violation of this procedure is suspected, the school should contact the PPW to investigate.
 2. If the parent or prospective student is found to be noncompliant with any aspect of this enrollment procedure or documents are found to be fraudulent, the PPW shall issue a letter of withdrawal giving the opportunity for appeal to the Director of Student Services within ten (10) school days of the date of issuance.

- D. Special Hardship Admissions
 1. Informal Kinship Care
 - a. The relative providing informal kinship care must provide evidence of domicile in Harford County.
 - b. The relative verifies the informal kinship care relationship through a sworn affidavit and provides documentation of hardship to the school PPW. A new affidavit and supporting documentation must be provided each year prior to the start of the school year.
 - c. One or more of the following shall be considered as serious family hardship, for purpose of enrollment under the informal kinship care provision:
 - (1) Death of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (2) Serious illness of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (3) Drug addiction of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (4) Incarceration of father/mother/legal guardian

- (5) Abandonment by father/mother/legal guardian
 - (6) Assignment of father/mother/legal guardian to active military duty
- d. The relative must notify the PPW in writing within 30 days, if any change occurs in the care of the student or in the serious family hardship of the student's parent.
 - e. The relative providing informal kinship care shall make the full range of educational decisions for the student. The parent of a student in an informal kinship care relationship shall have the final decision-making authority regarding the educational needs of the student.
 - f. The PPW may verify the facts given by the relative providing informal kinship care. If fraud or misrepresentation is discovered during an audit, the student shall be withdrawn from HCPS. Any person who willfully makes a material misrepresentation in the affidavit shall be subject to a penalty payable to HCPS in the amount of the pro-rated share of tuition for the time the student fraudulently attends a public school in the county.
2. Caretaker Admissions
- a. Caretakers must provide evidence of domiciliary in Harford County.
 - b. Caretakers and, if available, the parent, must verify that they are providing care to the student by completing a Responsibility of Caretakers form. The Responsibility of Caretakers form and documentation of hardship must be provided to the school's PPW at the time of application.
 - c. Supporting documentation of continuing hardship must be provided each year prior to the start of the school year.
 - d. One or more of the following shall be considered as serious family hardship, if applicable to either parent/guardian, after exploring the availability of the second parent for purposes of enrollment under this provision:
 - (1) Death of father /mother/legal guardian
 - (2) Serious illness of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (3) Drug addiction of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (4) Incarceration of father/mother/legal guardian
 - (5) Abandonment by father/mother/legal guardian

- (6) Assignment of father/mother/legal guardian to active military duty
- (7) Child abuse or neglect
- (8) Physical or mental condition of father/mother/legal guardian such that he/she/they cannot provide adequately for the child's care and supervision
- (9) Financial circumstances of father/mother/legal guardian making it a hardship for him/her/them to provide for the child's care and supervision
- (10) Medical or other conditions necessitate that a student lives in a home within Harford County

e. The following are not to be considered serious family hardships:

- (1) Presence in Harford County primarily for improved quality of education.
- (2) Presence in Harford County primarily because of adverse conditions in or dissatisfaction with the child's prior school system.
- (3) Parents/guardians placing the child with the caretaker for child care purposes.
- (4) Students sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason, refer to Section F. Homeless Students.

f. Caretakers must notify the PPW in writing within 30 days, if any change occurs in the care of the student or in the serious family hardship of the student's parent.

E. Multi-Family Living Arrangement

1. Guest families living with host families who rent or own a home in Harford County must submit a completed Multi-Family Affidavit to the school's PPW.
2. The host family must submit one of the following documents as evidence of residence in Harford County:
 - a. Signed Settlement Agreement/most recent mortgage payment
 - b. Current signed Lease Agreement
 - c. Most Recent Tax assessment
 - d. Most Recent County Tax records
 - e. Title/Deed establishing ownership of the dwelling in Harford County

- f. A current monthly utility bill (turn off notice is not accepted)* – internet, cable, landline, gas and electric (usage detail page required)
- g. Guest families must provide one additional proof of residency within 45 days, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Pay stub*
 - (2) W-2 form
 - (3) Car, Homeowner, or Renter's Insurance Declaration page
 - (4) Government or official correspondence
 - (5) Change of address card from MVA or Post Office
 - (6) Credit Card Statement *
 - (7) Cell Phone Bill*

* These documents must be dated within 30 days from date of enrollment.

- 3. All documents must bear the same name and address that is shown on the Multi-Family Affidavit.

F. Homeless/Unaccompanied Homeless Student

- 1. HCPS is subject to the requirements of the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001.
- 2. Principals or their designees shall immediately refer homeless children and unaccompanied homeless youth or those that appear to be homeless to the PPW.
- 3. Such students shall be immediately enrolled pursuant to HCPS Administrative Procedure, *Implementation of Education of Homeless Children*.
- 4. Case management will be provided by the PPW.
- 5. Homeless students must be immediately enrolled even if they do not have required documents such as school records, medical records, and proof of residency. The school and PPW will assist in obtaining necessary records as quickly as possible.
- 3. If a dispute arises regarding the educational placement of a homeless student, the student must be immediately admitted to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

G. Other Bases for Admissions

- 1. Tuition

- a. Students whose parents reside outside Harford County and who are requesting admission on a tuition basis shall only be enrolled in HCPS upon written approval of the Superintendent/designee.
 - b. Tuition rates will be determined annually by the Finance Office.
 - c. Tuition is effective from the first day of attendance or the date upon which the student no longer resides in Harford County.
 - d. Tuition is payable in advance on a monthly, semester, or annual basis. Prorated rates or reimbursement will be made as appropriate.
 - e. For a student currently enrolled in HCPS but who has relocated outside of Harford County during student's final semester of the senior year or the final quarter of an undergraduate year, tuition is waived.
 - f. For a prospective student who is an international student and discloses B-1 (temporary visitor for business) or B-2 (temporary visitor for pleasure) status.
 - g. Prospective students possessing an F-1 visa (student) status are not permitted to enroll in HCPS.
 - h. Requests for revised payment schedules based on financial hardship may be submitted to the Director of Student Services, along with supporting documented evidence.
 - i. Except for students currently enrolled in HCPS, tuition requests:
 - (1) Will not be considered if the school the student would attend is over-utilized or experiencing any of the limiting factors as described in the *Administrative Guidelines for Evaluating Boundary Exception Requests Procedure*.
 - (2) Additionally, a prospective student's grades, behavior, and attendance will be taken into consideration when making a decision on a tuition placement request.
2. Foreign exchange students
- a. HCPS provides tuition free education to foreign exchange students who come to reside in Harford County with a host family for a maximum of one year if all the following conditions are met.
 - b. The exchange program organization is registered with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and authorized to process Form I-20 for the J-1 visa.

- c. Applicants must be enrolled in a secondary school in their country of residency, and must be between ages 15 and 18 (as of the beginning of the program) and have not completed more than eleven years of primary and secondary education (exclusive of kindergarten).
 - d. Students who have completed the equivalent of a high school program are not eligible for admission in HCPS.
 - e. The exchange program has made arrangements for the applicant to live with a host parent who is a bona fide resident of Harford County.
 - f. The period of enrollment may range from one full semester to a maximum of one academic year.
 - g. The applicant's current J-1 visa status and immunizations meet established legal and regulatory requirements.
 - h. Applicant is in good academic standing.
 - i. The applicant presents documentation which reflects positive behavior and the ability to adapt to a different school environment.
 - j. The receiving school is not over-utilized or experiencing any of the limiting factors as described in the *Administrative Guidelines for Evaluating Boundary Exception Requests Procedure*.
 - k. Applicant has the approval of the local school principal.
 - l. The host parent (s) must sign the Responsibility of Host Parents for Foreign Exchange Student form prior to the foreign student's enrollment in the local school.
 - m. Foreign exchange students who attend HCPS will not be eligible for a diploma. The student may participate in graduation exercises and receive a certificate in recognition of his/her foreign study.
 - n. Foreign exchange students are subject to all rules and discipline policies of HCPS.
 - o. In the event of a suspension of a foreign exchange student in which the Superintendent of Schools imposes a long-term suspension (i.e., eleven days or more) or expulsion, the foreign student's placement in HCPS will be reviewed by the Director of Student Services.
 - p. If, after review of the matter, the Director determines the placement is terminated, then the host parent and placing agency shall be notified promptly.
3. Agency placements
- a. A child who is placed into foster care by a Maryland state agency shall be admitted into HCPS via the local Student Services Office as provided below:

(1) A placement letter on agency letterhead documenting the child is in the care/custody of a Maryland State agency to include the foster care parent(s) name, address, and contact information.

(2) Above placement letter may be used in lieu of a proof of residency only if approved by a PPW and processed as "Other Affidavit".

(3) When an original birth certificate cannot be provided, HCPS will accept a letter from the placing agency case worker stating the reason it cannot be submitted and the good faith effort that they are in the process of obtaining one.

(4) Court order showing the child is in the care/custody of a Maryland state agency if available.

b. A child who is placed in a Harford County adoptive, foster, or group home as a child in an out-of-county / out-of-state arrangement as defined in §4-122 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The child may be admitted into HCPS via the local Student Services Office as provided below:

(1) The costs associated with the child's education shall be assessed against the Maryland school district determined to be financially responsible.

(2) Out of state placement agencies shall be liable for the payment of out of state tuition for the cost of the child's education, including transportation.

(3) A child who is placed for adoption in Harford County with the requisite documentation deemed acceptable by HCPS may be admitted to HCPS without the payment of tuition.

c. The PPW will be responsible for authorizing all enrollments under this category.

H. School Assignment

1. All schools will have designated attendance areas determined by the Board of Education.

2. Students admitted to school in Harford County are assigned to schools serving the school attendance area in which the parents are domiciled.

3. Students are required to attend the schools to which they have been assigned unless reassigned by the Superintendent/designee, or the student receives an approved boundary exception, or as otherwise permitted by law, regulation, or board policy.

I. Dispute Resolution

The following procedure shall be implemented to address disputes relating to this procedure.

1. The parents must file a written notice of appeal to the Director of Student Services within ten (10) school days of the withdrawal notice or within ten (10) school days of the notice of denial of a request of enrollment. The Director of Student services will make reasonable effort to issue a written decision within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the written appeal.
2. If the appeal is denied, the matter may be further appealed by filing a written notice of appeal to the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of the date of the decision of the residency liaison. The Superintendent or designee will make reasonable effort to issue a written decision within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the appeal.
3. If the Superintendent or superintendent's designee denies the appeal, the parent may appeal in writing to the Harford County Board of Education within thirty (30) calendar days pursuant to Education Article, Section 4-205(c) Annotated Code of Maryland.
4. If the student is enrolled in and currently is attending a public school in Harford County at the time that the parents timely file at each level of appeal, the student may remain in that school until the earlier of:
 - (a) A decision by the Board of Education of Harford County, or
 - (b) The exhaustion of all appeals, or

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(c) The end of the current school year

Approved By:



Sean W. Bulson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Procedure Action Dates					
ACTION DATE		ACTION DATE		ACTION DATE	
Adoption	06-21-2018	Amended	08-12-2021		
Amended	07-10-2018				
Amended	11-21-2018				
Amended	06-30-2020				

Responsibility for Procedure Maintenance & References	
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Mr. Bernard Hennigan	JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: Director of Student Services
PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Mr. Buzz Williams	JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE: Supervisor of Pupil Personnel
DESIGNEE NAME:	DESIGNEE POSITION:
PROCEDURE NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005:	

LEGAL REFERENCES¹

Section 7-101 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code

Section 4.122.1 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code

Additional references are set forth in the Procedure.

¹ All references are to specific federal or Maryland statutes or regulations. References are provided for convenience and informational purposes only and are not to be considered as exhaustive or as precluding Harford County Public Schools from relying upon any other statutes or regulations in support of a policy.