

## **ACPS STUDENT PLACEMENT REGULATIONS**

Alexandria City Public Schools attendance zones are established by the School Board. Students shall attend the school in the attendance zone in which they reside and/or to which they are assigned.

However, in limited circumstances, the school division provides student placement alternatives to parents/guardians. These include capacity reassignments, programmatic transfers, parent/guardian-requested administrative transfers, and placement consideration for siblings and military children.

The following guiding principles inform both Policy JC/JCD: Student Placement, and this regulation.

- ACPS supports students attending their boundary school even as it recognizes the need to create options to address rapidly increasing enrollments.
- ACPS supports stability and continuity in one school environment during a school year and to the extent possible throughout elementary school.
- ACPS supports small class sizes and reasonable school capacities.
- ACPS supports keeping siblings together whenever possible.
- ACPS recognizes the contributions made by military service personnel and will work to accommodate military children.

This regulation defines the procedures that are followed for student placement. In all cases, the Superintendent or authorized designee has the final approval authority in student placement decisions.

All students must be registered in their boundary school before alternative student placement can be requested or made.

### **I. Student Placement Alternatives**

#### **A. Capacity Reassignments**

Each year by April 1, the Superintendent will publicly present the projected number of students by school and by grade level for the following school year. The Superintendent and School Board will review proposed class size caps and the number of homeroom sections for each school at each grade level during the budget process each spring.

Under certain conditions listed in Policy JC/JCD, the Superintendent may place restrictions limiting the assignment of elementary students to a particular school or grade level based on capacity. If an enrollment limit for a grade level is reached, the Superintendent or authorized designee may reassign elementary students to the school closest to the student's residence where there is capacity. Because ACPS transportation resources and utilization impact

placement procedures, “school closest to the student’s residence” is determined by the shortest driving distance (mileage).

### **Guidelines**

- ACPS will provide transportation for all capacity reassignments.
- No student currently enrolled in a particular school will be reassigned due to capacity. (This does not apply to children who have moved during the school year and have only been granted an administrative transfer until the end of the year. In addition, it does not apply during Division-wide redistricting approved by the School Board.)
- Siblings of current students will be allowed to enroll in the school that their sibling attends even if class size caps are exceeded.
- Students who were reassigned due to capacity will be placed on a waiting list, according to reassignment date, to be given the option to return to the boundary school at the start of the following school year, should space become available.
- All students must be registered in their boundary school before alternative student placement can be made.

### **Kindergarten Lottery Procedures**

#### **Traditional Calendar Schools (TCS)**

On June 15, if the enrollment limit for kindergarten at a school has not reached capacity, everyone who has registered will be enrolled at that school for the following year.

If the limit has been exceeded at the kindergarten level, all of the new kindergarten parents/guardians making application will be polled to determine if any want to volunteer to have their child(ren) reassigned to the school closest to the student’s residence where there is capacity. If so, that request will be granted and transportation will be provided.

On or before July 1, all of the students with new applications will enter a lottery for random selection. Every student will be assigned a rank through the lottery (with siblings in the same grade having the same rank). Students will be placed in the boundary school until all slots are filled according to rank. The remainder will be reassigned to another school via a capacity reassignment.

Students who were reassigned due to capacity will be placed on a waiting list, according to rank, to be given the option to return to the boundary school at the start of the following school year, should space become available.

The Superintendent will develop an outreach program to encourage parents/guardians in all parts of the community to enroll their child(ren) before June 15. The Superintendent will develop procedures to simplify the registration process and to help parents/guardians meet all

requirements, including the possibility of extending deadlines for vaccinations and health records.

### **Modified Calendar Schools (MCS)**

On June 1, if the enrollment limit for kindergarten at a school has not reached capacity, everyone who has registered will be enrolled at that school for the following year.

If the limit has been exceeded at the kindergarten level, all of the new kindergarten parents/guardians making application will be polled to determine if any want to volunteer to have their child(ren) reassigned to the school closest to the student's residence where there is capacity. If so, that request will be granted and transportation will be provided.

On or before June 15, all of the students with new applications will enter a lottery for random selection. Every student will be assigned a rank through the lottery (with siblings in the same grade having the same rank). Students will be placed in the modified calendar school until all slots are filled according to rank. The remainder will be reassigned to another school via capacity reassignment.

Students who were reassigned due to capacity will be placed on a waiting list, according to rank, to be given the option to return to the boundary school at the start of the following school year, should space become available.

The Superintendent will develop an outreach program to encourage parents/guardians to enroll their child(ren) before June 1. The Superintendent will develop procedures to simplify the registration process and to help parents/guardians meet all requirements, including the possibility of extending deadlines for vaccinations and health records.

### **B. Programmatic Transfers**

Parents may request a transfer for their student based on designated school programs within ACPS. Designated school programs are the dual-language program at Mount Vernon, the dual-language program at John Adams, the K-8 program at Jefferson-Houston, and the modified calendar program at Samuel Tucker. These programs shall be primarily open to students living within the attendance zone. These schools will receive transfers from outside the attendance zone only if space is available for that year and grade level. Programmatic transfers are approved by the Superintendent or authorized designee.

As with all other categories of transfers, all students must be registered in their boundary school before a transfer may be requested.

If a programmatic transfer is approved, transportation services shall be provided.

Students who have received programmatic transfers may request to return to their boundary school at the start of the following school year. These requests will be granted if there is capacity at the requested grade level. Any requests received during the school year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**Entering a School Program from another Attendance Zone**

If the number of students seeking a programmatic transfer to a modified calendar program exceeds the available spaces at any grade level, then after June 15 all of the students with new programmatic transfer applications will enter a lottery for random selection. (See Table 1: Enrollment Procedure Deadlines)

If the number of students seeking programmatic transfers to other designated school programs exceeds the available spaces at any grade level, then after July 1, all of the students with new programmatic transfer applications will enter a lottery for random selection. (See Table 1: Enrollment Procedure Deadlines)

Every student will be assigned a rank through the lottery (with siblings in the same grade having the same rank). Students will be placed in the designated school program until all slots are filled according to rank. The remainder will continue to attend their boundary school. Not all designated school programs will be available in the lottery every year.

Siblings of students who have received programmatic transfers will be allowed to attend the sibling's school even if class size caps are exceeded.

**Dual-Language**

Given the sequential nature of the program and its alignment with instructional program requirements, students typically enter the dual-language program at kindergarten or first grade. Any student seeking admission to the dual-language program during grades 2-5 will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the student can fully access and participate in the appropriate grade-level dual-language curriculum.

Students who do not wish to participate in the dual-language program may participate in a traditional curriculum program if available at that school. If the school is dual-language only, the student may request a programmatic transfer to the school closest to the student's residence with capacity at that grade level.

Siblings of students who have received programmatic transfers will be allowed to attend the sibling's school even if class size caps are exceeded.

Transportation is provided for families opting in and out of this school program.

Students who have received programmatic transfers may request to return to their boundary school at the start of the following school year. These requests will be granted if there is capacity at the requested grade level. Any requests received during the school year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **K-8 Schools**

A K-8 school shall be primarily open to students living within the attendance zone. It will receive transfers from outside the attendance zone only if space is available at that grade level. Students may opt in to the K-8 school that is designated for their school attendance zone.

Elementary students attending a K-8 school may opt out beginning at grade 6, but not before. K-5 programming in a K-8 school is consistent with services offered in a traditional elementary school. Students will continue in that school through their middle school years unless they choose to attend their zoned, traditional middle school.

Siblings of students who have received programmatic transfers will be allowed to attend the sibling's school even if class size caps are exceeded.

Transportation is provided for families opting in and out of this school program.

Students who have received programmatic transfers may request to return to their boundary school at the start of the following school year. These requests will be granted if there is capacity at the requested grade level. Any requests received during the school year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Modified Calendar Program**

Modified calendar students attend the same number of days as included in the traditional calendar, but have the option of attending up to thirty additional days of school. The additional days are redistributed throughout the year so that students have the option to participate in extended learning during intersessions.

Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School operates on a modified school calendar. It shall be primarily open to students living within the attendance zone. It will receive transfers from outside the attendance zone only if space is available at that grade level.

Parents/guardians of students living in this attendance zone who do not want to attend a modified calendar school may request a programmatic transfer to the traditional calendar school closest to the student's residence with capacity at that grade level.

Siblings of students who have received programmatic transfers will be allowed to attend the sibling's school even if class size caps are exceeded.

Transportation is provided for families opting in and out of this school program.

Students who have received programmatic transfers may request to return to their boundary school at the start of the following school year. These requests will be granted if there is capacity at the requested grade level. Any requests received during the school year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **C. Administrative Transfers**

Parents may request an administrative transfer for their child(ren) based on exceptional student situations. An administrative transfer is the movement of a student from one school to another, based on a parent/guardian request and designated administrator approval that a student would benefit from a change in educational settings due to safety, health, or a or a temporary or mid-year housing change. Administrative transfers are approved by the Superintendent or authorized designee.

#### **Moves within the School Division**

A student who attends an ACPS school and whose family moves into another ACPS attendance zone after the school year begins will have the option of remaining in his/her current school for the duration of that school year only via administrative transfer. If the student remains in his/her current school, transportation will not be provided.

#### **Moves to Other School Divisions**

A fifth-grade student who attends an ACPS school and whose family moves to another school division during the fourth quarter will have the option of remaining in his/her current placement for the duration of the school year via administrative transfer. Further, a twelfth-grade student who attends an ACPS school and whose family moves to another school division after the second quarter will also have the option of remaining in his/her current placement for the duration of the school year. These exceptions are subject to the student remaining in good standing for behavior, attendance and academics. Transportation will not be provided.

Siblings of students who have received administrative transfers will be allowed to attend the sibling's school even if class size caps are exceeded.

Transportation is not provided for parent/guardian-requested administrative transfers. In rare circumstances, transportation may be provided after extensive review by the Superintendent or designee.

As with all other categories of transfers, all students must be registered in their boundary school before a transfer may be requested.

If approved, administrative transfers remain in place for the number of years spanned by that school, provided:

- The child demonstrates good attendance and punctuality in accordance with Policy JED.
- The child demonstrates appropriate behavior in school.

Should the principal, the Superintendent or the authorized designee determine that there are sufficient concerns about either of the two requirements above and that the student should return to his/her boundary school, the parent will be notified by May 1 of that year.

New transfers will be considered only for schools where there is capacity at that grade level.

The request for an administrative transfer must be submitted to the Department of Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity. Request forms can be accessed through the ACPS website or in the main offices of all ACPS schools.

Students who have received administrative transfers may request to return to their boundary school at the start of the following school year. These requests will be granted if there is capacity at the requested grade level. Any requests received during the school year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

#### **D. Exceptions**

##### **Placement of Military Children**

ACPS recognizes the contributions made by military service personnel and will work to accommodate military children as provided in the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#) (Va. Code [§ 22.1-360](#)). This will include placement at schools previously attended by a student prior to a change of station or in the boundary school where the military family may reside, even if class size caps are exceeded.

In further accordance with the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children and Policy JHCB, the children of military families shall have 30 days from the date of enrollment to obtain any required immunization(s). For a series of immunizations, initial vaccinations must be obtained within 30 days.

##### **The Sibling Rule**

Siblings of current students will be allowed to enroll in the school that their sibling attends even if class size caps are exceeded.

##### **Citywide Programs for Students with Disabilities**

Students enrolled in a citywide Specialized Instruction program resulting from IEP Team placement are not affected by this policy. These include programs for students with emotional disabilities (ED), intellectual disabilities (ID), multiple disabilities (MD), programs for students with autism (AUT), and early childhood special education (ECSE) programs.

## II. Appendix

### Glossary

**Boundary School:** The school a student is designated to attend according to his/her residency address and the ACPS School Board approved school zone boundaries.

**Current School:** The school a student is currently enrolled in unless otherwise indicated.

**Capacity Reassignments:** Reassignments made due to specific grade levels reaching capacity at the student's boundary school. Transportation is provided for all capacity reassignments.

**Programmatic Transfer:** Transfers to opt in or out of ACPS designated school programs (the dual-language program, the K-8 program and the modified calendar program). Transportation is provided for families opting in and out of school programs.

**Administrative Transfer:** Transfers from one school to another, based on a parent/guardian request and designated administrator approval that a student would benefit from a change in educational settings due to safety, health, or a housing change. Administrative transfers are approved by the Superintendent or authorized designee. Transportation is not provided for parent/guardian-requested administrative transfers. Exceptions will be made by the Superintendent in cases of student homelessness.

**Lottery:** The process used by ACPS when new student enrollment at a grade level or school exceeds available space. Each student is assigned a random number to determine priority placement.

**School Closest to the Student's Residence:** Because ACPS transportation resources and utilization impact placement procedures, this is determined by the shortest driving distance (mileage).



**Table 1: Enrollment Procedure Deadlines**

<b>Enrollment Procedure</b> (Superintendent projects enrollment for following school year (SY) by April 1)	<b>Parent/Guardian Application Deadline by:</b>	<b>ACPS Lottery Held by:</b>	<b>ACPS Notification/ Result to Parent/ Guardian by:</b>
<b>Notification that Administrative Transfer will be Rescinded</b> (for the following SY due to attendance/behavior violations)			May 1
<b>Modified Calendar School (MCS) Program Lottery</b> (if necessary)	June 1	June 15	July 1
<b>Other Designated School Program Lotteries</b> (if necessary)	June 15	July 1	August 1
<b>MCS Kindergarten Lottery</b> (Announced by June 1 if necessary)	N/A	June 15	July 1
<b>TCS Kindergarten Lottery</b> (Announced by June 15 if necessary)	N/A	July 1	July 15

**Table 2: Student Placement and Transportation**

<b>Placement Type</b>	<b>Transportation Provided for Student &amp; Siblings</b>
<b>Capacity Reassignment</b>	Yes
<b>Programmatic Transfer</b>	Yes
<b>Administrative Transfer</b>	No
<b>Administrative Transfer for Homeless Students</b>	Yes
<b>Citywide Programs for Students with Disabilities</b>	Yes

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Cross Refs.:	IHB	Class Size
	IHB-R	Regulations Pertaining to Class Size
	JC/JCD	Student Placement
	JCE	Redistricting Implementation
	JCE-R	Redistricting Implementation Regulations
	JED	Student Absences/Excuses/Dismissals
	JHCB	Student Immunizations