

## **ACPS STUDENT PLACEMENT REGULATIONS**

Alexandria City Public Schools creates attendance zones that are used to assign students to schools. Attendance zones are established by the School Board. Students attend their assigned school based on the attendance zone in which they reside. ACPS may reassign a student to a different school based on capacity.

The division provides student placement alternatives to parents/guardians. These include programmatic transfers, parent/guardian-requested administrative transfers, and placement consideration for siblings and military children.

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

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

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

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

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

In accordance with Policy JC/JCD, the Superintendent may place restrictions limiting the assignment of elementary students to a particular grade level at a school based on capacity. Because ACPS transportation resources and utilization impact placement procedures, schools are organized into capacity-reassignment clusters. If an enrollment limit for a grade level at a school is reached, the Superintendent or authorized designee may reassign elementary students to an alternate school in their capacity-reassignment cluster where there is capacity at that grade level.

#### **Guidelines**

- ACPS will provide transportation for all capacity reassignments in accordance with Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services.
- No student currently enrolled in a particular school will be reassigned due to capacity. This guideline 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, at which time the student will return to their new attendance zone school.
  - To children who have been reassigned due to capacity to another school and space becomes available at their attendance zone school.
  - During Division-wide redistricting approved by the School Board.
- Siblings of current students who are attending their attendance zone school will be allowed to enroll

in the school that their sibling attends even if class size caps are exceeded.

- Students who are reassigned due to capacity will be placed on a waiting list kept by their attendance zone school, according to their reassignment date. Twice a year, in the fall and in the spring/summer, ACPS will determine if there is space to return capacity reassigned students to their attendance zone school. If space is available, students on the waiting list will be reassigned back to their attendance zone school. The reassignment back to the attendance zone school occurs at winter break and at the start of the following school year. Students reassigned back to their attendance zone school at winter break who wish to remain at their current school for the remainder of the school year may request a deferral. If siblings have been capacity reassigned, they will be reassigned back to their attendance zone school only if there is space for all the reassigned siblings.
- All students must be registered in their attendance zone school before alternative student placement can be made.

### **Kindergarten Lottery Procedures**

If the kindergarten enrollment limit at a school has not been exceeded by the kindergarten capacity determination date (see Table 1: Enrollment Procedure Deadlines), everyone who has registered will be enrolled at that school for the following year.

If the kindergarten enrollment limit at a school has been exceeded by the kindergarten capacity determination date, all new kindergarten parents/guardians who have applied for enrollment will be polled to determine if any want to volunteer to have their child(ren) reassigned to a school in their capacity-reassignment cluster where there is capacity. If so, that request will be granted, and transportation will be provided.

If the kindergarten enrollment limit at a school has been exceeded after voluntary reassignments, all applicants for enrollment in kindergarten at the school will enter a lottery for random selection. Every applicant will be assigned a rank through the lottery (with sibling applicants in the same grade having the same rank). Applicants will be placed in the attendance zone school until all slots are filled according to rank. The remainder will be reassigned to another school in their capacity-reassignment cluster via a capacity reassignment.

### **B. Programmatic Transfers**

Parents may request a transfer for their student based on designated school programs within ACPS.

- Designated opt-in school programs are the dual-language program at Mount Vernon and the dual-language program at John Adams. These programs are 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.
- Designated opt-out school programs are the dual-language program at Mount Vernon and Grades 6-8 of the K-8 programs at Patrick Henry and Jefferson-Houston. Students who opt-out of the dual-language program at Mount Vernon will be reassigned to another school in the Mount Vernon capacity-reassignment cluster. Students who opt-out of Grades 6-8 of the K-8 programs

at Patrick Henry and Jefferson-Houston will be reassigned the comprehensive school in their cluster. Opt-out transfer must be related to the student's instructional needs.

- Programmatic transfers are approved by the Superintendent or authorized designee.

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

If a programmatic transfer is approved, transportation services will be provided in accordance with Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services.

Students who have received programmatic transfers may request to return to their attendance zone 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.

### **Programmatic Transfer Options**

The dual-language program is the only program designated to receive programmatic transfers.

#### **Dual-Language**

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

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 attendance zone school. Not all designated school programs will be available in the lottery every year.

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

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, students who opt-out will be reassigned to another school in their attendance zone school's capacity-reassignment cluster with capacity at the student's grade level.

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

Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services.

### **K-8 Schools**

Programmatic transfers are not accepted into the K-8 programs.

Students in Grades 6-8 may opt-out of the programs. Students who opt-out will be reassigned to the comprehensive school to their cluster. Opt-out transfer must be related to the student's instructional needs. Transportation is provided for families opting out of Grades 6-8 of the K-8 school programs in accordance with Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services.

### **Modified School Calendar**

Programmatic transfers are not accepted into or out of the Modified School Calendar program.

Siblings of current students who have received programmatic transfers will be allowed to attend the school while the current student receiving the programmatic transfer attends the school, even if class size caps are exceeded. Once the current student who has received the programmatic transfer transitions to another school, the sibling must return to their attendance zone school.

## **C. Administrative Transfers**

Parents/guardians 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 temporary or mid-year housing change. Administrative transfers are approved by the Superintendent or authorized designee.

### **Moves During the School Year Within the School Division**

A student who attends an ACPS school and whose family moves into another attendance zone after the start of the second semester will have the option of remaining in their current school, only for the duration of that school year, via administrative transfer. These exceptions are subject to the student remaining in good standing for attendance, academics, and behavior. Transportation will not be provided. At the start of the next school year, the student will attend their attendance zone school.

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

A student who attends an ACPS school, is in the highest grade offered by the school, and whose family moves to another school division during the fourth quarter, will have the option of remaining in their current placement for the duration of the school year via administrative transfer. In addition, a twelfth-grade student who attends an ACPS school and whose family moves to another school division after start of the second semester will also have the option of remaining in their current placement for the duration of the school year. These exceptions are subject to the student remaining in good standing for attendance, academics, and behavior. Transportation will not be provided.

Siblings of students who have received administrative transfers will be allowed to attend the school while the sibling receiving the administrative transfer remains at the school even if class size caps are exceeded. When the sibling receiving the administrative transfer transitions to a new school the sibling must return to their attendance zone school.

Transportation is generally 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 attendance zone school before a transfer may be requested.

Administrative transfers for temporary or mid-year housing change are in place for the remainder of the school year. The student must return to their attendance zone school, capacity reassigned school, or apply for a programmatic transfer for the next school year.

If approved, administrative transfers for reasons of health and safety 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 their attendance zone school, the parent will be notified by May 1 of that year.

New administrative 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 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 attendance zone 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 attendance zone 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. With the exception of the dual-language programmatic transfers, once the older sibling transitions to the next level of schooling, the younger sibling will return to their attendance zone school.

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

Students enrolled in a citywide Specialized Instruction program resulting from IEP Team placement are not affected by this regulation. 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**

**Attendance Zone School:** The school a student is designated to attend according to their residency address and the ACPS School Board approved school attendance zones.

**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.

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

**Cluster / Capacity-Reassignment Cluster:** Groups of schools organized by proximity and grade levels served.

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

**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.

**Programmatic Transfer:** Transfers to opt in or out of ACPS designated school programs according to the specific opt in or out rules of the program. Transportation is provided for programmatic transfers.

**Table 1: Enrollment Procedure Deadlines**

<b>Enrollment Procedure</b> (Superintendent projects enrollment for following school year (SY) by April 1)	<b>Date</b>	<b>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) Kindergarten Capacity Determination Date</b> (Enrollment applications due)	June 1	June 1
<b>Traditional Calendar School (TCS) Kindergarten Capacity Determination Date</b> (Enrollment applications due)	June 15	June 15
<b>MCS Kindergarten Lottery</b> (Announced by June 1 if necessary)	June 15	July 1
<b>TCS Kindergarten Lottery</b> (Announced by June 15 if necessary)	July 1	July 15
<b>Designated School Program Lotteries Applications Due</b>	June 15	July 1
<b>Designated School Program Lotteries</b> (if necessary)	July 1	August 1

**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 Students Experiencing Homelessness</b>	Yes*
<b>Citywide Programs for Students with Disabilities</b>	Yes*

\* In accordance with Policy EEA - Student Transportation Services.

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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