

# SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## District Policy

Article: 5000 Students

Title: Foster Students

Policy #: 5118

### STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

The Smyrna School District Board of Education (the “Board”) for the Smyrna School District (the “District”) intends to promote educational stability for students in foster care in accordance with State and Federal law. Students in foster care must be provided with access to free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided for other children and youth. In order to provide equal access, the district shall remove barriers that could cause students to be unable to access critical learning opportunities.

The District shall coordinate with other Districts, local child welfare agencies, and other agencies or programs providing services to students in foster care as needed. At least one staff member shall be designated to serve as the foster care education liaison and fulfill the duties set forth in State and Federal law. Designation of the District’s foster care liaison and procedures for enrollment and transportation for students in foster care shall be made in accordance with Delaware regulations and applicable law.

### Delegation of Responsibility

*Title 14 § 202A/Title 14 Admin Code 903*

The Board designates the Superintendent or designee to serve as the district's point of contact for children in foster care.

The district's point of contact shall coordinate with:

1. Local children and youth agency to:
  - a. Establish formal mechanisms to ensure that the district is promptly notified when a child enters foster care or changes foster care placements
  - b. Develop a protocol on how to make best interest determinations
  - c. Develop and coordinate transportation procedures
2. Other school districts on issues of transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities

### Guidelines

*Title 14 § 202A/Title 14 Admin Code 903*

#### Enrollment/Placement

A child in foster care shall continue to be enrolled in his/her school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his/her best interest to attend the school of origin.

#### Best Interest Determination:

The best interest determination shall be made in accordance with state laws and regulations, court orders, and established local procedures. In determining whether it is in a child’s best interest to remain in his/her school of origin, all factors relating to a child’s best interest shall be considered, including the appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of foster care placement.

Documentation related to the best interest determination shall be kept in the student’s education record.

#### Enrollment:

When a child in foster care is placed in the district and seeks enrollment in district schools, the district’s point of contact shall:

1. Ensure the child is immediately enrolled and attending school, even if the records normally required for enrollment pursuant to district policies are not available.
2. Immediately contact the school last attended by the child to obtain relevant academic and other records.

Dispute Resolution:

If a dispute arises over the appropriate school placement for a child in foster care, to the extent feasible and appropriate, the child shall remain in his/her school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute.

Student Who Has Exited Foster Care:

A student who exited foster care may be permitted to finish the school year in this district, if appropriate.

Transportation:

The district shall ensure that children in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin will promptly receive transportation in a cost-effective manner.

To ensure that transportation for children in foster care is provided, arranged, and funded, the district shall collaborate with the local children and youth agency to develop a local transportation plan.

The transportation plan shall address the following:

1. The procedure the district and local children and youth agency will follow to:
  - a. Promptly provide transportation for children in foster care
  - b. Promptly arrange transportation for children in foster care
  - c. Ensure transportation is funded in a cost-effective manner

Training

The district's point of contact for children in foster care shall provide professional development and training to school staff on foster care provisions and education needs of children in foster care, as needed.

No Board policy, administrative procedure, or practice will be interpreted or applied in such a way as to inhibit the enrollment, attendance, or school success of children experiencing foster care.

*Approved by Board of Education, April 21, 2021*