

Tupelo Public School District



EDUCATIONAL **STABILITY** *for* CHILDREN *in*
FOSTER CARE

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures used in the Tupelo Public School District to enroll, withdraw, and serve children placed under the care of the Mississippi Child Protection Service pursuant to the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Title I educational stability provisions.

Goal

Tupelo Public School District in collaboration with Lee County Division of Child Protection Services ensures that children placed in foster care have stability with regards to their education.

Mission

The Tupelo Public School District serves the community by engaging each student in an excellent education that develops skills and citizenship needed for success in a global society.

Definitions (with Roles and Responsibilities)

District Point of Contact (DPC) – the person designated by the Tupelo Public School District Superintendent to represent the District with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the district. The District Point of Contact will communicate directly with the Regional Director of Child Protective Services. It will be the responsibility of the DPC to ensure that school personnel receive training regarding foster care children and school stability and that district procedures related to these students are being followed. Other responsibilities include:

- Ensuring the children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attend school
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures
- Managing best interest determinations and transportation cost disputes

District Point of Contact: Ruth Baker 662 620-6193 rebaker@tupeloschools.com
(If unavailable, contact Federal Programs Director, Corlis Curry 840-8850
ccurry@tupeloschools.com)

School Point of Contact (SPC) – the person designated by the building level Principal to represent the school with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the school. In most schools, this will be the school counselor. The School Point of Contact will

communicate directly with the District Point of Contact. The School Point of Contact will ensure that any and all student records are obtained when a foster child enrolls in the local school and that any and all student records are provided to the Child Protective Service Case Worker when a foster child withdraws from the local school. It will be the responsibility of the SPC to ensure that a best interest determination meeting is held when a foster child is withdrawn from school and to notify the District Point of Contact if there is a problem related to enrollment, withdrawal, or best interest determination of a foster child.

Regional Director of Child Protective Services (CPS) – the person from Child Protective Services that will communicate directly with the District Point of Contact and with the Child Protective Service Case Worker in charge of the case for a particular foster child.

Case Worker – the person from Child Protective Services who has been assigned the case of a child in foster care.

Foster Child – a child for whom custody has been assigned to Child Protective Services by a sitting judicial authority.

Foster Parent – the parent(s) with whom a foster child is currently residing.

Procedures

Enrollment of a Foster Child

Resident Foster Children

Foster children residing within the district boundaries shall be enrolled as any other student that resides within the boundaries of the district. Enrollment and disenrollment must be initiated and completed by the legal guardian of foster students (MDCPS). An exception to the rules is if a court order indicates another person as the legal decision maker for the child. Upon enrollment, the School Point of Contact shall obtain any and all records pertaining to the student's current education. A list of these records is found in Appendix A of this document.

Following the enrollment of the student, the SPC will notify the District Point of Contact, forward copies of relevant records and will also keep these records on file. The DPC will keep relevant records until the student withdraws or graduates from the Tupelo School District or the child is no longer in the care of Child Protective Services.

Free/Reduced Lunch Application

Foster care parent or Child Protective Services representative should complete a Free/Reduced Meal Application for Tupelo Public Schools. This form may be completed online. A paper application is available from the school office, cafeteria cashier or the School Nutrition Office

located at the Fillmore Center. Verification of foster care status will be done by Food Services through checking the SAMs data system. If SAMs system does not indicate foster care status, the school nutrition office staff will contact the school office to verify status directly. Parents who have a foster child are asked to complete a separate meal application for foster children. Parents are asked to include the foster child as a household member on a separate meal application if there are other children enrolled in the Tupelo Public School District and the parents are applying for meal benefits for those children so that all household members are in the total number when the application is processed for approval of meal benefits.

Transportation procedures

Children in foster care will be entitled to transportation services in the same manner as all other children in the school district. In addition to regular transportation routes, the school district will collaborate with the CPS when transportation is required to maintain children placed in foster care in a school of origin outside their usual attendance area or district when it is in the best interest of the student. Under the direction of the Federal Programs Director, the POC will invite appropriate district officials, the CPS, and officials from other districts or agencies to promptly arrange cost-effective transportation for the student. These agreements will cover how the transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care. *(Transportation Agreement Form appended)*

Credit for Full and Partial Coursework

Accumulating enough credits to graduate can sometimes be very difficult for students in foster care due to the variety of class offerings/requirements, methods of calculating credits, and graduation requirements across school districts as students may have multiple placements. When students transfer, it is the responsibility of the counselor to ensure that foster students receive credit for full and partial coursework completed in the prior school. When appropriate, counselors will work with students to ensure access to programs such as credit recovery.

Best Interest Determination

TPSD will coordinate with MDCPS , educational liaison or social worker, to finalize BID within 7 school days from the date the district is notified by MDCPS of child's placement in foster care or change in the child's living arrangement, except in emergency removal situations. During this time The District or School Point of Contact will meet with the Case Worker or CPS representative and other interested parties (such as Principal, Parents (if allowed), and Foster Parents). A determination as to whether or not it would be in the best interest of the child to attend school in the Tupelo Public School District shall be made immediately following this meeting. Tupelo Public School District recognizes the right of a foster child to attend the child's school of origin in order to ensure school stability except in cases where it is not in the child's best interest or not reasonable (due to excessive travel times or other factors). In the event of a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the CPS will be considered the final decision maker in making the best interest determination. The CPS considers other

non-educational factors (safety, the child's permanency goal, and other components of the case plan). The CPS also has the capacity to collaborate with and gain information from multiple parties including the court in making these decisions.

Non-Resident Foster Children

Foster children who are no longer residing within the Tupelo Public School District boundaries shall be allowed to remain in the school of origin pending a determination that it is in the best interest of the child to remain. If determination is made that student should remain, the CPS Worker will provide updated information to Student support Services office. CPS Worker or CPS representative will also collaborate with district's POC to confirm the transportation plan.

Withdrawal of a Student by CPS

MDE Policy Rule 30.8 specifies an employee of MDCPS will be the person to disenroll a foster student. The School Point of Contact in this case is responsible for providing as many educational records as possible to make any transition from the school of origin to the new school a smooth transition. Records shall be forwarded to the new school within 24 hours following a request by the school or CPS. If the School Point of Contact has a problem with withdrawal or with scheduling the Best Interest Determination meeting, he/she will notify the DPC who will contact the Regional Director.

Confidentiality

Title I foster care provisions allow data sharing to improve educational outcomes for children. TPSD recognizes that sensitive student information may be shared by child welfare agencies and commits to ensuring children in foster care are properly supported in a way that respects student privacy. In all cases, TPSD will comply with all statutory requirements to protect student privacy, including FERPA and any other privacy requirements under Federal, State, or local laws.

Appendix A

Children in Foster Care Enrollment Records Checklist

The following records (where applicable) are requested for enrollment of a child in foster care.

Supporting Documentation:

- ☐ Report Cards and Progress Reports
- ☐ Discipline Records
- ☐ Student Achievement
- ☐ Teacher Evaluations
- ☐ Attendance Records
- ☐ Written input from absent participants
- ☐ IEP and/or 504 Plan
- ☐ Transcript showing current credits, if high school student
- ☐ Withdrawal From Previous School
- ☐ Copy of Birth Certificate
- ☐ Copy of Immunization Form
- ☐ Other: _____

Records Checklist for Case Worker Withdrawing a Child

Supporting Documentation:

- ☐ Report Cards and/or Progress Reports
- ☐ Current Grades
- ☐ Discipline Records
- ☐ List of student activities, if junior high or high school student
- ☐ Attendance Records
- ☐ IEP and/or 504 Plan
- ☐ Transcript showing current credits, if high school student
- ☐ Withdrawal Form
- ☐ Copy of Birth Certificate
- ☐ Copy of Immunization Form
- ☐ Copy of Best Interest Determination Worksheet (provided after school meeting)
- ☐ Other: _____

Records Checklist for Case Worker/Foster Care Parent Enrolling a Child

Supporting Documentation:

- ☐ Report Cards and/or Progress Reports
- ☐ Withdrawal Form from Previous School if available
- ☐ Copy of Birth Certificate
- ☐ Copy of Immunization Form
- ☐ Completed Registration Packet
- ☐ Completed Free/Reduced Lunch Application
- ☐ Verification Document for Foster Care Placement
- ☐ Copy of Best Interest Determination Worksheet (from school of origin)
- ☐ Other: _____

Children in Foster Care Best Interest Determination Worksheet

Goal: To determine if it is in the best interest for the student to remain in the school of origin.

MSIS ID: _____ Student Name _____

DOB: _____

Current District and School: _____

Potential New District and School: _____

Previous Schools (if known): _____

Supporting Documentation:

- ☐ Report Cards and Progress Reports
- ☐ Discipline Records
- ☐ Student Achievement
- ☐ Teacher Evaluations
- ☐ Attendance Records
- ☐ Written input from absent participants
- ☐ IEP and/or 504 Plan
- ☐ Transcript showing current credits, if high school student
- ☐ Other: _____

Guidance Information:

Number of years attending the current school: _____

Current Academic Performance: _____

Number of Schools Attended in Past 5 years: _____

Number of Schools Attended this year: _____

Impact of School Transfers on Student Performance: _____

Enrollment in special programs (Gifted, Special Education, Career and Technical Programs, etc.) _____

Effect of new school on obtaining full academic credit to be able to proceed to the next grade level: _____

Access to school-based supportive services: _____

Describe the student's relationship with the current school: _____

Extracurricular or other activities: _____

New living arrangement short or long term:

Distance and mode(s) transportation to school of origin: _____

Can change in schools if necessary coincide with end of a grading period: _____

Other factors considered:

Determination of Placement:

- ☐ It is in the best interest of the student to remain in the school of origin.
 - A permanent transportation plan for the student should be in place within five school days of the placement, per the agreed upon transportation procedure.
 - While permanent transportation is arranged, interim transportation must be provided to ensure there is no disruption in the student's education.

- ☐ It is in the best interest of the student to not remain in the school of origin.
 - The student will be immediately enrolled in the new school. The new school will request the student's record the same day from the school of origin. Enrollment means attending and actively participating in class.
 - The school of origin will send all of the student's record within one school day (e.g., cumulative record, grades, reading plan, IEP, etc.)

 - If the student is currently receiving special education services, he/she will need to continue special education services from the receiving school district.

Date: _____

Meeting Facilitator: _____

Child's Name: _____

Grade: _____

Custodial Agent Representative: _____

Custodial Agent Contact Information:

Meeting Participants:

Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date

Tupelo Public School District
Transportation Agreement Form

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Grade: _____

MSIS ID: _____

Custodial Agent Caregiver (Name and Contact Information):

Caregiver (Name and Contact Information):

Educational Representative, if applicable (Name and Contact Information):

District: _____

District Foster Care Point of Contact (Name and Contact Information):

Case Worker (Name and Contact Information):

The custodial agency verifies that:

1. It is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin based on the following factors:

2. Eligibility of the child under Title IV-E from the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services: _____ Yes _____ No

a. If YES, reimbursement for some funding of transportation costs:

_____ will be pursued

_____ cannot be pursued for the reason below:

3. The following was executed to identify a no-cost or low-cost transportation service:

The district verifies that:

4. There is an existing transportation option that can serve the student's new housing placement.

_____ Yes _____ No

If YES, explain the option:

The District and Mississippi Child Protection Services agree that the most cost effective transportation procedures for this student will be:

The District and Mississippi Child Protection Services agree that while permanent transportation is arranged, interim transportation arrangements will be:

These transportation procedures were agreed to on the following date: _____ and will be implemented within five (5) days, by the following date: _____.

Authorized Signature
Mississippi Child Protective Services

Date

Signature
LEA Foster Care Point of Contact

Date

Dispute Resolution to State Level Point of Contact

To appeal the district's decision to the Mississippi Department of Education and Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, please complete this form and submit it by the date indicated on the Written Notice you received from the school. You may submit this form by any of the following methods:

- Scan and email it to twilliams@mdek12.org with the subject "Foster Child Dispute Appeal" to Terissa Williams, Mississippi Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact;

OR

- Return the paper form to Terissa Williams, Mississippi Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact at 359 N. West Street, P O Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205

Student Name: _____

School in which enrollment is sought: _____

I am the educational decision-maker for this student, and I believe the school in which we are seeking enrollment is in the student's best interest because:

I believe the student has a right to attend this school because:

If you would like to provide additional information, please attach it to this form. The student shall remain in the school of origin, receiving all appropriate educational services including transportation, until the dispute reaches its final resolution.

Educational decision-maker name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____