



**Foster Care
Procedural Manual
2024-2025**

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Kosciusko School District Foster Care Plan

The Kosciusko School District is committed to providing all students with sound educational experiences. We recognize that foster children are at an increased risk of grade retention, gaps in academic achievement, low high school graduation rates, and postsecondary enrollment. These provisions promote greater stability for children in foster care so that they can continue their education without disruption, maintain important relationships with peers and adults, and have the opportunity to achieve college and career readiness.

The educational stability includes assurances that (1) a child in foster care will remain in the child's school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest in that school and (2) if a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in the school of residence, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.

Definitions

District Point of Contact (DPC) – the person designated by Kosciusko School District Foster Care Liaison to represent the District with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the district.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.

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designated by the building level Principal to represent the school with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the school. 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 Work when a foster child withdraws from the local school.

Regional Director of Child Protective Services (CPS) – the person from Child Protective Services who 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 to whom the custody has been appointed to Child Protective Services by a sitting judicial authority.

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

Enrollment of a Foster Child

Per MDE and CPS Guidelines, only a Child's Case Worker may enroll or withdraw a foster child. A Foster Care parent may not withdraw a child from any school or any school district.

Exception: As of August 2022, MDCPS issued an enrollment statement form. This form allows the Foster Care parent to enroll their child if the proper paperwork is present. Attached is the form. (ENROLL ONLY)

The District Point of Contact must be contacted immediately for enrollment and withdrawal of a child in foster care, and a Best Interest Determination meeting must be held with the CPS Case Worker upon enrollment and withdrawal.

Foster Care parents are not legal guardians; therefore, all educational documents and meeting notifications will be sent to the student's case worker. According to MDE, Foster Care parents may not withdraw children in foster care. They may receive copies of any educational records from the school, and be notified of meetings about the student If and only if the proper paperwork is recorded at registration. Case Workers, however, may invite Foster Parents to meetings as they deem appropriate.

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. The SPC shall obtain any and all records pertaining to the student's current education.

See Appendix A Children in Foster Care Enrollment Records Checklist (SPC) and Records Checklist for Case Worker/Foster Parent Enrolling a Child (CPS).

Following the enrollment of the student, the SPC will complete the enrollment document. The SPC will place a copy in the student's cum file in the office of the SPC and forward the original to the DPC. The DPC will keep on file the original until the student withdraws or a graduate from the Kosciusko School District or the child is no longer in the care of Child Protective Services.

Non-Resident Foster Children

Foster children not residing within the district boundaries shall be enrolled once a determination has been made that it is in the best interest of the child to attend a school within the Kosciusko School District. The DPC in collaboration with CPS will meet with the SPC, Principal, Parents (if allowed), Foster Parents, CPS representative, and other interested parties. The meeting shall take place within 3 business days after CPS has sought to enroll the child in the Kosciusko School District or prior to CPS seeking enrollment in the Kosciusko School District.

A determination as to whether or not it would be in the best interest of the child to attend the school in the Kosciusko School District shall be made immediately following this meeting.

See Appendix A Children in Foster Care Enrollment Records Checklist (SPC) and Records Checklist for Case Worker/Foster Parent Enrolling a Child (CPS).

See Appendix A Best Interest Determination Worksheet and Transportation Agreement for the meeting.

The Kosciusko School District recognizes the right of a foster child to attend the child's school of origin provided that it is reasonable.

Withdrawal of a Student by CPS

CPS has the right to withdraw students assigned to them by a judicial authority. The SPC 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 not on file in the school office shall be forwarded to the new school within 24 hours following a request by the school or CPS.

See Appendix A Records Checklist for Case Worker Withdrawing a Child.

The SPC shall contact the DPC if he/she thinks it would be in the best interest for the child being withdrawn to remain in the school of origin. The DPC will immediately contact the Regional Director of Child Protective Services to relay the concerns of the SPC as well as possibly scheduling a time to discuss the child's educational placement.

Free/Reduced Lunch Application

Foster Care Parents or Child Protective Services should complete a Free/Reduced Lunch Form for the Kosciusko School District. The form along with verification of foster care shall be submitted to the School Point of Contact who in turn will forward the documents to the District Point of Contact. The District Point of Contact will forward the documents to the Food Service Director.

Transportation

Some children in foster care may need transportation to remain in their school of origin. Any child in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin must promptly receive transportation services. If the child remains in their school of origin and moves outside the current school's attendance zone, the Kosciusko School District (KSD) must collaborate with the local MDCPS to develop and implement clear written transportation procedures. The two entities must establish a system that expedites transportation for children placed in foster care. The goal is to maintain educational stability for the student. There are various modes of transportation available for students. Examples of no-cost or low-cost options for transportation that the KSD and the MDCPS could explore include whether:

- MDCPS will arrange for the child to be dropped off at a school bus stop for the school of origin;
- MDCPS will arrange for the foster parent or other designee to transport the child to school (mileage reimbursable through foster care maintenance payments);
- MDCPS and the KSD will review pre-existing bus routes or stops close to the foster care placement that cross district boundaries, such as bus routes for magnet schools and transportation for homeless students as required by the McKinney-Vento Act;
- MDCPS and the KSD will determine if the child is already eligible for transportation covered by other programs;
- MDCPS and the KSD will address how the child welfare agency will use foster care maintenance payments and administrative funds to pay for transportation to the school;
- MDCPS and the KSD will specify how "additional costs" of transportation will be calculated, to delineate clearly the KSD's responsibility to provide transportation when there are no additional costs;
- MDCPS and the KSD will specifically describe how transportation to the school of origin will be provided in situations where there are no additional costs; and

- MDCPS and the KSD will specify the timing and procedures for the child welfare agency to reimburse the KSD for transportation costs.

In the event of a dispute between the KSD and MDCPS concerning the cost of transportation, the two entities must consider what is in the best interest of the student. If the disagreement continues, the cost will be divided equally between the KSD and MDCPS. The dispute shall be brought before the state appointed POCs (Toni Kersh, MDE and Julie Propst, MDCPS). Current transportation expenses shall remain in effect until a decision is rendered to maintain the student's status quo.

Appendix A

- Children in Foster Care Enrollment Records Checklist
- Records Checklist for Case Worker Withdrawing a Child
- Records Checklist for Case Worker Enrolling a Child
- Children in Foster Care Best Interest Determination Worksheet
- Transportation Agreement Form
- Dispute Resolution to State Level Point of Contact



Children in Foster Care Enrollment - Records Checklist

The following records are required for enrollment of a child in Foster Care:

- Report Cards and Progress Reports
- Discipline Records
- Student Achievement
- Teacher Evaluations
- Attendance Records
- Written input from absent participants
- IEP and/or 504 Plan
- Cumulative File and Transcript showing current credits if high school student
- Withdrawal From Previous School
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Immunization Form
- Foster Parent's proof of residency



Records Checklist for Case Worker Withdrawing a Child in Foster Care

- 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
- Other: _____



Records Checklist for Case Worker Enrolling a Child in Foster Care

- 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
- Other: _____



Questions for the District of origin POC to discuss with MDCPS POC during the BID process

How many schools has the student attended, including natural transitions (elementary, middle, high)? How many schools has the student attended this year? What is the student's attendance record for this school year?

Describe all participants' views of the student's ties to his or her current school, including significant relationships/interactions, and involvement in extracurricular activities? (Include student/family voice as well as professional input.) Discuss family members, friends, and ties to school staff.

What is the student's academic/career goal? Does one school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the other school does not have?

How is the student performing academically and behaviorally? What is the student's progress towards on-time graduation?

Does the student participate in other specialized instruction or services (e.g., special education (IEP) or 504 accommodations, gifted program, career and technical program, therapeutic day treatment)?

If the student has an IEP, is specialized transportation identified as a related service? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the student is an English learner, have the schools' ESL resources been considered? If so, explain?

Would changing schools affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities, proceed to the next grade, or graduate on time? If so, how?

How have the school transfers affected the student emotionally, socially, academically, and physically?

What are the safety considerations related to school placement?

Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture, such as after testing, after an event that is significant to the child, or at the end of the school year?

What are the transportation options being considered? How would the length of the commute to school impact the student?

Which school is preferred (and why) by:

- the student
- the birthparents (**if applicable**)
- student's current placement provider i.e. group home/foster parent (**if applicable**)



Kosciusko School District
Transportation Agreement Form

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

MSIS ID: _____

Custodial Agent/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 TKersh@mdek12.org with the subject "Foster Child Dispute Appeal" to Toni Kersh, Mississippi Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact;
- **OR**
- Return the paper form to Toni Kersh, Mississippi Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact at 359 N. West Street, Jackson, MS 39201

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: _____

Kosciusko School District Foster Care Plan and Procedures Approved by the Kosciusko School Board:

Allison Schuler, Board President

Date

Zach Bost, Superintendent

Date