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Westerly Public Schools Centralized Student Registration

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Westerly Public Schools requires registration of new or returning student(s) prior to attending classes. In order to streamline the student registration process, Westerly Public Schools has a Central Registration Office located at Babcock Hall, 23 Highland Avenue. Therefore, registration must be completed through the Central Registration Office.

1. Proof of Domicile Requirements for Initial and Continuing Enrollment

- a. Absent an approved alternative method of assignment or reassignment, students must attend the school in the attendance zone where the student/parent(s)/legal guardian lives in accordance with Rhode Island General Law 16-64-1, Westerly Public Schools Residency Policy 2510 and Westerly Public Schools Bus Transportation Between Home and School Policy 8100.
- b. Upon initial enrollment in Westerly Public Schools, proof of domicile is necessary in order to ensure that a student is enrolled in the boundaried or assigned school. One (1) proof of domicile reflecting correct address is required to register a student. Examples of acceptable proof may include:
 - i. current utility bill such as telephone or electric bill;
 - ii. rental/lease agreement with name of tenant and landlord and contact information;
 - iii. mortgage;
 - iv. a letter regarding rental/lease agreement with Rhode Island Housing.
- c. At any time that a student's address changes, it is the parent's responsibility to immediately notify Central Registration.
- d. Parents are expected to obtain all of the required documentation before enrolling a child in school. In cases of homeless or foster care status, however, please refer to Section 4 below.

2. Additional Proof May be Required

- a. When Westerly Public Schools believes that a student's enrollment information is inaccurate due to returned mail or reasonable suspicion that the student is not residing at the claimed address, the following procedures shall be implemented:

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- i. A call may be made or a letter may be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s) who have conflicting address information, requesting that parent update enrollment information.
- ii. Westerly Public Schools Attendance Officer may be sent to personally verify occupancy.
- iii. If there is reason to believe that a student does not reside in Westerly the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be billed for tuition. If payment is not made within ten (10) days of the date on the bill, legal action will be taken.
- iv. In accordance with Rhode Island General Law 16-64-8, "if a student is a senior or about to enter his or her senior year the student shall be allowed to complete his or her senior year in his or her original city or town of residence."

3. Submission of False Information; Enforcement

- a. Other documents or information may be accepted as "proof of residency" only under extenuating or hardship circumstances.
- b. A Post Office box, private mail box (PMB)/mail drop address, or commercial establishment address does not meet residency requirements. Only residential street addresses are accepted. All proofs submitted must show the residential Westerly address. The residential address of a relative of the student does not meet student residency requirements unless the student actually lives with the relative as the student's primary residence.
- c. A hotel address is a temporary mode of residency and it should be treated as such.
- d. If the parent/guardian resides with someone else temporarily who resides in the school's boundary area, the parent must submit an "Affidavit of Residence," signed by the parent/guardian and the owner or lessee with whom the parent is residing.

4. Enrollment of Students Who are Homeless

- a. Homeless students are defined as students who are without a fixed, regular and adequate residence. According to the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. § 11432 et seq.), homeless students are to be enrolled in the school immediately that meets the "best interest" of the student. Homeless children must be admitted to the school where they or their families lived

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when they became homeless. Westerly Public Schools will make arrangements for immunizations, transportation and all other school services. Appropriate student school and grade level placement as well as completion of required immunizations and physical examination shall occur within 30 days of enrollment.

- b. Under no circumstances will students who are homeless be withdrawn due to lack of appropriate enrollment documentation.

5. Enrollment of Students Who Are in Foster Care

- a. The registration process for foster care students shall be conducted in private in order to protect the student's confidentiality. No student in a shelter or foster care should be denied entrance to school due to a missing form.
- b. If the student lives in a residence licensed by the Department of Children and Families, the student may be enrolled in the school that serves that licensed residence.

6. Persons Acting as Parent

- a. For purposes of establishing student residency, a "*parent*" is defined as the natural or adoptive parent of the student, the student's legal guardian, a person in a parental relationship to the student, or a person exercising supervisory authority over the student in place of the parent. Therefore, proper documentation will need to be presented to Central Registration.
- b. The student's primary residence must be with the parent or person acting as parent. The student must live at the residence during the school year.

7. Assignment to Correct School

- a. School assignment is based on Westerly Public Schools district lines in accordance with "Westerly Public Schools Policy 8100", Transportation between Home and School.
- b. When the student is already enrolled in the school and it is determined that there is a discrepancy in address documentation on file (via returned mail, random checks, investigation, or discrepancies in public records such as the Property Appraiser's Records and/or Voter Registration records), the parent/guardian shall have 10 days to provide sufficient documentation to Central Registration to validate primary residence, as outlined herein.

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- i. If, after the parent's/guardian's 10-day opportunity to provide further information, Central Registration determines that insufficient documentation exists to prove that the student resides within the school enrollment boundary, the student will be reassigned to the appropriate school at the end of the marking period.
- ii. However, during the appeal process set forth below, the student will remain in his or her current school.

8. Transportation

Once registration is complete the documentation is forwarded to the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department has forty-eight (48) hours from receipt of registration information to assign the student onto a bus. The Transportation Department will forward the student pick up time, bus number and/or walker information to the assigned school. The school will provide the student/parent with the information.

9. Appeal

- a. If the parent/guardian believes that the determination has been made in error, the parent/guardian shall have 10 calendar days to file an appeal with Central Registration.
- b. In considering an appeal, the appealing party may appear before the Superintendent's designee, who shall consider the documentation and information available, as well as the following:
 - i. unique and temporary circumstances such as temporary housing arrangements;
 - ii. fire or other severe damage to a primary residence; or
 - iii. other unique hardship circumstances which are not self-imposed.
- c. The Superintendent shall inform the appealing party of the decision.