



**Foster Care Plan
2026-2027**

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures used in the Kosciusko School District to enroll and withdraw children that have been placed under the care of the Mississippi Child Protection Service.

Goal

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

Vision

The Kosciusko School District is committed to serving our communities by providing educational opportunities for all students.

Mission

The Kosciusko School District provides a high-quality education in a safe, healthy environment and develops responsible citizens who become productive members of our society.

Definitions

District Point of Contact (DPC) – the person designated by the Kosciusko School District Superintendent to represent the KSD with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the district.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designated by the building level Principal to represent the school with regards to foster children being enrolled or withdrawn from the school.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 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 that 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

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. A list of these records is found in Appendix A of this document. **Students must be enrolled by a MDCPS representative (i.e., case worker, educational liaison, or an individual with MDCPS foster parent verification.) MDCPS foster parent verification may come in the form of the court order or a letter/form on letterhead from MDCPS stating the person is the foster parent for the enrolling student.**

Following the enrollment of the student, the SPC will complete the enrollment document placing a copy on file in the office of the SPC. The SPC will notify the DPC of the enrollment and enrollment verification will be kept at the school of enrollment until the student graduates from KSD or until 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 from the originating district will collaborate with CPS, SPC, Principal, Parents (if allowed), Foster Parents, or other interested parties. 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 collaboration. Schools will need a copy of this BID Form when the student arrives to be enrolled.

Exception: Students enrolling into Kindergarten for the first time do not require a BID form to be completed if the foster parents can prove residency in the school zone they are seeking to attend.

Students must be enrolled by a MDCPS representative (i.e., case worker, educational liaison, or an individual with MDCPS foster parent verification.) MDCPS foster parent verification may come in the form of the court order or a letter/form on letterhead from MDCPS stating the person is the foster parent for the enrolling student.

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. CPS workers will work with the DPC to complete a BID Form to determine the best interest of the student. 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.

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.

Student Records

In January 2013, Congress passed the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), which amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to permit educational agencies and institutions to disclose, without parental consent or the consent of an eligible student, education records of students in foster care to State and Tribal child welfare agencies.

MDCPS workers should provide copies of all educational records for school-age children in foster care when registering the child.

Records should include but not limited to the following:

- copy of birth certificate,
- copy of immunization form,
- withdrawal from previous school,
- grades from previous school,
- class schedule for junior high and high school students,
- copy of the most recent IEP if the student receives services from IDEA,
- copy of language service plan if the student received English Learner services, and
- any other record that will assist the school in the enrollment of the student.

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 it to the Food Service Director or Food Service Secretary.

School of Origin

These provisions emphasize the importance of limiting educational disruption by keeping the children who move into foster care (due to entering the foster care system

or changing placements) in their schools of origin, unless it is determined in their best interest to change schools.

Best Interest Determination (BID)

- The LEA and MDCPS must determine the best interest of a child in foster care collaboratively.
- The cost of transportation cannot be considered when determining the best interest of the child.

Considerations:

- The child's participation in specialized instruction (e.g. gifted programming, career and technical education program, College Credit Plus, Advanced Placement classes, dual-credit classes).
- The availability of required special education and/or related service in a school other than the school of origin when the student has an identified disability under IDEA and 504.
- The availability of language services in a school other than the school of origin when the student has been identified as an English Learner pursuant to Title VI and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act.
- The student's ability to earn full academic credit, the ability to proceed to the next grade, or the ability to graduate on time.
- School climate, peer support, supportive adults and involvement in extracurricular activities.
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs.
- The impact the commute to and from school would have on the student, based on developmental functioning. The cost of transportation or the appropriate services should not be a consideration when determining a child's best interest.
- For children with disabilities, the Fostering Connections Act, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), federal requirements are to be factored in when determining the best interest.
- The safety of the child.
- The wishes of the parent, caregiver, and child.
- The toll of the commute, distance and time for the child to travel to and from the school he/she is attending at the time of placement.
- The projected duration of out-of-home placement.
- The child's academic, developmental and socialization needs.
- The effect a school change will have on the child's learning.
- The potential loss of credits, for high school students, which may occur due to changing schools in the middle of a term or semester.

Responsibilities of KSD

The KSD will notify MDCPS if children are coming to school improperly dressed or without materials needed to support success.

KSD shall consider MDCPS as the guardian of students in foster care; therefore, foster parents or group home staff should not be making educational decisions for the child/children.

KSD should be made aware of the trauma children in foster care experience and associated behaviors. KSD and MDPS should collaborate with regards to treatment goals that can be incorporated in the child's BIP or IEP, if possible.

KSD and/or MDCPS workers may invite foster parents, therapists and/or group home staff to participate in educational related meetings.

Transportation

KSD will collaborate with MDCPS concerning transportation for a foster care child that lives outside of the district but remains a student in the district **or** for students placed in a different attendance zone than the school of origin within the district. The following will be explored in providing transportation such as:

- 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 LEA will review pre-existing bus routes or stops close to the foster care placement that cross district boundaries;
- MDCPS and LEA will determine if the child is already eligible for transportation covered by other programs.
- MDCPS and LEA 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 LEA will specify how "additional costs" of transportation will be calculated, to delineate clearly the LEA's responsibility to provide transportation when there are no additional costs;
- MDCPS and LEA will specifically describe how transportation to the school of origin will be provided in situations where there are not additional costs; and
- MDCPS and LEA will specify the timing and procedures for the child welfare agency to reimburse the LEA for transportation costs.

In the event of a dispute between the LEA 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 LEA and MDCPS.

Homelessness

Students who are in the official custody of MDCPS **may not be** also considered homeless.

Safety Plans

Children under safety plans are not considered in the custody of MDCPS. Safety plans are a protocol used by MDCPS in cases where a judge feels that it is unnecessary for a student to enter into official MDCPS custody; however, there is concern for the child's safety or wellbeing. The safety plan identifies a person or persons who will be responsible for the care of the child for a specified amount of time. The majority of safety plans place children in the custody of family members or close friends and outline a list of steps that a parent must complete in order to maintain custody of the student.

KSD allows the individual outlined in the safety plan to register students, as long as, the individual can prove residence or is willing to transport the student to their original school of enrollment. Custodial parents still have rights to the child should they choose to interfere with the safety plan; however, MDCPS should be notified of the parent's actions immediately especially in the event that a parent is attempting to withdraw the student.

Appendix

- Enrollment Checklist
- Withdrawal Checklist
- Best Interest Determination Forms
- Foster Care Service Record
- Transportation Agreement Form
- Dispute Resolution



Enrollment Checklist

The following records are required for enrollment of a child in foster care.

Supporting Documentation:

- ☐ Report Cards and Progress Reports
- ☐ Discipline Records
- ☐ Student Achievement
- ☐ Attendance Records
- ☐ Written input from absent participants (found on BID form)
- ☐ 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
- ☐ Verification of Foster Care Placement
- ☐ BID Form
- ☐ Free and Reduced Lunch Application
- ☐ Other: _____



Withdrawal Checklist

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
- ☐ Other: _____

Rationale

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

FOSTER CARE SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Promote educational stability by ensuring that students in foster care can perform at the same high levels as their peers with limited disruption by first determining what is in the youth's best interest.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) stipulates that foster care students should only change schools if remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest.

HOW TO MAKE A BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

- If a change in school is being considered, the local education agency (LEA) and child welfare agency (CWA) must collaborate to complete the Best Interest Determination (BID) process.
- The MDCPS case worker or designee and the school of origin POC should engage in a conversation with the youth and any other appropriate parties to discuss the following information as it relates to the youth's educational stability:
 - Number of schools the youth has attended
 - How often the youth is changing schools
 - Home placement type/length as well as number of placements
 - Youth's involvement in extracurricular / community activities
 - The youth's academic/career goals
 - The youth's academic achievement
 - The youth's ability to earn full academic credits, participate in sports, graduate on time, etc.
 - The student's ability to receive necessary supports/services
 - What the youth wants, what the family wants, what the resource family wants, what CPS wants
 - School safety concerns
 - Youth's access to gifted or accelerated programs
 - If changing schools could affect the youth's end of year testing
 - Travel time to and from school
 - Biological family, resource family, friends, mentor, residential staff, MDCPS connections
 - Youth's relationships and connections to teachers and school staff
- The conversation will result in a determination that should be recorded on the BID Form. All parties who participate should be listed on the BID Form with the corresponding signature.
- Youth shall remain enrolled in their school of origin until the BID process is complete and a determination has been made.

- If the determination is made for the youth to change schools, the youth should be enrolled immediately in the new school even if the required paperwork is not available.
- The enrolling school's Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) will contact the school of origin to obtain necessary documentation.
- There must be a school of origin in order for the BID process to occur. With no school of origin, the normal school enrollment process will occur.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOSTER CARE SCHOOL PLACEMENT FORM

BID Timeframe				
A BID must be completed every time a youth comes into care or there is a placement change while in care. BID conferences/meetings with the school district POC must take place within five (5) business days of a child entering foster care or changing placement. The youth shall not be withdrawn/enrolled until a BID is completed.				
Student Information				
Student Name: (first, middle, last)		DOB: Grade:	Date of BID:	
Address/District of Residence:		MSIS:	IEP Ruling ☐ Yes ☐ No	
School/District of Origin:		(enter school name)		
Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services Information				
Case Worker: _____		COR: _____	Phone: () _-__	
ASWS: _____			Phone: () _-__	
Determination				
☐ The student shall remain in the district/school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement (school of origin). Name of School District/School: (enter school name)				
☐ Based on the best interest determination, a change in school placement is recommended. In accordance with ESSA, the child will be enrolled in the district/school of current residence (receiving school). Name of School District/School: (enter school name)				
NOTE: If a change in educational placement is necessary, enrollment in the new school must take place immediately . All educational records must be provided to the receiving school. * An IEP Placement meeting should be scheduled with the new school district's POC.				
BID Participants				
Title	Participated	Printed Name	Signature	Agree with Determination
Student	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
Birth Parent(s) if applicable	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
MDCPS POC- Case Worker or Supervisor	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
Guardian Ad Litem	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
POC for School of Origin	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
POC for New School District (if applicable)	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
IEP Team Member (if applicable)	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
Foster Parent (if applicable)	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
Ed. Decision Maker (if applicable)	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No
Other	☐ Yes ☐ No			☐ Yes ☐ No

Supporting Documentation

Indicate and attach any supporting documentation which was used in making this best interest determination interest. Send documentation to the receiving school district if applicable. (The following is checklist of sample documents that may be considered. The list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

- ☐ Report cards
- ☐ Progress reports
- ☐ Achievement data (test scores)
- ☐ Attendance data
- ☐ IEP or 504 Plan
- ☐ E-mails or correspondence from individuals consulted
- ☐ Disciplinary referrals
- ☐ Health reports/records

A copy of the BID form must be sent to the receiving school district and BID@mdcps.ms.gov. When applicable, a copy of the BID form must be sent to the group home and/or treatment facility.

BID Impasse

The COR Worker must forward the BID Packet to the MDCPS Education Unit if an impasse is reached between the LEA and MDCPS. The LEA POC must forward a copy to the MDE Compulsory School Attendance Unit if an impasse is reached.



Kosciusko School District
229 West Washington Street
Kosciusko, MS 39090
(662) 289-4771

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

Foster Student Identification Form

The following information will be documented in the drive shared by counselors and foster care point of contact for purposes of MSIS documentation. The services and barriers will be indicated by writing the corresponding numbers.

School	Student Name	MSIS Number	Services	Barriers

Services

1. Addressing need related to domestic violence	10. Obtaining or transferring records necessary for enrollment
2. Assistance with participation in school programs	11. Parent education related to rights and resources for children
3. Before, after school, mentoring, summer programs	12. Referrals for medical, dental, and other health services
4. Clothing to meet school requirements	13. Referral to other programs and services
5. Coordination between schools and agencies	14. School supplies
6. Counseling	15. Staff professional development and awareness
7. Early childhood programs	16. Transportation
8. Emergency assistance related to school attendance	17. Tutoring or other instructional support
9. Expedited evaluations	18. No Services Provided

Barriers

1. Eligibility for homeless services	5. School records
2. Immunizations	6. School selection
3. Other barriers	7. Transportation
4. Other medical records	

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: _____