STUDENTS: Enrollment and Attendance

Admission

I. Purpose

To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 5110 by establishing guidelines for the admission of students to Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

II. Definition

Parent – The biological or adoptive parent, legal guardian or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian.

III. Age of Admission

The age of admission to public schools has been established by state law and regulation. A child must be:

A. Four (4) years old by September 1 to attend prekindergarten;

B. Five (5) years old by September 1 to attend kindergarten; or

C. Six (6) years old by September 1 to attend first grade.

IV. Guidelines

A. Transfer Students

Students seeking admission as the result of a transfer from a private, parochial, public school system or nonpublic program certified by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) shall be admitted in accordance with state law and regulation, Board Policy, Superintendent’s Rules and established procedures.

1. Transfer students entering kindergarten must turn five (5) years old on or before September 1, unless the student is currently enrolled in a public school and transfers from another state during the school year.

2. Transfer students entering senior year must be under 21 years old on the first day of school and must be eligible for graduation at the end of that school year.
3. If the transcript or record is not available, the Superintendent shall determine the appropriate placement of the student by an evaluation that shall include, but not be limited to, one or more of the following:
   a. Administration of standardized tests and examinations;
   b. Inspection of report cards and other documentation;
   c. Observation of student in a classroom setting; and
   d. Use of interviews that are focused around the student’s demonstration of course content knowledge and performance levels.

B. Prekindergarten

Children who are four (4) years old on September 1 are eligible to be screened for prekindergarten. Automatic eligibility occurs when a child meets the age requirement and is at least one of the following:
1. From an economically disadvantaged background or is homeless; or
2. Has been identified through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process with the development of an IEP as necessitating special education classroom instruction within a general education setting.

C. Early Admission
1. A parent may request early admission to prekindergarten when the child turns four (4) years old between September 2 and October 14 of the school year in which the child applies for entrance and all of the following criteria are met:
   a. The child is from an economically disadvantaged background or is homeless; and
   b. The child lives within the boundaries of the school; and
   c. The child is toilet trained, unless toileting is listed as a supplementary service on the child’s IEP.

2. A parent may request early admission to kindergarten when the child turns five (5) years old between September 2 and October 14.
   a. All requests for early admission to kindergarten under this subparagraph must be made in writing to the home school principal by the deadlines established by the Office of Early Childhood.
   b. Students who meet the early admission age requirement, will be required to taken an early admission assessment administered by BCPS staff.
   c. A decision regarding early admission will be determined in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Office of Early Childhood.
Childhood’s Guidelines for Applying for Early Admission to Kindergarten.

D. Kindergarten

Children who are five (5) years old on or before September 1 shall be enrolled in kindergarten.

E. Exemptions to Kindergarten Attendance Requirements
1. The parent of a student who is five (5) years old on September 1 may request a waiver of the mandatory school attendance for one (1) year for the following reasons:
   a. Level of Maturity Waiver
      A child may be exempted from mandatory school attendance if the child’s parent believes that a delay in school attendance is in the best interest of the child and the parent files a written request with the Superintendent asking that the child’s attendance be delayed due to the child’s level of maturity.
   b. Alternative Program Settings
      A child may be exempted from attending kindergarten if the parent of the child files in writing their intent to place the child in an alternative setting and verifies that the child is enrolled in an:
         (1) Full-time licensed child care center;
         (2) Full-time registered family day care home; or
         (3) Part-time Head Start 5-year-old program.

2. A parent seeking an exemption to kindergarten attendance shall complete a Request for Exemption from Mandatory Kindergarten Attendance form and submit the form to the principal of the child’s home school by no later than the first day of school for students, unless otherwise authorized by the home school principal and the Office of Early Childhood Programs. (See, Rule 5110, Form A).

F. The burden of proof of date of birth is upon the parent. The following documents will constitute adequate evidence of proof of age:
1. A birth certificate;
2. A baptismal certificate;
3. A passport or Visa; or
4. Any other legal document as approved by the enrolling official.
G. Children receiving home instruction shall not be enrolled in public school programs nor be eligible to participate in school-sponsored activities.

H. Students who have been identified as homeless by the Office of Student Support Services, pursuant to the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act, and who meet the age requirements for admission, will be immediately enrolled in BCPS.

Legal References: 42 U.S.C. §11431, *Et seq.*, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-101, Admission of Students; Location, Kindergarten
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-301, Compulsory Attendance
COMAR 13A.08.01.01, Attendance
COMAR 13A.08.01.02, Age for School Attendance
COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2, Exemptions to Kindergarten Attendance Requirement

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5100, Compulsory Attendance
Board of Education Policy 5150, Residents and Nonresident Students

RULE
Superintendent of Schools

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