

FOSTER CARE LIAISON

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The North Harrison School District recognizes that students in foster care face unusual educational challenges. The purpose of this policy is to remove barriers to, and provide opportunities for, academic excellence for foster care students.

Foster Care Student – Any K–12 student who is residing in a foster care setting in this state.

The district designates the School Counselor as the liaison for foster care students. The liaison will provide assistance regarding all aspects of the enrollment, placement, transfer and withdrawal of children in foster care.

Enrollment and Placement of Foster Care Students

The district will initially place foster care students in the same courses and programs the students were in while attending the previous district to the extent this district offers such courses and programs. Such placements may include, but are not limited to: honors classes; vocational, technical and career pathway courses; and International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), English Language Learner (ELL), special education and gifted programs. If necessary, the district will waive course or program prerequisites or other preconditions for placement in courses or programs offered at the district. After placement, the district may perform additional evaluations to ensure that the student has been placed appropriately and may change the student's placement after consultation with the student's foster parent.

Access to Records

The district will provide foster parents and other legal guardians access to student records and will respond within three business days to a request for records by another district when the request involves a foster care student. In accordance with law, the district will allow a child placement agency access to a foster care student's records for the purposes of assisting the school transfer or placement of a student and fulfilling educational case management responsibilities required by the juvenile officer or by law.

Attendance

If a student in foster care is absent from school due to a decision by a court or child-placing agency to change the student's placement or due to a verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity, the grades and credit of the student will be calculated as of the date the student left school, and the district will not lower the student's grade as a result of absence under these circumstances.

Programs and Activities

The district will encourage foster care students to participate in extracurricular activities and assist them in joining extracurricular activities. Locally imposed application deadlines for participation in extracurricular activities will be waived for foster care students who are otherwise eligible to participate in the activities. Participation in activities governed by the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) will be permitted in accordance with the rules established by MSHSAA. Foster care students are automatically eligible for participation in the district's free nutrition program.

Graduation

In order to facilitate timely graduation of foster care students, the district will:

1. Waive specific courses required for graduation if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school. If such course work is not waived, the district will provide reasonable justification for the denial.
2. Accept the results of exit exams, end-of-course exams, nationally norm-referenced tests or alternative testing from another school to satisfy district testing requirements related to graduation.
3. Accept for credit full or partial course work completed at the previous school attended in accordance with district policy.

If a foster care student who enrolls in the district at the beginning of or during his or her senior year cannot meet the district's graduation requirements by the end of the senior year, even after all alternatives have been considered, the liaison will contact the student's previous district to determine if the student is eligible to receive a diploma from the previous school.

The North Harrison School District will award a diploma to foster care students who transfer out of the district at the beginning of or during the senior year if, considering all courses, tests and attendance at the school to which the student transferred, the student has met the North Harrison School District graduation requirements.