

VERIFICATION OF RESIDENCY

The following procedures shall apply in verifying a student's residency within the Calhoun County School District and /or within a particular school attendance zone.

Proof of Residency at Time of Enrollment

Upon application for enrollment, the custodial parent or legal guardian shall complete the required residency questionnaire and provide acceptable proof of residency subject to the following terms and conditions:

- A. Acceptable proof of residency shall normally consist of the following:
 - 1. A current utility bill (electric bill preferred) in the name of the parent / guardian **and**
 - 2. A lease agreement, mortgage statement, or additional utility bill in the name of the parent / guardian (or such similar documentation as school officials shall deem acceptable).
- B. In cases of "dual occupancy" with another family (i.e., where the name of the parent / guardian is not listed on utility bill, lease agreement, or other documentation) acceptable proof of residency must be provided in the name of the host resident / caregiver. In order to verify the dual occupancy situation, school officials may conduct home visits and / or request execution by the parent / guardian of a confidential *Release of Utility Account Information* form.
- C. In the event a student is identified as homeless under the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*, enrollment procedures associated with the Act will apply and the family will be referred to the system's Homeless Liaison.

Annual Update of Residency Information

At the beginning of each school year, submission of updated proof of residency in the form of a current utility bill (electric bill preferred) will be required.

Reports, Investigations, and Appeals of Suspected Non-Compliance

Concerns about residency non-compliance may be prompted by third-party reports, student reports, anonymous tips, returned mail, bus-driver / staff observations, or other information sources. School personnel should promptly report any such concerns to school administrators. Suspected non-compliance issues will be documented and investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

- 1. Updated proof of residency shall be requested. If appropriate documentation is not supplied or if the parent / guardian acknowledges that the family is residing out of district, the parent / guardian shall be required to complete transfer arrangements within a reasonable length of time. In determining a reasonable time, school officials will consider testing schedules, proximity to the end of the term, and other relevant factors, but under no circumstance shall the minimum time allowed for transfer be less than two calendar weeks.

2. The district may require supplemental residence verification when (a) updated residency documents have been requested but not provided or (b) residency documents provided are not dispositive of the compliance issue being investigated. Examples of scenarios that would prompt the need for supplemental verification include observations that a claimed residence appears unoccupied, reports that a student is regularly meeting the bus at a place other than the claimed residence or that a parent is driving the student to the bus stop, comments by the student indicating the family has moved, reports identifying another residence at which the family is residing, and similar reports or observations indicating that the family is not regularly residing in the claimed residence. In such circumstances, school officials shall seek verification calculated to determine the actual residence of the family, including but not limited to a signed *Release of Utility Account Information* form and / or home visits.
3. School officials shall act promptly to complete residency inquiries and to notify the parent / guardian in writing of the determination and the process for appealing an adverse determination. The inquiry will normally be completed and written notice given by hand delivery or U. S. mail within 30 calendar days, except in extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include a failure by the parent / guardian to cooperate with home visits or other reasonable verification requests.
4. A parent / guardian may appeal an adverse determination by submitting a written request for review to the Superintendent within five (5) school days of receiving the determination. The appeal may be submitted by hand delivery or U.S. mail and may include any documentation or information that the parent / guardian believes to be relevant to the review process. The Superintendent, with assistance from the Attendance Supervisor and staff, will review all documentation and information associated with the original determination, including any documentation or information submitted by the parent / guardian, and will render a written decision within ten (10) school days.
5. In all instances when it is determined that a family is residing out of zone, a reasonable time shall be allowed for completing transfer arrangements. In determining a reasonable time, school officials will consider testing schedules, proximity to the end of the term, and other relevant factors, but under no circumstance shall the minimum time allowed for transfer be less than two calendar weeks following a final decision.
6. There shall be no disruption of the education or current school assignment of currently enrolled students while residency determinations are pending. Residency determinations are pending from the time a report of non-compliance is received by the District through the conclusion of the appeals process (as described in paragraph 4 above) if the family appeals.

Documentation and Record Keeping

Each school principal shall maintain for each school year a chronological log of residency inquiries, which shall be maintained in a loose leaf notebook in a format prescribed by the Superintendent. The log shall include the following information and documentation, as applicable:

1. The name and race of each family suspected or reported as residing out of district.
2. The date of any such report or observation.

3. The source of each such report or observation of residency outside the district or school attendance zone.
4. All notes and documentation of the investigative process including appeals.
5. Copies of all documentation reviewed or relied upon in making a determination.
6. Copies of any and all written notices to the parent / guardian regarding the investigation and / or appeal determination.

In the case of an appeal to the Superintendent, a copy of all such documentation shall be promptly forwarded by the school principal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent's office shall maintain a copy of each appeal and all documents related to the appeal.

Approved: 11/22/2011