

# **Maritime Academy Charter School Foster Student Transportation Procedures**

**When registering a student that is identified as a foster child, the secretary must contact the Foster Student Point of Contact (POC) immediately.**

1. Point of contact (POC) will contact child welfare agency representative
2. POC will obtain information on student's previous school and placement
3. POC and child welfare agency/representative will discuss factors listed below for educational consideration.

## **Best Interest Determination Factors/Considerations:**

- Appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of foster placement;
- Preferences of the child;
- Preferences of the child's parent(s) or education decision-maker(s);
- The child's attachment to the school of origin, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- Placement of the child's sibling(s);
- Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety;
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socio-emotional needs;
- History of school transfers and how they have impacted the child;
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage; and
- Whether the child is an English Learner and is receiving language services, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin, consistent with Title VI and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA).  
The POC and child welfare representative will make a determination of appropriate educational setting for the child.

## **Transportation and Best Interests:**

Transportation costs should not be considered when determining a child's best interest. Some children in foster care will need transportation to remain in their school of origin when it is in their best interest. Since MACS is an LEA receiving Title I funds, the school must collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency or agencies to ensure that transportation for children in foster care is provided, arranged, and funded.

### **Additional Considerations:**

Federal guidance provides that “if there is a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the child welfare agency should be considered the final decision-maker in the making the best interest determination.” Further, federal guidance also states that “legislation addresses action that should be taken when parties are in disagreement about the best interest determination. Any party can challenge the decision within three business days of receiving the notice by using the dispute resolution process for a child welfare treatment plan.” Such disagreements are to be resolved “expeditiously” and burden of proof is placed upon the child welfare system to show that its decision is in the child’s best interest.”

### **Admission Procedure:**

Guardians of foster students enrolling in MACS must present:

1. A certified copy of the foster student’s birth certificate. If a birth certificate is not presented, the CEO shall notify in writing the person enrolling the foster student that within 30 days he or she must provide a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate. When a certified copy of the birth certificate is presented, the school shall promptly make a copy for its records, place the copy in the foster student’s temporary record, and return the original to the person enrolling the child. If a person enrolling a foster student fails to provide a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate, the Principal or Foster Care point of contact shall notify the supporting agency of the requirement.
2. Proof of residence, as required by Board policy.
3. Proof of disease immunization or detection and the required physical examination, as required by State law.
4. Placement paperwork from Department of Children and Family Services indicating who the foster care provider is for the child.
5. Contact information for the child’s caseworker.