

Foster Care Policy

Colorado Preparatory Academy & Pikes Peak Online School

Purpose:

This policy ensures that foster care students enrolled in Colorado Preparatory Academy (CPA) and Pikes Peak Online School (PPOS) are provided equitable access to quality education while addressing their unique needs. Our goal is to ensure academic success, stability, and support for every foster care student in compliance with federal and state laws, including Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Colorado Revised Statutes.

Definitions:

- **Foster Care Student:** A student placed by the Colorado Department of Human Services in 24-hour substitute care, including family foster homes, group homes, or residential facilities.
- **School of Origin:** The school the student attended when placed into foster care or the school in which the student was last enrolled.
- **Best Interest Determination (BID):** A process to determine whether a student should remain in their school of origin or enroll in a new school based on educational stability and individual needs.

Policy Guidelines:

1. Identification:

- CPA and PPOS receive notifications from county child welfare agencies when a child enters foster care or when a newly enrolled student is identified as being in foster care.
- The Foster Care Coordinator initiates contact with the foster family and students to provide support and address educational needs.

2. Educational Stability:

- Foster care students have the right to remain in their school of origin, unless it is determined that it is not in their best interest.
- If a change in school placement occurs, CPA and PPOS will ensure immediate enrollment without delay, even if records or documents are unavailable.

3. Transportation:

- Transportation to the school of origin will be arranged and funded in collaboration with the placing agency and local education agency (LEA). CPA and PPOS will ensure no disruptions in transportation services.

4. Immediate Enrollment and Records Transfer:

- Foster care students will be enrolled immediately upon request from the caseworker or caregiver, regardless of the availability of immunization records, transcripts, or other documentation.

- CPA and PPOS will request and expedite the transfer of academic records from the previous school.

5. Academic Support and Resources:

- Foster care students will be provided with access to academic resources, individualized education plans (if applicable), and mental health services.
- Teachers and staff will receive professional development to understand and address the unique challenges foster care students face.

6. Best Interest Determination (BID):

- The BID process will involve collaboration among school staff, foster care liaisons, caseworkers, and caregivers.
- CPA and PPOS will prioritize the student's educational stability, proximity to the school of origin, and the student's preferences in BID decisions.

7. Foster Care Liaison:

- CPA and PPOS will designate a Foster Care Liaison to ensure compliance with state and federal laws, act as a point of contact for foster care students and provide necessary support to students and families.
- The liaison will coordinate with child welfare agencies, provide staff training, and ensure the implementation of this policy.

8. Data and Privacy:

- The confidentiality of foster care students' status and records will be strictly maintained.
- CPA and PPOS will disaggregate and monitor data on foster care students' academic performance, attendance, and graduation rates to ensure accountability and improvement in services.

Monitoring and Accountability:

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of foster care students. Revisions will be made as necessary to address gaps and improve outcomes.