

2025–2026

Change of School Assignment (COSA)

INFORMATION BOOKLET

Please note that all COSA requests must go through Synergy ParentVue

INTRODUCTION

Students in Montgomery County are expected to attend the school within the established attendance area in which they reside (home school) or assigned in accordance with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Approval requires consideration of available classroom space, grade-level enrollment, staffing allocations, or other factors that impact the schools involved. Students may apply for Change of School Assignment (COSA) from the home school, or the school of assignment through the IEP process, based on the following criteria:

- **UNIQUE HARDSHIP**—Students may apply for a COSA when extenuating circumstances related to their specific physical, mental, or emotional well-being or their family’s individual or personal situation could be mitigated by a change of school assignment.
- **FAMILY MOVE**—Students whose families have moved within Montgomery County who wish to continue attending their former home school may request a COSA without demonstrating a unique hardship. Such requests may be considered for the remainder of the current school year only, with the exception that students in Grade 11 or 12 may be granted a COSA to stay through high school graduation.
- **SIBLINGS**—When a student seeks to attend the school where a sibling will be enrolled in the regular/general school program, or a special education program, during the year the student wants to enroll.
 - » When a sibling attends a magnet, language immersion, or other application program at the elementary level, a COSA may be approved to the regular school program for other siblings on a case-by-case basis.

The criteria above regarding siblings does not apply if a boundary change has occurred, or if the sibling is in PreK.

For all COSA requests, consideration will be given to school capacity and other issues that impact the ability of the requested school to admit new students.

REFER TO PARENTVUE OR COSA BOOKLET FOR MORE OPTIONS

These students do not have to submit a COSA if requesting another school within their consortium:

- **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS** who live in the Northeast Consortium (NEC) or Downcounty Consortium (DCC) areas and are requesting another Consortium school.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS** who live in the Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC) and are requesting another MSMC school, or who went through the MSMC Choice process lottery and are applying to an MSMC school.
- **SIBLINGS** another school within the Consortium, (DCC, NEC, or MSMC) you must submit a written and signed letter of appeal to the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS), via e-mail at DCCAPS@mcpsmd.org, located at 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902. For information on changing schools within NEC, DCC, or MSMC, contact the DCCAPS at 240-740-7800, or visiting the website: www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/schoolchoice

PLEASE NOTE: Absent an emergency event or recent move into Montgomery County, all COSA requests must be submitted by April 1, 2025, and by accepting a COSA, the parent or guardian must provide transportation.

DIVISION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL AND ATTENDANCE SERVICES (DPPAS)

240-740-5620 • COSArequest@mcpsmd.org





VISION

We inspire learning by providing the greatest public education to each and every student.

MISSION

Every student will have the academic, creative problem solving, and social emotional skills to be successful in college and career.

CORE PURPOSE

Prepare all students to thrive in their future.

CORE VALUES

*Learning
Relationships
Respect
Excellence
Equity*

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15 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I apply for a school transfer?

All Change of School Assignment (COSA) requests are made in ParentVue in Synergy. If your address is different than the address presently in Synergy, you must have your child's current school of assignment update the address before a COSA request can be processed. The current and requested schools will be notified when your COSA request has been received.

Students new to the school system must be enrolled and registered in their home school prior to submitting a COSA request. COSA requests will not be processed until the student has completed the residency verification and enrollment process at the home school.

When do I apply?

COSA applications for the 2025-2026 school year are to be submitted between the first school day in February 2025 and the first school day in April 2025. We will make every effort to notify parents/guardians and students of the decision regarding their COSA request by May 23, 2025. COSA requests submitted after the first school day in April will be accepted only if the student is a new resident of Montgomery County, or there is an emergency event that could not be foreseen prior to April. Documentation supporting this situation must be supplied. Documentation could include verification of a family move, or of a significant school or community-related event, which occurred after the April deadline. Students awaiting a decision on a COSA must attend their assigned school until a final decision is made.

What documentation do I need to submit with my request for a COSA?

It will depend on your individual situation; however, the documents must represent facts that can be independently verified. Examples include financial records, letters from health-care professionals, and letters from employers. In the absence of such documentation, evidence of such extenuating circumstances may be obtained through consultation with school staff.

What is a unique hardship?

A unique hardship depends on the family's individual and personal situation. Problems that are common to large numbers of families, such as issues involving day care or program/course preference, do not constitute a hardship, unless there are other compelling factors. Documentation that can be independently verified must accompany all hardship requests, or the request will be denied. In the absence of such documentation, evidence of such extenuating circumstances may be obtained through consultation with school staff.

Examples of such unique hardships include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. CHILD CARE:** Parents/guardians must demonstrate extenuating circumstances in obtaining age-appropriate supervision of school-age students before-and/or after-school because: (a) their work hours extend significantly beyond the typical hours for available child care programs and activities located within the home school or otherwise easily accessible child care programs; and/or (b) significant financial constraints limit the family's ability to otherwise access child care, or other student specified needs. (c) Many MCPS elementary schools provide child care within or near the school building.
 - » Preference of a previously used child care provider, or one where the student has an established relationship with the provider, that is outside of the student's school of assignment does not constitute a unique hardship. In addition, financial assistance is available through the [Child Care Scholarship Program \(CCS\)](#) and the [Working Parents Assistance Program \(WPA\)](#).
 - » Middle and high school students are developmentally capable of caring for themselves, unsupervised, for brief periods of time before and after school. This may include, but is not limited to, walking to and from school, boarding/deboarding their assigned MCPS school bus, and remaining unsupervised at home prior to parents/guardians returning home from work. In addition, many secondary schools offer after school activities that provide engaging programming through early evening hours.
- 2. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:** involving the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of the student. Parents/guardians seeking COSAs for this reason should provide documentation of: (a) ongoing treatment by a health care provider of issues related to the student's physical, mental, or emotional well-being that are directly related to or significantly impacted by the school environment; and/or (b) a significant health issue with unique care requirements (e.g., frequent medical appointments far from the student's home school and/or the parent's/guardian's work location).

MCPS students are expected to attend their school of assignment based on their bona fide residence within Montgomery County. School assignments can be determined using the [MCPS School Assignment Tool](#). Preference due to a school's national ranking; academic offerings; interscholastic athletic records; student enrollment and building capacity; perceived safety, suspension rates, or student attendance rates does not constitute a unique hardship.

Once my child has been approved for a COSA, do I need to reapply each year?

The student may remain at the requested school on a COSA until the student is ready to matriculate to the next education level, (i.e. - middle school or high school), unless a COSA was approved for one year only. Students attending school on a COSA must reapply for a COSA and demonstrate a unique hardship to attend a school other than their home school when matriculating from elementary to middle school, and middle to high school.

What if my child is receiving special education services that are not offered in all schools?

If your student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires them to receive special education services that are not offered in all schools, then you should complete the ParentVue COSA application, indicating that the student receives special education services, in addition to submitting appropriate documentation indicating the reason for the COSA request. Decisions regarding requests for students receiving special education services that are not available in all schools will be made after July 1. For more information, please contact the Department of Special Education Services at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 230, Rockville, Maryland 20850 at 240-740-3900.

Are students of MCPS staff members automatically approved for a COSA?

No. However, consistent with MCPS strategic priorities to encourage and support school-based staff who work in Title I Schools or Focus Schools, staff based in any one of those schools may request a transfer for their own child to attend the school in which they work under the following conditions:

- a. The staff member is assigned to work in one of the above referenced schools for the upcoming school year in a budgeted full-time equivalent (FTE) position that is eligible for leave, retirement, and health benefits coverage; and
- b. The staff member is a Montgomery County resident, and the student is otherwise eligible to enroll in MCPS; and
- c. The request is accompanied by a plan for childcare during all times during the staff member's duty day.

If the student's enrollment in the school in which the staff member works becomes an impediment to the staff member's ability to perform their duties satisfactorily, the student transfer may be rescinded.

MCPS staff who do not work in one of the schools identified in this section may otherwise apply for COSAs for their children in accordance with requirements of this policy and related regulations.

Is the transfer process the same for paired elementary schools?

Yes. If a student attends a paired primary school (Bel Pre, Montgomery Knolls, New Hampshire Estates, Roscoe R. Nix, Rosemary Hills, and Takoma Park elementary schools) on an approved COSA, they must submit a COSA request, which will be approved to the upper elementary grades school automatically.

What is the process for students who are assigned to Poolesville Elementary School who wish to attend Monocacy Elementary School?

Parents/Guardians must submit a COSA application through ParentVue, which will be approved automatically.

Are COSAs approved to academic signature programs, or unique courses?

No. Signature programs and unique courses have been designed for the school in which they are located. COSA requests to these schools must meet the same criteria as all other COSA requests. See page 5 of this booklet for programs exempt from the COSA process

Can students submit a COSA request for an academic transfer?

High school students may request academic transfers to participate in one of the following:

- 1. A multi-year sequence of related courses, as defined in the district or school course catalog, that is not available at the student's home school. This refers to a sequence of related courses within a **career-related program of study** CTE not offered at the student's home school that culminates with a capstone course and/or program completion.
- 2. A multi-year single course sequence, as defined in the district or school course catalog, that is not available at the student's home school. This refers to a multi-year course sequence that results in advanced-level study of a specialized subject not offered in the student's home school.

Examples:

Arabic 1, Arabic 2, Arabic 3

Tap Dance 1, Tap Dance 2, Tap Dance 3

Note: Must be submitted between the first school day in **February 2025** and the first school day in **April 2025**. Applicants will be permitted if space is available. Sibling link does not apply. If the student decides to exit the program, student will return to their home school. Approved students are subjected to MCPS Student Transfer Policy (<https://ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/je.pdf>).

Are there programs exempt from the COSA criteria?

The following are examples of programs that are accessible through an application process and not part of the transfer process; however, other selection criteria may apply.

- Aviation and Aerospace at Col. Zadok Magruder High School
- Communication Arts Program at Montgomery Blair High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at John F. Kennedy High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Springbrook High School
- Regional International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Watkins Mill High School
- Countywide International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at Richard Montgomery High School
- Leadership Training Institute at Kennedy High School
- Science, Math, Computer Science Program at Montgomery Blair High School
- PLTW Engineering Program at Wheaton High School
- PLTW Biomedical Program at Wheaton High School
- Visual Art Center at Albert Einstein High School
- Healthcare Professions - Biosciences Academy at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Hospitality and Tourism Management - Global Studies Academy at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Information Technology & Cyber Security - Academy of Information Technology at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Construction Management and Engineering - Academy of Engineering at Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology
- Middle College at Montgomery College (MC2) Program at Northwood High School
- PLTW Biomedical Sciences IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- PLTW Engineering IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Hospitality Management IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Computer Science IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Child Development Associate IB Career Programs at Rockville High School
- Global Ecology at Poolesville High School
- Science, Math, Computer Science Program at Poolesville High School
- Humanities at Poolesville High School
- Healthcare Professions at Seneca Valley High School
- Hospitality and Tourism Management at Seneca Valley High School
- Information Technology & Cyber Security at Seneca Valley High School
- Construction Management and Architecture at Seneca Valley High School
- Project Lead the Way Engineering at Seneca Valley High School
- Middle College at Montgomery College (MC2) Program at Northwest High School
- PLTW Biomedical Sciences at Gaithersburg High School
- Network Operations & Information Technology (PTECH) at Clarksburg High School
- Leadership of Social Justice at Whitman High School
- Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education at Sherwood High School
- The Humanities and Communication Magnet Program at Eastern Middle School and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School.
- The Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Takoma Park Middle School and Roberto Clemente Middle School
- Middle School Magnet Consortium (Argyle, Loiederman, Parkland)
- Centers for Enriched Studies
- Students assigned to any elementary or middle school language immersion program
- Other programs as identified by the superintendent of schools
- Other programs as identified in the OPTIONS: Guide to Countywide Programs (www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/enrichedinnovative/options)

Students whose COSAs were approved for an academic transfer are required to return to their home school if they exit that program:

(See ww2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/jee.pdf)

What happens to my COSA request after it is submitted?

Your submitted COSA request is forwarded to DPPAS, which receives 3,000 to 4,000 requests each year. DPPAS completes an investigation prior to making a decision. In cases of requests for academic transfers, the COSA will be forwarded to the Office of Teaching, Learning, and School who will analyze the program request and communicate with the family.

When will I hear whether my request has been approved or denied?

DPPAS staff makes every effort to notify parents/guardians and students by ParentVue no later than May 23, 2025.

Once my child has been approved for a COSA, can it be rescinded?

A principal may request to have a COSA rescinded for proper cause. An example may be disciplinary infractions or attendance issues.

Will my child be eligible to play interscholastic sports at the new school?

High school students who receive a COSA out of their current feeder pattern must attend the new school for one calendar year before being eligible to participate in athletics, unless they apply for an athletic waiver. Please review the Department of the Athletics *website* for more information.

Is transportation provided to the new school?

No. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

My COSA was denied. How do I request reconsideration of my circumstances??

If you believe the COSA rules were applied incorrectly, you may appeal to the **Superintendent/Designee, via e-mail at DivisionOfAppeals@mcpsmd.org, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 43, Rockville, Maryland 20850**. The appeal must be made in writing and received by the superintendent/designee no later than 15 calendar days following the date of the decision notification. The appeal should state reason(s) for seeking review of the decision and should include any additional information that you wish to be considered. **For more information, call 240-740-4130. Students awaiting a decision on a COSA appeal will attend their assigned school until a final decision is made.**

All appeals are reviewed on the basis of the documents submitted and follow-up communication.

If your appeal is denied by the superintendent/designee, you may appeal to the **Montgomery County Board of Education (Board), via e-mail boeappeals@mcpsmd.org, 15 West Gude Drive, Room 100, Rockville, Maryland 20850**, within 30 calendar days of the date of the superintendent/designee's decision letter, although you are strongly encouraged to submit any appeal as soon as possible. All appeals are heard on regularly scheduled Board meeting dates. **Please note that the Board is in recess during the month of August.**

PARENTVUE ACCOUNT ACCESS PAGE

ParentVUE Account Access

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MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nativity, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. The Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy *ACA, Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.*

It is the policy of the state of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not
 - (a) discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
 - (b) refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
 - (c) discipline, invade a privacy against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.**

Please note that contact information and federal, state, or local content requirements may change between editions of this document and shall supersede the statements and references contained in this version. Please see the online version for the most up-to-date information at www.mcpsmd.org/equity/nondiscrimination.

<p>For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students***</p> <p>Director of Student Welfare and Compliance Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 15 West Gate Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 SWD@mcpsmd.org</p>	<p>For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff**</p> <p>Human Resource Compliance Officer Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gate Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 HRC@mcpsmd.org</p>
<p>For student requests for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</p> <p>Section 504 Coordinator Office of School Support and Improvement Well-Being and Student Services 858 Hungerford Drive, Room 257, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3388 504@mcpsmd.org</p>	<p>For staff requests for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act</p> <p>ADA Compliance Coordinator Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gate Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 HRC@mcpsmd.org</p>
<p>For inquiries or complaints about sex discrimination under Title IX, including sexual harassment, against students or staff***</p> <p>Title IX Coordinator Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 15 West Gate Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 TitleIX@mcpsmd.org</p>	

*This notification complies with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended.

**This notification complies with the Code of Maryland Regulations Section 13A.01.02.

***Discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as the following: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Baltimore Field Office, 61 Fallon Federal Building, 33 Niagara Plaza, Suite 3432, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-688-8820 (TTY); Maryland Commissioner of Civil Rights (MCCR), William Beardsley Schaefer Tower, 8 Saint Paul Street, Suite 800, Baltimore, MD 21202, 410-767-8600, 1-800-637-6247, mccr@maryland.gov; Agency Equity Office, Office of Equity Assessment and Compliance, Office of the Deputy State Superintendent of Operations, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-2505, aeo.mde@maryland.gov or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), The Hammer Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 312, Philadelphia, PA 19102, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-827-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the MCPS Office of Communications at 240-740-2837, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or PIO@mcpsmd.org. Individuals who need sign language interpretation or oral speech transcription may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 901-637-2958 (VF) mcpsinterpreting@mcpsmd.org, or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org.

