

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONES**A. Establishment of Zones**

School attendance zones for each school are established by the Board. In the establishment of such zones, the Board considers, among other things, the capacity of a school, the number of school-age children living in a given area, city limits, natural boundaries and major traffic areas, the safety of students going to and from school, and the number of children living in a given area who qualify for free and reduced meals. A separate attendance zone is established for each **preK-4 elementary** school and a single citywide attendance zone is established for schools serving middle and high school students **in grades 5-12**. (Note: Effective August 2026, the elementary schools will change from grades preK-4 to grades K-5, and there will be a single citywide attendance zone for preK students in addition to middle and high school students).

Any student who resides on a military installation or in military housing within the division is permitted to enroll in any school in the division upon request of the student's parent if space in the school is available. The superintendent is responsible for establishing an application process which may include the following

- A process by which a parent or guardian indicates a school preference for purposes of his child attending a school in the division but outside of the attendance area in which the child resides
- A requirement that the parent or guardian provide transportation for the student attending a school outside the attendance zone in which the child resides
- A requirement that the student may be disqualified from attending a school outside the attendance area in which the child resides if he has been subject to specified disciplinary actions
- A prohibition on the recruitment of a student from one school to another by a school division employee
- A limitation on participation in certain athletic activities for a student who chooses to attend a school outside the attendance zone in which he resides
- A random, unbiased selection process in the event enrollment requests exceed the capacity of a school
- A provision that a student will be permitted to remain at the receiving school until the student has completed the highest grade level in that school
- A preference to a student
 - who resides in a location that has been subject to a change in school attendance area during the previous two years
 - who has a sibling attending the receiving school, or
 - whose parent or guardian is an employee of the receiving school

Changes in attendance areas are determined by the School Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent based on the need to provide for the orderly administration of the schools, the competent instruction of the students, and the health, safety, best interests and general welfare of all students.

B. School Zone Attendance Requirements for Resident Students

All resident students shall attend the school which serves the attendance zone in which they reside except under special conditions approved by the Board. The residence of the person having legal custody of the student is considered the residence of the student. The Board reserves the right to verify the residency of any student.

C. Requests for Out of School zone Attendance by Resident Students

A parental request for out of school zone attendance by a resident student may be considered under the limited circumstances set forth below:

- **Grade K-4 Elementary** student child care issues. The parent/guardian must demonstrate hardship in providing appropriate supervision for the child in the designated school area where the parent/guardian resides. Factors the School Division will consider include, but are not limited to, the age of the child, lack of childcare providers in the designated school area, personal circumstances within the parent/guardian's household (i.e., the parent/guardian work schedule, ability to pay for child care, among others), length of time child has been with child care provider, type of care situation (private home vs. daycare center), and family relation to the childcare provider, advantages of the care to be provided in the requested area, and whether the **family or** provider will provide safe and punctual transportation to/from the requested school.
- Change of residence during the course of a school year. A student changing residence within the city shall be permitted to complete the school year in the school in which he/she was in attendance, and the parent/guardian must provide transportation to and from school. A student who has attended a school for at least three years and moves to another residence in the city is eligible to complete his/her education at the school he/she was attending, and the parent/guardian must provide transportation. If the student has not been in attendance for three years, the student shall enroll in and attend the school serving the attendance zone in which he/she resides at the beginning of the next school year.
- **Families impacted by elementary rezoning.** A student attending their school of residence the year prior to a boundary change going into effect may apply annually to continue attending the school until the highest grade level for that school is completed if the family will provide safe, reliable and punctual transportation to/from the requested school. For students applying to stay who are entering first through third grade, applications for younger siblings entering kindergarten will also be considered. Similarly, families may apply to attend a school outside the current zone of residence based on boundary changes planned to go into effect before their student completes fifth grade if the family will provide safe, reliable and punctual transportation to/from the requested school.

D. Application for Out of School Zone Attendance

INSTRUCTION

A request for out of school zone attendance must be made on a form provided by the School Division. The form shall be submitted to the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration Chief Operations Officer (COO) who will forward a copy to the office of the principal of the desired school of attendance. A request based upon convenience or personal preference not in alignment with the circumstances detailed in this policy shall not be considered. Out of zone attendance may be approved only when the approval does not exceed the optimum student capacity, as determined by the Superintendent, of the grade and school requested. The COO, in a timely manner, shall provide an applicant with written notification of the approval or denial of a request. Approval, if granted, is valid only for the school year in which it is received and a parent/guardian shall reapply in writing each school year for consideration. Falsification of any information stated in a request will be cause for immediate revocation of out of school zone attendance permission and no further application shall be considered.

Approval of out of zone attendance can be revoked by the Superintendent or his/her designee with written notification to the parent/legal guardian. Reasons for revocation include, but are not limited to, overcrowding, poor attendance, habitual tardiness, failure to provide safe and punctual transportation, Code of Conduct violations, and any action or behavior by the student or parent/legal guardian that is disruptive to and/or interferes with the educational process.

E. Homelessness

Federal and state mandates regarding the admission of homeless students shall supersede Board policies or regulations related to out of school zone attendance by resident students.

Approved: April 3, 2003
Revised: June 19, 2008
Revised: June 23, 2013
Revised: June 26, 2014
Revised: June 19, 2018
Reviewed: June 27, 2023
Revised: May 1, 2025

Legal References: Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, §§ 22.1-7.1, 22.1-7.2, 22.1-78, 22.1-79

Cross References: JCA Transfer by Student Victims of Crime
JCB Transfers by Students in Persistently Dangerous Schools