

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMISSION TO PRE-KINDERGARTEN,
KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE

5111.1

Procedure No.

September 27, 2023

Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To provide the procedures for determining eligibility for admission to prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade as it relates to legal age of admission and attendance requirements, the procedures for early admission and waiver of attendance requirements.

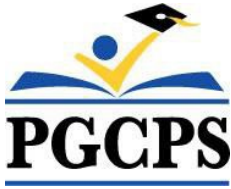
- II. **POLICY:**
 - A. The Prince George’s County Board of Education (“Board” or “Board of Education”) allows early admission into prekindergarten for three (3) year-old based on space availability as determined by district need at the boundary school only and who meet all other enrollment qualifications.

 - B. The Board allows early admission into kindergarten for four (4) year-old students who meet all other enrollment qualifications and demonstrate capabilities warranting early admission based on assessment results.

 - C. The Board maintains that qualified kindergarten students should be declared eligible to enroll into the first grade when it is determined by staff that those students have the maturity and ability to succeed academically in the first grade (Board Policy 5111). Information on early entrance into first grade is available under [Administrative Procedure 5111.11](#).

- III. **BACKGROUND:**
 - A. State law governs the age and eligibility requirements for children to attend public school.
 1. **Compulsory school attendance:** Every child who is 5 years old or older and residing in Prince George’s County shall attend public school regularly during the entire period of the school year. Each child who resides in Prince George’s County shall attend a kindergarten program regularly during the school year prior to entering the first grade unless it can be shown that the child is otherwise receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the skills and studies usually taught in a kindergarten program of a public school, or the child is exempted under COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2.

 2. **Proof of residency:** Parent(s) and guardian(s) who are registering their child in Prince George’s County Public Schools (“PGCPS”) for the first time must complete the Affidavit of Disclosure, as required by state law, verifying their legal residence. Proof of residency, and any update thereto,



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is a prerequisite of admission to the public schools in Prince George's County.

3. **Registration:** The action or process of supplying documentation as described in AP5111 for the purposes of enrollment. Registration can be conducted face-to-face at the boundary school, when appropriate, or online.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

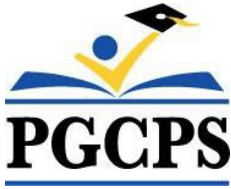
- A. *Economically disadvantaged background* - In COMAR 13A.06.02.02, "economically disadvantaged background" refers to a family whose income based on eligibility requirements established by the USDA, would qualify for free or reduced price meals based on the eligibility required established by the USDA if the child were in K-12. This does not imply a family must apply for the FARMS program, but that their family income would make them eligible.
- B. *Eligible child* - a student who is four by September 1st of the school year and meets any of the following criteria:
 1. meets the income eligibility guidelines
 2. registered with the [McKinney Vento Program](#) (homeless) demonstrates
 3. developmental delays or is at risk for developmental delays as identified by an IEP placement

****Over-income families will be placed on a waitlist and considered for a seat based on space availability mid-September***

- C. *Homeless* - A student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The student may live in a shelter, a motel, a car, a campground, or on the street. Homeless students may be "doubled-up" with relatives or friends.
- D. *Registration:* The action or process of supplying documentation as described in AP5111 for the purposes of enrollment. Registration can be conducted face-to-face at the boundary school, when appropriate, or online.

V. PROCEDURES:

- A. Admission to Prekindergarten



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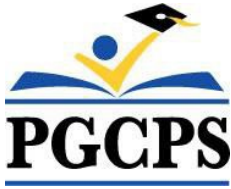
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1. Children applying to a public school prekindergarten program must meet the age, income-eligibility and residency requirements for admission. Except for a few special circumstances outlined in Administrative Procedure 5111 (Registration and Withdrawal of Students), only a parent or court-appointed guardian may register a student. At the time of registration, online or in person at the boundary school, the parent or court-appointed guardian must complete the Student Registration form (PA-14) according to Administrative Procedure 5111.
 - a. **Age:** Children shall be four (4) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they apply for entrance.
 - (1) The parent or legal guardian must provide the child's proof of age. The following documentation must be an official original and can be used as birth verification: birth certificate/certificate of live birth, hospital certificate, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certificate, passport/VISA or other official documentation approved by Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. A passport or VISA can be used as a proof of birth only if approved by the International Student Counseling Office (ISCO). The child's name, child's birth date and parent's complete name must be listed on the document provided. If the parent's name is listed differently from the document provided, additional information may be required to verify identity (e.g., marriage certificate, court order, etc.). *NOTE: If a new student is already registered in one of Prince George's County Public Schools and a copy of the original birth verification is already on file in the student's folder, a new copy is not needed.*
 - (2) No child shall be admitted to prekindergarten until such proof of age is presented and accepted.
 - b. **Income Eligibility:**
 - (1) Children admitted to the Prekindergarten Program through mid-September must meet the income guidelines set by the United States Department of Agriculture for free and reduced meals. Income guidelines are provided on the PGCPS Food and Nutrition Services website: <http://www1.pgcps.org/foodandnutrition/>. The Prekindergarten Regulations section on Student Eligibility (COMAR 13A.06.02.03) states that local school systems shall enroll all 4 year old prekindergarten applicants who are from



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families with economically disadvantaged backgrounds or who are homeless.

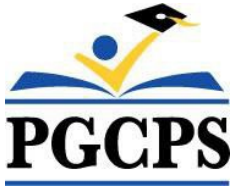
- (a) The following **proof of income** is required from all parents in the household:
 - i. If currently employed, two (bi-weekly) current pay stubs or four (weekly) current pay stubs.
 - ii. Additional documents that may be accepted:
 - Current Tax Return Transcript (Self Employed Only)
 - Child Support Letter
 - Unemployment Stubs/Letter
 - Notarized letter with amount from person assisting parent
 - Notarized Salary letter on company letterhead
 - TCA/Cash Assistance/SSI
- (b) School staff should contact the Early Learning Office for questions with regards to acceptable proof of income.
- (c) Families who do not meet the income guidelines will be placed on a waiting list and considered for admission based on space availability as determined by district need in mid September. However, non-income eligible children receiving services under an IEP may attend the prekindergarten program through the special education process, not as an income-based enrollment.

2. Registration Process:

Prekindergarten registration is scheduled at boundary prekindergarten program locations or online from the first day of the registration season. The registration season is set around spring break of every year unless changed due to extenuating circumstances

3. Prekindergarten Behavioral Issues

- a. Any student demonstrating significant difficulties with the instructional program and/or exhibiting behaviors considered



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inappropriate or dangerous to him/herself or others will be referred to the SIT.

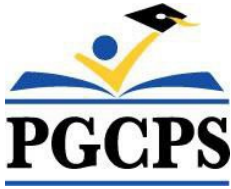
- b. The SIT, which should include the school counselor, psychologist and mental health clinician, will review student data (teacher observations, student portfolio samples, behavior data collection tools and informal and formal assessments), and develop an action plan to address student needs. Staff from the Early Childhood Office or the Early Childhood Special Education Office will provide additional supports to school teams as needed.
- c. If the school administrator, in consultation with a school psychologist or other mental health professional, determines that there is an imminent threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated through interventions and supports then the student may be suspended. If appropriate, the student can be referred to Child Find for an assessment.

Prekindergarten students may not be suspended for more than five (5) school days.

4. **Withdrawal:** Prekindergarten students cannot be withdrawn from school without prior consultation with the Early Childhood Office or the Early Childhood Special Education Office unless the parent is requesting the withdrawal.

B. Early Entrance into Prekindergarten :

1. Parents/Guardians seeking early entrance into prekindergarten must complete the Prekindergarten Early Entrance application available online. Early entrance will only be considered for children turning four (4) years of age between September 2 and October 15, of the school year for which they are requesting early entrance. **Early Entrance to Prekindergarten applications will be placed on hold until after October 15th and considered based on space availability as determined by district need at the boundary school only. Families will be contacted directly if space is available.**
 - a. No applications for early entrance into Prekindergarten will be accepted after June 1st unless this date is extended by the school system due to extenuating circumstances.



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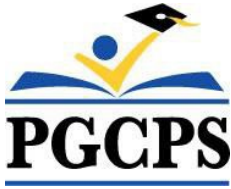
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- b. If accepted for early entrance into prekindergarten, parents/guardians must complete all registration requirements including providing verification of residency, income verification, proof of age and up to date immunization records.
- c. Notification of placement and waiting lists:
 - (1) Applicants for early entrance will be placed on a waiting list in the order the applications are received by the Early Childhood Office. No applications for early entrance will be accepted after June 1st unless the school system is prohibited from doing this due to extenuating circumstances..
 - (2) Applicants for early entrance will be notified if a placement becomes available. No early entrance applicant will be placed prior to October 15th.
 - (3) Early entrance applicants will only be offered placement at the boundary school. Early entrance does not apply to lottery programs. If a placement is offered and not accepted within 14 days, the space will be forfeited and offered to the next waiting student.
- d. Prekindergarten
 - (1) A probationary period occurs for any student offered early entrance. The SIT will review the child's progress to determine whether the probationary early entrance status continues or is terminated. If termination is deemed appropriate by the SIT, the parent will be notified in writing within 60 days of entrance in the prekindergarten program.
 - (2) Students admitted to Prekindergarten through the early entrance process who demonstrate kindergarten readiness will be enrolled into kindergarten. The School Instructional Team (SIT) will review the student's Early Learning Assessment (ELA) ratings and student portfolio



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to determine kindergarten readiness. Some early entry students may need an additional year in Prekindergarten as deemed appropriate by the SIT.

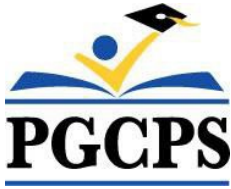
C. Admission to Kindergarten

1. Age

- a. Children admitted to the kindergarten program in the public school shall be at least five (5) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they apply for entrance.
- b. The law allows a one (1) year exception from mandatory attendance upon granting of a maturity waiver. The parent or guardian seeking a waiver from mandatory attendance must file a written request, prior to the opening of school, with the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries asking that attendance be delayed due to the child's level of maturity. Students who are approved for a Kindergarten waiver are prohibited from enrolling and participating in a Prekindergarten program.

2. Early Admission

- a. Those seeking early admission into kindergarten must demonstrate kindergarten readiness by showing mastery of Prekindergarten standards in Language & Literacy and Mathematics and striving efforts towards Kindergarten standards as measured by assessments administered by Prince George's County Public Schools.
- b. Early entrance will only be considered for children turning five (5) years of age between September 2 and October 15, of the school year for which they are requesting early entrance. Early entrance does not apply to lottery programs.
 - (1) Parents/Guardians seeking early admission to kindergarten must complete the appropriate application available online. No applications for early entrance will be accepted after June 1st unless extenuating circumstances require a delay and then



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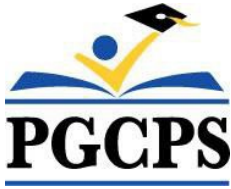
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the school system will set an appropriate date.

- (2) Applicants for early admission will be assessed by a qualified examiner from the Early Childhood Office. During an extenuating event health protocols must be followed (masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, no contact thermometer, etc.) or other guidelines as warranted by the school system. The assessment and eligibility determination will be completed on or before the next school year.
 - c. Determination of early admittance will be shared with parents the same day that the screening takes place. Parents will have two weeks from the day of the screening to appeal assessment results. Appeals must be emailed to the Early Childhood Office. All information will be reviewed and parents will be notified with a decision within two weeks from the date of receipt.
 - d. If accepted for Early Entrance to Kindergarten, parents/guardians must complete all registration requirements including providing verification of residency, proof of age and up to date immunization records.
 - e. A probationary period occurs for any student offered early entrance. The SIT will review the child's progress to determine whether the probationary early entrance status continues or is terminated. If termination is deemed appropriate by the S I T, the parent will be notified within 60 days of entrance in the program.
3. Registration Process
 - a. Proof of Age
 - (1) Except for a few special circumstances outlined in Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students, only a parent or court-appointed guardian may register a student.



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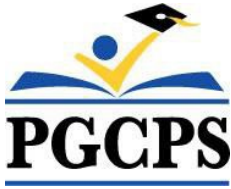
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- (2) At the time of registration, the parent or legal guardian completes the Student Registration Form (PA-14) according to Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students.
- (3) The parent or legal guardian must provide proof of age. The following documentation must be an official original and can be used as birth verification: birth certificate/certificate of live birth, hospital certificate, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certificate, passport/VISA or other official documentation approved by Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. A passport or VISA can be used as a proof of birth only if approved by the International Student Counseling Office (ISCO). The child's name, birth date and parent's complete name must be listed on the document provided. If the parent's name is listed differently from the document provided, additional information may be required to verify identity (e.g., marriage certificate, court order, etc.). *Note: If a new student is already registered in one of Prince George's County public schools and a copy of the original birth verification is already on file in the student's folder, a new copy is not needed.*
- (4) No child shall be admitted to kindergarten until such proof is presented.

4. Exemptions

a. Level of Maturity Waiver

- (1) A child who resides in the Prince George's County and is five (5) years old may be exempted from mandatory school attendance for one (1) year if the child's parent or guardian believes that a delay in school attendance is in the best interest of the child and the parent or guardian files a written request



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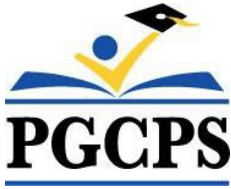
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with the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries.

- (2) A written request for a one (1) year exemption from mandatory attendance for a five (5) year-old shall be filed with the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries.
 - (3) After a child is enrolled in kindergarten, a parent or guardian may file a written request to withdraw the child from the program and delay attendance until the following school year if the parent or guardian believes it is in the best interest of the child.
 - (4) The Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries shall approve the request for delay or withdrawal in writing within five (5) working days from date of receipt.
 - (5) Students approved for a Kindergarten Maturity Waiver are prohibited from enrolling in and/or repeating PreKindergarten.
- b. Alternative Program Settings
- (1) A child may be exempted from attending Kindergarten if parents or guardians of the child file in writing their intent to place the child in an alternative setting and verifies that the child is enrolled:
 - (a) Full-time in a licensed child care center;
 - (b) Full-time in a registered family day care home; or
 - (c) In a Head Start five (5) year-old program.
 - (2) Parents or guardians who elect to enroll a child full-time in a licensed child care center or full-time in a family care home or in a Head Start five (5) year-old program shall file their intent to enroll the five (5) year-old child in an alternative program with the Department of Pupil Accounting and School



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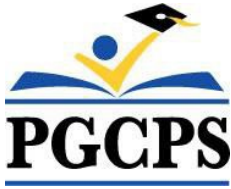
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Boundaries before the opening of school of the year in which the child becomes five (5) years old. Parents or guardians shall verify enrollment by providing the following information:

- (a) Name of program;
 - (b) Address of facility location; and
 - (c) License or registration number and expiration date.
- (3) Parents or guardians of a child who attended an alternative program and meets the age of entrance shall register the child for first grade before the opening of school of the year in which the child becomes six (6) years old and shall provide documentation to the enrolling school showing proof of attendance in the alternative program setting. Documentation includes:
- (a) Date child was enrolled; and
 - (b) Number of days child was absent.

c. Non-State Residents

- (1) A child who moves into Maryland who has had a Kindergarten experience in another state but is not five (5) years old or older by September 1 of the school year shall be enrolled in Kindergarten if their birth date meets early entrance guidelines. If their birth date is after the early entrance cut off and the student has attended at least one semester, they shall be admitted to Kindergarten on a probationary status.. This recognizes that the state from which the child is transferring may have established a different regulation for determining the age for school attendance.
- (2) A six (6) year-old child who moves into Maryland who has not had a Kindergarten experience may be enrolled in Kindergarten or first grade. The School Instructional Team (SIT) shall determine the appropriate grade placement based on a review of



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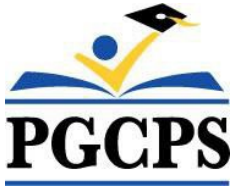
the documentation provided by the parent or guardian and if necessary, an assessment of the child's readiness for the requested grade level.

d. Nonpublic Kindergarten Students

- (1) A child who attends a nonpublic Kindergarten program may transfer to a public Kindergarten program. The child must be age-eligible for Kindergarten.
- (2) A child who attends a nonpublic Kindergarten and is not five (5) years old or older by September 1 of the school year, PGCPS may use its adopted early admission regulation to determine placement. Early entrance will only be considered for children turning five (5) years of age between September 2 and October 15, of the school year for which they are requesting early entrance.

5. Kindergarten Behavioral Issues:

- a. Any student demonstrating significant difficulties with the instructional program and/or exhibiting behaviors considered inappropriate or dangerous to him/herself or others will be referred to the S I T.
- b. The SIT, which should include the school counselor, psychologist and mental health clinician, will review student data (teacher observations, student portfolio samples, behavior data collection tools and informal and formal assessments), and develop an action plan to address student needs. Staff from the Early Childhood Office or the Early Childhood Special Education Office will provide additional supports to school teams as needed.
- c. Kindergarten students who demonstrate difficulties with the instructional program and/or exhibiting behaviors considered inappropriate or dangerous to him/herself or others cannot be placed in the prekindergarten program.



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- d. If the school administrator, in consultation with a school psychologist or other mental health professional, determines that there is an imminent threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated through interventions and supports then the student may be suspended.

Kindergarten students may not be suspended for more than five (5) school days.

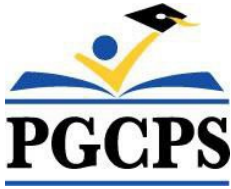
D. Admission to First Grade

1. Age and eligibility

- a. Except for a few special circumstances, children admitted to the first grade in the public schools shall be at least six (6) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they apply for entrance.
- b. Children cannot be enrolled in first grade unless they meet the age of entrance and have completed a public or private kindergarten program, one of three (3) alternative program settings, or home school instruction. This applies to all children who are Maryland residents. Students who do not meet these requirements will be placed in kindergarten and the parent can nominate the child for Early Entrance into First Grade, as provided in [Administrative Procedure 5111.11](#).

2. Registration Process

- a. Proof of Age
 - (1) Except for a few special circumstances outlined in Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students, only a parent or court-appointed guardian may register a student.
 - (2) At the time of registration, the parent or legal guardian completes the Student Registration Form (PA-14) according to Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students.
- b. Parent or legal guardian must provide the original document of proof of age. The following documentation



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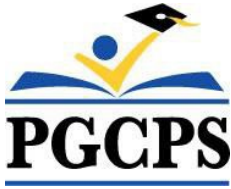
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must be an official original and can be used as birth verifications: birth certificate/certificate of live birth, hospital certificate, physician's certificate, baptismal or church certificate, passport/VISA or other official documentation approved by Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. A passport or VISA can be used as a proof of birth only if approved by the International Student Counseling Office (ISCO). The child's name, birth date and parent's complete name must be listed on the document provided. If the parent's name is listed differently from the document provided additional information may be required to verify identity (e.g., marriage certificate, court order, etc.). *Note: If a new student is already registered in one of Prince George's County public schools and a copy of the original birth verification is already on file in the student's folder, a new copy is not needed. All documents must be uploaded when registering online.*

- c. No child shall be admitted to first grade until such proof is presented.

3. Exemptions

- a. A six (6) year-old moving into Maryland from another state, who has not had kindergarten experience, may be enrolled in first grade.
- b. Families that have moved to the state of Maryland and have a child who does not meet the age of entry for first grade but have completed kindergarten in another state, the parent or guardian must:
 - (1) Provide proof that they just moved into the state of Maryland and must complete the Affidavit of Disclosure (PA-15) to establish proof of their legal residence.
 - (2) Provide proof that the child completed kindergarten and was promoted to first grade.
- c. If the parent or guardian cannot provide proof that the child attended kindergarten, or one of the alternative programs, or that they are new residents of Maryland, then the child



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cannot be enrolled in first grade. The child must be enrolled in kindergarten and the parent can nominate the child for Early Entrance into First Grade, as provided in [Administrative Procedure 5111.11](#).

VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

- A. Training for school based secretaries will be conducted yearly online or face to face as appropriate by the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Office, to review Prekindergarten and Kindergarten enrollment procedures.
- B. The Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Office, will conduct an annual audit of student enrollment every year to identify students who are not age eligible for Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten or who have not been accepted into Early Entrance.
- C. Schools will work in collaboration with the Division of Academics to resolve registration and enrollment errors made on the part of school based staff.

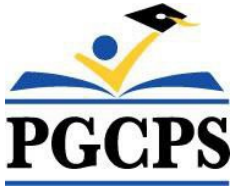
VII. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

Maryland Annotated Code, Education Article, §§ 2-205; 7-101; 7-101.1; 7-102; 7-301; 7-302;
Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.02

VIII. RELATED PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS:

Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students;
Administrative Procedure 5111.11, Early Entrance into First Grade;
Administrative Procedure 5123.2 General Procedures Pertaining to Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students;

- IX. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES: This Administrative Procedure originates with the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries and will be updated as needed.



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- X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This Administrative Procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5111.1, dated June 13, 2019.
- XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 27, 2023