



Child Find Policy Statement

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

*Introduction*

**§ 300.111 - Child find: Authority and/or Responsibility**

22 Pa. Code §§ 14.121 – 14.123

22 Pa. Code § 711.21, § 711.23 and § 711.24

(a) General.

(1) The State must have in effect policies and procedures to ensure that—

(i) All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State, and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated; and

(ii) A practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children are currently receiving needed special education and related services.

(b) Use of term developmental delay. The following provisions apply with respect to implementing the child find requirements of this section:

(1) A State that adopts a definition of developmental delay under §300.8(b) determines whether the term applies to children aged three through nine, or to a subset of that age range (e.g., ages three through five).

(2) A State may not require an LEA to adopt and use the term developmental delay for any children within its jurisdiction.

(3) If an LEA uses the term developmental delay for children described in §300.8(b), the LEA must conform to both the State's definition of that term and to the age range that has been adopted by the State.

(4) If a State does not adopt the term developmental delay, an LEA may not independently use that term as a basis for establishing a child's eligibility under this part.

- (c) Other children in child find. Child find also must include –
- (1) Children who are suspected of being a child with a disability under §300.8 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade; and
  - (2) Highly mobile children, including migrant children.
- (d) Construction. Nothing in the Act requires that children be classified by their disability so long as each child who has a disability that is listed in §300.8 and who, by reason of that disability, needs special education and related services is regarded as a child with a disability under Part B of the Act.

It is PFPCS policy that all children with disabilities residing in the LEA, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who need special education and related services, are *identified, located, and evaluated*. In order to be eligible for special education services and supports, a child must have a disability under the IDEA (“disability”) and a need for special education services and supports. Thus, PFPCS will actively Identify students by gathering information that may be used to determine if they suspect the student has a disability.

If a child is having trouble in school PFPCS will investigate why.

Areas of concern may include:

- Academic (learning to read, write and do math)
- Health
- Adaptive behavior (life skills, including dressing, safety following rules, organization, getting around in the community, etc.)
- Behavior
- Hearing and vision
- Physical (handwriting, walking, etc.)
- Communication
- Employability skills
- Health literacy

### **Background**

In accordance with **§ 300.111 – Child find and** Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code, the Special Education Director/CEO or designee shall ensure that children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, who are enrolled at the charter school and need special education and related services, are *identified, located, and evaluated*. A practical method which includes gather information is

developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently requiring special education and related services.

*Child Find* includes children who are suspected of having a disability under Section 300.8 of the federal regulations that implement IDEA 2004 and in need of special education, even though they are advancing from grade to grade. This applies to all children, including those who are homeschooled or in private schools, plus children who are migrants or without homes, considered highly mobile children, and parentally placed private students, as appropriate.

## **Procedures**

The Director/CEO or designee shall ensure that the following outreach activities occur concerning programs and services for children with disabilities who attend PFPCS:

PFPCS uses a variety of outreach efforts. The charter school will run local media campaigns and post notices in public places. Additionally, PFPCS will send information to health care providers, like doctors and clinics. In some cases, PFPCS may even send staff into the community. This is important because parents and caregivers may not know what help is available.

The public outreach awareness system utilized by PFPCS shall include methods for reaching homeless children, wards of the state, children with disabilities attending private schools, and highly mobile children, including migrant children. PFPCS shall conduct *Child Find* activities to inform the public of its special education services and programs and the way to request them.

Efforts must be made to identify enrolled students who have a native language other than English to ensure that notices and other outreach efforts are available to them in their native language. This is required by law unless it is clearly and absolutely not feasible to provide such.

Offer parents/guardians and family (including foster and surrogate parents) information regarding training activities and publicize the availability of such activities to all parents/guardians.

Provide Child Find access to interested health and mental health professionals, daycare providers, county agency personnel and other professionals, including professionals and agencies who work with homeless and migrant or other highly mobile youth, wards of the state, as well as to students attending private schools (where applicable).

Provide information concerning the types of special education programs and services available at PFPCS.

Provide information regarding the step-by-step procedures wherein parents/guardians can request and access those services.

Provide or obtain periodic training for PFPCS's regular education staff and special education staff, paraeducator concerning the identification and evaluation of special needs. Further, provide a provision of special education programs and services available to students with disabilities which include signs of developmental delays and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities.

**Public Awareness:**

The Director/CEO or designee shall ensure that the following public awareness activities occur concerning programs and services for children with disabilities who are enrolled at PFPCS:

PFPCS shall annually publish a written notice (attached hereto), in means accessible to PFPCS families.

Such notice must be included in PFPCS Handbook and on PFPCS website.

The Notice may also be made available in means accessible to the public, such as: at PFPCS main office, in PFPCS Special Education office, through local Intermediate Units and/or through other generally accessible print and electronic media, and with the Board meeting minutes.

The notice should include a description of: child identification activities, PFPCS Special Education Services and programs, the manner in which to request services and programs, and the procedures followed by PFPCS to ensure the confidentiality of student information pertaining to students with disabilities pursuant to state and federal law.

Special education students newly enrolled in PFPCS with an Individualized Education Plan shall receive services upon enrollment. Within 30 days, the IEP team will meet and determine whether to accept the IEP from the previous placement as is or develop a new one. If the IEP from the previous placement is acceptable, the team will issue a new IEP cover page and Notice of Recommended Educational Placement. If a new IEP must be written, the Special Education Teacher will schedule an IEP meeting the parents/guardians and/or student/ There is no delay in services during this time.

Appropriate public education to school age children with disabilities who need special education and related services. School age children with disabilities who need special education and related services are identified as eligible for special education if they need specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following

IDEA lists 13 different disability categories under which 3- through 21-year-olds may be eligible for services. The disability categories listed in IDEA are:

- Autism
- Deaf blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury; or
- Visual impairment (including blindness)

### **Screening**

People for People Charter School has established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate school age students suspected of being eligible for special education. These procedures include a wide variety of valid and reliable screening instruments that include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screenings (at minimum first through seventh grades); visual screenings (at minimum first through seventh grades); motor screenings; speech and language screenings (for all kindergarten and first graders, to other students upon parent or teacher request); and occupational therapy screening (fall all kindergarten and first graders, to other students upon parent or teacher request).

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly, screening activities take place routinely throughout the school year. Screening is conducted at PFP unless other arrangements are necessary. If parents need additional information about the purpose, time and location of screening activities, they can contact the PFP's Special Education Director: This screening process will sustain the process to:

The screening activities shall not serve to bar parents from the right of a parent/guardian to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time. When the completion of screening activities prior to referral for a multidisciplinary team evaluation will result in serious mental or physical harm, or significant educational regression, to the student or others, PFPCS may initiate a multidisciplinary team reevaluation without completion of the screening process in accordance with Chapter

711. Whenever an evaluation is conducted without a pre-evaluation screening, the activities described shall be completed as part of that evaluation whenever possible. PFPCS has established an active system two-part screening process which include 1) prescreening and 2) screening:

### **Pre-Evaluation Screening**

The pre- evaluation screening process shall include:

- For students with academic concerns: an assessment of the student’s functioning in the curriculum,
  - classroom assessments
  - curriculum-based
  - performance-based assessments.
  - Universal screening results
  - District-wide assessments
  - General education intervention results
  - Attendance records
  - Office referrals or other behavior data
  - Medical reports
  - Observations inside or outside of the classroom
  
- For students with behavioral concerns: a systematic observation of the student’s behavior in the classroom or area in which the student is displaying difficulty (“FBA” or functional behavior assessment).
  
- An intervention based on the results of the assessments conducted. • An assessment of the student’s response to the intervention, if applicable.
  
- A determination of whether or not the assessed difficulties of the student are the result of a lack of instruction or limited English proficiency.
  
- A determination of whether the student’s needs exceed the functional capacity of the regular education program, without special education programs and services, to maintain the student at an instructional level appropriate to the level and pace of instruction provided in that program.
  
- Activities designed to gain the participation of parents/guardians.
  
- A process to ensure that if screening activities have produced little or no improvement within the specified timeframe after initiation, the student shall be referred for a multidisciplinary team evaluation.

- Identify and provide screening for students prior to referral for an initial special education multidisciplinary team evaluation.
- Provide support and resources for teachers and other paraeducators to assist them in working effectively with students accessing the general education curriculum.
- Conduct hearing and vision screening in accordance with the Public-School Code of 1949, for the purpose of identifying students with hearing or vision difficulty so that they can be referred for assistance or recommended for evaluation for special education, if necessary.

Maintain the confidentiality of information in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

### **Evaluation**

When screening indicates that a student may be eligible or thought to be for special education, the PFP will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation, "Evaluation" means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not mean basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children.

This evaluation is called a Multidisciplinary Evaluation (MDE). It is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) which includes a teacher, other qualified professionals who work with the child, and the parents. The MDE process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. For example, tests and procedures used as part of the multidisciplinary evaluation may not be racially or culturally biased,

The MDE process results in a written evaluation called an Evaluation Report (ER). This report makes recommendations about a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction. Once parental consent for evaluation is obtained, the school has timelines and procedures specified by law that it must follow.

Parents who think their child is eligible for special education may request, at any time, that PFP conduct a multidisciplinary evaluation. Requests for multidisciplinary evaluation should be made in writing to the Special Education contact person. If a parent makes an oral request for multidisciplinary evaluation, PFP shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. PFP must provide parents, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain

circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

### **Educational Placement**

The determination of whether a student is eligible for special education is made by a factor in determining that a child is exceptional. The IEP team must include at least two members in addition to the parent(s). Other required members include at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider, and a representative of PFP or LEA.

If the student is determined to be eligible for special education, the IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP shall be based on the results of the multidisciplinary evaluation. The IEP team may decide that a student is not eligible for special education. In that instance, recommendations for educational programming in regular education may be developed from the ER.

An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, objectives, and the individualized programs and services that the student will receive. IEPs are reviewed on an annual basis. The IEP team will make decisions about the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention.

Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with supplementary services and aids with children who are not disabled.

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may still qualify as handicapped students and therefore be protected under federal statutes and regulations intended to prevent discrimination such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

PFP must ensure that students who qualify for services have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student.

In compliance with federal law, PFP will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities.



To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to eligible or thought-to-be eligible students. PFP or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student, is a protected handicapped student.

For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact PFP's Special Education Director office.

**References:**

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22 Pa. Code § 711.21, § 711.23 and § 711.24

20 USC 1401(3), 1412(a)(3);

34 CFR §300.111

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED  
TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE  
APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL

*People for People Charter School does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access.*