



HARMONY DC PCS - SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

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HARMONY DC PCS CHILD FIND POLICY SY 2020-2021

INTRODUCTION

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), **Harmony DC PCS** is responsible for conducting continuous efforts intended to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years enrolled in **Harmony DC PCS**, including children with disabilities who are homeless, children who are in the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) or committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency (DYRS), children who are making progress grade to grade, and highly mobile children, who are in need of special education and related services. These duties are called Child Find responsibilities. This policy establishes procedures for fulfilling Child Find responsibilities at **Harmony DC PCS**, and applies to all children enrolled in **Harmony DC PCS** and to all staff employed by **Harmony DC PCS**.

Harmony DC PCS staff is expected to know and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. **Harmony DC PCS** trains staff on an **annual** basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find responsibilities.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Parents are encouraged to speak with any **Harmony DC PCS** staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other relevant stakeholders¹ with questions or concerns about a child's educational needs should contact one of the following **Harmony DC PCS** staff to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at **Harmony DC PCS**:

Kimberly Morris
Special Education Coordinator
202-529-7500
kmorris@harmonydc.org

Evren Culha
Principal
202-529-7500
eculha@harmonydc.org

¹ The ability of [LEA] to share personal information about a child shall be governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC §1232g, 34 CFR Part 99.

TARGET POPULATIONS

This policy and **Harmony DC PCS** Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years enrolled in **Harmony DC PCS** including children who are:

- Homeless;
- In the custody of the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency;
- Committed to the District of Columbia Youth Rehabilitation Services Agency;
- Making progress grade to grade; and
- Highly mobile children.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

To ensure the local and school communities are aware of the availability of special education and related services for eligible children with disabilities and the methods for requesting such services, **Harmony DC PCS** provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- **Harmony DC PCS** provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events, etc.;
- **Harmony DC PCS** publishes information and relevant timelines in parent/student handbooks, school manuals, calendars, and on its website at <https://harmonydc.org/>
- **Harmony DC PCS** staff provides information to parents during **quarterly** parent-teacher conferences;
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public in the **Harmony DC PCS** main office

COORDINATION WITH NON-EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT AGENCIES

To ensure coordination with appropriate District agencies to facilitate the identification, location, and evaluation of children with disabilities enrolled, **Harmony DC PCS** maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Early Stages program;
- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); and
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH).

Harmony DC PCS conducts **annual** meetings with representatives of the above agencies to ensure open and cooperative lines of communication regarding **Harmony DC PCS's** Child Find, referral, and initial evaluation processes and procedures, as well as continuously updating agencies of changes in appropriate points of contact.

Harmony DC PCS may establish agreements with other entities responsible for administering various education, health, and social service programs to children from birth through age 22. Those agencies may include, but are not limited to: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS), and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the Department of Disability Services (DDS).

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our website at <https://harmonydc.org> or by contacting **Kimberly Morris, Special Education Coordinator**. **Harmony DC PCS** also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found in the **Harmony DC PCS** main office located at 62 T Street NE Washington, DC 20002. **Harmony DC PCS** staff provides information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

REFERRAL PROCESSES

A referral for initial evaluation should state why it is thought that the child may have a disability. **Harmony DC PCS** is required to make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for the initial evaluation within 30 calendar days of receipt of a referral, and must complete an initial evaluation and eligibility determination within 60 calendar days of obtaining parental consent.

The initial evaluation timeline does not apply if:

- The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation after reasonable efforts;
- The parent of the child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or
- The child enrolls in another LEA prior to the determination of eligibility.

If a parent or other person would like to make a referral for an initial evaluation to determine if a child is in need of special education and related services, please contact:

Kimberly Morris
Special Education Coordinator
202-529-7500
kmorris@harmonydc.org
62 T Street NE Washington, DC 20002

All **Harmony DC PCS** staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, **Harmony DC PCS** staff must document an oral referral in writing within (3) business days of receipt. **Harmony DC PCS** can provide a referral form to assist parents and other parties in documenting a referral, but a form does not need to be completed by the person making the referral for **Harmony DC PCS** to act on the referral. To obtain this form, please contact:

Kimberly Morris
Special Education Coordinator, Harmony DC PCS
202-529-7500
kmorris@harmonydc.org
62 T Street NE Washington, DC 20002

Harmony DC PCS accepts referrals for an initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent;
- The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student; and
- An employee of **Harmony DC PCS** who has knowledge of the student.

For children under the age of 6, **Harmony DC PCS** also accepts referrals from:

- Pediatricians or other medical professionals, including physicians, hospitals, and other health providers;
- Child development facilities, including day care centers, child care centers, and early childhood programs;
- District agencies and programs, including IDEA Part C programs;
- Community and civic organizations; and
- Advocacy organizations.

Harmony DC PCS maintains regular contact with community-based referral sources, and works to collaborate with community-based service providers to provide information on the availability of special education and related services and the means through which parents or organizations may submit a referral.

Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a referral, **Harmony DC PCS** must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation. Reasonable efforts include attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. **Harmony DC PCS** must begin reasonable efforts within 10 business days of receipt of the referral. **Harmony DC PCS** must conduct an analysis of existing data on the student to determine if additional assessments are necessary. Existing data that may be considered may include but is not limited to teacher observations, classroom assessments, schoolwide screenings and assessments, state assessments, student grades and records, parent reports, health records, or data from other interventions. **Harmony DC PCS** will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment. For children under the age of 6, upon obtaining parental consent for disclosure of referral information, **Harmony DC PCS** will provide feedback to the person making the referral regarding the outcome of the referral in a timely manner.

SCREENINGS

Harmony DC PCS implements a comprehensive screening process to determine if a child should be referred for an evaluation, the result of which is provided to the child's parent. Screenings utilize assessments and tools that are generally applied across the entire student population. Parent consent is not required for **Harmony DC PCS** to conduct a uniform, schoolwide screening. A screening conducted by a **Harmony DC PCS** teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation does not constitute an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services and does not require parent consent.

Harmony DC PCS does not use screenings to delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI)

Harmony DC PCS's Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts will not be used to delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES UNDER IDEA PART C

Under IDEA, **Harmony DC PCS** must ensure a smooth and effective transition for children transitioning from Part C early intervention services to Part B special education and related services. In furtherance of this responsibility, **Harmony DC PCS**

- Identifies incoming children that were served by Strong Start DC Early Intervention Program (DC EIP) prior to enrollment at **Harmony DC PCS**, and participates in transition activities as appropriate at the request of DC EIP; and
- As applicable, regularly coordinates with DCPS Early Stages to ensure a smooth transition for students served by DCPS Early Stages prior to enrollment in the **Harmony DC PCS**.

When a child is transitioning from Part C to Part B services, **Harmony DC PCS** participates in transition planning conferences as appropriate and ensures each child with a disability has an IEP developed and implemented by the child's third birthday.

PARENT PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS AND RIGHTS

Parents' legal rights during the Child Find process are defined by IDEA and District of Columbia law. In the event of a disagreement, parents may pursue dispute resolution and due process rights, including mediation, due process complaints, or state complaints. Parents can learn more about their rights under IDEA by referring to the Part B Procedural Safeguards located on OSSE's website at <https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> or by contacting **Kimberly Morris** to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

DATA REPORTING

In accordance with District of Columbia law, **Harmony DC PCS** counts and reports the number of children with disabilities receiving special education and related services annually on October 5 or the date set for the annual pupil count required by D.C. Official Code § 38-2906.