



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Guidance Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19): 2020-21 School Year Residency Requirements and Temporary Absences

(Aug. 11, 2020)

Background

As part of the District's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is providing guidance for a person's temporary absence from their inhabitation of a place of abode in the District of Columbia (DC) as it relates to residency requirements for attending a public or public charter school in DC. OSSE's residency regulations define bona fide residency for the purposes of enrolling in a public (DC Public Schools, or DCPS) or public charter school as the enrolling person's establishment of physical presence in DC. A physical presence is the actual occupation and inhabitation of a place of abode with the intent to dwell for a continuous period of time. Under OSSE regulations, temporary absences are acceptable, but these temporary absences have traditionally consisted of short periods of time where educational services were not being received.

Scope

This document contains guidance specific to temporary absences related to the coronavirus and the provision of educational services. This document does not remove the requirement to demonstrate residency at the time of enrollment.

Effective Date

The policy outlined below will apply to all students enrolling for the 2020-21 school year (the enrollment season began on March 27, 2020). The policy applies for the duration distance learning is offered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic or until otherwise updated or rescinded.

Policy Guidance

Temporary Absences Related to the Public Health Emergency

As noted above, physical presence in the District is a requirement for attending a public or public charter school in DC tuition-free. This requirement remains in place regardless of whether learning is taking place in-person or through distance or virtual models. However, temporary absences from the District are acceptable. OSSE will consider circumstances resulting from the coronavirus as valid for the provision of educational services while not physically present in DC. While OSSE does not pre-approve such arrangements, temporary relocations outside of the District for the purposes of caring for, or accessing care for, dependents or other vulnerable person, or for the protection of persons at higher risk of

serious COVID-19 infection do not necessarily constitute a violation of the physical presence requirement.

Temporary Absences and Non-residency Findings

In instances where there is a suspicion of non-residency that results in an investigation due to an absence from the District, OSSE reviews the totality of circumstances before making a determination as to whether the individual maintained a physical presence. Circumstances can include duration of stay, frequency, intent, integration in a new jurisdiction, and continuing ties to the District. Circumstances related to the public health emergency are also considered when making determinations. Please note non-residency determinations can result in the assessment of owed tuition and referral to the DC Office of the Attorney General.

Questions?

If you have questions relating to these policies please contact OSSE's Office of Enrollment and Residency at osse.residency@dc.gov.

For resources and additional information on the District of Columbia Government's coronavirus (COVID-19) response and recovery effort, including any out-of-District travel advisories, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov.