SPECIAL SERVICES
Admissions, Residency, and Attendance
Foreign Exchange Programs

This regulation supersedes Regulation 2236.10.

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for foreign exchange programs: for foreign students to enroll in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and for foreign exchange programs not sponsored by the school division.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

Section III.B.7. added in entirety, subsequent section renumbered.

III. APPROVAL OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS TO ATTEND FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Division Superintendent may grant approval, with tuition waived, to enroll nonresident students under the sponsorship of an approved foreign exchange program. (The current version of Notice 2236, Foreign Student Exchange Programs, lists the programs that are approved to petition for foreign exchange students to attend FCPS.) The Division Superintendent shall have the right to determine the number of foreign exchange students annually admitted to the school system.

A. Review of Programs

Foreign exchange student programs for students from other countries to attend FCPS may be approved after review of required credentials by the assistant superintendent, Department of Special Services. Only programs operated by organizations that are included on the approved list of the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) and which have a record of successful placement of students within FCPS will be considered by the assistant superintendent. Each approved program must maintain a local representative who is responsible for the program and its participants. Foreign exchange student programs must be approved prior to the request for the enrollment of specific students.

B. Individual Student Application

1. Placement of a foreign exchange student in a specific school must be approved by the coordinator, Student Registration, acting as the designee of the assistant
superintendent, Department of Special Services, and by the principal of the school requested. Approval by the school division of a foreign exchange program does not automatically guarantee enrollment for foreign exchange program students. A school may only accept the foreign exchange student after determining that the student will participate in the general curriculum and will not require English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) services; that the appropriate curriculum offerings exist for the student in the school; and that an overcrowded situation is not aggravated.

2. Each individual foreign exchange student application packet must include satisfactory supporting documentation demonstrating English proficiency; a handwritten essay; an original transcript of the student’s English courses taken in school; and the results of a standardized English language proficiency assessment. Agencies are responsible for ensuring the full English proficiency of applicants.

3. School assignment for the foreign exchange student is generally determined by the residency address of the host family. If the child of the host family has been granted a student transfer to attend a school other than the base school, and the foreign exchange student wants to attend that same school, the agency must notify Student Registration. Student Registration will submit the application to the identified high school for review and a decision regarding acceptance. Acceptance at the alternate school does not permit a foreign exchange student to be enrolled in a magnet or special program at that school, for example, the International Baccalaureate program. In no instance will approval be given for a foreign exchange student to attend Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.

4. Foreign exchange students must have completed satisfactorily the equivalent of tenth grade prior to enrollment in FCPS. A minimum age of 16 is recommended and the maximum age is 18 and 6 months.

5. A foreign exchange student who has been awarded a diploma or a certificate of completion may not be enrolled in FCPS.

6. FCPS will not issue diplomas to foreign exchange students. Foreign exchange students are allowed to participate in commencement exercises provided they have successfully passed all classes during the school year in FCPS. The Department of Special Services will provide an appropriate certificate of achievement for each such student upon successful completion of the school year.

7. Foreign exchange students who complete the foreign exchange year and reenroll the following school year as a non-resident, F1 visa student, will not be issued diplomas in FCPS.

8. Before a student is accepted, the exchange program local representative must
obtain permission from Student Registration to register the student based on the following guidelines:

a. The local representative contacts the coordinator of Student Registration for permission to register the student or to have the student participate in an exchange visit. Complete individual student application packets must be received in the Student Registration office no later than July 1 prior to the school year in which placement is being sought. After reviewing the student documentation, the coordinator of Student Registration makes an enrollment recommendation for the student and, if the recommendation is favorable, forwards the records to the school principal.

b. After reviewing the documentation, the principal makes a recommendation and the documentation is returned to Student Registration.

c. The coordinator of Student Registration notifies the local representative of the final determination regarding the conditional acceptance of the individual student, pending the results of the ESOL assessment administered during registration.

d. The local representative makes the appropriate arrangements with Student Registration to coordinate the registration of the student for school in FCPS. The local representative is responsible for: (i) ensuring the student arrives in Fairfax County at least one week prior to the first day of school, (ii) scheduling the registration appointment, (iii) verifying that the student has all necessary documentation (including insurance requirements verification), and (iv) providing the student and the host family with an overview of the registration process, including a discussion of credits and grade placement based on FCPS regulations and procedures.

e. The local representative is responsible for making an alternate appropriate placement in a timely manner should a student not meet the requirements for enrollment into FCPS.

f. The local representative accepts complete responsibility for monitoring the student exchange experience and for informing the coordinator of Student Registration, as well as the principal of the local school, of changes in the student's host family placement, withdrawal from school, or other significant changes in the student’s environment.

g. Notwithstanding the student’s acceptance, a school may require an agency to withdraw a student if that student is not adjusting favorably and not benefiting from the foreign exchange experience in the sole judgment of the school administration.
IV. FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROGRAMS NOT SPONSORED BY FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Participation by schools and school personnel in foreign exchange or overseas student travel programs that are not sponsored by FCPS is restricted as provided in the following guidelines:

A. School participation shall be limited to posting bulletins and making brochures available through the library and in the school student services office.

B. The school’s name and/or letterhead shall not be used in any literature or promotional activities. In addition, use of FCPS permission forms, electronic mail, or anything else that implies that FCPS or the school is sponsoring the foreign exchange is prohibited.

C. School personnel who engage in such activities apart from their positions with the school division should be familiar with current policies regarding conflict of interest. Personnel shall not accept or receive any gift, loan, gratuity, favor, or service of economic value that might reasonably be expected to influence one in the discharge of duties.

D. School personnel may not plan trips, recruit students, collect fees, accept applications, or attend trip-related meetings on FCPS instructional time. These activities may only occur in FCPS facilities when community use directives are followed.

E. Administrative leave shall not be granted for participation by school personnel.

F. Student groups formed for the purpose of planning, conducting, or facilitating a non-sponsored foreign exchange or student travel will not be recognized by FCPS.

See also the current versions of:

- Notice 2236, Foreign Student Exchange Programs
- Notice 8420, Community Use of Facilities
- Policy 4430, Conflict of Interest—Employees
- Policy 8420, Community Use of School Facilities
- Regulation 5790, Field Trips—Planning, Financing, and Conducting
- Regulation 8420, Community Use of School Facilities