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:** The legal age of admission to public schools in the State of Maryland is five (5) years old, as governed by State law and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education (COMAR 13A.08.01).

The Prince George’s County Board of Education allows early admission into prekindergarten for three (3) year-old students who meet all other enrollment qualifications and have demonstrated educational needs warranting early admission based on assessment results.

The Prince George’s County Board of Education 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.

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. **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

State law governs the age and eligibility requirements for children to attend public school.

A. **Compulsory school attendance:** Every child who is 5 years old or older and under 18 years of age residing in the Prince George’s County shall attend public school regularly during the entire period of each school year, unless it can be shown that the child is elsewhere receiving regular, thorough instruction during the school year in the studies usually taught in said public schools to children of the same age, or the child is exempted under COMAR 13A.08.01.02-2.

Students remain eligible to be enrolled in a public school, free of charge, until they graduate or turn age 21.
B. **Proof of residency:** Parent(s) and guardian(s), who are registering their children in Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) for the first time must complete the Affidavit of Disclosure, as required by law, verifying their legal residence. Proof of residency, and any update thereto, is a prerequisite of admission to the public schools.

IV. **PROCEDURES:**

A. **ADMISSION TO PREKINDERGARTEN**

Children applying to the prekindergarten program in the public schools must meet the age, income-eligibility and residency requirements for admission.

1. **Age:**

   Children shall be four (4) years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they apply for entrance.

   a. 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.

   b. At the time of registration, the parent or legal guardian must complete the Student Registration Form (PA-14) according to Administrative Procedure 5111, Registration and Withdrawal of Students.

   c. The parent or legal guardian must provide proof of age. The child’s name, child’s birth date, and parent’s name must be listed on the document provided. One of the following original documents may be provided as evidence of date of birth: *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.

   (1) Birth Certificate
   (2) Hospital Certificate
   (3) Baptismal or Church Certificate
   (4) Passport/VISA
(5) Birth Registration Card

d. No child shall be admitted to prekindergarten until such proof is presented.

2. **Income Eligibility:**

   a. Families admitted to the Prekindergarten Program 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/](http://www1.pgcps.org/foodandnutrition/).

   b. The following **proof of income** is required from both parents in the household:

      1. If currently employed, two (bi-weekly) current pay stubs or four (weekly) current pay stubs.

      2. Additional documents that may be accepted:

         - 2018 Tax Return (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

   School staff should contact the Early Learning Office for questions with regards to acceptable proof of income.

   Families who do not meet the income guidelines will not be placed on a waiting list or enrolled into the Prekindergarten Program. However, non-income eligible children receiving services under an IEP may attend the pre-K program through the special education process, not as an income-based enrollment.

3. **Registration Process:**

   Parents/Guardians seeking early entrance must complete the prekindergarten and early entrance applications available at the
boundary school. 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.

a. Parents/Guardians seeking early entrance must complete all registration requirements including providing verification of residency, income eligibility, proof of age and up to date immunization records. Families must qualify for the prekindergarten program before an application for early entrance will be considered. No applications for early entrance into Prekindergarten will be accepted after June 1st.

b. Prekindergarten registration is scheduled at boundary prekindergarten program locations from the first day of the registration season. The registration season is set around spring break of every year.

c. Beginning June 1st, families may register at non-boundary elementary schools or Early Childhood Centers that still have available seats in a half-day program only. Elementary Schools and Early Childhood Centers may not accept out of boundary students into their full-day Prekindergarten program sites. Full Day Prekindergarten classes are intended for in-boundary students only.

d. 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 into a Prekindergarten Program will be accepted after June 1st.

   (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 may be offered placement at the boundary school or at an alternative location based on systemic enrollment of age eligible four year olds. Transportation will only be provided to the boundary elementary school. If a placement is offered and not
accepted within 14 days, the space will be forfeited and offered to the next waiting student.

e. Attendance at an out of boundary school is only for the prekindergarten year. For kindergarten, the student will be enrolled at the boundary school.

f. Transportation will only be provided to students attending their boundary prekindergarten programs. Transportation is not provided for out of boundary students.

4. Prekindergarten Academic Evaluation

a. A probationary period occurs for any student offered early entrance. The School Instructional Team (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 School Instructional Team, the parent will be notified in writing within 60 days of entrance in the program.

b. Students admitted to prekindergarten through the early entrance process who successfully complete the academic year will be enrolled into kindergarten if deemed appropriate by the School Instructional Team (SIT). Some early entry students may need an additional year in prekindergarten as deemed appropriate by the School Instructional Team (SIT).

5. Prekindergarten 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 School Instructional Team (SIT).

b. The SIT, which must include a member of the Early Childhood Office or Early Childhood Special Education Office, 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.

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.

6. 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. 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.

2. Early Admission

   Those seeking early admission into kindergarten must demonstrate developmental readiness by achieving a score of 90% or better on an early entrance assessment in each of the domains: reading, spelling, and arithmetic. 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.
a. Parents/Guardians seeking early admission to kindergarten must complete the appropriate application available at the boundary school. No applications for early entrance will be accepted after June 1st.

b. Parents/Guardians seeking early admission must complete all registration requirements including providing verification of residency, proof of age and up to date immunization records.

c. Applicants for early admission will be assessed by a qualified examiner from the Early Childhood Office. The assessment and eligibility determination will be completed on or before the next school year.

d. Parents will have two weeks from the day of the screening and receipt of results to appeal any decisions of the Early Childhood Office. Appeals must be put in writing and addressed 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.

e. A probationary period occurs for any student offered early entrance. The School Instructional Team (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 School Instructional Team, the parent will be notified within 60 days of entrance in the program.

3. Registration Process

Proof of Age

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. The parent or legal guardian must provide proof of age. The child’s name, child’s birth date, and parent’s name must be listed on the document provided. One of the following original documents may be provided as evidence of date of birth:

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:

(1) Birth Certificate
(2) Hospital Certificate
(3) Baptismal or Church Certificate
(4) Passport/VISA
(5) Birth Registration Card

d. 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 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.

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 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. 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 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 Academic Evaluation:

A probationary period occurs for any student offered early entry. The School Instructional Team (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 School Instructional Team, the parent will be notified in writing within 60 days of entrance in the program.

6. 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 School Instructional Team.

b. The SIT, which must include a member of the Early Childhood Office, 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.

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.

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

C. 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

Proof of Age

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. Parent or legal guardian must provide the original document of proof of age. The child’s name, child’s birth date, and parent’s name must be listed on the document provided. One of the following documents may be submitted as evidence of date of birth: 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.

(1) Birth Certificate
(2) Hospital Certificate
(3) Baptismal or Church Certificate
(4) Passport/VISA
(5) Birth Registration Card
(6) Previous School Record

d. 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. School must fax the student report card to the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries.

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 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.

V. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

A. Training for school based secretaries will be conducted yearly 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 errors made by school based staff.

VI. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

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

VII. RELATED PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS:

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

VIII. 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.

IX. CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES: This Administrative Procedure
cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 5111.1, dated March 1, 2014.

X. EFFECTIVE DATE: July 8, 2019

Distribution: Lists 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 10