

## **RESIDENCY POLICY FOR THE HAVERHILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*To attend the Haverhill Public Schools, a student must reside in the City of Haverhill*

### **Residency Requirements for Students:**

“Residence” is the place where a person actually lives. Residency also implies that the student:

- Keeps his/her personal possessions at the Haverhill address listed on the registration document and on the Affidavit of Residency.
- Returns to the address listed on the registration document and the address on the Affidavit of Residency to spend the evening or night there.
- Receives his/her mail at the address listed on the registration document and on the Affidavit of Residency
- Is listed on the Residence List in the City of Haverhill and if not listed, the parent, guardian or responsible adult must fill out a census form at the time of registration.
- Students who are residing in Haverhill and who qualify as homeless students under the federal **McKinney-Vento Act** will be immediately enrolled in Haverhill Public Schools in accordance with federal law. Further information and assistance may be obtained from the Homeless Liaison for the Haverhill Public School District.

*Temporary residence in the City of Haverhill, solely for the purpose of attending a Haverhill public school is not considered "residency."*

### **Proof of City of Haverhill Residency:**

Prior to a student assignment in the Haverhill Public Schools, the student's parent, legal guardian or responsible adult must provide proof of residency in the City of Haverhill. Documents must be pre-printed with the name and address of the student's parent, guardian or responsible adult. These documents must be presented at the school site administrative office by October 1 of each new school year. Please note that legal guardianship requires additional documentation from a court or agency.

The current list of acceptable documentation that new student enrollees are required to provide will serve as the documentation for all students attending the Haverhill Public Schools.

### **Procedure for Annual City of Haverhill Proof of Residency:**

The Superintendent shall request that each Haverhill school send out a notice twice a year informing parents and guardians of the residency enforcement policy.

- The *first notice* will be sent home with the final report card in June of each year giving parents ample time to return documentation by October 1. The *second notice* will be sent home in September at the beginning of the school year with the informational packet. These notices shall provide a brief summary of the goals of the residency policy, a list of acceptable and mandatory proof-of-residency documents, highlight a deadline of October 1 every year for the submission of acceptable copies of documents and give prominent publication to the legal and financial penalties associated with violations of the policy, including the issuance of tuition billing statements and the exact dollar amount for a full school year of tuition. The acceptable documents shall reflect a recent three-month window of time to ensure that submitted documents are relevant, accurate and valid.
- All proof of residency documentation must be submitted to the school site administrative office where a student is assigned.
- Each school's administrative office shall receive, review and maintain proof-of-residency records for every assigned student. Any family failing to provide the acceptable and authorized documentation by October 1 shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee for follow-up investigations.
- The Superintendent or designee shall send out written warning letters to these families, informing them of the requirements of the residency enforcement policy and will request proof-of-residency documents to be submitted immediately or else be obligated to pay full tuition billing statements.
- Parents and guardians shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent, but only insofar as to confirm proof-of-residency.
- In the event that parents and guardians acknowledge that their student is attending the school system as an out-of-district student, they will be given one business week to remove the student from the school system or be responsible for paying the tuition bill for the full school year.
- The Superintendent shall provide an annual written report to the School Committee at the first meeting of October that provides:
  - 1) number of students for which families failed to provide sufficient documentation, and
  - 2) overview of efforts to send out warning letters and tuition billing statements
- Lastly, the Superintendent shall send home a letter to all families that have failed to provide proof of residency informing them the last day the student(s) may attend school.

**Declaration of City of Haverhill Residency:**

Custodial parents, legal guardians or responsible adults of Haverhill Public School students as well as students age 18 and older, must sign a statement saying they are actual residents of the City of Haverhill (See Affidavit).

*They must also agree to notify the Haverhill Public Schools if they move during the school year.*

**Enforcement of the Residency Requirement:**

When the school department suspects that a family of a current Haverhill Public School student lives outside of Haverhill an investigation will take place. The Haverhill Public Schools may suspect a student is not a resident if, for example, mail is returned due to an invalid address, the proofs of address submitted by the parent are inconsistent or suspicious, or for other reasons upon the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

**What will happen to students who violate the residency enforcement policy?**

Students found to be in violation of the residency policy may be dismissed immediately from the Haverhill Public Schools and parent(s) or guardian(s) may be liable to the Haverhill Public Schools for the student's tuition for the full academic year(s). The Haverhill Public Schools may also impose other penalties on the family such as legal fees incurred by legal action and the withholding of certain scholarships and prizes. All applicants must reside in our City (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 16 sec 5 provides... Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the City where he/she actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the City unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the City of the improperly attended public schools. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Amended by st. 1971, c.622, c.1; st.1973, c.925, s.9A, st.1993, c.282; st.2004, c.352, s.33.)

**Reporting Hotline:**

The Superintendent shall establish a hotline for the purpose of allowing for confidential calls regarding out-of-district students not currently authorized to attend our public schools. This hotline shall be advertised on the school district channel and website, and shall be included in the Superintendent's notice sent home to parents and guardians. The Superintendent shall provide a monthly report to the School Committee based on the following tracking information:

- Number of calls made to the hotline providing verifiable information (vehicle identification, specific bus stop, etc.?)
- Number of calls investigated by the Superintendent or designee with verifiable information
- Number of students found to be in violation of the residency policy based on the results of the investigation

If an investigated case is found not to be in violation of the residency rules, the Superintendent or designated representative shall provide a written summary of how the investigation was conducted without identifying the complainant or compromising the privacy of any party being investigated.

Upon final approval of the residency enforcement policy, the Superintendent shall take every reasonable step to promote the policy language and goals via the school district channel and website, through notices and flyers sent home to parents and guardians, through outreach to PTOs and other school based organizations and through official press releases to area media outlets.

The main goal of the residency enforcement policy is to ensure that every parent, guardian and student is abiding by the School Committee's vote when they choose not to participate in school choice within the district. The Haverhill School Committee votes every year at a public meeting on school choice. A direct and positive result of this residency enforcement policy may be an overall cost-savings to the district and a subsequent reduction in class sizes, which should be encouraged and welcomed by all staff, faculty, parents, guardians and Haverhill taxpayers.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 16:5, McKinney-Vento Act

Approved: February 11, 2016