



## **Thurgood Marshall Academy Child Find Policies and Procedures**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA) 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 of age enrolled in TMA, 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 TMA, and applies to all children enrolled in TMA and all staff employed by TMA. TMA staff is expected to know and act in accordance with the requirements and procedures established by this policy. TMA trains staff on a quarterly basis to ensure staff understand and execute Child Find responsibilities.

### **POINTS OF CONTACT**

Parents are encouraged to speak with any TMA staff if they have concerns about their child. Parents and other stakeholders should contact one of the following TMA staff to discuss Child Find, the referral process, and the availability of special education programming at TMA:

Linsey Donovan, Special Education Coordinator  
202-563-6862  
LDonovan@tmapchs.org

Malika Mays, Associate Head of School  
202-563-6862  
MMays@tmapchs.org

### **TARGET POPULATIONS**

This policy and TMA Child Find efforts apply to children between the ages of three (3) and twenty-two (22) years of age enrolled in TMA, 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, TMA provides public notice through a variety of methods:

- TMA provides information to parents and the school community at school events such as parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school events, summer enrollment events, etc.;
- TMA publishes information and relevant dates in school manuals, calendars, and on its website at <https://thurgoodmarshallacademy.org/about/policies-and-resources/>;
- TMA staff provides information to parents during quarterly parent-teacher conferences;
- Brochures regarding special education services are available for parents and the public in front office and Special Education Conference Room.

## **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 in TMA, TMA maintains contacts with the following District agencies:

- The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA);
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education;
- Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)

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

TMA 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 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), and the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).

## **PARENT ENGAGEMENT**

Parents may obtain information about the availability of special education and related services through this policy, information posted on our website at [LINK], or by contacting Linsey Donovan, Special Education Coordinator. TMA also maintains written materials for parents, which can be found in the main office. TMA staff is required to provide information to parents upon request and at parent-teacher conferences.

## REFERRAL PROCESSES

A referral is documentation provided by the child's parent, or other referral source, which clearly states why it is thought that the child may have a disability. TMA is required to complete an initial evaluation and determine if a child is a child with a disability eligible for special education and related services under IDEA within 120 days of receipt of a referral.

The 120-day requirement does not apply if:

- The parent fails or refuses to respond to a request for consent for the evaluation;
- 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 community member would like to request an initial evaluation to determine if a child is in need of special education and related services, please contact Linsey Donovan, Special Education Coordinator, 202-563-6862, LDonovan@tmapchs.org, and 2427 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, DC 20020. All TMA staff must accept an oral or written referral for initial evaluation. Upon receiving an oral referral, TMA staff must assist any outside referral source in documenting the referral in writing, and must document the date of the referral within three (3) business days of receipt. TMA provides a referral form to assist parents and other parties in documenting a referral. To obtain this form, please contact LDonovan@tmapchs.org, and 2427 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, DC 20020.

TMA accepts referrals for initial evaluation from the following persons:

- A student's parent;
- The student, provided that educational rights have transferred to the student; and
- Employees of TMA who have knowledge of the student.

TMA 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.

After TMA has received a referral, TMA must make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation, which includes attempting to contact the parent at least three (3) times on three (3) different dates using at least two (2) modalities. TMA shall 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. TMA will provide the parent of a child suspected of having a disability with information about the nature of any additionally required assessment.

## **SCREENINGS**

TMA 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 TMA to conduct a uniform, schoolwide screening. A screening conducted by a TMA teacher, specialist, or school nurse 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.

TMA screenings must not 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**

TMA Response to Intervention (RtI) efforts must not delay the initial evaluation of a student who may be a child with a disability in need of special education and related services.

## **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 <https://osse.dc.gov/publication/rights-parents-students-disabilities-idea-part-b-notice-procedural-safeguards> or by contacting Linsey Donovan, Special Education Coordinator, 202-563-6862, LDonovan@tmapchs.org, and 2427 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, Washington, DC 20020 to obtain a copy of their procedural safeguards.

## **DATA REPORTING**

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