

~MSD ADMISSIONS POLICY~

Frederick & Columbia Campuses

Under the direction of the Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) Board of Trustees, MSD provides a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to Maryland's deaf and hard of hearing students who meet the MSD criteria for admission. MSD also accepts, on a tuition basis, out-of-state deaf and hard of hearing students who meet the admission criteria.

Parents, legal guardians and students age 18 or older may apply for admission directly to MSD. Referrals/applicants to the MSD specialized programs must meet the specific criteria for admission listed under the desired program. For specifics on these programs refer to the upcoming sections of this chapter.

A. GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All students must meet the general admission criteria in order to be eligible for enrollment in any of the MSD educational programs.

1. Hearing Status: Applicants to MSD must have a valid audiological assessment completed by a qualified examiner. If documentation is unavailable, this service can be provided during the admission evaluation appointment. MSD programs and services are designed to meet the educational needs of students whose primary disability is deafness or hard-of-hearing. Applicants must be able to acquire and maintain adequate American Sign Language skills in order to learn through a visual modality. Factors such as family deafness, progressive hearing loss, unilateral hearing loss, chronic middle ear infections, auditory processing disorder and/or failure to thrive in an auditory environment will be taken into consideration.
2. Age: Applicants must be between the ages of 3 (on or before August 31st of a given school year) and 21 (must begin the school year at the age of 20). Children who are transferring from Part C to Part B and who wish to continue enrollment in MSD must go through the MSD admission process prior to their 3-year-old Individualized Education Plan (IEP) date.
3. Vision: Visually impaired students can be served at MSD provided that their visual limitations do not preclude the use of the visual instruction used in the classroom. Students who need special provisions such as the use of Braille or tactile manual communication should contact the Maryland School for the Blind in Overlea, Maryland.
4. Intellectual Functioning: Applicants to the Common Core State Standards Curriculum and the Special Needs Curriculum must have cognitive performance measures of a standard score in the low average range or above and have the potential to learn in an educational environment. The MSD Enhanced Program of Services (ES) includes exceptions to the range of intellectual functioning requirement. Refer to the later section entitled:

- Admission into the MSD Program of Enhanced Services (ES)

In determining intellectual functioning, other factors are considered in addition to the applicant's standard scores on formal, nonverbal assessments. Adaptive behavior measures, informal reports from teachers and others, family history, motor skills, communication abilities, achievement to date and social/emotional maturity are reviewed and considered when determining the appropriateness of a MSD program for a given student.

- Student's nonverbal cognitive performance is no lower than a standard score in the range of 50-55 unless age 14 or older.
- High school applicants (age 14 and older) to this program must have a nonverbal cognitive performance with at least a standard score of 55 to 70.

Students with emotional or behavioral disorders may be considered for enrollment in the Program for Deaf Students with Emotional Disability; however, enrollment of a student who poses a safety risk to self or others will be denied.

Conditions under which MSD would not be able to ensure the safety of the student and others may include but are not limited to:

1. The student has been adjudicated for a violent offense;
 2. The student has otherwise been deemed a sexually aggressive youth;
 3. The student's needs must be addressed in a hospital setting or a residential treatment facility;
 4. The student's primary ongoing needs are related to severe emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders;
 5. The student has a documented history of severe behaviors in a prior school, educational or institutional setting; and/or
 6. The student requires ongoing one-to-one adult supervision to protect himself/herself and/or others from harm.
5. Medical Conditions: Applicants who have special medical conditions can be served at MSD provided that their medical condition/s allow participation in the instructional programs that are offered. MSD does not provide constant 1:1 nursing care or 24 hour medical care.
6. Residence Status: Every applicant must provide proof of residency to the MSD admission team. In-State students are given admission priority over out-of-state applicants. Out-of-State applicants who are eligible may be admitted to MSD provided that all eligible in-state applicants have been accepted and are being served. Out-of-State student enrollment will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that in-state applicants continue to have priority offers of placement.

Out-of-State students are any students who do not meet the criteria for in-state status. Those students who do not meet residency requirements are ineligible for enrollment into the Program of Enhanced Services, the Program for Deaf Students with Emotional Disabilities, and the Pilot Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at MSD. Out-of-State students at the Maryland School for the Deaf will follow the Maryland Common Core Curriculum, as they will receive a Maryland state diploma or certificate of completion at the end of their studies. They will be subject to all state testing required of Maryland public school students, in accordance with COMAR 13A.01.04 et seq. MSD will not administer out-of-state high stakes testing for out-of-state students.

In-State Residency Verification:

All students who are considered to be of in-state status must have an established bona fide residence in Maryland. Bona fide residence means that it is the student's actual residence (where he/she is really living) and does not include a temporary or superficial residence established for the purpose of free attendance at MSD.

MSD requires that parents, legal guardians or emancipated students provide documentation of in-state residency. The following are the acceptable documents that MSD requires to verify in-state residency. All documents are reviewed as part of the admission team proceedings.

To verify Maryland residency, at least **2** of the following documents must be submitted:

- Federal and/or state income tax forms indicating Maryland as the home address;
- A valid Maryland driver's license;
- Maryland vehicle registration card or title;
- Checking or savings account statement with Maryland address;
- Property tax bill;

- Mortgage account or proof of home ownership;
- Residential rental contract (apartment lease or other rental of real property);
- Major credit card bill with Maryland address and name of parents, legal guardian or individual applying;
- Cancelled check with imprinted name and address;
- Voter registration card;
- Selective service card;
- Residential service contract with name and Maryland address (refers to service performed at the address of resident; for example a cable or satellite TV repair or installation, or some other service such as lawn service);
- Utility bill statement showing both the name and a Maryland address.

Families who plan to provide the appropriate documentation within the current school year (for example, they are in the process of purchasing a home) may choose to enroll the student and pay tuition until the residency is verified.

When there are changes to the residency status of a student, parents, legal guardians and students 18 or older must notify MSD immediately. The notification must be in writing.

If residency information is found to be false, inaccurate or misleading, MSD may at its discretion revoke the student's in-state status and require tuition payment as that of an out-of-state enrollment beginning with the semester for which the in-state admission had been granted.

Residents who are new to the State of Maryland must provide proof of residence before an IEP is offered by MSD.

Cases in which there is questionable proof of residency are referred to an MSD Residence Status Review Committee which may require additional documentation. This Committee is by appointment of the Superintendent on an as needed basis.

Cases referred to the Residence Status Review Committee will result in the provision of a written report of findings to the person/s requesting admission. To appeal a denial of admission decision a written request must be completed and submitted to the MSD Superintendent.

7. Admission Appeals:

All appeals of an admission rejection must be presented in writing to the Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Deaf. The written request for re-consideration must include an explanation as to why the parent/legal guardian/individual student believes that admission should be granted. An appeal letter should be addressed to: **Superintendent, Maryland School for the Deaf, 101 Clarke Place, P.O. Box 250, Frederick, MD 21705-0250.**

The Superintendent may appoint an advisory review committee. The Superintendent will reply within 20 calendar days of receipt of an appeal. The decision of the Superintendent is final.

8. Tuition:

- In-State students attend MSD **free** of a tuition charge.
- Out-of-State students must pay tuition to cover the cost of services provided by MSD. Tuition is established annually by the MSD Board of Trustees. Out-of-State applicants are encouraged to work closely with their Local Education Agency (LEA) where assistance with tuition payments might be obtained. Additional costs may be added for services provided beyond Academic tuition.

- Foreign exchange students who have a J-1 VISA may attend MSD free of a tuition charge.

J-1 VISA Eligibility Requirements: Individuals meet the criteria for a J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa if they are coming to the United States as a student who is participating in a program of studies that is specifically designed for such individuals by the United States Department of State, through its Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

No bona fide in-state applicant may be denied admission or displaced by a foreign exchange student.

B. ADMISSION PROCEDURES

1. The MSD Application and Release of Information Forms are completed and submitted along with a copy of the following:

- a current educational document: IEP, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and/or 504 Plan
- Report Cards
- a High School transcript, if applicable
- Home School documents, if applicable
- Immunization Records
- Birth Certificate or Passport
- Proof of Residency

2. MSD schedules an on-site evaluation visit to MSD with the family to determine if MSD can meet the applicant's educational program needs.

- The on-site visit to MSD includes the completion of any required admission screening assessments the applicants functioning in the areas of:
 - hearing status
 - achievement and learning
 - cognitive performance
 - social/emotional performance

The MSD admission team may elect to waive any or all of the assessments if it is determined that a recent report of such assessments provides sufficient data for decisions regarding admission to MSD. Admission is focused on a student's current educational needs.

- Student/s who desire admission into the MSD program must come in person and be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian as applicable. Students age 18 and older may apply independently.
- The on-site evaluation includes a personal interview and completion of a written case history.

3. The parent/s, legal guardian and/or student meet with the MSD evaluators once assessments have been completed to discuss the test results.

4. Once all the required documents (refer to #1 of this same section) are received, the MSD Admission Review Team meets to determine the student's admission eligibility.

5. Parents are informed in writing of the admission team decision.

- If admission is being offered, a date for a change of placement Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting is set up and parents are informed that they will be provided with the written reports of all the completed assessments at this IEP meeting.

- If admission to MSD is denied, a written letter stating the reasons why admission is not being offered is sent to the parents/legal guardian or student.
- Placement is reviewed annually, as part of the IEP process.

C. ADMISSION INTO THE MSD FAMILY EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEPARTMENT

The MSD Family Education and Early Childhood Department will work cooperatively with the local Infants and Toddlers Programs (LITP), the Local Education Agency (LEA) and/or other providers to help parents locate appropriate services and resources for their young child/ren. Any child who is birth-five years of age who has a hearing loss may receive services through the Family Education and Early Childhood Department.

Family Education and Early Childhood Department Services Include:

- An option for an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP): birth – age 3
- An option for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) at the age of 3
- An option to continue with an extended IFSP at age 3 and continue working collaboratively with the LITP, LEA, and other service providers. Exit age for children served through the Extended Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Option is from the beginning of the school year following the child's fourth birthday (COMAR 13A.13.01 & COMAR 13A.13.02)
- Enhanced Services and 1:1 aide for IEP students

Family Education and Early Childhood Department Services Do Not Include:

- Enhanced Services and 1:1 aide for IFSP students
- Dormitory Services
- An After-School Program

Contact your local county Infants and Toddlers Program to request services from the Maryland School for the Deaf or the Director of the Birth Through 5 Program, Ms. Maryann Swann at:

Email: maryann.swann@msd.edu

(P) 410-480-4540

(VP) 410-696-7446

(VP) 240-575-2924

D. ADMISSION INTO THE MSD PROGRAM OF ENHANCED SERVICES (ES)

MSD may provide educational services to multiply disabled deaf school age students who are in need of additional support in order to access learning. Such students would have moderate to severe additional disabilities and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which MSD has determined can be implemented at MSD. Students who do not meet in-state residency requirements are ineligible for enrollment into the ES program at MSD.

All of the following criteria must be met for a student to be eligible for the Program of Enhanced Services:

- Student's home Local Education Agency (LEA) must initiate and provide a written endorsement requesting placement to the MSD Admissions office at admissions@msd.edu or by contacting 301-360-2030 for the Frederick Campus or 410-480-4514 for the Columbia Campus.
- Student meets all the MSD general admission criteria and is considered to be a candidate to the program by a combined MSD and Local Education Agency IEP team.
- Student's cognitive performance is no lower than a standard score of 35. High school students (age 14 or older) must have a cognitive performance that is no lower than a standard score of 55.

- Applicant must be able to acquire communication skills during early childhood.
- The Program of Enhanced Services is not appropriate for students that require a custodial program.
- Funding provided to MSD by MSDE and the LEA for all needed staff and related services as identified on the student's IEP must be in place prior to enrollment in the ES program at MSD.

E. PROGRAM FOR DEAF STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISABILITY

MSD provides high school educational services to deaf students who have been diagnosed as students with emotional disability. Such students would have an IEP which the MSD IEP team has determined can be implemented at MSD. Students who wish to enroll in this special program must have a primary disability coding of deaf or hard of hearing. MSD does not provide services at the level of a residential treatment facility or a hospital setting. Students who do not meet in-state residency requirements are ineligible for enrollment into the Program for Deaf Students with Emotional Disability program at MSD.

- Student's home LEA must initiate and provide a written endorsement requesting placement to the MSD Admissions office at admissions@msd.edu or by contacting 301-360-2030.
- Student meets all the MSD general admission criteria and is considered to be a candidate to the program by a combined MSD and Local Education Agency IEP team.
- The student must have cognitive functioning identified as being in the average range or higher. The student must also demonstrate the ability to complete the requirements for a Maryland High School Diploma.
- The student is able to attend MSD as a day student (student residence allows for daily transportation to and from MSD). This program requires that students live at home during non-classroom hours.
- Funding provided to MSD by MSDE and the LEA for all needed staff and related services as identified on the student's IEP must be in place prior to enrollment in the Program for Deaf Students with Emotional Disability program at MSD.

Admission into the Program for Deaf Students with Emotional Disability does not constitute admission into any other MSD educational program.

F. ADMISSION INTO THE PILOT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

MSD may provide educational services to deaf and hard of hearing children with a diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Family Education and Early Childhood Department's 3 year old and Pre-K classes as well as grades Kindergarten through 5th. Such students would have mild to moderate ASD and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which MSD has determined can be implemented at MSD. An applicants' disability must result in a need for complete access to a visual environment throughout the day. Students who do not meet in-state residency requirements are ineligible for enrollment in this program. All of the following criteria must be met for a student to be eligible for the Pilot Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- Student's home Local Educational Agency (LEA) must initiate and provide a written endorsement requesting placement to the MSD Admission's office at admissions@msd.edu or by contacting 301-360-2030.
- Student meets all of the MSD general admission criteria and is considered to be a candidate to the program by a combined MSD and Local Education Agency IEP team.
- The student is able to attend MSD as a day student (student residence allows for daily transportation to and from MSD). This program requires that students live at home during non-classroom hours.
- Students intellectual functioning must at least meet the criteria as indicated under the Program of Enhanced Services (ES).
- Students must be able to acquire and maintain adequate American Sign Language skills in order to be able to learn through a visual modality.

- Funding provided to MSD by MSDE and the LEA for staff, resources and related services as identified on the IEP must be in place prior to enrollment at MSD.