

Procedure #5018
Category: Academy Programs
Title: FOREIGN EXCHANGE STUDENTS
Date of Initial Approval: 03-17-2022
Revision/Reauthorization Dates:
Reviewers: MSA Superintendent; MSA Directors

I. PURPOSE

This procedure is to establish a clear and consistent procedure for students who wish to enroll at MSA as a foreign exchange student.

II. OVERVIEW

The Foreign Exchange Student Program allows high school students from other countries to enroll at schools in the United States to learn more about our culture, increase their English (or ASL) skills, and/or learn about our government system. In most cases, foreign exchange students are looking for enrichment of their educational experiences in their home country and do not require any core courses to meet graduation requirements or expectations for their graduation from their home schools. Most foreign student programs involve a 6-month to 1-year stay with a host family and enroll in schools near their host families. However, for deaf/hard-of-hearing, deafblind, or blind/visually-impaired students, MSAD or MSAB are often a possible enrollment option.

Most students in this program can enroll at a school and participate in classes, extracurricular activities, and/or athletics. In most cases, they do not stay in the dormitories as a part of their experience involves living and learning from their host family but in some situations, permission may be granted for them to live in the dormitories. At MSAB, permission to stay in the dorms is often granted because students need the opportunity to learn and practice new skills provided within the Expanded Core Curriculum.

High school programs do not usually charge foreign exchange students for tuition, textbooks, or support services. Students and/or their host families are responsible for any other costs incurred at the school (fees, supplies, and any damage costs). Students or their host families may be charged for any books or technology not returned by the end of the semester/year. Students do not need to meet any state or district requirements for testing, promotion, or academic progress but may opt in to participate in state/district testing if desired.

Students in this program must meet the eligibility requirements and abide by participation requirements/limits specified in MSA policies and procedures. They must also meet eligibility requirements and abide by participation requirements/limits specified in their respective foreign exchange programs.

III. CRITERIA

Students wishing to attend MSAB or MSAD must have documentation showing that they are deaf/hard-of-hearing, deafblind, or blind/visually impaired. Students must be independent and capable of following school rules and expectations independently. Students must be able to participate in classes that are taught in English (MSAB) or in ASL (MSAD) independently with minimal assistance to support their transition. Additional instruction in English, including access through Braille, and/or ASL will be made available if needed for students to support their access. They may also receive nominal support services to support their transition into the program such as occasional counseling services, additional tutoring/academic support, orientation/mobility support, or technology training. Students who cannot abide by the school code of conduct will not be allowed to continue their enrollment at the school.

Students who are deafblind will work with the directors of MSAB/MSAD to develop a class schedule that matches their learning needs and goals for their experience.

Students must first register in their host families' home school district and complete evaluations/IEP development as mandated by the Minnesota Department of Education. At their initial IEP meeting, the home school district should invite MSAB or MSAD to the meeting to discuss placement options. Any necessary accommodations must be listed in the IEP and service levels must be determined.

As part of MSA's academic programs, some students attend classes at the Faribault Public Schools. Generally, because of registration deadlines during the previous spring, foreign exchange students will not be eligible to attend classes at FPS in the fall semester but may make arrangements for classes during the spring semester. Exceptions due to extenuating circumstances may be made. This should be discussed at the student's initial IEP meeting.

IV. PROCESS

Requests for consideration to enroll as a foreign exchange student must be submitted to the director. Requests must be accompanied by paperwork from

the sponsoring foreign exchange student program and must include documentation that the student is deaf/hard-of-hearing, deafblind, or blind/visually-impaired. Information about the student's medical history and needs should also be included.

The director(s) will review the paperwork and determine if MSAB or MSAD is an appropriate option for the foreign exchange student. This process may also include a meeting with the host family to address any concerns, learn about the family/student's expectations for their stay, and/or answer questions about our program.

If MSAB/MSAD is a possible placement for the foreign exchange student, the directors will share contact information for the host family's home school district to begin the process of completing an evaluation and developing an IEP. If the IEP team determines that MSAD/MSAB is the most appropriate placement for the student, MSA will accept the student as a foreign exchange student and the host family will be given a registration packet to fill out.

If the student wishes to participate in MSHSL athletics/activities, the athletic director must also work with the host family to complete paperwork to be filed with the MSHSL.

After the registration packet is completed, the director will review all documentation, ensuring that all essential information is included (especially the student's medical history and any medical-related needs) and establish a schedule of classes. Students and/or their host families are responsible for all fees and procedures and expectations related to participation in extracurricular activities/athletics, including travel and uniform/equipment costs.

V. ATTENDANCE

Foreign exchange students are expected to attend classes daily, following their schedule and complete all school assignments, following direction from their teachers. If students need to miss school for some reason, their host families should communicate with the department secretary. Excessive tardiness and/or truancy will be addressed through a meeting with the student and their host family to develop support for the student and their family.

VI. ORIENTATION

All students that are registered for classes at MSA must attend orientation prior to their first class. This orientation will include information about items such as

their schedule, support system, how to self-advocate for their educational needs, communication channels, technology rules and agreements, and duties/responsibilities of taking classes at MSA.