



KANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND	SUBJECT: Student Placement/ Residential Campus Policy
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Distribution: All Staff	Kind: Policy

GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the Kansas State School for the Blind to adhere to Federal and State Regulations when accepting students into campus-based and field service (outreach) programs. The Federal Regulations CFR 300.7 (13), states, “Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.” The Kansas Regulations, KAR 91-40-1 incorporate Federal definition: “*Visual impairment: means a visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes children who are partially seeing and blind.*”

REFERRALS

All referrals of students to KSSB shall be coordinated by the child’s originating local education agency (LEA) or current educational provider. When a parent or medical professional or any other person seeks information on possible placement at KSSB, KSSB will contact the LEA or current educational provider to inquire about the child. Specifically, KSSB will coordinate with the LEA or current educational provider to determine:

- 1) whether the LEA and its Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team believe that a change in placement should be considered;
- 2) whether, upon observation and observation of the child and/or the child’s records, KSSB believes that a placement at KSSB may be a viable option that offers the least-restrictive, free and appropriate education (FAPE) services at this time. KSSB will participate in any IEP held by the LEA or educational provider in which placement at KSSB is being considered by the team.

PLACEMENT DETERMINATION

KSSB is established to serve students who require specialized or intensive educational or related services specific to their visual impairment. KSSB retains the ultimate right to reject placement referrals or IEP team determinations by the LEA if KSSB believes, in its discretion, (1) that the criteria for placement listed in this policy have not been met, (2) where FAPE is already provided by the LEA, or (3) where placement at KSSB would otherwise not be advantageous for the child.

Prior to any enrollment at KSSB, a child may participate in an initial observation. An initial observation on the residential campus for a student is typically 30 days. Placement, even during the 30-day observation, is still considered to be with the sending Local Education Agency. This observation period is used for informal observation, observation and program development. After 30 days, KSSB will provide information to the LEA during the LEA's IEP addressing whether placement is appropriate at KSSB.

Any LEA or educational provider that seeks or permits placement of a child at KSSB is considered to be an LEA for that child with joint responsibilities for provision of FAPE pursuant to KAR 91-40-4. Where not otherwise outlined in the IEP, KSSB will require a service plan with the originating LEA or educational provider that outlines responsibilities for the provision of resources and services to the child.

After the 30 day observation, if KSSB determines in its discretion that KSSB is not an appropriate placement for the student, an IEP meeting is convened that addresses transition planning to support a student's return to their local district. The determination of appropriate placement, least restrictive environment (LRE), and a review of the transition planning will be re-examined as necessary.

Pursuant to K.A.R. 91-40-4(b) and 91-40-4(c), if KSSB determines that its program is not appropriate for a student and can no longer maintain the student in our program, the state school shall give the district of residence of the student at least 15-day notice of this determination.

Unless otherwise expressly authorized by state law, when a student transfers from KSSB to a school district, the most recent individualized education program (IEP), as well as any additional educationally relevant information concerning the child, shall be forwarded immediately to the receiving school district.

In order to assure appropriate and safe placement of students, and to ensure that all students are able to benefit from their educational experience, the following criteria must be considered for placement at KSSB.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA

- Students who are placed at KSSB will have specific vision-related goals and objectives to accomplish during their placement and the length of their placement will be in relation to those goals.
- Placement is based on needs related to the expanded core curriculum and academics.
- KSSB must be able to review all academic, medical, psychiatric, discipline and behavior records before placement decisions are made and while the student is placed at KSSB.
- Because KSSB's residential campus is located in the northeast quadrant of the state, the ability to be transported safely to and from KSSB is a strong consideration for placement. Ability to safely transport is defined as:
 - Students must be able to travel in a bus with a seatbelt or three-point restraint. Wheelchair students must be able to ride in their wheelchair or in an adapted car seat.
 - Students with medical conditions that can result in emergency medical crises must have clearance from a medical doctor stating they are safe to travel long-distances in areas that may or may not have cell phone service. Students at risk for medical crises must also carry with them any medical aid that they can administer themselves (ex: EpiPen, diabetic medication, cortisol injection, asthma medication, etc.) Students, who may require the administration of one of these medications en route, must have a note from their doctor that the administration of the medication can be delegated to transportation staff that have been trained by the LEA nursing staff. Final delegation authority resides with the LEA's supervising nurse.
 - Students must not be in significant, immediate danger of harming themselves or others.

- Students may not have a current level of escalated behavior that requires the regular use of either mechanical or chemical restraint.
- A student requiring 24 hour nursing care is not a candidate for placement on KSSB's residential campus.
- KSSB will look for evidence that a student is able to tolerate at least an 8-hour day of programming prior to acceptance in a residential setting.
- Enrollment may be postponed until a student's behavior has stabilized if a significant portion of a student's day is involved in negative behavior or de-escalation intervention. A student with this level of emotional/behavioral issues will not gain full benefit from the intensive curriculum available at KSSB.
- Following placement at KSSB, if a student's behavior significantly escalates and does not decrease in a reasonable period of time, placement will be re-evaluated by the IEP team to determine whether the distance from the student's supportive home environment is detrimental to their wellbeing.
- Students who have had a psychiatric crisis within the last 6 months must have clearance from their psychologist or their psychiatrist who will render a professional opinion whether or not the student is stable enough to attend a residential school. KSSB will consider this medical opinion, but retains sole authority to make a determination if a student can be maintained. Students with current prescriptions for psychotropic medication must take the medications as prescribed.
- The LEA or educational provider must demonstrate willingness to jointly administer and support the provision of FAPE for the child and to set benchmarks and/or timelines for the child's return to the LEA or educational provider for completion of the child's education.
- Any factor bearing on the provision of FAPE for the particular child will be considered.

PROCESS/STEPS

- The first step to request services from KSSB is for the LEA to place a "service request" on our website.
- When a 30-day observation is determined appropriate by KSSB, a preliminary **service plan** is completed which delineates the immediate steps that both KSSB and LEA are responsible for.
- An IEP meeting is held before the 30-day observation begins. KSSB staff are to be invited to this meeting. The LEA calls an IEP meeting and amends the IEP to indicate that the student will receive an observation on KSSB's campus for 30 days.
- The LEA will secure consent for evaluations, signed by parents/guardians. KSSB will attempt to honor the existing IEP/goals but the primary purpose of the 30-day observation is to determine the appropriateness of placement in one of KSSB's campus programs.
- Upon completion of the 30-day observation, the LEA will call another IEP team meeting to receive KSSB's report and decision on whether a change in placement to KSSB's campus is appropriate.
- If the student is placed at KSSB, the service plan will be updated to reflect the responsibilities of LEA and KSSB and the IEP will be amended (or a new IEP written) to reflect the changes and ensure parent/guardian consent to a change in placement.
- The LEA will continue to hold the students' IEP.
- KSSB will provide input on IEP goals (academic, ECC), related services, supplementary aids and services, program modifications and supports, observation protocols, service minutes, providers, and other information that is required in the IEP.

The purpose for the LEA continuing to hold the IEP is to clarify that it is ultimately the LEA's responsibility to assure the students' educational program is meeting his/her needs. While KSSB works collaboratively with the LEA in this shared endeavor, it is more clear to parents and all IEP team members when the LEA holds/retains the IEP.