

**SCHOOL OPERATIONS/SPECIAL PROGRAMS
JUVENILE JUSTICE SUPPORT OFFICE (JJSO)**

WORKING WITH DEPENDENT STUDENTS

Who are dependent youth? Youth who are under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) are involved in the *dependency system*. Dependent youth are also under the jurisdiction of a division of the juvenile justice system, dependency court. In Miami-Dade County, dependency falls under the 11th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. The entity responsible for child welfare supervision in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties is Our Kids, Inc. Our Kids, Inc. is the supervising agency; eight full case management agencies who are supervised by Our Kids, Inc. provide the direct case management services to youth and their families.

Where are dependent youth placed? They may be placed in temporary shelter, licensed foster care, relative care, or in a group home. Even while in relative care, these youth may still be under the temporary custody of relatives under the supervision of DCF and the jurisdiction of the court.

How do school personnel know that a student is under the supervision of DCF? A dependent student's educational record is identified by a DCF flag in the ISIS PF3 Student Information screen. The DCF flag identifies the full case management agency which is responsible for the direct supervision of the youth. (See Attachment A – *Our Kids Full Case Management Providers DCF Flags*).

Who should school personnel contact with questions regarding dependent students? M-DCPS in collaboration with Our Kids, Inc. established the Education Dependency Action Team (EDAT), staffed by M-DCPS and Our Kids, Inc. to provide a clearinghouse and information center for schools and full case management agencies for all issues related to dependent youth. Office hours are 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. The number is 305-633-4950.

Who should school personnel contact regarding suspected or known abuse, neglect, or abandonment of a child/youth? All M-DCPS personnel are mandated reporters of child abuse and must follow the Superintendent's directives and School Board Policy for reporting child abuse. Mandated procedures include, but are not limited to; contacting The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse Registry Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE, contacting Miami-Dade School Police and, worksite administrator. Detailed procedures are outlined in **Guideline #4 – Child Abuse Reporting** in *Procedures for Promoting and Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment*.

If a child/youth is already under the supervision of DCF and school personnel have a question or concern regarding the students' home environment, lack of emotional or educational support, (e.g. lack of participation in IEP meetings, parent conferences), who should they contact? M-DCPS personnel should contact the Education Dependency Action Team (EDAT) via the district's EDAT mailbox at edat@dadeschools.net. School personnel will be immediately contacted via email with next steps by the appropriate full case management agency or by an M-DCPS EDAT staff member. M-DCPS personnel must NOT use this mailbox in lieu of reporting child abuse and must follow district guidelines as stated above.

What is the transfer policy regarding dependent students? In order to provide educational stability for all dependent students, these students have a right to remain at their current school, regardless of their home placement within the school district. No school, regional or district personnel, caseworker, relative, or foster parent, may withdraw, nor transfer, a dependent child without the approval and consent of the Juvenile Justice Support Office (JJSO) at 305-633-4950. (See Attachment B – *Procedures for Dependent Student Transfers*).

ATTACHMENT A

**OUR KIDS FULL CASE MANAGEMENT PROVIDERS
DCF FLAGS**

- A.** CHARLEE
- B.** Neighbor to Family
- C.** Kids Hope United
- D.** Center for Family and Child Enrichment
- E.** Children's Home Society
- F.** Family Resource Center
- G.** His House
- Y.** Our Kids Temporary Code
- N.** No longer under supervision

ATTACHMENT B PROCEDURES FOR DEPENDENT STUDENT TRANSFERS

All dependent student school placements are determined by an educational review conducted at the JJSO by an M-DCPS district court liaison. Schools may not withdraw a student without prior approval from the JJSO.

Out of Area Transfers

1. Schools must immediately direct DCF Child Protective Investigators (CPI), full case management caseworkers, licensed foster parents, or anyone wishing to withdraw a dependent student to the JJSO at the Juvenile Justice Center. *Please note that a student may be removed from school at any time by a CPI, but not withdrawn or transferred without JJSO approval.*
2. In order for a dependent student to remain at the current school, the student's full case manager will complete a *Foster Care Out-of-Area Transfer* form and submit for approval at the JJSO.
3. A transfer code of "J" will be entered in ISIS to indicate that the student has been approved for a Foster Care out of Area Transfer and cannot be removed from the current school. All such transfers must be authorized by the Director of School Operations/Special Programs.
4. All students approved for a Foster Care Out of Area Transfer will receive M-DCPS transportation. The JJSO will contact Transportation and process the request, however, school staff will be contacted by transportation and the school is responsible for informing the student and providing the bus and route information.

Dependent Student Address Verification

1. Although approval of a transfer for a dependent student to another school is unlikely, the receiving school must contact the JJSO to verify that the transfer has been authorized.
2. The caseworker or licensed foster parent is authorized to register the student at the receiving school. They are not to be directed back to the sending school.
3. The receiving school's registrar should provide a *Dependent Student Address Verification Form* (FM-6536) and assist the case worker or foster parent, in completing the form as part of the registration process. The receiving school's registrar must contact the sending school's registrar for withdrawal and to complete the transfer.
4. Any books or other school materials the child has with him/her will be sent back by the receiving school to the sending school via school mail. Schools may not deny the transfer of a dependent student for lost books, school materials, or a financial debt. The students' parent remains responsible for the financial obligation.