

What We Need From Parents

- Parents must provide the school a copy of the child's birth certificate or other legal document showing the names of the natural parents or guardians.
- Parents must provide the school with any court order showing the rights of the natural parents or other individuals. The court order must be the complete and most recent court order concerning the child. Updated and amended versions must be provided to the school as soon as possible.
- Parents must accept that the school system and its employees will not play favorites with parents. Parents should not attempt to put their child's teacher or other school staff in the middle of their disputes.
- Parents must not cause a disruption at school. Individuals who do so may be banned from the school. School is not the place for parents to settle private disputes or to compensate for their inability to visit with their child off school grounds.



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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Dr. Patricia Vaira, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event. (Parents_in_schools15, 9/1/17)

Information about
the rights and
responsibilities of

Custodial & Noncustodial Parents in the Schools



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Rights of All Natural Parents

- Natural parents are presumed to be the natural guardians to their child.
- Parents are jointly and individually responsible for the support, care, nurturing, welfare and education of their child.
- Neither natural parent is presumed to have a right to custody or decision-making over the other parent, unless there is a court order.
- Separation or divorce does not change the legal rights of the parents, unless there is a court order defining those legal rights. The school system does not recognize less-formal documentation, such as notarized statements or informal agreements.
- Married, unmarried, separated or divorced parents who share legal custody share equally the right to make major decisions for their child, such as enrollment in a particular schools system or the placement of the child in a specialized program.

For information about the rights and responsibilities of parents concerning special education, parents should contact their child's principal.

Rights of Custodial Parents

- The school system cooperates with parents in implementing court orders, such as recognizing the rights of the primary physical custodian.
- The parent who has primary physical custody of a child during the school year has the right to make day-to-day decisions for the child, such as emergency card information, who picks up the child from school, or whether the child can participate in a field trip.
- The school system is not responsible for enforcing visitation or custody schedules. In the absence of an acceptable schedule and full cooperation by parents, the school system will expect that, upon the end of the school day, the child will return to the location where he or she came from that morning, and any visitation or other arrangements shall occur off school grounds.

Rights of Noncustodial Parents

- Parents who do not have legal or physical custody still retain certain rights, unless a court order expressly states otherwise.
- Noncustodial parents may meet with their child's teacher and other school staff, may obtain a copy of school records, may chaperone on field trips at the school's discretion, and may arrange to receive parental communications from the school, unless there is a court order stating otherwise.
- The school system retains the right (but is not obligated) to notify the custodial parent anytime the noncustodial parent requests information from or asks to meet with school employees or participate in school activities.
- Step-parents and other individuals have no direct right to receive information about a student or discuss a student with school employees, unless they have legal guardianship or permission of the legal custodian. Additionally, they may not register or withdraw a student unless they have legal guardianship. However, they may participate in any school meetings held with the custodial or noncustodial parent, at the parent's request.