



NORTHPOINT
CHARTER SCHOOL

Child Find Policy and Procedure Handbook

NORTHPOINT CHARTER SCHOOL

1. Legal Foundation and Purpose

In accordance with Section 300.111 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Northpoint Charter School (NCS) is legally required to identify, locate, and evaluate all enrolled students with disabilities who may require special education and related services.

Child Find is a proactive and ongoing process. It ensures that all students with suspected disabilities are identified in a timely manner and are provided with access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as required by federal and state law.

2. Applicability to Charter Schools

NCS is responsible for conducting Child Find only for students who are actively enrolled in the school. While the broader mandate of IDEA applies to all public education agencies, charter schools fulfill their obligation solely within the scope of their enrolled student body.

Child Find at NCS includes:

- Students in all grade levels served by the school;
- Students attending in-person, virtual, or hybrid programs;

- Students who may be homeless, in foster care, or experiencing instability;
 - Students who are progressing academically but may still have a disability.
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3. Outreach, Awareness, and Communication

NCS is committed to maintaining transparency and providing clear information to families, staff, and the community. The school will:

- Communicate annually with parents and staff regarding Child Find responsibilities;
 - Post Child Find policies on the school website and in family handbooks;
 - Provide training to teachers and staff on how to recognize signs of a potential disability;
 - Include Child Find information during enrollment and parent orientation events.
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4. Early Intervention and Pre-Referral Support

Before initiating a formal special education referral, NCS utilizes a Multi-Layered System of Support (MLSS) and Student Assistance Team (SAT) or similar problem-solving process to support students who are struggling. The SAT may:

- Review academic, behavioral, or developmental concerns;
- Implement targeted interventions and monitor progress;
- Collaborate with families to address student needs;
- Recommend formal evaluation if interventions are not sufficient.

Parents and teachers will be clearly informed about the SAT process and how it fits into the broader Child Find system. This ensures that students receive support early and appropriately, without unnecessary delays in evaluation.

5. Referral for Evaluation

If concerns persist despite general education interventions, any individual with knowledge of the child (including parents, teachers, or staff) may initiate a referral for a special education evaluation. Parents have the legal right to request an evaluation at any time, regardless of whether a pre-referral process (such as the SAT) has been completed.

NCS will:

- Accept referrals in writing or through documented verbal communication;
- Provide parents with prior written notice and a clear explanation of their rights;
- Obtain informed written consent before initiating any evaluation procedures;
- Proceed with evaluations within legally mandated timelines.

Referrals are never delayed or denied based solely on a student's response to SAT interventions.

5a. Parents' Right to Request an Evaluation

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), parents have the right to request an evaluation of their child at any time if they suspect a disability.

At NCS:

- A parent may submit a written or verbal request for an evaluation;
- The school must respond within a reasonable time—either by initiating the evaluation process (with parental consent) or providing a written explanation of why the request is being denied, along with a notice of procedural safeguards;
- The school cannot require completion of interventions (such as SAT) before considering the parent's request. Parents may also change their request for evaluation in favor of SAT interventions. If NCS agrees to evaluation, SAT intervention will occur concurrent to the evaluation;
- Parents are encouraged to provide input, observations, and documentation to support their request.

All evaluation requests will be reviewed promptly, and families will be included in all steps of the process. If an evaluation is denied, parents have the right to pursue mediation or a due process hearing.

6. Screening, Evaluation, and Eligibility

Following referral and informed written consent, NCS will conduct a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation to determine:

- Whether the student meets eligibility under one or more of the 13 IDEA disability categories;
- Whether the student requires specially designed instruction and related services.

The evaluation process will include:

- Review of existing data;
- Direct assessments using multiple tools and measures;
- Input from parents, teachers, and specialists.

An Eligibility Determination Team (EDT) meeting will be convened to review evaluation results and determine the student's eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Following the review, one of the following determinations will be made:

1. The student is eligible under IDEA and requires specially designed instruction; an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed.
2. The student is found to have a disability under IDEA but does not require specially designed instruction and will not receive an IEP.
3. The student is not eligible under IDEA and will be referred back to the MLSS Team for continued support and/or consideration for eligibility under Section 504.

7. Procedural Safeguards

Parents are entitled to specific rights and protections under IDEA and New Mexico state regulations, including:

- Prior written notice of proposed actions or refusals;
- The right to consent or decline evaluation and services;
- The right to participate in all decision-making meetings;
- The right to dispute resolution, including mediation and due process;
- Access to documents and communications in their preferred language.

NCS ensures that teachers, staff, and board members are aware of these protections and understand their role in upholding them.

8. Documentation and Recordkeeping

NCS will maintain detailed records for each phase of the Child Find process, including:

- Dates and documentation of referrals and screenings;
- Parent notices and consents;
- Evaluation plans and reports;
- Eligibility meeting summaries and outcomes;
- Communications and interventions provided through the SAT.

These records are securely stored and used to monitor timelines, ensure legal compliance, and improve service delivery.

9. Continuous Review and Training

To remain compliant and effective, NCS will:

- Review Child Find procedures annually;
- Provide regular training to staff on referral procedures and legal responsibilities;
- Update forms, templates, and communication tools as needed;
- Seek feedback from families and staff to improve Child Find practices.

Procedures

Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) Procedures

Overview:

Northpoint Charter School utilizes a Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) as part of its comprehensive approach to meeting student needs. MLSS serves as a proactive framework to identify and support students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, or social-emotional challenges. It also serves as a foundational component of the Child Find process.

Northpoint Charter School's MLSS/PLC Team Function:

- The MLSS/PLC team meets multiple times per month to review student progress, share concerns, and develop intervention plans.
- Interventions are designed using student data and focus on grade-level standards, with an emphasis on maintaining access to strong core instruction.
- Decisions regarding layered supports are made by those closest to the student, including classroom teachers, support personnel, and families.

Key Features of MLSS:

- **Timely Support:** Allows immediate intervention when a student is struggling—no requirement to wait for formal diagnosis or failure.
- **Evidence-Based Practices:** Interventions may include high-dosage tutoring, differentiated instruction, and embedded wellness supports.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Engages educators, families, and support staff in problem-solving and planning.

- **Access to FAPE:** MLSS ensures that all students, including those who are homeless, in foster care, or migrant, receive equitable access to educational supports.

MLSS and Child Find:

MLSS functions as an early step in the Child Find process. Students demonstrating ongoing challenges despite universal instruction may be referred to the SAT team for further support and documentation. In cases where a parent formally requests a special education evaluation, MLSS interventions continue concurrently with the evaluation process, ensuring timely support is not delayed.

Student Assistance Team (SAT) Procedures

Purpose:

The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a problem-solving, school-based team designed to support students who are not making adequate progress in the general education setting. SAT serves as a key component of the Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) and the Child Find process.

1. Referral to SAT:

A student may be referred to SAT when:

- Academic, behavioral, attendance, or social-emotional concerns are identified.
- The student has not responded adequately to general education interventions.
- A parent/guardian expresses concern or formally requests an evaluation for special education.

2. Initial SAT Meeting:

- Scheduled by the MLSS coordinator or designee.
- Includes classroom teacher(s), SAT facilitator, administrator or designee, and other relevant staff (e.g., counselor, interventionist).
- The student and parents/guardians are invited and encouraged to participate.
- Team reviews student data, including attendance, grades, assessments, behavior reports, and intervention history.

3. Problem-Solving and Planning:

- Team identifies specific concerns and determines appropriate interventions.
- A written SAT Intervention Plan is created, outlining the supports, responsible staff, timeline, and progress monitoring tools.
- If a parent has requested a special education evaluation, the team documents the conversation in a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and obtains informed written consent for evaluation if agreed upon.

4. Implementation and Progress Monitoring:

- Interventions are implemented in the classroom and/or through school-based supports.
- Student progress is monitored using data (academic performance, behavior tracking, etc.).
- The team meets regularly (e.g., every 4–6 weeks) to review progress and adjust interventions as needed.

5. Outcomes of SAT Process:

After sufficient time and progress monitoring, the SAT may determine that:

- The student is responding to interventions and will continue with support.
- The student needs modified, additional, or intensified interventions.
- The student should be referred for a 504 evaluation.
- The student should be evaluated for special education eligibility (with parent consent).
- The student's needs are met and no further action is required.

6. Documentation:

- All SAT meeting notes, plans, data, and correspondence are documented and stored in the student's file in PowerSchool Special Programs.
- PowerSchool is used for logging entries and maintaining communication records.

7. Parent Rights:

Parents must be informed of their rights, including the right to request a special education

evaluation at any point. If a request is made, the school must respond within 15 school days with a Prior Written Notice.

Evaluation Timelines and Actions

Timeline	Action	Legal Reference
Day 0	Referral or Parent Request received Any school staff member who receives a request must immediately notify the Special Education Director/Executive Director, MLSS Coordinator, and Sponsor Teacher	IDEA §1414(a)(1); 34 CFR §300.301(b)
Within 15 school days	Response to Referral or Request -See Parent Request Process- <i>- Parent Request:</i> Review with SAT and parent; issue Prior Written Notice (PWN) reflecting the discussion and if appropriate the consent to evaluate date. Note: see below	34 CFR §300.503(a)-(b); §300.304(a); §300.300(a)
Upon receipt of signed consent	Consent may authorize: - Review of outside evaluations - Additional testing - Comprehensive initial evaluation	34 CFR §300.300(a); §300.305(a)(1); §300.306

Within 60 calendar days of signed consent	Complete full, individualized evaluation and report*.	34 CFR §300.301(c)(1)(i)
At least 48 hours before EDT meeting	Provide parent/guardian with a copy of the evaluation report.	Best practice (not federally mandated, but required or recommended in many states including NM); aligns with principles of parent participation (34 CFR §300.322(a))
Within 15 school days of evaluation completion	Hold Eligibility Determination meeting to determine whether the student is eligible under IDEA.	34 CFR §300.306(a)(1)–(2)
Within 30 school days of Eligibility = Yes	Conduct Initial IEP Meeting. This may be combined with the eligibility meeting if all required IEP team members are present.	34 CFR §300.323(c)(1)
Within 5 school days of IEP meeting	Begin providing services as outlined in the IEP.	State/district policy-driven; aligns with 34 CFR §300.323(c)(2) (IEP must be implemented as soon as possible)

*Indicator 11

Parent Request Process for Special Education Evaluation

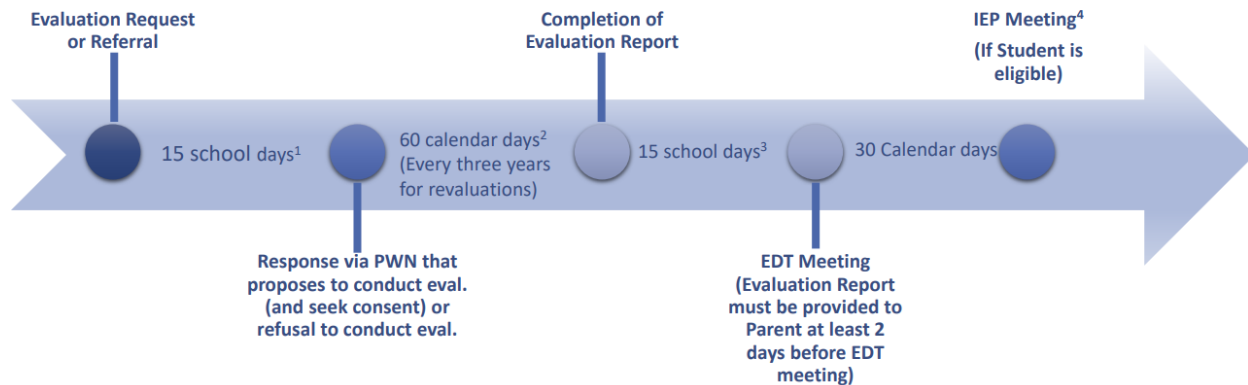
Time Frame & Actions

Time Frame	Action	Document(s)
Day 1	Parent requests Special Education evaluation.- Notify the Special Education Director, MLSS Coordinator, Sponsor Teacher, and Executive Director immediately via email.- Log the request in PowerSchool student log entries.	Written communication (email)
	The Special Education Director or Executive Director speaks with the parent to discuss concerns and next steps.	Notes from conversation
	MLSS Coordinator assembles the SAT team to schedule a meeting at a mutually agreed-upon date and time within 15 days.	Meeting scheduling
Within 15 school days of request	SAT Meeting: Discuss concerns, possible options, and educate the parent about the special education process and systems. - Parent decides whether to proceed with the request for Special Education evaluation, pursue 504 eligibility, and/or engage in SAT/MLSS interventions.	Meeting notes, written communication
	MLSS Initiation: MLSS interventions are always initiated and continue during the evaluation process. SAT interventions are implemented concurrently if the parent opts to proceed with the evaluation.	MLSS Plan, SAT Plan
	Prior Written Notice (PWN): Provide the parent with a PWN outlining the proposed actions. Proposed actions may be evaluate or not evaluate.	PWN, Parent Rights Document, SAT Plan

	Obtain Informed Consent if the parent and LEA agree to proceed with the evaluation.	Consent to Evaluate (signed)
Upon receipt of signed consent	Consent to Evaluate received: Initiates the official evaluation timeline, starting from the date of the signed consent. (60 Calendar Days)	Signed Consent to Evaluate
Within 60 calendar days of signed consent	Multidisciplinary Evaluation: Complete the evaluation and prepare the evaluation report(s).	Evaluation Report(s)
	Provide Evaluation Report(s) to the Special Education Director, Case Manager and parent/guardian.	Evaluation Report(s)
	Timeline for Eligibility Determination, IEP, and IEP Implementation remains as previously described under Evaluation Timelines.	No additional documentation required (refer to Evaluation Timelines)



Evaluation & Eligibility Timeline



¹ If request for evaluation is received within 15 school days before a school break lasting 14 calendar days, then the public agency shall respond no later than 30 calendar days from the date of the request.

² Child is not produced for evaluation or child enrolls in another LEA and the other LEA is making sufficient progress towards completing evaluation.

³ If the evaluation report is completed during a break of at least 14 calendar days, then the public agency is required to hold an EDT and IEP meeting within 15 school days after the students return to school.

⁴ Special education and related services shall be made available as soon as possible after the initial IEP meeting

Additional Notes:

- **SAT Team:** The SAT meeting must involve relevant school personnel and address the family's concerns, providing clarity on all options available.
- **PWN:** The PWN should contain:
 - ◆ An explanation of the reasons behind the LEA's decision to propose or refuse the action.
 - ◆ A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, or report considered in making the decision.
 - ◆ An outline of any other relevant factors influencing the LEA's proposal or refusal.
 - ◆ A statement informing parents of their right to request an independent educational evaluation (IEE).
- **Consent:** Informed written consent from the parent is a prerequisite before the evaluation process can begin. It ensures the parent's agreement with the planned evaluation and testing. The 60 calendar day timeline starts on the date consent was signed.

→ Under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation in all areas of suspected disability is required to ensure that a student's educational needs are accurately identified and addressed.

- ◆ **Comprehensive Evaluation:** IDEA mandates that schools conduct a thorough evaluation of a child in all areas related to the suspected disability, including academic skills, cognitive abilities, social-emotional functioning, and behavioral concerns. This helps create a clear understanding of the child's strengths and weaknesses. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(a)(1)(C))
- ◆ **Identification of Disabilities:** The evaluation is used to determine whether the child qualifies for special education services under IDEA. A comprehensive report helps to identify whether the child has a disability and, if so, how it impacts their ability to perform in a general education environment. (20 U.S.C. § 1401(3)(A); 34 C.F.R. § 300.304(c)(4))
- ◆ **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The results of the comprehensive evaluation form the foundation for developing an IEP (Individualized Education Program). The IEP must be tailored to the child's specific needs, based on data gathered from the evaluation, ensuring the child receives the appropriate supports, services, and accommodations. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(3)(B))
- ◆ **Informed Decision-Making:** IDEA requires that decisions regarding eligibility, services, and interventions be based on a complete assessment of the child. This ensures that decisions are not made in a vacuum but are backed by comprehensive data that guides effective intervention planning. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(b)(3)(A))
- ◆ **Parental Involvement:** IDEA emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in the evaluation process. The comprehensive evaluation, along with its findings, is shared with parents, allowing them to actively participate in the development of their child's IEP and educational plan. (20 U.S.C. § 1414(b)(4); 34 C.F.R. § 300.305(a)(1))
- ◆ **Protection of Rights:** IDEA ensures that children with disabilities are provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Comprehensive evaluations are part of the process that ensures children receive appropriate services, and that their rights are protected, including the right to dispute findings or request an independent educational evaluation (IEE) if parents disagree with the results. (20 U.S.C. § 1415(b)(6)(A); 34 C.F.R. § 300.502)

