

VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Title: **ADMISSION: GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**¹

Policy: **S001**

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

In order to be evaluated for admission into the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind ¹ (VSDB), the applicant must be identified and served for Special Education services through a disability category of either Hearing Impairment/Deafness, Visually Impaired/Blindness, Deafblindness, or Deaf/Hearing Impaired or Visually Impaired/Blindness with other disabilities. The disability categories are defined below:²

1. **Deafness** means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects the student's educational performance.
2. **Hearing Impairment** means an impairment in hearing in one or both ears, with or without amplification, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.
3. **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.
4. **Deafblindness** means simultaneous hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for students with deafness or students with blindness.
5. **Multiple Disabilities** means simultaneous impairments (such as intellectual disability with blindness, intellectual disability with orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. **The term does not include deafblindness.**

¹ VSDB is a state school/agency, not defined as a school division, as that term is used in the *Code of Virginia and Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia*. Accordingly, the VSDB is governed by its Board of Visitors and adheres to the admission criteria established by its Board of Visitors.

² See Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia.

In addition, the student must be two (2) years of age on or before September thirty (30) or have not reached their twenty-second (22nd) birthday by September thirty (30) of the current school year. Students who are younger than five (5) years of age may receive early childhood special education and early intervention services on a case by case basis. Students are not considered for residential placement until they are five (5) years of age and in kindergarten.

An applicant may apply for enrollment as a day student or residential student.

Admission determinations occur through an application process and in cooperation with the referring local school division. Only students referred by their school division are considered for admission. The VSDB works cooperatively with the local school division in which the student resides. If the parent(s) or legal guardian of the applicant contacts the VSDB directly regarding admission, the VSDB refers the parent(s) or legal guardian to the Special Education Director at the local school division in which the student resides. The VSDB also notifies the respective local school division of any inquiries made by the parent(s) or legal guardian regarding admission.

In order to be considered and evaluated for admission to VSDB, the applicant and/or the parent(s) or legal guardian of the applicant must complete an application packet and submit the application packet to the VSDB in conjunction with the following documentation:

1. Documentation of applicant's residence in Virginia;³
2. Copy of applicant's Birth Certificate or verification of presentation of a Birth Certificate;
3. Medical records, including most recent medical evaluations, and immunization certificate;
4. Educational records, including most recent educational evaluations, school transcript, current signed IEP, and disciplinary records if applicable;
5. Authorization for Release of Information from placing local school division and other relevant agencies (signed by parent(s) or legal guardian); and
6. Permission for emergency/routine medical care (signed by parent(s) or legal guardian).

Upon receipt of the application packet, including relevant documentation, the Admissions Coordinator at the VSDB will contact the applicant's parent(s) or legal guardian to schedule a pre-placement admissions interview between the applicant and parent(s) or legal guardian and the Admissions Team. Please note that a pre-placement admissions interview will not be scheduled without a complete application packet with required documentation on file. In addition, if the parent(s) or legal guardian desires to invite additional individual(s) to attend the pre-placement admissions interview, they must notify the Admissions Coordinator at least one week prior to the pre-placement admissions interview.

³ Children of military families are admitted under the same procedures as a resident.

The Admissions Team consists of a VSDB Admissions Coordinator (administrator or designee), relevant VSDB service providers, and a VSDB educational representative. The Admissions Team may include additional VSDB employees, such as support staff, health services staff, or Student Life staff, as deemed appropriate by the Admissions Coordinator. For applicants who are identified as multi-disabled with a disability of sensory impairment, a visit to the applicant's current educational placement may be conducted, if deemed necessary in order to obtain additional insight into the student's needs. Following the pre-placement admission interview, the Admissions Team will convene within ten (10) business days to make an admission determination for the applicant.

All prospective students are required to attend a TEMP week prior to an admission decision being finalized. The TEMP program allows students to attend VSDB for 1-2 weeks on a trial basis. This allows students to attend classes, experience residential living, if applicable, and provides additional information to the Admissions Team, parent(s)/guardian(s), the student, and the local school division regarding the appropriateness of VSDB as an educational placement for the student.

In making its determination, the Admissions Team evaluates the application packet, including the documentation provided, pre-placement admissions interview, additional VSDB evaluations, and considers the following criteria:

1. Availability of space in the educational program and in the residential program, if applicable;
2. Applicant's academic, behavioral, therapeutic, emotional, physical and medical needs, and VSDB's capacity to appropriately provide for those needs in its established educational program and services and, residential program, if applicable;
3. Level of independence and daily living skills, for those applicants considering residential placement.
4. Information obtained from the student's participation in the TEMP program.

NOTIFICATION OF ADMISSION DETERMINATION

Within ten (10) business days following the applicant's pre-placement admissions interview, VSDB shall notify in writing, the placing local school division the applicant, and the applicant's parent (s) or legal guardian of VSDB's admissions determination.

If the decision is to provisionally accept the applicant for enrollment at the VSDB, the notification includes the following:

1. Any special conditions or considerations regarding the student's acceptance;
2. An applicant's placement as a day student or a residential student;
3. The need for an amendment to the IEP that includes VSDB as the day or residential placement, and services and/or accommodations necessary for student to access the educational program and services at the VSDB;

5. The ***VSDB- LEA Service Agreement*** between placing local school division and VSDB, to include a mutual understanding of any special conditions or considerations regarding the student's acceptance if appropriate;
6. The ***VSDB-Parent Service Agreement*** between the parent(s) or legal guardian and VSDB; and
7. A due date for submission of any pending mandatory documents;

Final acceptance into the VSDB is dependent on the final execution of the ***VSDB-LEA Service Agreement*** and the ***VSDB-Parent Service Agreement***. Once the placing local school division and the student and/or parent(s) or legal guardian sign their respective Service Agreements with VSDB, and amend the student's most current IEP to reflect the VSDB as the placement, including any other required revisions regarding services and accommodations, only then will acceptance be final; and the VSDB will work with the student's IEP team to determine a date for the student to enroll at VSDB.-Within 30 days of enrollment, the IEP team will meet to develop a new annual VSDB IEP for the student.

At the time of enrollment, each student's record must include a completed information sheet which contains the student's full name, current residence, birthdate, birthplace, gender, race, social security number, religious preference, and admission date, and names, addresses and telephone numbers of the student's placing local school division, parent(s) or legal guardian, and emergency contacts.

If the Admissions Team's decision is non-acceptance of the applicant for enrollment at the VSDB, the VSDB shall notify in writing the placing local school division and the student and/or parent(s) or legal guardian of non- acceptance, including the reason for non-acceptance. Criteria for non-acceptance of admission requests to VSDB include the following:

1. VSDB has no available space in the educational and/or residential program or the capacity to appropriately provide for the individual needs of the applicant;
2. Proposed emergency placements without completion of the application process, including submission of application packet, documentation, the pre-placement admissions interview and evaluation by Admissions Committee ;
3. Application not referred by the applicant's local school division or in cooperation with the applicant's local school division;
4. Applicants who do not have a disability of deafness, hearing impairment, visual impairment including blindness, or deafblindness;
5. Applicants who evidence a need of a therapeutic level of supervision or care, an imminent need for therapeutic care at a treatment facility, long stay hospital, or intensive psychiatric care; and/or
6. Applicants who evidence a pattern of disruptive, aggressive or destructive behavior, elopement, self-harming behavior, behavior that threatens the safety or well-being of others, or other imminent health and safety issues that would jeopardize the welfare of themselves or others (e.g. spreading feces, pyromania, actions of an overt sexual nature).

7. Applicants who demonstrate the need for an ongoing level of 1:1 support for behavioral and/or safety needs in order to maintain educational and/or residential program engagement, and/or to maintain a safe learning and working environment.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF SERVICES OFFERED

All students accepted to the VSDB receive educational services without regard to gender, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or based on a belief that such characteristic exists at school or any school sponsored activity.

As a state agency, the VSDB provides special education and related services, diagnostic evaluations, transportation, residential services, community experiences, vocational training, work experience, and other support services, according to the student's IEP at no cost to the student's parent/guardian.

The VSDB curriculum is tailored to meet the unique needs of each student's disability. The curriculum is based on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). All students participate in Virginia Assessments according to their program of studies. Students pursue various diploma and certificate options based on credits earned for an Advanced Studies Diploma, a Standard Diploma, an Applied Studies Diploma, or a Certificate of Completion. The VSDB coordinates services with a variety of state agencies including the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) and/or the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) as part of each student's transition plan.

The VSDB Student Health Center provides health services in cooperation with the student's parent/guardian. Health services include emergency medical/dental care (including rescue squad and hospital services), dispensing of medication, first aid, and consultative services through health care professionals. Emergency services are also provided for any student experiencing or showing signs of suicidal or homicidal thoughts, symptoms of mood or thought disorders, or other mental health problems.

The VSDB reviews and revises placements annually through the IEP process in collaboration with the placing local school division. The VSDB informs the parent/guardian and the designated representatives of the placing local school division of the student's progress, disciplinary actions taken, investigations involving the student, and all other matters considered important to the student's well-being.

Each student's continued enrollment is subject to review at IEP meetings or when circumstances and conditions warrant. Conditions that would warrant an admission review are listed under the Discharge Policy.

Rescission:	Revised: April 2014 ; July 2018 Provisionally Approved by BOV on 9/22/15; Approved by BOV 12/10/15 Revised: May 31, 2016; BOV Approved: June 8, 2016 ; Revised: May 16, 2022
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