

I. Residency (Legal Reference: MGL Chapter 76, Section 5)

In order to attend the Westford Public Schools a student must actually reside in Westford, unless the exception (set forth in section V below) applies. The residence of a minor child is ordinarily presumed to be the legal residence of the child’s parent or legal guardian having physical custody of the child. A student’s actual residence is considered to be the place where he or she lives permanently. In determining residency, Westford Public Schools (WPS) retains the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides.

A determination that a student does not actually reside in the Town of Westford renders the student ineligible to enroll in the WPS or, if the student is already enrolled in the WPS, shall result in the termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency, may appeal the determination of the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

II. Verification of Residency

Before a student is enrolled in the WPS, his or her parent or legal guardian must provide proof of residency. All applicants enrolling in Westford, or changing their address, must submit a minimum of three (3) proofs of residency (per chart below).

In the event when only a current document from Column A is available due to a recent relocation into town, Westford may make an exception to enroll a student with the understanding that the resident is required to provide documents from Columns B & C within 30 days of enrollment. If back up documents are not provided within 30 days, a student may be disenrolled.

Documents must be pre-printed with the name and address of the student’s parent or guardian* and must be presented to the school at time of registration.

In a situation where a rental agreement is provided as evidence of current residency, **evidence of residency is required on an annual basis.**

At least one document from each of the columns below must be presented as proof of residency:

<u>COLUMN A</u>	<u>COLUMN B</u>	<u>COLUMN C</u>
- Copy of Deed	A utility bill or work order dated within the past 45 days, including:	- Valid driver’s license (<i>back sticker not accepted</i>) must support the documents on Columns A & B
- Copy of a formal Lease AND Record of most recent rent payment	- Cable bill	- Valid MA photo I.D. with address
	- Gas bill	- Current vehicle registration
- Notarized affidavit from Landlord affirming tenancy AND record of most recent rent payment	- Oil bill	<i>Dated within the past year:</i>
	- Electric bill	- W-2 form
	- Home/Cell telephone bill	- Excise (vehicle) tax bill
- Fully signed and executed P&S Agreement with occupancy date		- Property tax bill
		<i>Dated within the past 60 days:</i>
- Section 8 Agreement: Federal Housing Program		- Bank or credit card statement
		- Letter from approved gov’t agency**
- Divorce Decree w/statement of residence		- Payroll stub

The Principal, or his/her designee, may verify the home address and home telephone number of each student during the school year. Any irregularities shall be investigated promptly and reported to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents are required to notify the school of any changes of their address or the address of the student within five business days of the change.

III. Enforcement

Should a question arise concerning any student's residency elsewhere while attending the WPS, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that is returned to the WPS because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds.

The Principal/Administrator may request additional documentation and may obtain the services of police, town departments and/or investigative agency personnel to conduct investigations into student residence. The Principal, Administrator and/or residency investigator(s) will report his or her findings to the Superintendent of Schools who shall make final determination of residency.

Upon an initial determination by the Superintendent of Schools that a student is actually residing in a city or town other than Westford, the student's enrollment in WPS shall be terminated immediately.

IV. Penalties

In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law (MGL Chapter 76, Section 5), the WPS reserves the right to recover restitution based upon the cost of educational services provided during the period of non-residency.

V. Exceptions

The Residency Requirements shall not apply to the following with prior written approval from the Superintendent:

- a. Students who are entitled to attend the Westford Public Schools under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- b. Students already enrolled in the WPS who are in good standing and move out on or after February 1st of a given school year, or in the case of 8th graders and Westford Academy seniors who move out on or after October 1st of a given school year, may complete the current school year provided they have made the Superintendent of Schools aware of the move in writing within 5 business days of such move.
- c. Students whose parents divorce or separate and share physical custody, provided one custodial parent remains a resident of Westford and the student resides at least 50% of the time with the parent who resides in Westford. *(Legal documentation must be provided to school office.)*

VI. Potential Waiver when Residency is in Transition

For students whose residency is in transition, the following exceptions to the general policy may apply, with prior written approval from the Superintendent of Schools.

- a. Pending Purchase of Dwelling – The children of families who have signed and accepted Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase and reside in a dwelling in the Town of Westford may be enrolled up to 45 calendar days in advance of the time actual physical residence occurs. If actual residence occurs later than 45 days after enrollment, students may be asked to leave the Schools until actual residence occurs. Acceptance is based on the completion of Intent to Reside form and payment of one quarter of a year's tuition.

- b. Construction of New Dwelling – Children of families which are building a primary residence in Westford may enroll in the Schools at the beginning of the school year if they have obtained a certificate of occupancy from the Town.

VII. Notification

The Westford Public Schools residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in each school handbook.

REPORT RESIDENCY FRAUD! Call WPS's anonymous residency tip line at 978-399-2442.