Child Find Procedures Manual
Sendero Prep

I. Purpose

These procedures ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, (20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(3))), 34 C.F.R. §300.111, and the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 6.31.2.10 regarding Child Find obligations. As a Local Educational Agency (LEA), Sendero Prep is responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 who are enrolled in or seeking enrollment and who may require special education and related services.

II. Scope of Child Find

Child Find activities apply to all students enrolled in Sendero Prep, ages 3-21, including:

- Students advancing from grade to grade
- Students experiencing academic or behavioral difficulties
- Transfer students with suspected or identified disabilities
- Highly mobile students (including foster and migrant students)
- Students experiencing homelessness
- Students with suspected disabilities who have not previously received special education services

Child Find may be triggered by any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Below grade level achievement
- Below expected academic growth
- Behavior that impedes the student's learning or others'
- Truancy, including excessive absences and tardies
- Medical diagnoses
- Social emotional concerns

III. Public Awareness

Sendero Prep shall annually notify the community of its Child Find responsibilities through:
• School website postings
• Parent/student handbook
• Enrollment materials

The special ed coordinator will ensure this is completed annually and reviewed for updates. The notice shall inform parents of their right to request an evaluation if they suspect their child has a disability.

IV. Referral

Referrals may be made by parents or staff. All referrals must be documented and submitted to the Special Education Director for review and next steps.

Sendero Prep uses a Student Assistance Team (SAT) and Multi-Layered System of Supports (MLSS) to provide early intervention.

However:
• MLSS/SAT cannot delay or deny an evaluation when a disability is suspected.
• Parent requests for evaluation must be addressed promptly.
• Interventions may occur concurrently with the evaluation process.

When a referral is made:

1. The staff member who initiates the referral (or is notified by a parent of the request) completes the Special Education Referral Form.
2. The Special Education Director will receive notice of the form submission and within 2 school days will communicate with the team (including SAT Coordinator, diagnostician, and school psych, if applicable) to determine next steps. This will be communicated via email and will include specific directives to collect existing data, such as attendance records, short-cycle assessment data, current grades/present levels, and any previous testing documents.
3. The Special Education Director will contact the parent within 5 school days to notify them of receipt of the referral and to schedule a meeting. The meeting will be held within 15 school days of the request, per NMAC 6.31.2.10. This meeting will include, at minimum, a prior written notice that includes a summary of the discussion of the referral and review of current data that will be used to determine whether or not Sendero Prep agrees to evaluate (34 CFR §300.503).
4. If a meeting cannot be scheduled with all necessary parties, the special education director is responsible for gathering all relevant information, communicating to the parent, and completing the PWN. If the decision is made to evaluate the child, informed consent will also be obtained at this time (34 CFR §300.300). Written informed consent must be obtained before conducting an initial evaluation. This documentation will clearly outline the specific assessments to be performed and the rationale for the request, provided in a manner that is easily understood. Parents have 30 days to sign the consent form following this meeting before the process will begin again. Evaluation activities cannot begin until consent is received.
5. A copy of Parent Rights and Procedural Safeguards will also be provided to the family, legal guardian, or educational decision maker at this meeting.

VII. Timeline (34 CFR §300.503)

Once parental consent is obtained, the school must complete the evaluation within 60 calendar days as required by NMAC (6.31.2.10) and IDEA (34 CFR §300.503). The 60-day timeline remains in place over breaks, including summer, therefore, the Sendero Prep will ensure that parents/guardians understand that the child must attend the scheduled evaluations in order to meet the required timelines.

VIII. Evaluation (34 CFR §§300.304–306)

Evaluations must:

• Assess all areas of suspected disability

• Use technically sound instruments
• Be non-discriminatory with respect to culture or language.

The evaluation shall be conducted by a multidisciplinary team and may include educational, psychological, speech-language, behavioral, or other assessments as appropriate.

The evaluation must include all assessments indicated on the consent. If additional assessment is needed, a second consent must be signed, but the evaluation must still be completed within the original 60-day timeline.

The Special Education Director will monitor and document any barriers that may interfere with the timely completion of evaluations, including, but not limited to, difficulty obtaining parent participation or access to the student for evaluation, student unavailability during summer or school breaks, scheduling challenges, and the absence or limited availability of qualified evaluators. Identified barriers, actions taken to address them, and the status of the evaluation will be documented on the designated special education tracking spreadsheet and reviewed regularly until resolved. The Special Education Director will take prompt action to remove or mitigate identified barriers, including coordinating with families, evaluators, school staff, and outside providers as necessary, to prevent avoidable delays and support completion of evaluations and the timely provision of appropriate special education services.

IX. Eligibility

Following completion of the evaluation, the Special Education Director will schedule a meeting with the Eligibility Determination Team (including the parent), who determines whether the student meets eligibility criteria under IDEA and NM TEAM and requires special education services (34 CFR §300.306). This must be completed within 15 school days of the completion of the final multidisciplinary report (NMAC 6.31.2.10). This meeting is called an Eligibility Determination Team Meeting (EDT).

X. IEP

If eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be developed within 30 calendar days of eligibility determination (NMAC 6.31.2.10). The Special Education Director will schedule the IEP meeting and will be responsible for ensuring services are initiated.

XI. Transfer

Students transferring to Sendero Prep with an existing IEP must receive comparable services immediately while records are reviewed. Sendero Prep must adopt the IEP or develop a new IEP consistent with IDEA and NMAC requirements within 30 days of the child attending the school.

If a student tries to enroll in Sendero Prep but is not in a grade served by Sendero, Sendero administration will refer the child to the local LEA (Las Cruces Public Schools) and may refer to local charters as well.

If the child transfers from another state, again, the student must receive comparable services immediately while records are reviewed. Sendero Prep must initiate a review of eligibility criteria to determine eligibility consistent with NM TEAM and NMAC requirements within 30 days of the child attending the school. If necessary, additional evaluations to determine

eligibility may be required. Again, informed consent must be obtained prior to any evaluations.

NOTE: The Sendero Prep registrar must check state databases (e.g., Nova, STARS) to determine if a child previously received services. This check is done within 5 days of the student enrolling.

XII. Documentation

The Special Education Director at Sendero Prep shall maintain documentation of referrals, notices, consent forms, evaluation reports, eligibility determinations, and parent communications consistent with FERPA and IDEA confidentiality requirements. Student records will be kept for a minimum of seven years, following the student's graduation or withdrawal date.

Sendero Prep will maintain a system for tracking and monitoring the provision of special education and related services identified in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Special education service delivery will be documented and tracked on a designated monitoring spreadsheet, which will be reviewed by the special education director at least quarterly to verify that required services are being provided in accordance with each student's IEP. Related service providers will document service delivery in MaxCapture for all students receiving related services, regardless of the student's Medicaid eligibility or billing status. Any identified gaps, discrepancies, or concerns regarding service provision will be reviewed promptly and addressed by the special education director.

XIII. Data Review

The Special Education Director is responsible for the collection, monitoring, and reporting of Sendero Preparatory School's Child Find data and for overseeing individual evaluation timelines. Child Find information will include, as applicable, referrals for initial evaluation, dates of parent consent, evaluation initiation and completion, eligibility determinations and disability categories, Evaluation Determination Team (EDT) and IEP meeting dates, initiation of services, and any barriers that may affect timely completion of the evaluation process. Relevant information will be documented in the school's special education tracking spreadsheet and Student Information System (SIS), through which required data are reported to NOVA. The Special Education Director will monitor evaluation activity on an ongoing basis and will promptly address identified barriers, such as difficulty obtaining access to a student, family scheduling or participation challenges, student unavailability during summer or school breaks, or the limited availability of qualified evaluators. Actions taken to resolve barriers will be documented and monitored until the issue is resolved to minimize avoidable delays in evaluation, eligibility determination, and the provision of appropriate services.

At least quarterly, in alignment with state reporting periods, the Special Education Director and administrative team will conduct a comprehensive review of Child Find data to verify data accuracy and completeness, monitor compliance with required timelines, evaluate the effectiveness of Child Find practices, identify recurring barriers or areas for improvement, and monitor for patterns that may indicate disproportionality or inequitable referral or identification practices. The quarterly review will include referral activity, initial evaluations,

consent and evaluation timelines, eligibility determinations, disability categories, EDT and IEP meeting dates, delays or identified barriers, and available demographic and enrollment data for students referred, evaluated, and determined eligible for special education services. Data will be examined for trends across student groups and over time to determine whether any population appears to be referred, evaluated, identified, or determined eligible at a rate warranting further review. Quarterly review does not, by itself, require changes to existing practices; however, when data identify compliance concerns, recurring barriers, disproportionate patterns, or other opportunities for improvement, the Special Education Director and administrative team will determine and implement appropriate responsive actions and review subsequent data to evaluate their effectiveness.

XIV. Training

Sendero Prep shall provide annual staff training regarding Child Find responsibilities, referral procedures, and legal requirements under IDEA and NMAC. This training will occur at the beginning of the year professional development or when new staff are onboarded. Training will be provided by the special education director when onboarded. Attendance and the training agenda will be maintained by school administration for documentation purposes.