

2026-2027 Program Handbooks and Purchasing Guides Summary of Changes

Revisions are based on guidance from the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, survey results, and parent/provider input. Please submit your suggestions for clarification or improvement via the Feedback Forms linked in each document.

All Family Handbooks

1. *Eligibility Requirements:* First time scholarship applicants who are six (6) years old on September 1st of the application year are no longer required to submit a birth certificate or non-expired passport confirming their age.
2. *Uploading Required Documentation:* Foster status documentation must be dated within the last two calendar years.
3. *Summer Programs & Day Camps:* Sports-related camps can be submitted under Sports Lessons and do not require provider credentials.
4. *Proof of Residency for Active-Duty Military Families Living Outside of Florida:* Leave and Earnings statements must be dated within two months of when the application was submitted.
5. *Award Prioritization:* New definitions for “new and “renewal” students.
6. *Full-Time Equivalent Crosscheck:* Approved documentation may also include a letter or email from the student's assigned school district, assigned public school or selected charter school stating the student is not enrolled as a full-time public school student
 - **As of July 22:** Attestation Deadlines added
7. *Grade Level Changes:* Schools may update grade level during enrollment, and guardians may request eligible changes in EMA. Requests may be submitted at any time, but changes made after the Department of Education assigns the award will not change funding. Approved documentation includes a report card, school enrollment information, assessment results, or portfolio review documentation.
8. *Accrued Interest:* SUFS does not earn profit from the interest accrued in student accounts or use the funds for any other purpose.
9. *Funding Errors and Adjustments:* SUFS will attempt to contact parent/guardian three times to correct errors that prevent funding. After three unsuccessful attempts, the student status will be changed to a declined or withdrawn status for that school year.
10. *Funding Transfers Between SFOs:* Unused funds from a student’s previous scholarship account will remain accessible and available to spend until the balance is exhausted. Such funds must be spent in accordance with the rules of the original scholarship program.
11. *Pre-authorization Requests:* For the 2026-27 school year, pre-authorization requests must be submitted by May 28, 2027.

12. *Additional Purchasing Guidelines:* Training and conferences intended for parents or teachers with no student activities are not considered eligible uses of scholarship funds.
13. *Frequency of Purchase Limits:* Students may purchase one of each specific item within the same category/type/description every one (1) or two (2) years depending on the FOP rule; for example, one easel and one kiln under Art Equipment are allowed, but not two easels.
14. *Eligible Reimbursements Before Scholarship Year Begins:* Fees for Eligible Private School (EPS) and Home Education Instructional Programs (HEIP) can be paid for and reimbursed in the previous school year once the EPS is marked compliant by FLDOE or the HEIP is approved by SUFS.
15. *Dual Enrollment:* FES-UA, PEP, and FTC/FES-EO students may use scholarship funds for eligible dual enrollment expenses that count toward high school completion and a career certificate, associate, or baccalaureate degree. Early admission dual enrollment does not affect scholarship eligibility, and out-of-pocket payment for out-of-state college credit programs does not jeopardize eligibility if all handbook requirements are met.
16. **As of July 22:** Replaced the Funding Proration section with Attestation and Withdrawal Requirements and Deadlines.
17. **As of July 22:** *Application Deadlines:* added 2026-27 Scholarship Schedule
18. **As of 9/16/2026:** Public school withdrawal and attestation section were updated.

Private School Family Handbook (FTC/FES-EO)

1. *Application Deadline Exceptions:*

1. Active-duty US Military and students in foster or out-of-home care can open their own application past the application deadline without needing to call SUFS.
2. Students cannot use their deadline exception status to switch scholarship programs later in the year. Such exceptions are only for first-time applications.

2. *Switching Between Scholarship Programs*

1. Awarded families should confirm or decline their initial scholarship or scholarship update by June 15, 2026, for renewal students and July 15, 2026, for new students to remain eligible for full-year funding consideration, subject to Florida Department of Education approval and all applicable deadlines.
2. Families who want to decline funding for Quarters 1 and 2 and may want to reaccept for Quarters 3 and 4 must decline by June 15, 2026, for renewal students and July 15, 2026, for new students.
3. Families should only accept a scholarship if the student will use it at the start of the school year. If the student is presented for funding and is found enrolled full-time in a Florida public school, the scholarship will be forfeited for the year.

3. *How To Get Your Scholarship Funds:*

1. Scholarship amount is based on factors present when the student is submitted for funding for the first time in the school year.
2. Any changes to grade level or county of residence made after FLDOE assigns the funding award amount will not change the funding award amount.

FES-UA Family Handbook

1. *Eligibility*: Students can enroll in kindergarten at any age.
2. *Documenting a Qualifying Diagnosis or IEP*: A Florida-licensed Physician assistant legally authorized to sign or certify documentation on behalf of a Florida-licensed Physician can now validate a student's diagnosis.
3. *Eligible Expenses*: Tuition and fees at a Hybrid Eligible Private School are eligible expenses.
4. *Student Learning Plan*: FES-UA students enrolled in a Hybrid Eligible Private School who attend in-person at least two (2) full school days per week must submit a Student Learning Plan (SLP) addressing the remaining instructional time.
5. *Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program (Prepaid 529 Plan)*: The Stanley G. Tate Florida Prepaid College Program (Prepaid 529 Plan) transitioned from reimbursement to direct pay only on June 30th, 2026. Scholarship funds that are transferred to a Florida Prepaid account (Prepaid 529 Plan and Investment 529 Plan) remain subject to both the terms and conditions of Florida Prepaid and the rights and restrictions of the scholarship program under Florida Statute 1002.394.
6. *Funding Revocation*: If a scholarship account is closed, any scholarship funds deposited into a Florida Prepaid or 529 account must be returned to the state.
7. *Appendix A*:
 - Dual Sensory Impairment includes both hearing loss and visual impairment, or a diagnosis indicating potential dual sensory loss, when the combined impact adversely affects educational performance.
 - For Other Health Impairment conditions not listed in rule, documentation must explain how the condition affects strength, vitality, or alertness and adversely affects educational performance.
 - A Visual Impairment diagnosis and a Speech Impairment diagnosis must be provided by a licensed professional listed under the *Documenting a Qualifying Diagnosis or IEP* section.

PEP Family Handbook

1. *Scholarship Overview*: FTC-PEP students are registered with a Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) and do not need to submit a letter of intent to establish a home education program with their school district.
2. *Switching Between Scholarship Programs*: Switching from a Private School scholarship (FTC/FESEO) or Unique Abilities scholarship (FES-UA) to the PEP scholarship must be completed by the April 30 application deadline.
3. *Additional Purchasing Guidelines*: Under Florida law, FTC-PEP students cannot use scholarship funds for digital devices or related peripherals, including laptops and computers. These items are not eligible for reimbursement or purchase through MSS.

Transportation Family Handbook

1. *How to Get Your Scholarship Funds*: Disbursement of funds now to be completed by December 15, 2026.

Provider Handbooks (School and Non-School)

1. *Direct Payment For Services:* Lists services that require a personal account and an individual to be linked to approved business in EMA.

New Worlds Scholarship Accounts (NWSA) Family Handbook

1. *Items That Are Lost, Stolen, or Broken Beyond Repair:* Any cost to diagnose broken items is not eligible for reimbursement.

Private School and PEP Purchasing Guide

1. *Product & Service Safety:* Updated the definition as “Items must meet the manufacturer’s stated minimum age requirement as indicated on product packaging or the manufacturer’s published specifications.”
2. *Instructional Materials—Elective Course Supplies:* To match the FES-UA Purchasing Guide developed by the Florida Center For Students With Unique Abilities at UCF:
 - Added “Drama costumes and accessories except for costume and fine jewelry prohibition”
 - Gardening: Added “trellises, drip irrigation, bulbs, fruits and vegetable plants, and fruit trees/shrubs”
 - Added “tripods, microphones, lenses” to “Photography/Video: batteries”
 - Prohibited supplies considered general household expenses or improvements
3. *Instructional Materials—Elective Course Equipment:*
 - Removed “tripods” and “microphones” from Photography/Video: cameras, lighting kits
 - Clarified “large” irrigation system are prohibited
4. *Field Trips & Other Activities Needed To Enhance Curriculum:*
 - Removed student name requirement for reimbursement request
 - Ticketed events are limited to plays, musicals, or orchestral performances
5. *Learning Manipulatives & Creative Play Items:*
 - Removed “accessories as part of a set” requirement from Drama costumes and accessories
 - Added that Drama costume and fine jewelry are prohibited
6. *Musical Instruments & Equipment:* Included musical equipment rentals as eligible expenses
7. *Physical Education (P.E.):*
 - Added “equipment for single-person items to benefit the student or equipment designed for shared use in cases where student requires an accompanying adult for safe use.”
 - Added “Sports Supplies Rentals (including helmets, bats, lacrosse sticks, gloves, shoulder pads, knee pads)” as an eligible expense.
 - Removed “Sports equipment (including basketball goals, soccer goals, tennis/volleyball nets, etc.)” and updated to Sports Supplies (including balls, racquets, basketball goals, soccer goals, tennis/volleyball nets, etc.) This removes the Frequency of Purchase limit for these items.
8. *School Supplies:*
 - Prescription eyeglasses have a one-year Frequency of Purchase limitation, but they may be eligible for replacement sooner with pre-authorization.
9. *[PEP AND UA ONLY]: Tuition & Fees For Home Education Instructional Programs:*

- Removed requirement to have a “published tuition and fee schedule”
 - Removed requirement to “be operated in a physical location”
10. *[PEP AND UA ONLY]*: The pre-authorization for P.E activities occurring outside of Florida for SFO-approved military families living outside of Florida has been removed.
11. *Appendix A—Summary of Prohibited or Ineligible Items*:
- Added “Concerts”
 - Updated “Guns, blades, knives and items with blades or knives (except for scissors, math tools, or some cooking equipment)” to “Guns, blades, knives and items with blades or knives (except for scissors, math tools, or elective equipment)”
 - Added “Meet and greet events”
 - Added “Pet beds and cushions”
 - Added “Photographs or souvenirs, premium access, and special event tickets outside of basic admission for Field Trips and Theme Parks”
 - Added “Smart and augmented reality prescription glasses”
 - Added “Toy weapons to include, but are not limited to: toy arrows, Nerf guns, airsoft guns, pellet and BB guns, water guns, toy pistols, rifles, shotguns, toy swords, knives or daggers, toy axes or hatchets, toy spears, nunchucks, throwing stars, toy grenades, toy tactical vests paired with toy weapons, slingshots, and dart guns.”
 - Removed “Pool toys/floats”
12. **As of 9/16/26**: Removed references to Streaming Services within the Internet Resources sections. Streaming services are still eligible expenses under the Educational Software & Subscriptions category.

NOTE: The FES-UA Purchasing Guide can be found at <https://fcsua.org/FESUA/>.