

# **PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES: ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT**

## **Georgia**

The school will enroll students in grades K-8 and comply with all applicable federal and state laws related to admissions and enrollment.

### **Non-Discrimination**

The school shall not discriminate in the admission or deny participation in any program or activity to any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, color, need for special education services, sex, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, religion, or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.

### **Enrollment Eligibility**

All student applicants must be residents of Georgia at the time of enrollment. At the time of enrollment, families must provide proof of residency, which includes:

General affidavit provided with the proofs of residency stating that the address provided by the parent/guardian is accurate and true and the parent/guardian understands the consequences if false information is provided; and Current deed, mortgage statement, lease or rental agreement including parent/guardian name and address; and Georgia Power utility monthly statement (issued within the last 30 days) in the name and address of the parent/guardian.

If the parent/guardian does not own or lease the property and parent/guardian and child are living with someone else, the following four (4) items must be presented to the school office:

1. general affidavit provided with the proofs of residency stating that the address provided by the parent/guardian is accurate and true and the parent/guardian understands the consequences if false information is provided;
2. and current deed, mortgage statement, lease or rental agreement including owner/lessee name and evidencing the location of the residence;
3. and Georgia Power utility monthly statement (issued within the last 30 days) evidencing the location of the residence;
4. and one (1) item from the below listed categories which includes the parent name and the address is required:
  - a. current bank, credit union, or other financial institution documentation (loan documents, credit card statement, monthly activity statement),
  - b. or mail delivered by the United States Postal Service,
  - c. or employer documentation (application for employment, health insurance, previously issued W-2 or Form 1099),
  - d. or voter registration documentation,
  - e. or a current motor vehicle registration (tag receipt).

Students in temporary housing, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, are not required to submit proof of residency documentation.

All students who enroll in kindergarten must turn five by September 1st of that school year.

### **Open Enrollment Period and Notice**

The “**Open Enrollment Period**” for the first year of operation will be determined prior to June 30 by the National Heritage Academies (NHA) Enrollment Department and included in the notice of Open Enrollment. In all subsequent years, the Open Enrollment Period begins October 1 of the current school year until 5:00 p.m. (school's local time) on the last day of business in November of the current school year. Notice of the Open Enrollment Period and application process will be designed to inform the persons most likely to be interested in the school.

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National Heritage Academies (NHA) and/or the school will provide notice of Open Enrollment on its website and by (a) printing a legal notice of the enrollment period in a local newspaper of general circulation; (b) posting a written notice of the Open Enrollment Period at the school. In addition, notice may also be provided by airing a public service announcement on local television.

### **Application Procedures**

Interested parties may obtain applications at:

- The school's website
- The offices of the school
- The service center of NHA at 3850 Broadmoor SE, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 or by calling 866-NHA-ENROLL from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

Applications will be mailed, emailed or faxed to anyone requesting an application by telephone.

Applications for the current school year will be accepted until the end of the current school year and available seats will be filled. Applications for the subsequent school year are received during and after the Open Enrollment Period. If applications received during the Open Enrollment Period exceed offered seats in any grade level a random selection process will take place for all affected grade levels.

All applications received after the Open Enrollment Period ("late applications") will not be eligible to participate in the random selection process. If seats are available, late applications will be added to the end of the accepted list in the order received. If no seats are available, the late application will be added to the end of the waiting list or, if the late application is entitled to preference, inserted in the waiting list immediately before all applicants on the waiting list with a lower enrollment preference category.

### **Currently Enrolled Students**

Every student who is enrolled in the current school year and remains enrolled on the last day of the current school year is eligible to re-enroll for the subsequent year without participating in the random selection process. Enrolled students do not have to submit an application for the subsequent year; however, they will be requested to complete a re-enrollment form during the current school year showing intent to re-enroll for the subsequent school year.

### **Random Selection Process**

The random selection process (also known as "lottery") shall be made public, shall be announced at least one week prior to the date of the lottery, and the school will notify all applicants of the time and place. A neutral third-party person will witness the random selection process. This person will not be related to any student, staff member, board member, anyone applying to the school, or an NHA employee.

Students who meet enrollment eligibility (i.e., age appropriate to attend school and reside within the state) and have applied during the Open Enrollment period ("eligible students") will be randomly selected until all offered seats have been filled. Any remaining students will be randomly selected to establish the grade level waiting list priority used to fill available offered seats prior to and during the school year for which the student applied. After all eligible students have been randomly selected, the school will add the names of applicants who submitted applications after the Open Enrollment Period in the order in which they were received.

The random selection process will be video recorded. In the event of any discrepancy, the video recording will be the official record of placement of students.

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## Procedural Steps for the Random Selection Process

### **Step 1: Setup**

A list with the name of each student who submitted an eligible application during the Open Enrollment Period will be created. The list will include, but not be limited to, the student's name, birth date, grade level to which the student is applying, street address, the names and grade levels of any siblings who are also applying for admission to the school, and any enrollment preference(s) that apply to the student.

### **Step 2: Admission of Applicants**

A neutral third-party person (as previously described) will witness the electronically random selection of the names of each applicant. A list with the name of each student who submitted an eligible application during the Open Enrollment Period will be created. The list will include, but not be limited to, the student's name, birth date, grade level to which the student is applying, street address, and names and grade levels of any siblings who are also applying for admission to the school.

### **Step 3: Waiting List Priority**

Students will continue to be randomly drawn until all are selected. After a grade level's seats are full, all remaining students will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are selected. Applications received after the Open Enrollment Period will be added to the end of the waiting list for the appropriate grade in the order in which they were received.

## **Class Size and Offered Seats**

Class size and offered seats will be recommended by NHA and submitted to the school Board for approval. In order to make provision for student attrition (reenrolling students who indicate that they are coming back but do not return on the first day of school) and erosion (new students who have been accepted for offered seats but are absent without excuse on the first day of school), the school may over-subscribe grades. The number of students to be over-subscribed will be determined based on historical and forecasted attrition and erosion.

In addition, the number of classrooms may fluctuate in the event the number of students enrolled warrants the increase or decrease in number of classrooms. The number of students in any particular grade and/or the number of students within a class may vary for the purpose of accommodating staffing exigencies and attrition patterns.

In no event will over-subscription, fluctuations in the number of classrooms or variations in the number of students in a grade or class result in a violation of any provision or limit contained within the school's charter contract or applicable law.

The school's openings by grade level change daily and will be posted at the lottery. Parents can contact the school registrar to obtain updates.

## **Enrollment Preferences**

•	Currently enrolled students
•	Siblings of students selected in the random selection process
•	Students whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee of the school

Enrollment shall be open to any student who resides within the limits of district(s) specified in the school's charter agreement. Enrollment preference is first given to currently enrolled students. Next preference is given to the following ordered categories of applicants: siblings of currently enrolled students, siblings of students selected in the random selection process, students whose parent or

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guardian is a member of the governing board of the school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee of the school, all remaining applicants.

If permitted by law, other enrollment preferences may be granted.

Siblings are defined as a student who is a sibling of an accepted or enrolled student who has at least one common parent/legal guardian and is living in the same household at least 50% of the time. If a student is selected for a grade level that still has offered seats available and the student has a sibling applying for a grade that no longer has offered seats available, the student will be accepted for his/her grade level and the student's sibling will be placed on the waiting list for his/her grade level with sibling preference. Therefore, while sibling preference applies, siblings are not guaranteed a seat.

#### **Accepting a Seat**

Prior to the start of school, accepted students must confirm their intent to attend the school within two weeks of acceptance by returning certain initial forms, including an Admissions Form, Official Release of Records Form, and proof of residency documentation (individual schools may choose to offer a defined grace period). One month prior to the first day of school and throughout the school year, the process will be accelerated, and families will have 24 business hours to verbally accept the seat. All remaining enrollment forms must be complete and submitted prior to the student's first day of school.

The school will send a reminder to all parents/guardians that if the student does not attend the first day of school or call in to request an excused absence on the first day of school, the student will forfeit his/her registered status in the school and will not be enrolled. The school may attempt to contact all applicants who have not responded to inquire whether the applicant is still planning to attend. If families do not respond within the deadline specified in the acceptance letter or decline the seat by contacting the school, the seat will be filled by the next person on the waiting list. The declining family will need to reapply if they change their mind.

#### **Waiting List Policy**

The school will keep accurate records of their waiting list containing the names, home addresses, telephone numbers and grade levels of students. All applicants on a waiting list must re-submit an application for the following school year beginning in the next Open Enrollment Period.

When a seat becomes available in a particular grade due to attrition, erosion, or other event, if that particular grade has a waiting list, that available seat will be filled by the first student on the waiting list. If a waiting list does not exist for that particular grade, but exists for another grade, the school may (subject to applicable enrollment limits and board approved offered seats) fill the available seat using the first student on the waiting list in a different grade. The grade where the seat may be filled shall be determined by considering which grade is deemed most beneficial to student and school considering class size, teacher capacity, and other school operational factors.

#### **Communication Prior to the First Day**

As part of the enrollment process, the school staff will communicate or meet with families, parents/guardians, and students prior to the first day of school. The school will send all applicants a reminder communication to inform parents/guardians of the importance of being present on the first day of school. If the student fails to show up on his/her given start date without prior notice to the school, additional follow up will be made with the parent/guardian. Unless the parent/guardian provides a response to save the seat and a new start date has been established, the student will immediately forfeit his/her accepted or registered status in the school and will not be enrolled.

#### **Re-Enrolling No Shows**

If a returning student fails to show up on the first day without prior notice to the school, additional follow up will be made with the parent/guardian by means that may include a telephone call, text, email, and/or letter to the home address as provided by the family to the school on the application. If

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no response has been received after three contact attempts, the school will unenroll the absent student and fill the vacant seat in accordance with the process outlined above. The school will not hold the student's seat beyond the first full week of school, without previous approval by the school's leadership.

### **Withdrawal Process**

Students may be withdrawn from the school at any time in accordance with the procedure outlined below. Only the enrolling custodial parent/guardian may withdraw a student. The withdrawal process is as follows:

1. The school will verify that the withdrawing parent/guardian is the custodial parent/guardian.
2. The withdrawing parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and provide a signature to confirm the withdrawal decision.
3. The school will confirm receipt of the completed withdrawal form and signature and may follow up with the parent to further discuss the nature of the withdrawal. If resolution is not made as a result of the follow up conversation, the school will remove the student from the school's roster.

Students who move outside the school district are subject to withdrawal.

### **Appeals**

Any parent or guardian may contest or appeal the random selection process, in writing, to the school's Board of Directors within 30 days of the lottery date. The bases for an appeal are limited to the violation of law or written policy or material error in the application of the Enrollment and Admission policy. Following receipt of the parent's/guardian's written appeal, a school board designee will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the nature of the concern or objection. Final decisions will be made in writing by the school board or its designee.