

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

### **North Carolina**

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 North Carolina at the time of enrollment. At the time of enrollment, families must provide proof of residency, which includes the following: copy of deed or record or most recent mortgage payment; or copy of lease agreement; or a utility bill dated within the past 30 days, including: gas, water, electric, landline phone, cable, or satellite; or a valid North Carolina driver's license or North Carolina photo identification card; or a vehicle or property tax bill (dated within the past year); or a bank or credit card statement with a North Carolina address (dated within the past 60 days). Students in temporary housing, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, are not required to submit proof of residency documentation.

All students who seek to enroll in kindergarten during the first 120 days of the school year must turn five by August 31st of that school year or meet the requirements for enrollment consistent with G.S. 115C-364(a)(2) or (a)(3).

#### **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 on the first day of school of the current school year until 5:00 p.m. (school's local time) on the last business day in February. Notice of the Open Enrollment Period and application process will be designed to inform the persons most likely to be interested in the school.

On behalf of the school Board, National Heritage Academies (NHA) will provide notice of open enrollment on the school's website and by (a) printing a legal notice of the enrollment period in a local newspaper of general circulation; and (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. In addition, it is NHA's goal that the school's student population demographically reflects the community's population. Marketing efforts will be made in the community surrounding the school to the fullest extent possible to support this goal. The school will use a variety of methods to promote a racial and ethnic balance that reflects the population of the surrounding area.

#### **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 877-223-6402 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

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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.

#### **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. Any grades that will not be filled to capacity in the lottery will be considered before other grades in descending order. After all these grades have been identified, the order of the grades that will be filled to capacity in the lottery will be randomly selected. Once the grade order has been established, randomly selected students will be placed in available seats or on the waiting list in the applying grade if an offered seat is not available. If the selected student is accepted and has siblings who are also applying for admission, the siblings will be accepted if there are offered seats available or placed on the waiting list with sibling preference if offered seats are not available. If the selected student is

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placed on the waiting list and has siblings who are also applying, the siblings' names will not be selected at this time or granted sibling preference but will wait until their grade level is selected. If multiple birth siblings apply, one surname will be entered into the random selection process to represent all of the multiple birth siblings. Other preferences will be incorporated as detailed in Enrollment Preferences.

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

If a card is drawn and there is no space available in the appropriate grade, the applicant(s) will be placed on the waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After the random selection process is complete, late applications will be processed in accordance with the procedures above.

#### **Class Size and Offered Seats**

Class size and offered seats will be recommended by NHA and approved by the school Board of Directors. If recommended by NHA and authorized by the school Board, (i) student enrollment may temporarily exceed the approved class size in order to allow for enrollment attrition and erosion, and (ii) the number of classrooms for a particular grade may be increased or decreased to allow for applicant demand. In no event will a change in the class size or number of classrooms violate any provision contained within the school's charter or applicable law.

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

#### **Enrollment Preferences**

• Currently enrolled students
• Children of the school's full-time employees and Board of Directors
• Siblings of students currently enrolled at the school
• Siblings of students selected in the random selection process

Enrollment preference is first given to currently enrolled students. Next preference is given to the following ordered categories of applicants: Children or grandchildren of employees working full-time in the operation of the charter school and Board of Directors (limited to no more than 15% of school's total enrollment), siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to the school in a previous year, siblings who apply to the charter school for admission beginning in the same school year, such as when a sibling was not initially admitted due to grade level capacity, and all remaining applicants.

The first preference category (children or grandchildren of employees working full-time in the operation of the charter school and children of Board members) is limited to no more than fifteen (15%) of the school's total enrollment.

Preferences apply to both the lottery and subsequent waiting list.

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

Siblings include any of the following who reside in the same household: half siblings, stepsiblings, and children residing in a family foster home. 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.

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#### **Accepting a Seat**

Prior to the start of school, accepted students must confirm their intent to attend the school within three weeks of acceptance by returning certain initial forms, including an Admissions Form, Official Release of Records Form, and proof of residency documentation. Three weeks 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 and five school days to attend school. All remaining enrollment forms must be complete and submitted prior to the student's first day in attendance at the 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 communication 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, telephones 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 family. Unless the family 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 family by means that may include a telephone call, text, email, or letter to the home address as provided by the family to the school on the application. If 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:

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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.

#### **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.