



HILL VIEW MONTESSORI

CHARTER Public School

Name of Policy:	Enrollment
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Approved:	6/03/04
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Purpose

To establish an enrollment pool of students that reflects the breadth and diversity of Haverhill; to establish procedures that govern the enrollment process thus ensuring fairness, consistency and transparency.

General

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVM) enrolls Massachusetts resident students in grades K-8. A Recruitment and Retention Plan guides the enrollment (and recruitment) efforts and this policy highlights enrollment protocol and policies.

Enrollment is conducted via public lottery for which students must submit enrollment materials. The lottery is unbiased and no child is given preference as a result of any circumstances except those outlined in this policy for sibling preference and residential preference.

HVM does not require attendance at information meetings as a condition of enrollment, nor are there placement or achievement tests given.

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex (gender), ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

Recruitment and Enrollment

The annual enrollment period begins in January and ends in mid March, dependent on the Charter School Association Collaborative Lottery day. The enrollment period is publicized in a number of ways as highlighted in the school's Recruitment and Retention Plan.

Annually HVM publically posts the deadline for submitting application materials as well as the date, time and location of the public lottery at least one month in advance of the deadlines. Notification can be found in local newspapers, on flyers, and on the school's website, etc. During the enrollment period, the school holds multiple *optional* Enrollment Information Sessions. Enrollment materials are distributed at these sessions as well as available on the school's website, at the school's front office or via postal mail if requested.

Distributed enrollment materials include an Enrollment Form, background information about HVM, notice of timelines and deadlines, notification of the time, date and location of the lottery and a checklist indicating required enrollment documentation (birth certificate, proof of residency). In addition to general student information (student name, birth date, address, grade) and contact information, additional,

The mission of Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is to provide a K-8 public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy.

optional information is requested. Additional requested information is not required and is not used for enrollment purposes, and this is indicated on the Enrollment Form.

Each year approximately 30-40 students are offered enrollment. The majority of these students are five year olds entering Kindergarten. Other grade levels are offered enrollment as necessary to maintain the school's chartered capacity.

1. Enrollment Criteria:

- Students must be residents of Massachusetts to attend and to apply for admission.
- Students entering Kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1st of the school year for which they are applying.
- Students applying for all other grades must have successfully completed the grade preceding the grade for which the student is applying.
- Grade levels for home-schooled children are determined by assuming that children were eligible for Kindergarten during the year when they were five years old by September 1st and then counting forward.
- If a student started school early or late, or was promoted or retained, then written evidence of the last grade completed from the school previously attended by the child is used to make the appropriate grade appointment.

2. Enrollment materials are accepted year-round for students entering Kindergarten-8th grade and can be submitted either in person, via postal mail or fax. All required enrollment materials must be received or **postmarked** by the stated deadline to be entered in the next subsequent lottery. HVM is not responsible for applications that are lost in the mail. Upon receipt of application materials, a letter is sent to all families to confirm receipt of a complete enrollment package. Complete applications include:

- An enrollment form
- A copy of the child's birth certificate
- Proof of Massachusetts residency from a rental or lease bill/receipt, a utility bill or a copy of the custodial adult's driver's license. If a family is homeless or living with someone, they are not required to provide proof of residency.

3. If any of the criteria listed above are not met, the parent/guardian is notified by mail prior to the lottery. Parents/guardians are given an opportunity to supply the missing information but if it is not received by the deadline specified, the application will be considered incomplete and the child(ren) will not be entered into the lottery. Enrollment materials received for child(ren) that do not meet the designated age requirement to attend kindergarten are notified of this by either phone and/or mail.

4. At a minimum, HVM will hold at least one lottery annually. An additional lottery will be held in late spring if there are less applicants than there are seats for enrollment, i.e., if there are fewer applicants than the number of kindergarten seats open. HVM typically holds a second lottery annually in August, irrespective of the number of applications received in the winter enrollment period, to augment the waitlists and be responsive to ongoing inquiries. Any subsequent lottery that is held follows the statutes and legal requirements of the main lottery.

Sibling Preference

Charter School legislation allows for preference to be given to the siblings of students currently enrolled and attending the school. For the purposes of this policy, currently enrolled students are those students that are currently attending, i.e., participating in classes at HVM.

According to the Charter School Administrative Guidelines, children receiving sibling preference are:

- Children who live in different households but share a common biological or legal parent
- Siblings of students who will graduate from HVM at the end of the school year in which the lottery is held
- Siblings of currently attending students, even if they are non-Haverhill residents

Children are *not considered siblings* regardless if they live in the same household

- if they do not share a common biological or legal parent;
- even if they are foster children;
- if they are siblings of alumni,
- if they are siblings of applicants who have been accepted for admission but are not yet attending (as might be the case with twins and other multiple births).

In the event there are vacancies during the school year, names from the Sibling Wait List will be selected in the order they were drawn for enrollment in the school. If a sibling who is currently enrolled withdraws from the school, corresponding sibling names from the Sibling Wait List will be transferred to the corresponding position on the Haverhill Wait List or Non-Resident Wait List, whichever is appropriate. (*See Wait List Information below*).

Lottery Procedure

When more enrollment forms are received than there are spaces available, a lottery is held in accordance with all State requirements for Charter Schools. The date, time and location of the public lottery is posted on advertising materials, at Haverhill City Hall, on the school's website and as part of the enrollment packet. The procedure for the lottery is as follows:

1. Children entering kindergarten who are siblings of currently attending students are not subject to the lottery unless there are more siblings seeking admission than there are spots in kindergarten.
2. For all non-sibling kindergarten age children, each child is assigned a lottery number, e.g., K-047-11, where the first letter/number before the dash represents the grade for which the child is being lottered, the second set of numbers represents the order in which the application was received and the last number indicates the school year for which the child initially submitted enrollment materials.
3. The number of spaces available is determined for each grade level.
4. The assigned lottery numbers are printed on an index card, color coded by grade, shuffled and placed face down on a table. Student lottery numbers are not separated by residency. (This ensures the ability to move a student to the appropriate waitlist ranking if their residency changes, i.e., to move horizontally to the resident waitlist or the nonresident waitlist without compromising their lottered position. For example, if a non Haverhill-residing student is lottered as a non-resident but then moves to Haverhill prior to the start of school, the student can be moved to the resident waitlist appropriately.)
5. A disinterested member of Haverhill's community such as a retired judge or local business leader draws the lottery numbers by grade level to fill the available spaces in the school. To minimize the risk of bias, the school excludes those who are closely related to the school or applicants from the task of drawing names.
6. After the lottery is held, the following rules apply and students are then separated into piles accordingly:
 - Siblings of students already attending HVM have preference over other Haverhill students.

- Haverhill students receive preference over students from other Massachusetts communities.
- When students not residing in Haverhill are drawn, they are put on a non-resident waiting list and can be enrolled only if there are no Haverhill children on the waiting list. **Exception:** If a Commonwealth student is already attending the school, his/her sibling has preference over other non-sibling Haverhill residents.

Waiting Lists

1. During the lottery, even when the open slots are filled, numbers continue to be drawn to determine the waitlist for each grade. Once all numbers are drawn, the cards are divided into three separate lists:
 - One for siblings of currently enrolled students (Sibling Wait List),
 - One for other Haverhill resident students (Haverhill Wait List),
 - One for other Commonwealth students who are not residents of Haverhill (Non-Resident Wait List).
2. As spaces become available in the school either prior to the start of the school year or during the school year, enrollment is offered to those on the Waiting Lists in the order outlined above. Waiting Lists from one year carry to the next and provide precedence over subsequent new applicants except in the case of siblings.
3. Enrollment forms submitted after the deadline are kept until the next enrollment period closes at which time the lottery is held.
4. In all circumstances, grade K-4 midyear vacancies that occur prior to February 15th are filled with students from the waitlist and in the grade in which the vacancy occurred. Whenever there is a midyear grade K-4 vacancy after February 15th, the school will decide whether to fill the spot with a grade K-4 student, a student from another grade, or to wait until the following academic year and fill it with the corresponding grade 1-5 student.
5. Waitlists are maintained from year to year and include a record of the student and contact adult's name, address, telephone number and grade level. If at any time a parent/guardian wishes to have their child's name removed from any of the Waiting Lists, they must inform the school.
6. Once an applicant declines enrollment either before or during a school year, the applicant will be removed from the Waiting List. If the student later wants to be enrolled, the family must again submit enrollment forms. (*See Acceptance/Declination of Enrollment process below*)
7. No student will be offered admission if that student's enrollment would exceed the tuition cap on net school spending. If the cap for a sending district has been reached, the student will be placed on the waiting list for that district. If a space becomes available and enrollment of any student on the waiting list causes the sending district to exceed the net school spending cap, HVM has to skip over that student, but can keep the name on the waiting list. **EXCEPTION:** If the student on the waiting list is the sibling of a currently enrolled student at HVM, HVM may enroll that student and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may pay the tuition, subject to appropriation.
8. Once a student has a slot in the school, the student owns the slot. When a child is retained, the slot stays with the child. If the child withdraws from the school during the summer of the year s/he is retained or during the retention year, the slot reverts back to the original grade. (Example: If a child is retained in Kindergarten, the slot remains a Kindergarten slot. However, if the child withdraws over that summer or during the year that s/he remains in Kindergarten, the slot will become a first grade slot again.) After the retention year, the slot remains with the child.

Acceptance/ Declination of Enrollment

Within four days following the lottery, all parents are mailed their child's status via postal mail (i.e. offered enrollment or placed on the waiting list). Parents of students who are offered enrollment receive a registration form by mail. The form must be completed and returned by the specified due date either accepting or declining enrollment. The deadline date for student to accept offers of admission is 18 days after the lottery date. Failure to return the registration form **postmarked** by the due date will be regarded as declining enrollment and the next available student from the appropriate waiting list will be offered enrollment in the school. At the discretion of HVM's Executive Director, a late reply may be accepted for extenuating "emergency" circumstances (such as the hospitalization of an immediate family member).

Students offered enrollment any time other than following the lottery are given offers first by telephone. If no contact can be established, a certified letter is sent and the family is given 5 days from the time of mailing to respond. Failure to respond to an offer is deemed disinterest and the child's name is removed from the waitlist and the subsequent name on the list is made an enrollment offer.

Student Information

In accordance with Mass General Law, HVM has policy that dictates the collection, storage and disclosure of student information. Information collected for the purpose of enrollment is confidential and will not be used by HVM beyond purposes of enrollment (grade level of the student and contact information for communicating with parents/guardians).

By statute, public schools are allowed to request the names and addresses of students for third party mailing unless parents request that the school withhold their child's information. HVM has included in its documentation an "opt out" signature line allowing parents to consent or deny the sharing of information.