

Four Rivers Charter Public School

ENROLLMENT POLICY

I Introduction

Four Rivers enrolls a new seventh grade annually and enrolls new students in grades eight through eleven as the school determines that openings are available.

Four Rivers Charter Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special needs, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

Four Rivers Charter Public School has and will implement a student recruitment and retention plan.

II Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

In order for an application to be accepted the following criteria must be met:

- a. The student must expect to successfully complete the grade preceding the grade the student plans to enter.
- b. The school does not specify an age threshold for enrollment.
- c. The applicant must be a resident of the state of Massachusetts at the time of application. Proof of residency may be required (except in the case of homeless students). See Residency Requirements defined on p.3.
- d. Students whose parents would willingly put them in either of two grades may not apply for two grades but must select the grade for which they are applying before the lottery.

If an application does not meet these criteria, the parents or guardian of the applicant will be notified in writing.

The School does not require potential students and their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of enrollment. However, students and their families are strongly encouraged to attend an information session, as these are the most efficient way to get a feel for the school, the faculty and the program, and our expectations for students and their families.

The school does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement.

In order for post-lottery enrollment to occur:

- a. The student must have successfully completed the grade preceding the grade the student plans to enter. (If enrollment is mid-year, the student must be in good standing in his or her current grade.)
- b. In the case of someone who has been home-schooled, there must be evidence that the school considers sufficient that the applicant has met the standards of the preceding grade.

Four Rivers is defined as a regional school; enrollment priority will be given to residents of the Four Rivers region, which is comprised of the following school districts in Franklin County: Greenfield, Frontier Regional, Gill-Montague Regional, Mohawk Trail Regional, Pioneer Valley Regional, and Ralph C. Mahar Regional. Siblings (resident or non-resident) of students who are already in attendance at the school in the year of application have preference for admission over non-sibling resident students. See Sibling defined on p.3.

III Lottery and Enrollment procedure

The school will determine the number of spaces available each year in each grade. Public notice of all application deadlines and lottery dates are posted publicly at least 1 month in advance of the application deadline for each lottery.

The primary application deadline each year (for Fall enrollment) will be a school day in the last week of February. If, at that time, there are more applicants than there are spaces available, the school will:

- a. Hold a lottery conducted by an individual who is not connected with the school.
- b. Each lottery will be open to the public and take place in the Gardner Room at the school, located at 248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, MA 01301.

- c. Immediately prior to the lottery, all parents/guardians in attendance are informed of the number initially assigned to their child (applicant). Immediately after the random computer sort, all parents/guardians in attendance are informed of the final number generated by the lottery. Using a number, rather than a child's name, allows for protecting the privacy of those who do not want their child's name read aloud in public.
- d. Prospective students will be divided into three categories for each grade: siblings of currently enrolled students, in-region and out-of-region. If there are more siblings than there are openings in any grade, names from the sibling category will be selected at random and assigned a number. The numbered order will be used to fill all available spaces in each grade, followed by a numbered wait list for each grade.
- e. Starting numbers from the in-region category will be selected at random and assigned a final lottery number. The numbered order will be used to fill all remaining spaces in each grade, followed by a numbered wait list for each grade.
- f. If students come from a district that has reached its charter school enrollment cap, their names will be placed on the wait list in the order in which their names/numbers are selected. For those students to whom the above policy applies but who are also siblings of students who are currently in attendance at the school, the state may pay the child's tuition, subject to appropriation.
- g. Finally, the names/starting numbers of out-of-region students will be selected at random, assigned a final lottery number, and placed on a wait list for each grade in the order in which they were selected. If there are spaces available in a grade after all siblings and in-region students have been placed in the affected grade, out-of-region students will be offered the next available spaces based upon the wait list order established by the out-of-region lottery.
- h. Students who are offered enrollment will have ten calendar days from the date of the mailing of the school's notification to accept the offer of enrollment.
- i. All applicants not selected in an enrollment lottery are placed on a waiting list in the order the names were selected while also taking into account sibling, as defined in this policy, and resident preference requirements.
- j. Wait-listed students who are subsequently offered admission will be telephoned and a mailing of a formal offer will take place the same day. Students who are offered enrollment from the wait list will have ten calendar days from the date of the mailing of the school's notification to accept the offer of enrollment.
- k. All students who decline an offer of enrollment will be asked to use the form provided in their mailing or to otherwise record their declination in writing. If they refuse, a note to that effect will be entered into the record.
- l. If a student stops attending the school or declines admission, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled.
- m. No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the waiting list unless said student is either a sibling or a resident of the charter school's region.

IV Subsequent public lotteries

If the principal enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, the lottery process may be repeated if an adequate waiting list does not exist. The required lottery process as described in Section III is strictly followed, including public notification and deadlines.

V Wait list

Students whose names are on the wait list hold their place on the list for the full academic year. If at any time during the course of the year openings become available, students from the wait list will be offered space in the order in which their names appear. When the next enrollment period begins, those students whose names are still on the current year's wait list may reapply and take part in the lottery for the coming school year.

The school will keep accurate records of the wait list, including names, home addresses, telephone numbers and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission

When a student stops attending the school for any reason, the school will attempt to fill vacant seats in grades 7, 8 and 9 up to February 15th. A vacancy not filled after February 15th may move into the subsequent grade, to be filled in September.

VI Information on the Application

All information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is not intended and will not be used to discriminate.

The school does not require dual parent/guardian signatures on the application.

The School does not disclose applicant information with the following exceptions:

- a. When required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for research or accountability purposes.
- b. The school is required by law to provide upon request names and addresses of students to a third party mailing house for mailings unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child's information (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89g).
- c. The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Four Rivers Charter Public School, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent's written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from their child's education records. However, the school may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent advised the school to the contrary by signing a form provided by the school. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Four Rivers Charter Public School to include this type of information from the child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:
 - a. An annual yearbook
 - b. Academic and other school recognition of achievement
 - c. Graduation programs
 - d. Sports activity sheets and reporting of game results
 - e. A playbill, showing the student's role in a drama production

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, colleges and universities that wish to mail information to the child, and companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs- like Four Rivers Charter Public School) receiving assistance under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

VII Residency requirements defined

- a. Students whose families live in the six sending districts of Franklin County, Massachusetts, at the time of the application deadline are given enrollment priority. Proof of residency will be required (except in the case of homeless students). Families that own property but do not have their primary residence in one of the six districts will not be considered residents. If a student lives in two households, and one of those households is in one of the sending districts, that student will be considered a resident.
- b. Proof of residency can be a lease or utility bill in the parent/guardian's name.
- c. Out-of-region applicants must be residents of Massachusetts.
- d. Students enrolled in the school whose families move out-of-region but within Massachusetts will be able to continue to attend the school.

VIII Siblings defined

Siblings are defined as children who share a common biological or legal guardian as opposed to children who live in the same household but do not share a common parent. The school will require proof of sibling status (such as birth certificates).

Qualification to receive sibling preference:

- a. Children who live in different households but share a common biological or legal parent.

- b. Siblings of students who are due to graduate at the end of the school year in which the lottery is held.
- c. If a student moves out of the school region but remains enrolled, that student's siblings have preference in admission even though they are non-residents at the time of application.

Those NOT qualified to receive sibling preference:

- a. Children who live in the same household but do not share a common biological or legal parent.
- b. Foster children
- c. Siblings and children of alumni/ae
- d. Sibling of applicants who have been accepted for admission but are not yet attending (including twins)

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