

Swan River Montessori Charter School

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*MSBA/MASA Model Policy 509 Charter
Orig. 2022 (as Charter Policy)
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509 ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

I. PURPOSE

The Swan River Montessori Charter School Board of Directors acknowledges that the application and enrollment process for charter schools is unique in comparison to traditional public school systems. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to disseminate SRMCS application and enrollment procedures that the charter school utilizes.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Swan River Montessori Charter School Board of Directors believes that parents have the responsibility to select the most appropriate educational programs for their children and that parental commitment to the educational program is a significant and positive choice. The Board also recognizes that choice in the selection of a public school provides parents and learners an opportunity to seek a school that best fits their needs and interests. This policy addresses the terms and conditions of student applications and enrollment into Swan River Montessori Charter School.

III. ADMISSION LIMITATIONS

- A. The charter school, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), may limit admission to:
 - 1. pupils within an age group or grade level;
 - 2. pupils who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.68; or
 - 3. residents of a specific geographic area in which the school is located when the majority of students served by the school are members of underserved populations.
- B. The charter school shall comply with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, which prohibits educational institutions from discriminating against students based on a protected class including race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability.
- C. Charter schools must disseminate information about the school's offerings and enrollment procedures to families that reflect the diversity of Minnesota's population and targeted groups. Targeted groups include low-income families and communities, students of color, students at risk of academic failure, and students underrepresented in the school's student body relative to Minnesota's population. The school must document its dissemination activities in the school's annual report. The school's dissemination activities must be a component of the authorizer's performance review of the school.

IV. OPEN ENROLLMENT

- A. General Application

1. Applications for all levels will be available on the school website or by request via phone or email.
2. Student applications for a school year that is in progress are accepted during the year. Students may be admitted if space is available throughout the year.
3. Applications will be made available for an upcoming school year on the first working day in January. Any applicants to be considered for the lottery process must have an application submitted to administration by the end of business on the last calendar day of that January.
4. Applications received beginning February 1st will be accepted and processed in the order they are received.
5. Applications for students may only be submitted for one grade.
6. A new application must be submitted each year for any student that is not currently enrolled. They do not carry over from year to year.
 - a) Families of enrolled students will be sent an "Intent to Return" form each January to formally identify students that will not be returning the following year (for the purpose of potential recruitment).
 - b) Students that do not submit an Intent to Return Form will remain enrolled.

B. Eligibility

1. Tuition-based Pre-K
 - a) Children must be 36 months of age by their first date of attendance.
 - b) Enrollment in each classroom environment shall not exceed 10 children, with a ratio of one adult per every ten children enrolled.

There are 17 full time spots in total.
 - c) No preference for K enrollment may be given to SRMCS Pre-K students based on their attendance or enrollment in the Pre-K program.
2. Swan River Montessori Public Charter School (K-6)
 - a) To attend Kindergarten, a student must be "at least 5 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences." MN 124E.11
 - b) To attend first grade, a student must be "at least 6 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed Kindergarten." MN 124E.11
 - c) SRMCS has philosophically chosen not to offer early Kindergarten (September 2 or later) or early first grade enrollment:

"A charter school may establish and publish on its website a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in [MN Statute 124E.11] paragraphs (b) and (c).

Preference is given to a Minnesota resident student. A student who does not reside in MN must apply annually to enroll. See section IV, C, 2.

C. Enrollment

1. SRMCS, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. SRMCS Montessori School must develop and publish, including on its website, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot.
 - a) Students will be enrolled as indicated by their chronological ages.
 - (1) Students who transfer from another school will be placed in the grade indicated by transfer records.
 - b) If the number of applications exceeds the given capacity, students will be accepted by lottery.
 - (1) Levels
 - (a) CH: 50 students
 - (b) Elementary I & II: 90 students each
 - (2) Grades
 - (a) Kindergarten: 25 students
 - (b) Elementary grades 1-6: 40 students each
 - (3) Entire K-6 Public Charter school program: 180 students
 - (4) Entire Tuition based pre-k: 20 full time spots
 - c) The classroom or program level may only be overenrolled under special circumstances and at the discretion of the teaching level team.
2. Admission to a charter school must be free to any eligible pupil who resides within the state. A charter school must give enrollment preference to a Minnesota resident pupil over pupils that do not reside in Minnesota. A charter school must require a pupil who does not reside in Minnesota to annually apply to enroll in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11, paragraphs (a) to (f).
3. The charter school must give enrollment preference to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents and may give preference for enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lot. A staff member eligible for an enrollment preference for their child, including a foster child, must be an individual employed at the school whose employment is stipulated in advance to total at least 480 hours in a school calendar year.

4. A person may not be admitted to the charter school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five (5) years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences; or (2) as a first grade student, unless the pupil is at least six (6) years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten; except that a charter school may establish and publish on its website a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in paragraphs A and B.
5. Except as permitted in paragraphs D and I, the charter school, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability and may not establish any criteria or requirements for admission that are inconsistent with this section.
6. The charter school or any agent of the school must not distribute any services or goods, payments, or other incentives of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student in a charter school.
7. Once a student who resides in Minnesota is enrolled in the school in kindergarten through grade 12, or in the school's free preschool or prekindergarten program under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), the student is considered enrolled in the school until the student formally withdraws, the school receives a request for the transfer of educational records from another school, the school receives a written election by the parent or legal guardian of the student withdrawing the student, or the student is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act in Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.40 to 121A.56.
8. Once a Pre-K student is enrolled, that student is considered enrolled in the Pre-K program until the student is formally withdrawn, is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, or until they apply for admission to and are enrolled in Kindergarten.
9. Delaying Kindergarten by one year (Kindergarten redshirting) is allowed, but discouraged, at the request of the parent.

D. Lottery Process

1. The lottery will be held in the gather space by the end of business of the 2nd full week of February each year.
2. Applicants are populated onto a spreadsheet by grade
3. All returning K-5 students are enrolled in the next grade
4. All enrollment preferences are filled
5. Any grade that has more applications than spots (end of January) will have all of the applications entered into a lottery and drawn at random.

- a) Students are admitted to the program in the order they are drawn (Randomize function, beginning with kindergarten then ascending through the grades), as capacity allows.
- b) Once individual grades/levels have been filled, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn.
- c) If a student is admitted through the general lottery and that student has one or more siblings/foster siblings in other grades also subject to a lottery, those students will be given preference.
- d) If there are more siblings/foster siblings and/or staff children than available spots, separate lotteries will be held for those categories before the general lottery is held.
- e) Multiple birth/foster siblings are entered into a lottery (each by their own name), then if one of the siblings is drawn, the other siblings shall be admitted to the program.
 - (1) In the event that admission of multiple siblings fills the enrollment to capacity without each of them being enrolled, they will be placed as next on the waiting list.

E. Waiting Lists

- 1. Waiting lists are constructed in the order drawn in the lottery. After conclusion of the drawings, SRMCS shall add to the waiting lists on a first come first serve basis. This waiting list is used to fill subsequent openings for the following academic year in the order populated onto the list.
 - a) If the applicant being placed on the waiting list has sibling/staff preference they will move to the top of the waiting list but below any other sibling/staff preference students already on the waiting list.

V. REQUIRED FORMS

A. Application process

- 1. Appropriate application form

B. Enrollment process

- 1. Enrollment form for new students
- 2. Student Information form
- 3. Health form including immunization records
- 4. Emergency information
- 5. Contract form and deposit for Children's House students
- 6. Early Childhood Screening records (Kindergarten only)
- 7. Previous school records including any Individual Education Plan (IEP) information

Legal References: Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
 Minn. Stat. § 124E.11 (Admission Requirements and Enrollment)
 Minn. Stat. § 124E.17 (Charter School Information)
 Minn. Stat. § 363A.13 (Educational Institution)

Cross References: None