

## Enrollment Policy and Procedures

### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. This means that Salem Academy Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students. Moreover, Salem Academy will not set admissions criteria that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating based upon any of these characteristics. M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(1); 603 CMR 1.06(1).

Salem Academy Charter School has an interest in making sure that all prospective students and their families understand the mission and focus of the school and are interested in being a part of the school community.

Salem Academy Charter School **requires:**

1. Candidates for admission who apply for the grade immediately following their current grade must successfully complete that grade to be admitted.
2. Students to be residents of Massachusetts at the time that they submit a Lottery Enrollment Form (attached) and at the time that they are offered admission.<sup>1</sup>
3. That primary preference for admission be given to siblings of students "currently attending" the school in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.
4. That secondary preference for admission be given to students **who are Salem** residents (as defined in 603 1.06(4)) at the time that they are offered admission to the school.
5. Except in the case of homeless students, residency is determined by where the child actually lives, and the school requires documented proof of the declared residency.

Note: Any candidate who fails to meet any of the above requirements will be notified as such in writing and may reapply when the requirements can be met. Eligible students who are declined an offer of admission for lack of available space will in all cases be offered a place on the waiting list according to the procedures below. Any student who declines an offer of enrollment may reapply at a later date according to the enrollment policy guidelines.

and **strongly advises and requests, but does not require:**

6. Parents/ guardians and students attend informational sessions and orientation sessions prior to enrollment.
7. Parents/guardians and students sign compacts that demonstrate their agreement with and understanding of the school's mission.

Salem Academy Charter School **will not:**

1. Give preferences to children of staff members or Board members;
2. Give preference to siblings of students accepted to the school but not yet attending;
3. Predicate enrollment on the results of any test of ability or achievement; or

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<sup>1</sup> Students are offered admission if their names are drawn in the lottery or if another student declines an offer of admission/transfers out of the school and their name comes up on the waitlist

4. Make statements in meetings intended to discourage, or that have the effect of discouraging, parents/guardians of students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, or any other protected group of students from submitting an application to the school. See M.G.L. c. 71 § 89(1).

## **OUTREACH**

Salem Academy Charter School provides information about the school to those who are interested throughout the year. To apply for an available space, parents are asked to complete a simple, one page Lottery Enrollment Form and submit it to the school prior to a scheduled lottery. Lottery Enrollment Forms are available from the school's website. They are also available in print from the school office, and they are included in the school's annual mailing to students enrolled in the District schools. In addition, Salem Academy Charter School distributes Lottery Enrollment Forms at its Information Sessions held in December, January, and February of each year for interested families.

The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive, city-wide outreach effort that includes advertisement and formal, public information sessions. Salem Academy Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or foreign language, or prior academic achievement. Attendance of Orientation Sessions is strongly encouraged for students and their families. Salem Academy will strive to make accommodations for families with individual hardships. In an effort to serve the diverse population of Salem, the outreach program specifically targets the following groups:

- A. Special education students
- B. Limited English-proficient students
- C. Students eligible for free lunch
- D. Students eligible for reduced price lunch
- E. Students who are sub-proficient (as determined by a previous score of "Needs Improvement" or "Warning/Failing" on the mathematics or English language arts examinations of the MCAS for the previous two years)
- F. Students at risk of dropping out of school
- G. Students who have dropped out of school
- H. Other subgroups of students who should be targeted to eliminate the achievement gap

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

1. For a given school year beginning in September, Salem Academy will accept lottery enrollment forms during an initial application process between the day after the previous lottery and March 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the next given school year. Returning students or those students currently on a waiting list do not have to reapply.
2. Salem Academy will accept Lottery Enrollment Forms until March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which the initial lottery will take place. .
3. The school will conduct a lottery after this initial lottery enrollment period on Wednesday of the second week of March at 6:00 pm in the school's cafeteria, 45 Congress Street, Salem, MA, and will publicize the date, time and location with reasonable notice of at least one week before the lottery date. 603 CMR 1.06(6). The lottery is open to the public, all are welcome.
4. Letters informing families of the results of the lottery will be prepared and mailed the next day to all families whose children were included in the lottery. Families who have been offered an available space will be given a final date of April 1 to accept offers of enrollment.
5. Any Lottery Enrollment Forms submitted after the March lottery will be accepted for additional lottery enrollment periods between April 1 and August 30.

6. Salem Academy will publicize all lottery enrollment deadlines and the fact that there will be a lottery if there are more eligible applicants than there are available spaces within a given application period, with reasonable public notice at least one month in advance..

After the application deadline passes, Salem Academy Charter School will divide all applications into three categories under 603 CMR 1.06(4)

- *Siblings* – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Marriage does not constitute legal parenthood, and step children not legally adopted are not siblings. Whether the children reside in the same household has no bearing on determining if the children are siblings for purposes of a sibling preference. Children who live in separate households may be siblings and those who live in the same household may not be. If siblings are placed in foster homes and one of them enrolls in the charter school, then the siblings of that student are entitled to admission preference. Foster children are not considered siblings of other children in the foster home unless they share a common parent.
- *Residents* - Students who live in the city or town in which the charter school is located. Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools or enrolling in schools in the district get equal preference.
- *Non-residents* - Students who live outside the city or town in which the charter school is located but within Massachusetts. Non-Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools or enrolling in schools in the district get equal preference.

Preference for admission is given first to applicants in the "Siblings" category followed by applicants in the "Residents" category and then by applicants in the "Non-Residents" category without regard to when their application was submitted as long as it was prior to the application deadline. Schools must either extend an offer of admission to all applicants within a group, Siblings, Residents or Non-Residents, that meet the application deadline or select applicants randomly using a lottery. Salem Academy Charter School will not offer admission to applicants on a first come first serve basis.

### **LOTTERY**

The school will determine the number of spaces available each year by grade level. If there are more eligible applicants in any of the categories ("Siblings", "Salem Residents" or "Non-Salem Residents") than there are spaces available, Salem Academy Charter School will hold a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an offer of admission. 603 CMR 1.06(3)(a). As previously mentioned, the school will give reasonable public notice of the lottery at least one week before the lottery date. Salem Academy Charter School will have an individual, without any connection to the school, randomly draw the names of all students who submitted applications before the deadline. After the available slots are filled, the individual shall keep drawing the names of the remaining applicants in each category and place them on a waiting list in the order they are drawn. Parents have the option to opt out of having their children's names announced publically. An "opt out" choice will be included on the Lottery Enrollment Form. Those who opt out will be assigned a number in lieu of the student's name. Lottery drawings are open to the public and will be held at Salem Academy Charter School, 45 Congress Street, Salem, MA.

If the school does not reach capacity after admitting all eligible "Siblings" and "Salem Residents," then it may admit non-Salem resident applicants. In this case, the school must hold a lottery, under the same rules as outlined above, to select non-Salem resident students for the remaining spaces if there are more non-Salem resident applicants than spaces available. 603 CMR 1.06(4)(b).

### **WAITING LIST**

Salem Academy Charter School will maintain accurate records including names, addresses, telephone numbers, and grades of students on waiting lists for "Siblings", "Salem Residents" and "Non-Salem Residents". These lists will roll over from one year to the next. Salem Academy must always accept "Salem Resident" students before accepting "Non-Salem Resident" students unless the "Non-Salem Resident" student is also a "Sibling".

Students will be notified in writing by mail of their place on a waiting list immediately following the lottery drawing.

There is one exception – if a space became available and the enrollment of a student from the waiting list would cause his or her sending district to exceed the net school spending cap, Salem Academy will skip over that student but keep the student on the waiting list. If that student on the waiting list is a sibling of a student currently enrolled at the charter school, the school may enroll that student and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will pay the tuition to the charter school, subject to state appropriations.

### **SECONDARY LOTTERY**

Salem Academy Charter School may hold a second lottery under the following conditions:

1. If by March 1<sup>st</sup> the school has received fewer enrollment forms than it has spaces available; or
2. If after March 1<sup>st</sup>, the school receives additional lottery enrollment forms for the upcoming school year.

### **ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATION**

Families will be notified at the lottery and by mail of their admission status (acceptance or placement on waiting list). Families whose children are being offered enrollment will receive a form on which to indicate acceptance of the school's offer and a form with guidelines for proof of residency. If a student is accepted through the March lottery, that family must confirm by April 1 that the student will attend the school. To ensure that the student is able to enroll, the family must fill out and submit the acceptance statement and proof of residency no later than April 1. Additional forms will be due during the course of the summer, and assistance in completing these will be provided on an as needed basis.

At any point prior to February 15 of the coming school year that an opening develops in grade six through nine, the school will notify the next student on the waiting list by phone and by mail with an offer of admission for that space. Since school begins in mid-August, if a student is selected from the waiting list after April 1 and if the family is notified before August 15<sup>th</sup>, the family will have 10 days to confirm enrollment. If the family is notified after August 15<sup>th</sup>, the family will have 3 days to confirm enrollment. A vacancy not filled after February 15<sup>th</sup> moves into the subsequent grade to be filled the following August if such grade is within 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

Salem Academy Charter School will report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and to the individual students' sending districts the names and other identifying information of students enrolled in the school as appropriate. The school will invite parents to consent to or deny permission to disclose information to other parties, and upon request to a third party mail house for mailings by other schools or districts.

### **OTHER LIMITATIONS**

While Salem Academy primarily accepts students entering 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Salem Academy will accept students in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades when there are spaces available. All entering students must have successfully completed the grade preceding the grade to which the student seeks admission.

**Approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education March 16, 2012**

**Approved by vote of the Salem Academy Charter School Board of Trustees March 21, 2012**

**Revised and approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education October 10, 2013**