

Admissions & Enrollment Policy and Procedures Updated - December 23, 2025

ADMISSIONS OVERVIEW

Salem Academy Charter School (SACS) is a public charter school that operates as an independent school district, which serves students in grades 6 - 12. Salem Academy is open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. Applications to Salem Academy are not integrated with those of the Salem Public School district; therefore, a separate application process for the district is required. Salem Academy accepts applications for admission in grades 6-12, and also backfills vacancies in grades 6-9 from the waiting list when they arise to meet statutory requirements. SACS may backfill openings in 10th-12th grades due to cohort size, staffing needs, academic needs, financial needs, or any other reason that SACS deems necessary. This level of enrollment is in accordance with Salem Academy's current 480 maximum student enrollment cap and the pre-enrollment submission to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5).

Salem Academy Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, 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). In accordance with MA state law, Salem Academy does not charge an application fee for admission or use financial incentives to recruit students. 603 CMR 1.05(3)(a). Salem Academy Charter School does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate acceptance for admission on results from any test of ability or achievement. 603 CMR 1.05(3)(a).

Salem Academy Charter School has developed and implemented a comprehensive student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in G.L. c. 71 § 89 (m); 603 CMR 1.05(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.

ADMISSIONS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Salem Academy Charter School **requires**:

1. Applicants for admission who apply for the grade immediately following their current grade must successfully complete that grade to be admitted and provide proof completion.
2. Applicants to be residents of Massachusetts at the time that they submit a Lottery Application Form (attached), at the time that they are offered admission,¹ and to attend Salem Academy Charter School. Residency is determined by where the child actually lives, and the school requires documented proof of the declared residency. Students who may be considered homeless are eligible to apply and to attend Salem Academy Charter School.

¹ 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

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

1. Parents/ guardians and students attend informational sessions and orientation sessions prior to enrollment.

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
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 in the school's advertising materials, on the [school website](#), and also in our student/parent handbooks (which are updated and uploaded onto www.salemacademycs.org annually).

The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive, city-wide outreach effort that includes advertisement and formal, public information sessions as outlined in G.L. c. 71, § 89(f), and 603 CMR 1.05(1). Attendance of Information 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

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for an available space, parents are asked to complete a simple, one-page Lottery Application Form and submit it to the school prior to the scheduled application deadline. Lottery Application Forms are attached to this policy, are available electronically on the school's website, and hard copies are available at the school's main office. They are also included in the school's annual mailing to students enrolled in the Salem Public District schools. In addition, Salem Academy Charter School distributes Lottery Application Forms at its Information Sessions held in December, January, and February of each year for interested families.

1. Salem Academy will accept applications for admission before the application deadline during a given application cycle. Salem Academy Charter School will give reasonable notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines. If students were placed on the waitlist in the previous school year, they must reapply for the next grade level in the following year.²

² In accordance with state regulations, SACS will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1st and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15th of each year.

2. When an application is received, the primary contact will be notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend the charter school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. 603 CMR 1.05(4).
3. If more applications are received by the application deadline than there are seats available, the school will conduct a lottery after the principal application deadline. The date, time, and location of the lottery will be publicized with reasonable notice, at least one week before the lottery date, and will include a weather emergency postpone date (the next business day available). 603 CMR 1.06(6). The lottery is live streamed to the public and all are welcome to watch online.
4. All families whose applicants were included in the lottery will receive a letter to inform them of the results of the lottery within 3 business days. Families who receive an offer of admission between the principal lottery date and May 31st, will have two weeks to accept the offer. Families that receive an offer of admission after May 31st, or during the school year for which they applied, will have 3 business days to accept an offer of admission.
5. Salem Academy will continue to accept lottery application forms after the principal application deadline for the principal lottery. Whereas a waitlist has been established from the principal lottery, Salem Academy must exhaust the initial waitlist prior to processing applications and holding subsequent lotteries.
6. Salem Academy will publicize all application 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 review each application to determine which preferences for admission they may be eligible for. 603 CMR 1.06(4). The preferences for admission are as follows:

- *Siblings* – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Marriage does not constitute legal parenthood, and stepchildren 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 of Salem, MA, in which the charter school is located.
- *Non-residents* – Students who live outside the city of Salem, MA, 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. In cases where there are fewer spaces than eligible applicants, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process. 603 CMR 1.05(6)(a) and (c). 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 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) and (c). The date, time, and location of the lottery will be publicized with reasonable notice, at least one week before the lottery date, and will include a weather emergency postpone date (the next business day available). 603 CMR 1.06(6). The lottery is live streamed to the public, all are welcome to watch online.

Salem Academy will run an electronic lottery using Rediker Software, which has been [certified as a randomized lottery mechanism](#). Each applicant will receive a random lottery number to establish the initial random lottery rank order. After the initial random lottery rank order is established, preferences for admission will apply. Primary preference for admission will be given to siblings of students "currently attending" the school at the time they are offered admission to the school in accordance with regulations. Following sibling status preference, secondary preference for admission is 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.

Students not offered admission following the principal lottery will be placed on the waitlist in order of their random lottery number. 603 CMR 1.05(10). Preferences for admission will be applied, while also taking into consideration how they might change over time.

If the principal lottery process fails to fill all available admission spaces and the initial waitlist is exhausted, we may repeat the application and lottery process more than once, providing that such process is fair and open and we give reasonable public notice at least one month prior to the application deadline. 603 CMR 1.05(8). In the event spaces become available during the school year, a school may repeat the enrollment process to fill these openings and to meet the requirements of G.L. c. 70, § 89(n). 603 CMR 1.05(8).

WAITLIST

If the number of applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, a waitlist will be created. Students not offered admission after the principal lottery will be placed on the waitlist in the order their names were drawn in the lottery. They will be notified in writing by email and by mail of their place on the waitlist after the principal lottery. The waitlist order is determined by the initial random lottery number and preferences for admission are taken into consideration. If a student stops attending Salem Academy or declines admission the next available student on the waitlist for that grade, subject to preferences at the time of admission, will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled. Students on the waitlist will be notified of the offer of admission by email and mail, and must respond by the indicated response deadline. Students who have withdrawn from Salem Academy in accordance with the school's official withdrawal policy, but seek to re-enroll, must reapply in a future application cycle.

Salem Academy Charter School will maintain accurate records including names, dates of birth, addresses, telephone numbers, and grades of students on the waitlist. Salem Academy must always accept a "Sibling" of a currently attending student first, "Salem Resident" students before accepting "Non-Salem Resident" students unless the "Non-Salem Resident" student is also a "Sibling." We acknowledge the sibling and residential status of a student may change over time—so we will update our lists in accordance with these changes. Families must notify the school of any changes that may occur. No student may be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist during a prior enrollment process, except in cases where enrollment preferences change. A vacancy not filled after February 15th moves into the subsequent grade to be filled the following August if such grade is within 7th through 9th grades, and may also include 10th and 11th grade pending space availability.

There is one exception – in cases where offering admission to a student, who is not a sibling of another student who is currently attending the charter school, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student should be skipped but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending a charter school would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, and the school has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be offered admission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation. G.L. c. 71, § 89(i); 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b).

SUBSEQUENT LOTTERY

Salem Academy Charter School may hold a subsequent lottery(ies) under the following conditions:

1. If the school has received fewer application forms by the principal application deadline than it has spaces available; or
2. If before February 15th of the following school year, the school has vacancies that exceed the number of applicants on our principal waitlist.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS & CONFIRMATION

Families will be notified at the lottery and by mail of their admission status; either offer of admission or placement on the waiting list. Families who receive an offer of admission, from either the lottery or from the waitlist, between the principal lottery date and May 31st, will have two weeks to accept the offer. Families that receive an offer of admission after May 31st, or during the school year for which they applied, will have 3 business days to accept an offer of admission.

Families whose children are being offered admission will receive a form on which to indicate acceptance of the school's offer, and with guidelines for confirming sibling status, providing proof of residency, and providing proof of the completion prior grade.

To confirm sibling status, one formal medical or legal document must be provided. Siblings are defined as students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Marriage does not constitute legal parenthood, and stepchildren not legally adopted are not siblings.

To prove Massachusetts residency, one formal document must be provided that states the applicant's parent/guardian's legal name and address. Examples of proof of residency may include, but are not limited to:

- A utility bill (not water or cell) dated with the past 60 days,
- A Deed or Mortgage Payment dated within the last 60 days,
- A Property Tax Bill dated within the last year,
- A current Lease, Section 8 Agreement, or landlord affidavit, dated within a year,
- A W2 Form dated within the last year,
- A Payroll Stub dated within the past 60 days,
- A Bank or Credit Card Statement dated within the past 60 days,
- A letter from an Approved Government Agency within the past 60 days (Approved Government Agencies: Department of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, or any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead).

Students who may be considered homeless are eligible to apply and to attend Salem Academy Charter School. In order to receive a preference for admission, however, proof of the student's current or temporary residence must be provided. The school's homeless liaison will work with students who may be considered homeless on a

case-by-case basis to support them during the application process and to complete any additional enrollment paperwork, as they are able, if they are to gain admission.

Furthermore, applicants for admission who apply for the grade immediately following their current grade must successfully complete that grade to be admitted. Proof of completion must be provided prior to their anticipated start date. Examples of proof of completion may include, but are not limited to, report cards, transcripts, an affidavit from current/previous school leader, or completion of district-approved home school plan. Failure to provide proof of successful completion will result in the offer of admission being rescinded and the student unenrolled from the school. The student must reapply again in a future application cycle in order to be considered again for enrollment.

Lastly, enrollment will be contingent upon the student's ability to begin to attend school in accordance with our attendance policy. This is to say, a student must attend school within 10 days of their anticipated start date (for example, the first day of school), or else the student will be considered to have declined their offer of admission. This spot will be given to the next person on the waitlist.

When a student stops attending Salem Academy Charter School for any reason up to February 15th, we draw from our waitlist to fill the vacant seat(s). Families on the waitlist will be notified of the offer of admission by phone and mail. Backfilling seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission to Salem Academy Charter School, but have never attended, are exempt from backfilling requirements.

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. During Salem Academy's annual summer mailing process, the school will invite parents to consent to or deny permission to disclose information to other parties (G.L. c. 71, § 89(g) and (n)), and upon request to a third party mail house for mailings by other schools or districts (G.L. c. 71, § 89(g); 603 CMR 1.05(6)(e)). Parents/Guardians will receive this paperwork via email, but paper copies will be made available for those families with technological limitations. We ask that this is completed prior to the first day of school so the necessary arrangements can be on a student-level basis.

ENROLLMENT CONSEQUENCES

Any applicant who fails to meet any of the above requirements will be notified as such in writing and will not be admitted to and/or unenrolled from Salem Academy Charter School. Applicants may reapply in a future application cycle in order to be considered again for admission. Eligible students who are declined an offer of admission for lack of available space will, in all cases, be offered a place on the waitlist according to the procedures outlined above. Any student who declines an offer of enrollment may reapply at a later date according to the enrollment policy guidelines.

OTHER LIMITATIONS

Salem Academy accepts applications for admission in grades 6-12, and also backfills vacancies in grades 6-9 from the waiting list when they arise to meet statutory requirements. SACS may backfill openings in 10th-12th grades due to cohort size, staffing needs, academic needs, financial needs, or any other reason that SACS deems necessary. All entering students must have successfully completed the grade preceding the grade to which the student seeks admission. Proof of completion of the prior grade is required and will be collected prior to the start of the school year. Examples of proof of completion may include, but are not limited to, report cards, transcripts, an affidavit from current/previous school leader, or completion of district-approved home school plan. Failure to demonstrate successfully completing the prior grade will result in the offer of admission being rescinded and the student unenrolled from the school.

SACS does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement (603 CMR 1.05(3)(a)). However, given that curriculum varies from school to school, students may be required to take a diagnostic exam prior to the start of school. Diagnostic exams do not affect admission or enrollment status, but may affect grade level placement.

Lottery Application Form
2026-2027 School Year

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____
Last First Middle required month day year

Home Address: _____
Number/street city state zip code

Telephone Number: _____ Gender: female male non-binary

Name of Current School: _____
Name phone #

Present Grade (2025-2026): 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th

Anticipated Grade (2026-2027): 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

How did you hear about Salem Academy? _____

Does the student have a sibling who currently attends Salem Academy? Yes No

Name of sibling: _____ Grade of Sibling: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____/_____
last first Relationship to student

Home Address: _____
Number/street city state zip code

Telephone Number: _____ Work: _____ Cellular Number: _____

Email Address: _____ Preferred Language: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (optional): _____/_____
last first Relationship to student

Home address: _____
Number/street city state zip code

Telephone Number: _____ Work: _____ Cellular Number: _____

Email Address: _____ Preferred Language: _____

Signature*: _____

*The application requires the signature of only one parent/guardian, unless a court order indicates otherwise for an individual applicant.

Salem Academy Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, 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." G.L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2). Salem Academy's policy includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. All information in this application is not intended, and will not be used, to discriminate. G.L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2). This application will be destroyed in accordance with 603 CMR 23.00 and applicants who are not admitted have a right to receive a copy of the documents to be destroyed.

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