

Admissions and Recruitment Policy

The Charter High School for Law and Social Justice (the “School”) is a non-sectarian, tuition-free, public school. The School is open to all students who are New York State residents, in grades nine through twelve, under the age of 21, and have not yet graduated from high school. The School shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, religion, or ancestry. No person shall be refused admission into or be excluded from any public school in the State of New York on account of any of these factors. The School will not require any action by a student or family (such as taking an admissions test, attending an interview, writing an essay, or attending an information session) in order for an applicant either to receive or submit an application for admission to the School.

A. Application and Admission Periods and Procedures

Each year, the School will hold a recruitment period for students entering ninth grade. The period will last for a minimum of thirty days. Applications will be made available beginning February 1 and will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. April 1 of each year. Applications will be available at the School; by mail, email, or fax; and on the School’s website. Applications can be submitted in person at the School, or by mail, fax, or email as an attachment. School officials who receive applications must put the date of receipt and their initials on the application.

1. Outreach Plan

The School will conduct outreach regarding the application period and admissions procedures as follows:

- **Publicity and Advertising:** The School will publicize its recruitment and application period through local newspapers and newspapers of general circulation, press notifications, an e-mail distribution list, direct mailing, and other marketing vehicles deemed available and appropriate.
- **Information Sessions and Tours:** During the recruitment period, the School will conduct information sessions and tours weekly. They will be held at varying times during the school day and in the evening. Sessions are open to all interested families and families will be provided the opportunity to complete applications while at the School.
- **Website:** The School will post information regarding the recruitment period, admissions, and enrollment on the School’s website, including a schedule of information sessions and tours, the student application, enrollment procedures, and the Admissions and Recruitment Policy.
- **Community Outreach:** The School will reach out to organizations that serve families of children within the community, including those that serve students with disabilities and English language learners. These organizations include, but are not limited to, community boards, community-based organizations, public libraries, and middle schools. The School will inform these organizations of our recruitment period and, when permitted, School representatives will conduct presentations about the School, its academic programs, and its admissions procedures. Additionally, the School will provide these organizations with School brochures and applications so they can be made available to potential applicants.

- School Brochures and Flyers: The School will distribute brochures, flyers, or other marketing materials along with applications to all current students. These materials will also be available at the School and at various locations within the School’s community.

- Language Accessibility: All written material regarding the registration period, student admissions, and the application will be available in English and Spanish. Spanish speakers will be available at information sessions and tours to help answer questions about the application process. The School will also make best efforts to accommodate other languages within the community.

B. Admissions Preferences

Returning students are automatically granted admission for the subsequent academic year, unless the student withdraws from the School. Additionally, the School will offer two admissions preferences. The first preference is for a sibling of a student currently enrolled in the School who intends to attend in the next academic year. The second preference is for children who reside in the School’s Community School District. There is no special preference given to a student who qualifies for both the sibling and the Community School District preferences.

1. Sibling Preference

In order to meet the needs of parents and guardians who care for more than one child, the School gives enrollment preference to siblings of students who are currently enrolled in the School and who intend to enroll in the next academic year. A “sibling” is a child who: (1) resides or intends to reside in the same household as a current student who intends to attend the School in the next academic year; and (2) shares a primary caregiver with that current student. Applicants who meet the requirements of the sibling preference will receive first priority for open seats in the School.

2. Community School District Preference

The second preference is for children who reside in the Community School District in which the School is located. This preference is secondary to the sibling preference. Applicants who qualify for the Community School District preference but not the sibling preference will have a second priority for open seats at the School.

3. Proof of an Admissions Preference

If a student is admitted to the School based on an admissions preference, the parent or guardian of the student must submit documentation that the student qualifies for the admissions preference.

- Sibling Preference: If the student is admitted based on the sibling preference, the parent or guardian of the student must provide a notarized statement that includes the names of the siblings, the location at which they intend to reside, and a statement that he or she will be providing primary care to the children.

- Community School District Preference: If the student is admitted based on the Community School District preference, the parent or guardian of the student must submit any one of the following: (1) a lease or deed containing the name of the child’s caregiver; (2) an original, notarized letter from a landlord or management company attesting that the child’s caregiver lives at the residence in question; or (3) two current billing statements, with the name of the child’s caregiver listed on the statement. The following constitute acceptable billing statements: gas, electricity, or cable television bill; rent payment receipt; paystub; or bank statement. Additionally, the parent or guardian must submit a notarized statement stating that he or she will be providing primary care to the child.

Documentation must be submitted by the enrollment deadline in order for the student to maintain his or her seat at the School. Failure to provide adequate proof of a preference by the enrollment deadline will result in the student's seat being revoked. In order to ensure the student does not lose his or her seat, it is recommended that parents or guardians submit documentation as soon as possible in case any different or additional documentation is needed.

C. Admissions and Enrollment Process

The School does not require any action (beyond the submission of an application) on the part of potential students or their families as a condition of admission. The School will publicize the number of and grade level in which there are open seats and will collect applications for those seats from February 1 through April 1. For each grade level, if the number of applications exceeds the number of seats available, the School will conduct a lottery to fill the open seats. If, after the application deadline, there are an insufficient number of applications to fill all open seats, all students who submitted a completed application will be accepted to the School and additional outreach will be conducted for applications. Additional applications will be accepted into the School in order of receipt until all seats are filled.

1. Public Admissions Lottery

The School will publicize a notice of the admissions lottery at least one week prior to the lottery date. The notice will include the number of seats available in each grade level as well as the date, time, and location of the lottery. Information regarding the lottery and the number of seats available in each grade will also be posted on the student application and on the School's website no later than February 1. Lotteries are open to the public and parents are encouraged to attend; however, attendance is not required. An independent observer, who is not an employee, official, or Board member of the School or related to anyone who has submitted an application, will conduct the lottery and ensure that all proper procedures are followed.

The lottery will be held each year between April 1 and April 15. All applications received before the April 1 deadline will be entered into a drawing at which all names will be called. The School will use the following ordered list to admit students: (1) siblings of students currently enrolled in the School and who intend to enroll in the next academic year; (2) students who reside in the Community School District in which the School is located; and (3) students who live outside the School's Community School District. As necessary, the School will conduct lotteries within each subcategory of applicants.

When the official conducting the lottery draws a name from the pool, the name will be posted immediately on the School's lottery board. Names will be drawn until all names in the applicant pool have been posted on the lottery board. Students whose names are not selected for admission through the lottery will be placed on the School's waiting list in the order that their names were drawn from the pool and appear on the board. A database will be maintained containing the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission.

2. Lottery Procedures

Before the lottery, the independent observer will review all applications and ensure that every application received during the February 1 to April 1 registration period has a corresponding lottery card with the student's name on it. The observer will bring the lottery cards to the lottery site in a sealed envelope following review.

During the lottery, the independent observer will assure that the following standards are met: (1) the written procedures for the lottery are read aloud to the public and available for

public viewing; (2) each eligible application has a card that was placed into the lottery drum, and that no other materials were placed into the drum; (3) application cards are drawn directly from the lottery drum, and from no other source; (4) names are called accurately; and (5) names are recorded accurately on the lottery board and in the lottery log according to procedures described at the lottery. The lottery board and log will be open to the public.

3. Enrollment Procedures

After the lottery, the School will notify parents or guardians by mail, at the residence provided on the application, of the student's acceptance or number on the waiting list. Letters will be sent within two weeks of the lottery date.

If the student has been admitted to the School, the notification will include a list of forms that need to be provided, including, but not limited to, all documentation required by the Department of Education to register at a public school. If the student was admitted based on the School's sibling or Community School District preference, documentation of proof that the student qualifies for the preference will also be required. The notification will also inform parents or guardians of and ask them to attend any enrollment events.

All forms and a confirmation of enrollment must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. within four weeks of the lottery date. The School will inform parents and guardians of the specific due date in the student acceptance letter and will also post the date on the School website. If the parent or guardian fails to provide adequate documentation by the enrollment deadline or declines an offer of admission, the student will be considered to have forfeited his or her seat. The seat will immediately be offered to the first student on the waiting list. In order to be considered again for a seat at the School, the student must submit a new application. His or her application will be placed at the end of the waiting list based on the date and time it is submitted.

E. The Waiting List

The School's waiting list is comprised of applications that were not selected for admission from the lottery as well as applications submitted after April 1 through the end of the first semester of the school year. The School will place applications on the waiting list, following the names of students who were placed on the list through the lottery, based on the date and time the School received the application as well as any applicable preference. At the end of the first semester, all waiting lists will become void and open seats will no longer be filled for that school year. New waiting lists will be established each year following the open lottery.

1. Waiting List Management

The School will maintain active waiting lists for each grade level. Applications on the waiting list are subject to the same admissions preferences as all other applications. If an application on the waiting list is eligible for an admissions preference, the School will place the application in the pool for that preference, in order of date and time applied.

If a space opens, the School will contact the parent or guardian of the child who is next on the waiting list and offer the vacant seat to that student. Vacancies will be filled beginning in June for the upcoming academic year and throughout the first semester of the academic year as they become available. The School will remove applications from the waiting list if a parent or guardian withdraws the application in writing or declines or fails to accept an offer for an open seat. The waiting list for each grade level will be maintained until the end of the first semester of the school year.

2. Waiting List Enrollment Procedures

When vacancies become available, a School official will contact the parents or guardians of students in the order in which they appear on the waiting list. The School official will call all phone numbers listed on the student's application and will maintain a record of the calls. The parent or guardian must accept the offer of admission within 24 hours of the phone call or the space will be forfeited to the next applicant on the waiting list. If the parent or guardian accepts the offer, he or she will be required to complete all enrollment forms and provide all necessary documentation immediately, including proof of an admissions preference if applicable, before the student may begin attending the School.

F. Withdrawal and Transfer Procedures

Parents or guardians may withdraw their child from the School at any time. When a parent or legal guardian withdraws a student from the School, he or she must complete a withdrawal form available at the School. The withdrawal process is complete when the signed withdrawal form is returned to the main office and is logged into the appropriate data systems. This includes confirming enrollment with the child's new school.

If a returning student does not attend the first day of school, the student is subject to the same 24-hour rule that applies to families being called from the waiting list. Following the first absence, the School will call the parent or guardian of the absent student and give the student 24 hours to report to school. If the parent does not return the call to confirm the absence and indicate that the student intends to return to school or the student does not report to school within that time frame, the returning student is considered to have withdrawn. An auto-withdrawn student who wishes to return to the School must then submit a waiting list application and the School will place the application at the end of the list based on the date and time of application.

School staff will not provide information about a student who has withdrawn at any time unless an official request is made from another school on behalf of that student.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: March 19, 2014