

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School Enrollment Policy

Introduction

In accordance with Massachusetts laws governing charter schools, our enrollment process is non-selective and non-discriminatory. Prospect Hill Academy Charter School is open to all Commonwealth of Massachusetts students with preference given to Somerville and Cambridge residents and those with siblings in the School. Admission is based on a lottery process and class placement cannot be determined until the student has written a grade-level assessment. Lotteries are generally held between March and June of a given application cycle.

Eligibility Criteria

Enrollment to the School is non-discriminatory and open to all Massachusetts residents at the time of application. It is required that families provide proof of residency by providing one of the following documents at the time they submit the application: a gas bill, an electricity bill, or a lease agreement. Should a student fail to provide proof of residency or should it be determined that a family has provided false information of residency or otherwise, the application will be void.

In accordance with regulation Ch.79. 89 (i); 603 CMR 1.06 (4)(d), in cases where the enrollment of a student, who is not a sibling of another previously enrolled student, would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student is skipped over but kept on the waiting list. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending the school would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, the sibling will be admitted in accordance to the lottery.

Applicants to Kindergarten must be five years of age by August 31 of the year they plan to enter Kindergarten. No age requirements for high school students apply.

There are no academic requirements to be admitted to the School and no testing is administered prior to admission. However, accepted students are assigned to a specific grade only after completing a grade level assessment.

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

To ensure applicants and their families understand Prospect Hill Academy's mission, the school holds Open House and Information Sessions as well as School Tours at the beginning of each application cycle and encourages but does not require applying families to attend.

Application Process

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School begins accepting applications each December for the following school year. Applications require only one parent/guardian signature. All applications are coded with one of the following preference pools:

1. ***Somerville and Cambridge siblings****: Children who share a common biological or legal parent of a student enrolled at the School as of the date that enrollment is offered and who is also a Somerville or Cambridge resident.
2. ***Non-Somerville or Cambridge siblings****: Children who share a common biological or legal parent of a student enrolled at the School as of the date that enrollment is offered and who is not a Somerville or Cambridge resident.
3. ***Somerville and Cambridge residents***: any applicant whose residence is within the Somerville or Cambridge city limits as of the date that enrollment is offered.
4. ***Non-Somerville and Cambridge residents***: any applicant whose residence is outside the Somerville or Cambridge city limits as of the date that enrollment is offered.

* Twins are considered separate applicants. Sibling preference only applies if one child is already attending the school at the time the other applies.

If there are more applicants than available spaces within the application pool for any given grade, a lottery process will be held to determine acceptance into the School. If there are more spaces than applicants within any application pool for any particular grade, then all applicants within said application pool will be accepted. The process is repeated, sequentially, for each subsequent application pool.

When lotteries are held, each application deadline will be advertised a minimum of one month in advance. Prospect Hill Academy will determine the number of spaces available for each grade level at the time of the lottery. Applications received after the application deadline will enter the next lottery for any given application cycle. However, if the waitlist from the March and June lotteries can sustain enrollment and backfill until February 15th, no subsequent lottery will be held.

In accordance with the amended Charter School Statute M.G.L.c.71; 89 the school will backfill vacated seats at minimum in grades K-5 up to February 15th. Should a student who was in attendance on the first day of school withdraw, that student's seat will be offered to the first person on that grade's waitlist, based on the aforementioned preference pools. Should the waitlist for the vacated seats be exhausted, a subsequent lottery process will take place. Vacancies which occur after February 15th are filled the following September.

Lotteries are held between March and June and a subsequent lottery may be added up to February 15th of an application cycle. Lotteries are drawn by a certified lottery software system. Lottery dates are posted on the PHA web site. They are held at the Early Childhood campus on 15 Webster Ave., Somerville and are open to the public. Each applicant entered into the lottery will receive a unique lottery number indicating the applicant's preference pool prior to the lottery.

Applicants accepted to the School are notified by mail if the notification takes place prior to school begin and by phone if the notification takes place after school begin. Parents/guardians must accept enrollment in writing or via phone within 14 days of the notification date if notification takes place prior to August 15th and within 5 days of the notification date if notification takes place after August 15th of a given application cycle.

Should a parent/guardian fail to accept enrollment within the permissible time frame, the school will make several attempts at contacting the family. Failure to accept enrollment will lead to the space being offered to the next applicant on the waitlist.

Waitlist Policy

Applicants who are not accepted to the School will be placed on a grade-level waitlist in the sequence of their lottery placement and preference pool (1. Siblings of residents, 2. Siblings at large, 3. Residents, 4. Students at large). Should a space become available, the first student on the corresponding grade-level waitlist will be accepted and informed thereof by mail prior to school begin and by phone after school begin. If a student declines an offer of admission PHA will remove that student's name from the admissions list and move to the next eligible student based on the lottery process.

Families that change residence after having submitted proof of residency must submit proof of residency for the new residence as soon as possible and prior to confirmation of enrollment. Please note that waitlist preference pool placement is subject to change according to the updated city of residence.

The School will keep accurate records of the waitlist of any given application cycle, including names, home addresses, phone numbers and grade levels. However, waitlists are not carried over to the next school year. After February 15th of a given application cycle, all applications on the waitlist are void. Students who wish consideration for the following year need to re-apply and re-enter the lottery process.

Returning Students

Students who are already enrolled in the School do not need to re-apply or re-register. Should an enrolled student fail to attend school, policies and procedures pertaining to attendance will be applied.

Disclosure of Student Information

PHA respects the privacy of its students and families and will not release student information to third parties unless required by law to do so. In accordance with Statute M. G. L. Chapter 71, Section 89, the School will release its mailing list to a state-approved mailing house at the request of the School's host cities' school districts. Prior to release, each PHA family is notified in writing and given the option to opt out from the mailing list.

The PHA application in English, Haitian Creole, Spanish, and Portuguese can be found during the open application window at:

http://www.phacs.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=354596&type=d&pREC_ID=768384