

North Lakes Academy

Policy #: 509

Policy Name: Enrollment and Admission Procedures

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I. Purpose

The enrollment and admission process at North Lakes Academy Charter School is designed to ensure that parents and potential students are fully aware of the school's mission, vision, values, and expectations so that once informed, they will be able to decide whether NLA is the right fit for their student.

II. General Statement of Policy

A. All interested parties are encouraged to access this information and download forms from the North Lakes Academy website, located at <http://www.northlakesacademy.org>. If no Internet access is available, an enrollment application form can be sent upon request. All requests regarding tours or questions about the waiting list status should be directed to the Executive Director or their designee.

B. North Lakes Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, or political beliefs.

III. Admission Requirements

A. According to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124E, a charter school may limit admission to the following groups of students:

1. Pupils within an age group or grade level
 - a. Verification of age may be determined with appropriate documentation that include, but not limited to a passport, a hospital birth record or physician's certificate, a baptismal or religious certificate, an adoption record, health records, immunization records, immigration records, previously verified school records, early childhood screening records, Minnesota Immunization Information Connection records, or an affidavit from a parent.
2. Pupils who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 124D.68

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. A charter school 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.

1. The charter school must develop and publish, including on its website, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot.

C. A person shall not be admitted to a charter school under the following conditions:

1. As a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five 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 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 Sections III.B and III.C.

D. Except as permitted in III.D, a charter school 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 subdivision.

E. The charter school shall not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student in a charter school.

F. Students who do not reside in Minnesota may be enrolled at the charter school when the following conditions are met.

1. Enrollment preference is given to Minnesota resident students over students that do not reside in Minnesota.
2. Non-resident students are required to annually re-apply to enroll.
3. The non-resident student pays a tuition rate agreed upon by both the school and the family of the student in writing.

V. Open Enrollment Deadline

All applications to be included in the lottery for the upcoming school year must be received by the school no later than February 1st each year. All applications will be marked according to the date received by the Executive Director or their designee.

VI. Enrollment Preference Policy

A. Preference for possible enrollment will be acknowledged and given to:

1. Siblings of students currently enrolled and in attendance at North Lakes Academy Charter School. Siblings include:
 - a. Any child of a family unit related biologically, by marriage or adoption to one or both parents.
 - b. Any child placed within a foster-care situation. NLA should be provided with documentation from their case manager, judge or the court as soon as the documentation is available.
2. Any child of an employee of North Lakes Academy Charter School at the time of the lottery.
 - a. The employee must have their employment stipulated in advance to total at least 480 hours in a school calendar year.

VII. General Lottery

A. A completed application is required in order to be included in the annual lottery and/or placed on the waiting list.

B. The lottery for all grades K - 12 will be held each February 15th – or the next school day if there is a scheduling conflict – to determine placement for the following school year.

C. On the date of the lottery, all existing and newly received applications as of each February 1st, will be sorted by grade level and then assigned a computerized, random number and placed sequentially by each grade to comprise the waiting list from which to fill the next year's class openings.

D. This process will be overseen by at least three of the following people: one person from administration, the Finance Director, and the Executive Director or their designee. All staff witnesses will sign a form certifying the lottery results and process.

E. Preference will be given to siblings and children of employees within the school according to MN Statute and Section VII of this policy.

1. Students qualifying for preference who were in the lottery will be placed by their lottery number in the “preference section” of that grade’s waiting list at any time after the lottery date.
2. Students qualifying for preference after the lottery was held who had not submitted an Enrollment Application (and have therefore not been assigned a lottery number), must submit a completed Enrollment Application before being placed at the bottom of the “preference section” for that grade of the waiting list.

F. The waiting list will remain in place for one school year. Students on the waiting list will need to reapply each year by the February 1st deadline to be included in the next year’s lottery process.

1. Siblings and children of NLA employees will continue to receive preference as allowed by statute.
2. Former students who have withdrawn and requested to remain on the waiting list will be subject to the same policies and lottery process.
3. The waiting list is intended for the sole purpose of filling enrollment and distributing information deemed appropriate by the organization to be of interest to involved parties.
4. The organization will not sell, distribute or otherwise disseminate waiting list information or use this list for solicitation purposes other than to gather interest and involvement in those things related to enrollment, expansion, or related interests.

G. Attempts will be made to fill all openings for the upcoming school year between February 1st and May 15th. Subsequent openings will be filled as they become available.

H. As soon as enrollment projections have been met, openings that become available will only be filled after semester break within two weeks of the start of the new term.

I. All enrollment decisions are contingent upon meeting the school’s budget requirements.

VIII. Foreign Exchange Students

Foreign Exchange students are welcome to be enrolled at NLA Charter School. They will be subject to the same policies for enrollment as all other students and efforts will be made to aid with the additional paperwork that is required.

IX. Enrollment of New Students

A. Openings for grades K - 12 will be filled on a grade-level basis. The Executive Director or their designee will contact the first student on that grade's waiting list who has not already been contacted for the current school year.

1. Any student who has already declined an offer for admittance for the current school year, but has requested to remain on the list, will be skipped for the rest of the current year.

B. The Executive Director or their designee will be notified when a position is open once the school receives a withdrawal form or confirmed enrollment from another school/district.

C. When accepting a position, the student's start date, grade level, transportation needs and siblings who may be on the waiting list or want to be added to it must be discussed with the parent.

1. The student start date is not to exceed ten school days from the offering date, unless otherwise noted by the school, such as at the beginning of a semester.

D. Once the decision has been made to enroll, the parent/guardian(s) must provide the name of the student's current school so that NLA staff can request the student's records, and inform staff if the student is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or receiving special education services.

E. Homeschool students will need to provide documentation that lists the names of the classes, the amount of time studied, and the grades received. NLA staff may request additional information on courses from parents, if necessary, to determine high school transfer credits and course placement.

X. Enrollment Limits

A. The Executive Director or their designee, will ensure that enrollment does not exceed the maximum/grand total student count as determined by the School Board.

1. Enrollment limits may only be changed with School Board approval.
2. The maximum enrollment for North Lakes Academy in grades K-12 will be 858 students with an average of 66 students per grade.

B. Parent notification of an enrollment opening will be by phone, email, or by letter, if there is no confirmation of the call/email by the parent within 24 hours. It is the parent's responsibility to update the school with current contact information.

C. The parent will have 4 calendar days from the day that phone contact is made or that the letter is mailed to contact the Executive Director or their designee and enroll, withdraw or decline and be moved to the bottom of the list.

1. If there is no response, the Executive Director or their designee will move the name to the bottom of the list with a note indicating "No Response" and the date contacted. The opening will then be offered to the next student on the list.
2. If the family responds after the opening has been filled, the student name may be moved back up on the list according to the previous lottery number placement. They would become the next to be offered a position if one becomes available.
3. In order to have all students enrolled by the first day of school or the first day of a semester, the Executive Director or their designee may use their discretion during the last two weeks prior to the start of school with regard to the time allowed for families to make their decision to enroll. The timeline will not be less than 48 hours from the time that the Executive Director or their designee has attempted to contact the family.

XI. Exceptions to the Lottery Process

An exception to the lottery process will occur if there are fewer applications for a given grade than the minimum enrollment number as outlined in this policy.

XII. Student Withdrawal Procedure

A. A Minnesota resident student is enrolled until that 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 accordance with MN §124E.11(g).

B. When a student withdraws, a Withdrawal Form should be completed and returned by a parent, routed to the Executive Director or their designee and placed in the student's cumulative file.

C. The class list and student withdrawal list will be updated by the Executive Director or their designee. The Waiting List will also be updated. If the parent elects for their child to "Remain on List", the withdrawing student will drop to the bottom of the Waiting List, and any siblings on the list will be moved to the non-sibling section of the list (based on their assigned lottery number), unless one or more siblings remains enrolled at NLA.

XIII. Legal References

Minnesota Statute, Chapter 124E.11 Charter Schools (Admission Requirements)
Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 121A.40 to 121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)

XIV. Cross References

Minnesota Department of Education Charter School Admissions and Enrollment
Guidance (Rev. 2025)
Policy 513-Student Promotion, Acceleration, Retention and Early Kindergarten
Admission