

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY**I. Introduction**

The goal of the admissions policy of Sonoma Charter School (hereinafter “School”) is to attract, admit and retain at the School the broadest spectrum of students and families representative of the rich diversity existing in the Sonoma Valley Unified School District. The School will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations. The School will not charge tuition and the School will not discriminate in admissions or outreach against any pupil on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or any other legally protected category.

II. Admission and Requirements for Admission

The School is open to any student in the State of California who meets the admissions requirements described herein. If the number of pupils who wish to attend the School exceeds the school’s capacity, attendance (except for existing pupils of the charter school) shall be determined by a public random drawing, the process for which is described below.

A. Admission Eligibility and Requirements

In order to be eligible for admission in the School, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- All students must have been fully immunized and present the appropriate health examination record in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code.
- All kindergarten students must be age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which he/she seeks admission.
- For those children who do not meet the minimum age for admission into kindergarten, the School offers a voluntary transitional kindergarten (“TK”) program for eligible children. The School’s TK program is the first of a two-year kindergarten program and students shall not attend more than two years of a combination of TK and kindergarten. The School’s TK program will admit children whose birthday falls within the following:
 - In the 2022-23 school year, a child who will have their fifth birthday between September 2 and February 2;
 - In the 2023-24 school year, a child who will have had their fifth birthday between September 2 and April 2;
 - In the 2024-25 school year, a child who will have had their fifth birthday between September 2 and June 2;

- In the 2025-26 school year, and each year thereafter, a child who will have had their fourth birthday by September 1.
- Provided the governing board of the School determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the child and that the parent or guardian is given information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of this early admittance. The curriculum offered in the TK program shall be age and developmentally appropriate. TK students may be placed in the same classroom as other kindergarten students, provided that the instruction given is that designed for TK students.
- No student admitted early shall generate average daily attendance until the student has attained his or her fifth birthday, regardless of when the student was admitted during the school year.
- All students must be at least age 6 by September 1 of the school year in which he/she seeks admission in first grade.
- No student may concurrently attend a private school that charges the student's family for tuition.
- All students shall be documented as residents of the State of California.
- A student that has been otherwise expelled may be admitted to the school in the discretion of the governing board on a case-by-case basis. No student will be admitted during the term of an expulsion for bringing to or possessing a firearm at any school, unless the Director makes a determination based on the specific facts of the situation in accordance with the School's discipline policy. [The previous sentence should be included if the school receives federal ESSA funds. 20 U.S.C. § 7961(b)]

Enrollment Process

In order to ensure that all students will be placed appropriately and benefit fully from the education program, the following enrollment procedures will be enforced. Failure to comply with any of these procedures will result in denial of enrollment. An enrolled student will be removed from the School if failure to comply with these procedures is discovered after enrollment has been granted. All eligible students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete applications for admission must be timely submitted to the School no later than the deadline published for that school year.
- The application for admission shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Authorization for the School to request and receive student records from all schools the student has previously attended or is currently attending;
 - A statement regarding the student's immunization or exception from the requirement;

- A statement regarding the student’s examinations required by the Health and Safety Code;
 - Identification of the student’s age;
 - Identification of the student’s residency;
- Parents/guardians/caregivers are strongly encouraged to attend a School Tour
 - Parents/guardians/caregivers and students shall sign and return to the School an acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Student Handbook with the application for admission.

The School shall follow any required procedures for the transfer of a program between SELPAs.

Additionally, each application will be reviewed by staff to ensure it is complete before the student will be considered for enrollment.

The School’s personnel shall not inquire specifically about a student’s citizenship or immigration status or the citizenship or immigration status of a student’s parents or guardians; nor shall personnel seek or require, to the exclusion of other permissible documentation or information, documentation or information that may indicate a student’s immigration status, such as a green card, voter registration, a passport or citizenship papers. Where any law contemplates submission of national origin related information to satisfy the requirements of a special program, School personnel shall solicit that documentation or information separately from the school enrollment process.

Pursuant to this policy and where permitted by law, the Director of the School shall enumerate alternative means to establish residency, age or other eligibility criteria for enrollment or programs, and those alternative means shall include among them documentation or information that are available to persons regardless of immigration status, citizenship status or national origin, and that do not reveal information related to citizenship status or immigration status.

If the School solicits the last four digits of an adult household member’s Social Security number to establish eligibility for a federal benefit program, the School shall explain the limited purpose for which the information is collected. It is the School’s policy that a failure to provide this information will not bar the student from enrolling in or attending the School, and such policy will be explained at the time the School asks for this information.

If the School has more applications for enrollment than available space, enrollment shall occur following the random public drawing as described below.

III. Preferences

In the event that there are more students applying for enrollment than available space, preferences shall be extended in the following order of priority:

- Pupils currently attending the School; [Note: This preference is required by Education Code § 47605(e)(2)(B), although the statute does not require that it be given first preference in the list of priorities.]
- Siblings of students currently admitted in the School; [Note: This preference is discretionary for the School and should be authorized in the school’s charter or related agreements with the charter-granting agency.]
- Children of the School’s teachers, staff and founding families (not to exceed 10% of the school’s total population); [Note: The California Department of Education and the federal Department of Education, in unofficial and non-binding guidance, indicate that preferences for children of founding families, current employees and board members should not exceed between 20%-10%. “Charter Schools Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, Title V Part B,” dated 2004 advises that children of “founders” and staff may be granted admissions preference provided their number is “small.”]
- Students residing within the boundaries of the [granting or district in which the school is geographically located] District. If enrollment was based on the preferential treatment received due to the in-district residence, the student must continue to reside in the district in order to remain admitted in the following school year; [Note: This preference is required by Education Code § 47605(e)(2)(B), although the statute does not require that it be given any particular ranking as a preference. Additionally, the statute is silent as to whether the preference must be provided to students residing in the boundaries of the granting district or the district in which the school is geographically located.]
- Children of staff (not to exceed 10% of the total student population). [Note: See note above relating to children of the School’s founding families.]

IV. Enrollment Process and Guidelines

There will be an open enrollment period each year, which will be advertised within the school community so that all interested students may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission. The deadline for accepting applications will be clearly stated. When a parent, guardian or student inquires about enrollment and before conducting an enrollment lottery, the School will provide a copy of the California Department of Education’s notice including the notice requirements in California Education Code section 47605(d)(4).

The process for enrollment proceeds as follows, (not necessarily in the exact order provided):

- The School will determine class size/configuration for the school year;
- The School will solicit from current students their intention to return the following year;
- The School will solicit from parents/guardians of current students their intention to apply for admission for siblings of current students;

- The School will solicit from staff members their intention to apply for admission for their children;
- The School will design program informational materials;
- The School will issue press releases and utilize other communication strategies;
- The School will actively recruit students throughout the community;
- The School will host Information Open House Meeting(s) and record attendance;
- The School will schedule School Tours (attendance at which is strongly encouraged for admission);
- The School will establish and hold an open enrollment period so that all interested student may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission;
- The School will determine the number of returning students at each level;
- The School will determine the number of new students at each level;
- After the returning students are placed, the School will hold a random public drawing, if necessary applying its identified preferences;
- The School will notify the families of the applicants who are accepted and rejected;
- Non-accepted families will be placed on the waitlist in the order in which the students are drawn from the random public drawing. Children who complete the application process after the published deadline will be added to the next lottery pool if a wait list already exists.

A wait list is maintained from year to year. Once on the wait list, a student would remain in that position until he/she is offered a spot in the school or expresses no further interest. During enrollment, volunteers and paid employees return calls and answer questions from prospective families. If families from the wait list are offered a position, they must accept that position within three business days or if they decline or fail to respond within three business days they may be removed from the wait list or placed at the bottom of the wait list if they desire.

V. Final Admission

Once the student has been enrolled, parents, guardians, education rights holders or students will be required to provide proof of immunization status, date of birth, residency, examinations required by the Health and Safety Code, transcripts, copies of any IEPs and other student records in order to complete the admissions process as described below.

In accordance with law, students who are qualify as homeless students or foster students may be admitted even if some of the above-referenced documents are not timely submitted.

No student will be unconditionally admitted unless the student has been fully immunized as required by law or has a valid medical exemption on file.

No non-California residents will be admitted to the School.

No student who does not meet the minimum age for admission in accordance with California law will be admitted to the School.

Authorization for the School to request and receive student records from all schools the student has previously attended or is currently attending;

Proof of full immunization or exception from the requirement;

Proof of health examinations required by the Health and Safety Code;

Proof of age with the application for admission through documents such as the following: birth records, statements by the local registrar or a county recorder certifying the date of birth, baptism certificate duly attested, a declaration from the parent/guardian or a passport;

Proof of residency through documents such as the following: parent or guardian's drivers' license, ID card or DMV printout, a copy of a lease, utility bill or similar showing the address of the residence, etc., California tax returns giving California as the home address (within acceptable dates); car registration and/or car insurance; California health insurance or Medi-Cal ID;

If any information provided to by the parents/guardians could indicate immigration status, citizenship status or national origin information, the School shall not use the acquired information to discriminate against any students or families or bar children from enrolling in or attending the School. If parents or guardians choose not to provide information that could indicate their children's immigration status, citizenship status, or national origin information, the School shall not use such actions as a basis to discriminate against any students or families or bar children from enrolling or attending school.

Adopted: 3/21/2023

Amended: