

# Atlantis Charter School

## Enrollment Policy and Procedures

### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. This means that Atlantis Charter School may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, 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, Atlantis Charter School may 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).

Atlantis 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.

#### Atlantis Charter School **requires:**

1. Candidates for admission to apply for:
  - a. The grade in which the student is currently attending (if application is submitted after the first day of school but before February 15),
  - b. The grade in which the student is expected to attend the following school year (if application is submitted after February 15 but before the first day of school). Student must successfully complete that grade to be admitted.
2. Students to be residents of Massachusetts at the time they submit a Student Application and at the time they are offered admission.
3. That primary preference for admission be given to siblings of students “currently attending” the school in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Education regulations.
4. That secondary preference for admission is given to students who are residents (as defined in 603 1.06(4)) at the time that they are offered admission to the school.

#### and **strongly advises and requests:**

5. Parents/caregivers and students attend an informational session and orientation session prior to enrollment
6. Parents/guardians and students sign the Home and School “Parents As Partners” Compact which demonstrates their agreement with and understanding of the school’s mission.

#### Atlantis 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; or
3. Make statements in meetings intended to discourage, or that have the effect of discouraging parents/guardians of students with disabilities, students with limited English language proficiency, or any other protected group of students from submitting a Student Application to the school. See M.G.L. c. 71 § 89(1).

## **OUTREACH**

Atlantis Charter School provides information about the school to those who are interested throughout the year. The School provides Student Applications at its Informational Sessions, which are held in June of each year for interested applicants. The School provides student applications in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer. If a family is unable to attend an Informational Session the school will mail the Student Application.

The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive, citywide outreach effort that includes advertisement in local newspapers, and distribution of information to local libraries, community centers, pediatricians' offices, pre-schools, and churches. Atlantis Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or foreign language, or prior academic achievement. Attendance of Informational sessions is strongly encouraged for students and their families. Atlantis Charter School will strive to make accommodations for families with individual hardships.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

1. For a given school year beginning in August, Atlantis Charter School will publicize its three Informational sessions and invite families to attend and complete a Student Application. Families who are unable to attend any of these sessions may request and will be sent a Student Application by mail. Returning students are not required to reapply. Students on the Waiting List **MUST** complete and submit a Waiting List Update Form. On April 15 of each year, the school will mail the form to all families on the Waiting List. The completed form must be received by the School no later than May 15. It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to keep the School updated with any changes in contact information. Failure to meet the May 15 deadline will result in a removal of a child's name from the Waiting List, and the parent/caregiver will be required to reapply and restart the enrollment process, if they are interested in having their child placed back on the Waiting List.
2. Atlantis Charter School will accept Student Applications until February 15 of the year in which the lottery will take place. Atlantis will advertise and publicize the deadline for submission of student applications at least 30 days in advance of all such deadlines. Student Applications submitted to Atlantis must be accompanied by at least one proof of residency document.
3. After this initial lottery enrollment period, the School will conduct a lottery prior to March 15<sup>th</sup>, publicizing the date, time and location with reasonable notice of at least one week prior to the lottery date. 603 CMR 1.06(6).
4. The School will set a final date for students to accept offers of enrollment (March 31). Student registration will be completed through individual meeting with each family and the Family Learning Center staff.
5. Any Student Applications submitted after February 15 will be entered into a second lottery to be held no later than August 10. If there is a Waiting List, these students will be placed at the bottom of such Waiting List in the order that they were drawn from the lottery.
6. Atlantis Charter School will conduct a lottery if there are more eligible applicants than there are available spaces. The School will publicize all lottery enrollment deadlines at least one week in advance of such lottery.

After the lottery enrollment deadline passes, Atlantis Charter School will organize all Student Applications into three categories under 603 CMR 1.06(4).

- **Siblings** – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. 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 considered siblings and those who live in the same household might not be. If siblings are placed in foster homes and one of them enrolls at the 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 or town in which the charter school is located (Fall River). Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools or enrolling in schools in the district get equal preference.
- **Non-residents** – Students who live outside the city or town in which the charter school is located (Fall River). 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 finally by applicants in the “Non-Resident” category. This action will be taken without regard to the date on which the Student Application was received, as long as it was prior to the lottery enrollment deadline. Atlantis Charter School will either extend an offer of admission to all applicants within a group (“Siblings”, “Residents” or “Non-Residents”) that meet the lottery enrollment deadline or select applicants randomly using a lottery. Atlantis Charter School will not offer admission to applicants on a first come first served basis.

### **LOTTERY**

If there are more eligible applicants in any of the categories (“Siblings,” “Residents” or “Non-Residents”) than there are spaces available, Atlantis Charter School will hold a lottery to determine which applicants will receive an offer of admission 603 CMR 1.06 (3)(a). The School will have an individual who is not a staff person nor has any personal interest in the lottery; randomly draw the names of all students who submitted Student Application forms before the deadline. After the available slots are filled, the individual shall keep drawing the names of the remaining applicants in each category and place them on a Waiting List in the order they are drawn.

If the school does not reach capacity after admitting all eligible “Siblings” and “Residents,” then it may admit “Non-Resident” applicants. In this case, the school must hold a lottery, under the same rules as outlined above, to select “Non-Resident” students for the remaining spaces if there are more “Non-Resident” applicants than spaces available. 603 CMR 1.06 (4)(b).

### **WAITING LIST**

Atlantis Charter School will maintain waiting lists for “Siblings,” “Residents,” and “Non-Residents.” These lists will be maintained in the following manner:

Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: The waiting list will be active for the school year. On April 15 parents/caregivers will be mailed a Waiting List Update Form. Parents/caregivers who wish to have a child currently on the Waiting List moved to the next grade in the following year’s Waiting List, must complete and return the Waiting List Update Form by May 15.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade: The waiting list will be active only through September 30 of each school year. However, since the Board of Trustees reserves the right to open admission for new students after September 30, the waiting list will remain active for the school year. Students on this waiting list will, at the end of the school year, be moved to the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade waiting list if the parents/caregivers complete and return the Waiting List Update Form by May 15.

7<sup>th</sup> Grade: The School is not currently enrolling students into 7<sup>th</sup> Grade. However, since the Board of Trustees reserves the right to open admission for new students in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, the waiting list will remain active for the school year. Students on this list will, at the end of the school year, be moved to the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade waiting list if the parents/caregivers complete and return the Waiting List Update Form by May 15.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: The School is not currently enrolling students into 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. However, the Board of Trustees reserves the right to open admission for new students in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Atlantis Charter School must always accept “Resident” students before accepting “Non-Resident” students unless the “Non-Resident” student is also a “Sibling.”

There is one exception – if a space becomes available and the enrollment of a student from the Waiting List would cause his or her sending district to exceed the net school spending capacity; the School would skip over that but keep them on the Waiting List. If that student on the Waiting List is a sibling of a student currently enrolled at the charter school, the school may enroll that student and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will pay the tuition to the charter school, subject to state appropriations.

### **SPECIAL LOTTERY**

Atlantis Charter School may hold a second lottery under the following conditions:

A special lottery will be held in the event of the School has slots available, no students on the current Waiting List, and Student Applications have been received since the last lottery. The special lottery will be conducted following the established lottery guidelines as previously described. The School will announce the date of the lottery at least one week in advance.

### **ENROLLMENT CONFIRMATION**

Families will be notified at the lottery and by mail of their admission status (accepted or placement on the Waiting List). If a student declines an offer of admission, the school will immediately contact the next family on the Waiting List. All families will receive an enrollment packet with all the forms necessary to complete the student registration at Atlantis Charter School (such as Proof of Residency, Student Information, and Records Release Form).

If a student is selected in the lottery for the current school year (including special lotteries), the family must confirm that the student will attend the school within three calendar days.

If a student is selected in the March lottery for the following school year, the family must confirm by March 31 that the student will attend the school.

To ensure that the student is ready to enroll, the family must meet with the Family Learning Center staff during the month of April (individually scheduled appointments) to complete all registrations forms. All required documents must be completed and submitted no later than August 1.

The School will conduct an Orientation session in July and August (before the start of school) to prepare new families and student for the transition to Atlantis Charter School and to assist families with any

remaining paperwork. If a student is selected from the Waiting List and the family is notified before August 1, the family will have five calendar days to confirm enrollment. If the family is notified after August 1, the family will have three calendar days to confirm enrollment.

### **OTHER LIMITATIONS**

While Atlantis Charter School primarily accepts students in Kindergarten through Grade 6, the school may accept student to Grades 7 and 8 when the Board of Trustees deems this is necessary for the growth of the school. For a student in Grades 7 and 8 he/she must have successfully completed (or is expected to complete) the grade preceding the grade to which the student seeks admission.

All commonwealth charter schools must ensure that they do not enroll a number of students from a sending district that would cause the district to exceed the 9% capacity on new school spending. M.G.L. c. 71 (89)(i).

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to close enrollment for an academic year after September 30<sup>th</sup> of that year.