

Enrollment Process and Procedures

Overview

Atlantis Charter School, an independent public school serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 12, provides an educational choice to the families of Greater Fall River by offering a solid academic foundation to its students on which they will build a successful future. The school expects an equal partnership among parents, community, faculty, staff and students to create a safe, caring, innovative and progressive learning environment. Atlantis incorporates the best research-based practices in education to meet the needs of its student population.

Charter schools are public schools and are therefore open to all Massachusetts students on a space-available basis. This means that Atlantis Charter School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, 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 will 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 implements a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(f); CMR 603 1.05(f). Atlantis Charter School provides information about the school throughout the year to students and families throughout the local and surrounding communities. The School can provide student applications and information in any foreign language upon request. The recruitment and enrollment process is an extensive, citywide outreach effort that includes advertisement in local newspapers (both in print and online), and distribution of information to local libraries, community centers, pediatricians' offices, pre-schools, and churches.

The enrollment process at Atlantis is not integrated with that of any other school district(s) (603 CMR 1.05(11)).

All applicants will be notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend Atlantis and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. (603 CMR 1.05(4)).

Information regarding the availability of services is presented in the school's outreach materials, the student handbook, and on the school's website. (603 CMR 1.05(4)).

Atlantis Charter School does not use financial incentives to recruit students. (603 CMR 1.05(3)(a)).

Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

- a) A student must be a resident of Massachusetts to apply to enroll, and to attend a Massachusetts charter school.
- b) Parents/guardians will provide proof of residency* which includes at least two of the following documents, with the exception of homeless students:
 - Driver's License
 - Vehicle Registration
 - Utility Bill (Gas, Electric, Cable)
 - Signed Leases and Mortgage Bills
 - Property Tax Bill

**Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, homeless students have the right to apply to Atlantis Charter School and to participate in the school's lottery for enrollment without having to provide proof of residency.*
- c) ACS will invite, but NOT require potential students and/or their families to attend lotteries, tours, and informational meetings to learn more about the school. Participation in such events will NOT be used as a condition of application and/or enrollment (603 CMR 1.05(3)(a)).

- d) ACS does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any tests of ability or achievement (603 CMR 1.05(3)(a)).
- e) Students entering kindergarten must be five years of age by September 1st to attend Kindergarten. The maximum age for students attending High School is 22.

Enrollment Process

- a) Parents/guardians are required to complete an Application for Admission to start the enrollment process. Applications will be accepted for any child meeting the school's age requirements and residing in Massachusetts. Applications will be available at the school during the enrollment periods, on the school's website www.atlantiscs.org, by contacting the Family and Community Resource Center and requesting an application, and in the school's main offices.
- b) The annual enrollment period for students who are seeking enrollment at ACS will be October 1 thru February 15 and then again as needed to fill available seats through September 30th. The enrollment period will be widely advertised throughout the sending district at least one month in advance. Interested families are to contact the Family and Community Resource Center for more information and to set up school tours. Attending information sessions/tours is not required as a condition of enrollment.
- c) The 1st enrollment process will take place the 2nd Wednesday of March no later than the 15th of that month yearly for children who will be eligible to start Kindergarten the next school year as well as for children who are currently enrolled in school elsewhere.
- d) The dates of the enrollment period and the date of the application deadline will be publicized at least one month in advance.
- e) ACS will enroll new students in grades K-10, following Certified Massachusetts Regulations (603 CMR 1.06(4)(d)) requirements.
- f) Students who are offered enrollment will be contacted by phone and will then have three days to accept or decline the offer. Parents are encouraged to update their contact information by calling the school with any changes.

Upon accepting an offer of enrollment the parents/guardians will be required to provide to the school 2 proofs of current residency (except in the case of homeless students, as explained above), sibling status, birth certificate, current student health insurance card and Immunization Records required by the DPH, current report card, district-wide testing, Individual Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Accommodation Plan.

- g) Once a student is attending Atlantis, they may remain at the school even if their town of residence, within Massachusetts, changes.
- h) Once a student is attending the school, they do not need to reapply to remain a student at ACS.

Lottery Procedures

- a) ACS will determine the number of seats available each year by grade level prior to the start of the new school year. 603(CMR 1.05(6)).
- b) In cases where there are fewer spaces than eligible applicants, students shall be accepted for admissions by a lottery process (603 CMR 1.05(6)(a) and (c)).
- c) Notice of the lottery will be publicized at least one week prior to the lottery.
- d) All eligible applications received by the enrollment deadline will be sorted into three categories under 603 CMR 1.06(6):

Siblings – Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.

Residents – Students who live in the city or town in which the charter school is located (Fall River).

Non-residents – Students who live outside the city or town in which the charter school is located (Fall River) but reside in the State in which the charter school is located (Massachusetts).

- e) Three separate lotteries, for every grade, will be held at the end of each enrollment period if there are more applicants than seats available, or if there is a Waiting List at any grade level.
- f) Siblings (resident or non-resident) of students who are already in attendance at the school are given preference at the time of the lottery and at the time an offer of admission is made over non-siblings (603 CMR 1.05(6)(b)).
- g) Residents of Fall River are given second preference in the lottery and at the time an offer of admission is made. Reasonable proof of current residency may be required at the time an offer of admission is made.
- h) Non-Residents are given third preference in the lottery and at the time an offer of admission is made.
- i) Each Application for Admission will be assigned a random identification number for the lottery. The parent/guardian completing the Application will also be given a copy of the identification number for their child prior to the lottery. As each student's number is drawn, he/she will be assigned the next available opening for his/her particular grade, or placement on the appropriate Waiting List. Each of the three lotteries will establish a fair and random list of students by grade ranked in ascending numerical order according to their lottery draw.
- j) An unbiased person will draw the identification numbers by grade at a publicized, public meeting at the Atlantis Charter Middle School, 37 Park Street, MA 02721
- k) No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the wait list unless said student is either a sibling of a currently attending student at the time an offer of admission is made, or a resident of Fall River. (603 CMR 1.06(5))
- l) In cases where the enrollment of a student, who is not a sibling of another currently enrolled student, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student should be skipped over but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending a charter school would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, the sibling may be enrolled with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts providing tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation (M.G.L. Chapter 71, § 89(i)) (603 CMR 1.05(10)(b)).
- m) If the principal enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, the lottery process may be repeated if a Waiting List does not exist and the required lottery process is strictly followed, including public notification and deadlines (603 CMR 1.06(5)).
- n) As space becomes available during the school year, the enrollment process may be repeated to fill these openings and to meet the requirements.

Waiting List Procedures

- a) If a student stops attending ACS or declines admission, the next student on the Waiting List for that grade will be offered admission; this will be repeated until the vacant seat is filled.
- b) No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the wait list unless said student is either a sibling of a currently attending student at the time an offer of admission is made, or a resident of Fall River (603 CMR 1.06(5))
- c) Students on the Waiting List will be contacted by phone with any offer of admission to the school. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school with any change of contact information.
- d) Any student who is offered a seat at ACS and declines admittance, will need to reapply.
- e) Starting in March 2014, all students who are already on the school's Waiting List will remain on the Waiting List advancing one grade level yearly until their name comes to the top of their grade list and they are offered admission to

attend ACS. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact ACS once a year to update their child's information and track their child's movement on the Waiting List.

- f) All other students applying to ACS, after March 2014, must complete an Application for Admission yearly if they are not offered admission. All students who sign up for enrollment will be part of a lottery to determine their placement on the Waiting List. These students will take part in a lottery, by grade, and will then be added to the existing grade Waiting List of the students who applied before April 2014, following the sibling, resident and nonresident preferences..
- g) Students who are on the Waiting List as non-siblings and become a sibling, due to the acceptance and attendance of their brother/sister, will be given sibling status. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school if this occurs. If a student currently on the Waiting List changes his/her grade, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school.
- h) ACS will keep accurate and secure electronic and paper records of the Waiting List. The Waiting List will contain the name (first, middle, last), home address, telephone number, grade level, date of birth, and sibling status of each student who enters a lottery but does not gain admission. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school with a change in sibling status.
- i) When a student stops attending the school for any reason, the school will attempt to fill that vacant seat up to February 15th of that school year. ACS must replace any student who leaves the school in grade K-12 with a student in the same grade level, if the replacement takes place on or before February 15th. **If a student in grade K-12 leaves the school after February 15th that vacancy may be filled in the current school year or in the following school year with a new student in the subsequent (next) grade level, at the school's discretion.**
- j) If a vacancy is not filled after February 15 the opening will move into the next grade to be filled for the following school year if such grade is not grades 11, or 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission in the charter school but have never attended are exempt from this provision (603 CMR 1.05(10)(c)).

Disclosure of Student Information

Upon request, the school will provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings, unless the parent or guardian requests that the school withhold that student's information (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g,n)). Parents/guardians must provide a written denial of consent to share student information, documented on a school release form, if they wish to have their student's information withheld (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 89(g)).

Any information that is requested on the application form, such as language spoken or race/ethnicity, will not be used to discriminate and will not be used for selection purposes.