ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

Policy Number: **4000**

Purpose of Policy

This policy is in place to address the process of admissions at Shining Rock Classical Academy (SRCA). The goal of this Admissions and Enrollment Policy is to define the processes and methods that will be used to admit students in a fair and consistent manner that does not offer priority to any student except those specifically noted in charter school law N.C. G. S. 115C-218.45.

Definitions

Open Enrollment: The period leading up to the lottery where applications are accepted for the following school year's lottery. Per CHTR-003, the Open Enrollment period will be no fewer than thirty (30) consecutive days.

Post-Lottery Enrollment: The period after Open Enrollment is closed and the lottery has been completed. Student preference is made chronologically, i.e.: In order of submission.

Sibling: Children residing in the same home with a common parent. For application and enrollment purposes this shall include half siblings, step-siblings, and children residing in a family foster home, provided such individuals are legally domiciled in North Carolina.

Lottery: A random selection of applications used to determine the order for offering students enrollment and subsequent waitlist. The purpose is to ensure that all applicants are provided equal opportunity.

Parent: A person with legal custody of a child, including a parent. The term does not include a divorced parent, step-parent, relative, or other person who does not have legal custody of a child.

Diversity

SRCA is committed to enrolling a diverse student population and abides by the provisions in the North Carolina General Statutes, N.C. G. S. 115C-218.45, forbidding discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, marital status, religion, ethnicity, or disability. The school admits students of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. All eligible students who submit a timely application will be enrolled unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building. In such cases, all applicants shall have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process.

SRCA endeavors to achieve racial/ethnic balance through a comprehensive marketing and recruitment plan that reflects the community it serves (N.C. G. S. 115C-218.45).

Eligibility Requirements

Any child who is qualified under North Carolina state law for admission to any North Carolina public school is qualified for admission to a charter school (e.g., turns five by August 31 of the academic year, can prove permanent North Carolina residence ("domicile") during enrollment).

The lottery enrollment application form must be completed and submitted within the open enrollment dates. Lottery application will contain only basic details, including

a. Parents' names and contact information (address, phone, and email)
a. Student's name, birth date, and projected grade level
b. Emergency contact for enrollment acceptance (in case parents do not reply in a timely manner to lottery acceptance)

The student must not be currently under long-term suspension or expulsion (student may appeal to the charter school board for eligibility).

Admission to SRCA shall ***not*** be determined according to the local school administrative unit in which a student resides.

Open Enrollment – Spring

Open Enrollment is designed to give all interested parents an equal opportunity for their child to attend SRCA. The first and last days of Open Enrollment will be published annually.

The Open Enrollment period will be communicated to the public through a series of public announcements. During Open Enrollment, all applicants will get equal consideration regardless of date submitted. An application received at the end of Open Enrollment receives equal treatment to one received on the first day of Open Enrollment. Shining Rock will enroll all eligible students who apply by the enrollment period deadline, unless the number of applications exceeds the number of available openings. When the number of applications exceeds the available openings, SRCA will conduct a lottery.

- Students admitted before May 15 will have 10 business days from the date of the enrollment notification to accept or decline enrollment and an additional 10 business days to turn in enrollment paperwork.

- If a student is admitted after May 15 but prior to August 1, he or she will have 5 business days to accept or decline enrollment at the school and an additional 5 business days to return the enrollment paperwork.

- If a student is admitted after August 1, he or she will have 2 business days to accept or decline enrollment at the school and an additional 2 business days to return the enrollment paperwork.

- If the school does not receive enrollment confirmation and the completed paperwork in the specified time period, the Head of School may decline enrollment to the student and offer the spot to the next student on the waitlist. Due diligence, including phone calls and emails will be completed by SRCA before declining enrollment due to the failure of returning the enrollment paperwork.

- If enrollment is declined and then a parent later wishes to accept the enrollment, he or she will be asked to submit a new application and the student will be placed on the waitlist in the next available seat.

- As seats at the school become available, the parents of a student on the waitlist will be contacted via phone and email in the order in which the student's name appears on the waitlist.

Fall Open Enrollment (High School ONLY)

The purpose of Fall Open Enrollment (FOE) is to allow for students in high school grades to apply for admission to SRCA for the 2nd semester. The only grades participating in the FOE shall be grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. The timeline for the FOE shall be:

- FOE will begin and applications accepted beginning on the Monday before Thanksgiving.

- The FOE lottery shall be conducted on December 15th or the Wednesday before holiday break, whichever comes first.

- FOE will close when all slots are filled or by January 3rd.

- Newly enrolled students must be in physical attendance by the second day of the semester.

Students must meet the same academic and policy criteria for eligibility to be admitted to SRCA. No student may begin attending until an enrollment packet has been verified by SRCA admissions staff,

Early Admissions

As a North Carolina public school, SRCA is required to follow the State Standards for Early Admission to Kindergarten for students who will be five after August 31st of a given school year (Policy ID Number: GCS-J-001; Administrative Procedures Act Reference Number and Category: 16 NCAC 6E.0105). Parents who are interested in pursuing Early Admission for their child should contact the Head of School.

Enrollment Priority

SRCA will follow all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as specified in charter school law N.C. G. S. 115C-218.45.

The following groups will have enrollment priority at SRCA, in the order that follows, as space permits in each grade:

1. Children of current board members and of full-time staff of SRCA will be given lottery preference. When no slots are available or when there are more children than space available, there will be a "staff" lottery and waiting list for that grade level, which will take precedence over a sibling and regular waiting list. By statute, no more than 15% of the enrolled student body may be the children of board and staff members.

2. When no slots are available or when there are more siblings than space available, there will be a sibling lottery for that grade level which will establish order after the staff lottery and prior to the regular lottery. All multiple birth siblings for whom there are spaces available shall be admitted if the surname is drawn. If multiple birth siblings are waitlisted, they shall be listed alphabetically by middle name.

3. Siblings in different grades and enrolling at the same time shall have only one sibling name placed into the lottery. If that surname is drawn, enrollment preference is given to all the siblings when space is available. Siblings not receiving a space will be placed at the bottom of the sibling waiting list. In order to be eligible for sibling enrollment preference applications must be submitted during the open enrollment period.

4. Applications for a sibling of a current SRCA student submitted after Open Enrollment receive no sibling preference until the following school year open enrollment period.

Sibling Definition and Preference

Siblings of students, including foster siblings, currently attending SRCA are given priority for placement as spaces for the applicable grade level become available. Cousins, nieces, nephews, and unrelated children sharing an address with the applicant are not considered siblings.

Multiple Birth Siblings

If multiple birth siblings apply to the school, their surname will be entered once to represent all of the multiple birth siblings. If the multiple birth siblings are pulled in the lottery when there is still at least one spot remaining in their grade level, all multiple birth siblings shall be admitted. If their application is pulled after the spots are all filled, they will be added to the wait list in the order they are listed on their application.

Returning Students

Current students at SRCA will not be required to re-enroll. They will be asked to sign a letter of intent for the coming year prior to the lottery to allow the school to plan appropriately.

At the end of each year, any student who is not currently enrolled at SRCA must apply for the next school year.

Right to Refuse Enrollment

- SRCA reserves the right to refuse enrollment to any student currently under a term of expulsion or suspension by his or her current or prior school until the term of expulsion or suspension is over.

- SRCA reserves the right to refuse enrollment to a student if a parent provided incorrect information on the enrollment application.

- If a student has accepted enrollment at the school, but does not appear at the school in the first 2 days of school, the school will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents. If there is no response from the parent by the 3rd day of school, the school reserves the right to remove the student from their enrollment roster and offer the next student on the waitlist the spot.

- If the school does not receive enrollment confirmation and the completed paperwork in the specified time period, the Head of School may decline enrollment to the student and offer the spot to the next student on the waitlist. Due diligence will be done before declining enrollment due to failure to return the enrollment paperwork or failure to attend school on the first three days. Due diligence includes phone calls and emails, and each of these steps will be documented.

Grade Level for the Lottery Application

1. Parents will be asked to confirm both their student's current grade as well as the grade for the coming year. Parents may not choose which grade they would like their child enrolled in for the coming year; instead, they must enter the actual current grade and the next year's grade as confirmation.

2. Parents wishing to have their child considered for retention or promotion (beyond one grade level) must still submit their student for the subsequent grade level.

3. Once admitted, the Head of School and the child's teacher will evaluate the student's records regarding placement. If the student's current school recommends a student for retention or promotion beyond one grade level, and documents the recommendation in the student's file, the student will be placed in the appropriate grade at SRCA if there is available space in that grade. If there is not, the student will be placed on the waitlist.

4. If the student is on the waitlist at the time the retention or accelerated promotion decision is made, he or she will be moved to the correct grade level and placed in the class if there is available space. If not, the student will be placed in the waitlist of the new grade.

Lottery Procedures

The Board will revisit the lottery and enrollment procedures in the fall of each year to adjust according to need, at which time the student preference policies will be addressed, including any other additional policies that may be adopted (i.e. legacy and educational opportunity preferences).

The SRCA lottery will be conducted by an independent 3rd party individual, computer program, or both. The lottery will proceed in ascending order from kindergarten through to the highest grade offered. A member of the SRCA Board will observe the lottery for accuracy.

Digital links will be provided for the public to observe the lottery live as it occurs. A recording will also be available on the school website at the conclusion of the lottery. Parents do not need to be present to secure a spot through the lottery.

As students with siblings in other grades are accepted, the additional siblings will be added to their respective grades in advance of each grade's lottery provided there are slots available. If not, those siblings will be placed at the bottom of the sibling wait list, which takes precedence over the student wait list, but not the board member and staff wait list.

The lottery will produce a rank order for applications to determine the order in which applications will be admitted. Students will be offered enrollment in classes with open seats. Once a class has been filled, the lottery results will be used to determine the waitlist order. A copy of the results will be available on the SRCA website and in the main office.

Waitlisted students who receive a seat will be notified by telephone and email. Parents must ensure that the school has an accurate phone number, email, and mailing address on file.

Lottery Results

If a student has been admitted to the school, the parent of the student will be contacted via email unless he indicated on his application that he did not have access to email. If the parent is unable to receive email, a phone call will be made. Failure to confirm acceptance of the slot by the time and date specified will result in the child's application being removed.

The results and the wait list will be updated regularly to allow parents to determine their current place on the waitlist. A student's waitlist status and information will be continuously updated.

Students Applying after the Open Enrollment Period

Any students applying after the open enrollment period will be placed in their respective grade if there is still space available. Otherwise, they will be placed directly after any wait-listed students from the lottery in the order the application was received.

Addressing Errors

If any substantial mistake is made by Shining Rock in administering the lottery (or if any substantial discrepancy occurs in the lottery process as a result of the actions of Shining Rock that is not corrected during the lottery), such mistake or discrepancy may invalidate the lottery and, in such case, the lottery will be rescheduled. Parents will be notified of the rescheduled lottery date and will be invited to attend. All results from the first lottery will be null and void.

For instances in which an application has been completed incorrectly, refer to the previous Rights of Refusal section.

Appeal Process

Any parent wishing to contest or appeal the lottery process can do so by contacting the Head of School in writing within 48 hours of the completion of the lottery.

Following receipt of the parent's written appeal, the Head of School will contact the parent to discuss the nature of the concern or objection. Final decisions regarding appeals or complaints about lottery procedures should be made within 24 hours.

Audit Process

In order to maintain the integrity of the lottery, SRCA will continually audit the process to ensure that enrollment into SRCA is unrestricted, impartial, and equitable to all applicants.

Accepted Students

Once offered enrollment by the school, all parents must follow guidelines for enrollment acceptance.

1. Families must accept or decline the offer for enrollment within the previously described timeline. All enrollment information must be completed. (Refer to *Student Enrollment Procedure*).

2. Parents must complete a form providing the school permission to request records and reach out to the child's former school to gain additional information to support the student.

3. If there is no correspondence from the parent, an additional phone call and email will occur. Failure to correspond will be treated as a declining of the offer for enrollment.

Wait Lists

If an opening becomes available, SRCA will immediately contact the parents of the child whose name appears next on the waitlist.

Enrolled Students and Withdrawal

Once students are enrolled, they will not be required to complete additional enrollment forms to maintain enrollment. The school may send a form to gather information regarding intent to return to the school, but this will only be utilized to gather information for the upcoming lottery. This form will NOT dictate a student's enrollment for the next academic year.

Staff Enrollment

Children of staff members hired after the open enrollment period will be granted staff preference and placed in the grade needed if there is space. If there is a waiting list at which time the staff child will be placed at the top of the waiting list.

Closing the Enrollment Period

SRCA will provide a public announcement 5 days prior to the enrollment period ending.

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