# Vertus Charter School Admissions Policy

**Eligibility to Enroll**

All male students who reside in the state of New York are eligible to attend Vertus Charter School (Vertus). The school shall be open to any male child who is eligible under the laws of New York State for admission to a public school, and the school shall ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools. There are no financial or academic requirements for admission to Vertus.

All students must have passed the 8th grade and will be admitted to each grade based on the following criteria:

* **9th grade:** Students must be younger than 16 as of September 1 of the school year
* **10th grade:** Students must be younger than 17 as of September 1 of the school year
* **11th grade:** Students must be younger than 18 as of September 1 of the school year

Vertus will accept only 9th graders for the 2014-15 school year; 9th and 10th graders for the 2015-16 school year; 9th, 10th and 11th graders for the 2016-17 school year and thereafter, to the extent seats are available.

# Recruitment

Vertus will target first time high school students as well as students who have dropped out of high school. In order to reach this population, the school will cultivate relationships with individuals and organizations that work and communicate with at-risk young men in Rochester, including middle and high school guidance counselors; social service organizations; faith-based organizations; sports leagues and after-school programs; truancy, gang and parole officers; juvenile justice and foster care agencies; and public housing councils. Public outreach and marketing materials will explain the model and clearly indicate that Vertus is a free, public charter school open to all eligible students, including those with disabilities and English language learners. In addition, Vertus will use a website and social media to disseminate information and applications. Outreach materials will be translated into Spanish and other languages if necessary. Vertus will host information sessions in locations throughout the city and meet with families to explain the opportunities. Once Vertus has secured its facility it will also conduct open houses and invite families to tour the school.

# Applications

To apply to Vertus, it is only necessary that the school receive a completed application, including a home address (unless the family is homeless). Applications will require no more information than is necessary under NYSED guidelines and are not considered a pre-registration form. To be eligible for the lottery, applications must submitted by April 1st by families of students interested in attending the school. Applications must be hand delivered, mailed or e- mailed, and received no later than the admission period deadline listed on the form. The

school will provide via e-mail and/or return postcard confirmation of applications received by the deadline.

Vertus will adapt the uniform application form within the following allowable parameters: print the application form with the school’s letterhead and/or logo; brand the application form by including the school’s mission statement and explanatory information about the school, and request additional information. All data elements that may be required to be submitted by the applicant will be marked with asterisk and the form will include the following notation: “*\* The items marked with an asterisk (\*) are the only items that may be required in order to apply to this charter school. Any items not marked by an (\*) are optional.”*

The following statement will also be included in the application form:

***Non-Discrimination Statement:*** *A charter school shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion or ancestry. A school may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission to that school.*

# Preferences

Vertus will use the following preferences to enroll new students:

* Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will have an absolute preference.
* English Language Learners will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living in or outside the district.
* Students residing within the Rochester City School District will receive an absolute preference, i.e., will be drawn before students living outside the district.
* Dependents of current employees
* Siblings of students selected in the lottery, i.e., when a student in the lottery with sibling(s) in the lottery is drawn, that student’s sibling(s) will be added next to the list.

# Lottery

If the number of applicants is less than the school’s number of available seats, then all applicants will be enrolled in the school. If the number of applicants by April 1 exceeds the school's available seats, a random selection lottery process will be conducted on or about April

15. At least one week’s public notice will be given for the lottery, stating the number of spaces available in each grade. The lottery will be conducted by a third party that has no affiliation with the school. The lottery will be open to the public. After checking the application to ascertain the appropriate entering grade, the child’s name will be entered into the lottery. The following will also be noted for each child entered into the lottery:

* If there are siblings applying, each child’s entry into the lottery will indicate that there is a sibling also applying.
* The home language preference will be noted so that preference can be given to students that are English Language Learners.
* The place of residence will be noted so that preference can be given to students living in the city of Rochester.

The lottery will follow these steps for each grade:

1. Siblings of students already enrolled in the school will be drawn.
2. Students who are English Language Learners.
3. Students who reside within Rochester will be drawn
4. Students who reside outside of Rochester will be drawn

Once the number of students equal to the number of available seats has been drawn, the remaining applicants will be drawn and placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. After all the names have been chosen, the parents will be notified by letter. For those students who are accepted, the letter will include a list of forms that need to be provided, including proof of age, immunization and residence except in the case of homelessness (residential utility bill, documentation from local, state or federal government agency, lease agreement, property tax bill, or payroll documentation), high school transcript, and an appointment time to meet with school staff to turn over the forms. Students offered enrollment must accept the offer by providing required forms within 30 days of notification.

# Waiting List

For children not selected, the letter will indicate their number on the waiting list, and will describe the steps that will take place if a space becomes available. The school will keep accurate records of the waitlist containing the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission. If a student withdraws, the next applicant on the waiting list in that grade will be called and will be offered the space. No new students will be accepted after the beginning of the second quarter of instruction, unless the Board passes a special resolution to extend the enrollment period later in the year due to under-enrollment. Student withdrawal will be permitted upon the written request of the parent or legal guardian and proof of enrollment in another school. Following the written request of the admitting school, student records will be transferred. If a student does not return in September, the school will telephone and send the family a certified letter to determine the child’s status. When a space opens, the waiting list will then be activated to admit the next child on the same grade level. For applications received after the April 1 deadline, those students will be added to the waiting list in the order they are submitted. The waiting list will expire annually at the lottery drawing for the next school year.

# Subsequent Enrollment

After the first year, students returning to the school will be considered to be enrolled in each successive year through the completion of 12th grade. Each year, school personnel will meet with the families of all parents and guardians of currently enrolled students to discuss enrollment plans for the following school year. Parents or guardians must then submit to the school a letter of intent confirming their desire to enroll their child(ren) in the school for the following year