

3.15.115 Admissions

MEMPHIS STREET ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL AT J.P. JONES POLICY: ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS

1. Purpose

Memphis Street Academy Charter School (the “Charter School”) complies with all State and Federal laws that govern admission policies and procedures, and with the terms and conditions established by the School District of Philadelphia or its Board of Education pertaining to the school's charter (the “Charter”), pursuant to the Charter School Law, 24 Pa.C.S.A. Section 17-1701-A, et seq (the “CSL”).

2. Delegation of Responsibility

The Board of Trustees of Charter School delegates the CEO to implement and oversee the admissions process.

3. Criteria for Admission and Enrollment

3.1 Except as otherwise stated in this policy, all applicants for admission must, at the time of application and completion of the enrollment process:

- a. reside in or attend approved feeder schools in the Charter School's catchment area (the “Attendance Zone”), which may be found at:

https://webapps.philasd.org/school_finder/

OR

- b. be siblings of presently enrolled students at the Charter School as specified in section 6.3.

3.2 The Charter School only will enroll first time entering students who reside in or attend approved feeder schools in the Attendance Zone, as may be revised by the School District during the term of the Charter, and siblings of presently enrolled students at the Charter School, pursuant to the CSL and the Charter. The Charter School will not enroll any first time entering students who live outside the Attendance Zone or do not attend any approved feeder schools identified in the Attendance Zone except for siblings of presently enrolled students at the Charter School, pursuant to the CSL and the Charter.

3.3 Once a student has enrolled in the Charter School, such student may remain enrolled in the Charter School even if such student moves to a residence in the City of

Philadelphia which is outside the Attendance Zone.

3.4 The Philadelphia School Partnership Common Application through [Apply Philly Charter](#) is the exclusive means for Charter School to accept applications for admission.

3.5 All required documents described in Section 10 also must be submitted to the Charter School in order to complete the enrollment process.

3.6. Applicable Apply Philly Charter Deadlines for 2024-25 School Year:

- a. Application Window: Friday, September 22, 2023 through Monday, January 22, 2024
- b. Common Lottery Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024
- c. Common Notification Date: Friday, February 9, 2024
- d. Common Acceptance Date: Friday, February 23, 2024

3.7 Subject to any additional parameters set forth in Section 4, as long as an applicant meets the criteria for admission and submits all completed documents required for enrollment, references to "deadline" or "time period" in this policy are for planning and administrative purposes only, and do not affect any right to admission and/or enrollment under State or Federal law, the Charter School's charter or other directive of the School District of Philadelphia or its Board of Education. Admissions and enrollment at the Charter School are not based upon consideration of race, color, familial status, religious creed, ancestry, sex, national origin, handicap or disability.

3.8 MSA has sibling preference for admission, in accordance with the Charter School Law and the Charter School's charter, which is further described in this policy.

4. Additional Parameters for Admission

4.1 Annual Enrollment Growth

Charter School adheres to the annual enrollment caps contained in its charter. Under no circumstances will the Charter School enroll more students or enroll students in different grades without approval by resolution of the School District of Philadelphia or its Board of Education.

4.2 The Charter School shall fill opening seats throughout the school year. When a seat becomes available at the Charter School, the Charter School shall fill such seat based on waiting list order by grade.

4.3 All students who apply to Charter School must meet the Charter School's reasonable requirements for admission, if applicable. The CSL allows charter schools to establish "reasonable criteria" for admission and to independently develop internal policies and procedures for admission.

4.4 The Charter School will follow additional parameters for admission established by the School District of Philadelphia or its Board of Education.

5. Application

5.1 The Philadelphia School Partnership Common Application through Apply Philly Charter requires only the following:

- a. Student name, address, date of birth and/or age, gender, grade applying for, and current grade;
- b. Parent or legal guardian name, relationship to student, relationship to the Charter School for if applicable, and contact information;
- c. Sibling name(s), school and grade;
- d. Specific admissions criteria questions, if outlined in the school's charter.

5.2 Application Access

- a. The Philadelphia School Partnership Common Application for admission to Charter School is available to all individuals and organizations, through Apply Philly Charter.
- b. The application through Apply Philly Charter is available in English and multiple languages (Albanian, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), French, Khmer, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese).
- c. The primary way to access and complete the Philadelphia School Partnership Common Application is online through the Apply Philly Charter website. Application (all languages) also can be completed over the phone by calling (800) 891-3999. As per the Memorandum of Understanding with Philadelphia School Partnership, Charter School will not accept paper applications. In the event that an applicant requests to submit an Application in person, Charter School will provide reasonable accommodations, which may include: (i) providing the applicant with access to a computer to submit the common application on the Apply Philly Charter website; (ii) providing the applicant with access to a landline to call Apply Philly Charter's toll-free number; or (iii) providing an applicant with a handout outlining instructions for how to submit the application via Apply Philly Charter.

5.3 Application Process

- a. The application process involves submitting the application through Apply Philly Charter. No interview, school tour or attendance at an information session will be required.
- b. The application through Apply Philly Charter can be submitted through at least

two (2) methods including, at a minimum, completing the application online or over the phone.

- c. Availability of the application through Apply Philly Charter will be announced through at least three (3) public avenues (e.g. local newspapers, community flyers, bulletins, school websites) in all applicable languages.
- d. Completed applications from students residing in or attending approved feeder schools in the Attendance Zone, and siblings for currently enrolled students, are accepted unless more students apply to the Charter School than the number of attendance slots available in the Charter School, in which case there will be a lottery in accordance with this policy.
- e. Applicants who successfully complete and submit an application via Apply Philly Charter will receive a confirmation email of their submission. Applicants who are unable to provide an email address will receive a confirmation of their application submission via postal mail to the address recorded on their application.

6. The Lottery, Waitlist, and Notification

6.1 Included in Lottery

All applicants who successfully complete the application through Apply Philly Charter within the application window.

6.2 Exempted from Lottery

Returning students who are currently enrolled in and attending the Charter School.

6.3 Lottery Process

- a. After the close of the application window, if more applications are received than there are seats available, the Charter School will conduct on the Apply Philly Charter system a randomized lottery for grades in which seats are available, in order to determine which applicants will be offered a seat for enrollment.
- b. All applications submitted within the application window will be referred into the lottery, after confirming that the application is not a duplicate submission, and that the applicant is otherwise eligible to attend the school.
- c. The application window for enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year is September 22, 2023 through January 22, 2024. Subsequent application window will be no earlier than four weeks after notification to applicants of lottery and/or application outcomes by the Charter School through Apply Philly Charter.
- d. In addition to Apply Philly Charter notifying applicants and the general public of the application window on the Apply Philly Charter website and other media, the

Charter School will present on its publicly available website and through at least three (3) public avenues (e.g. local newspapers, community flyers, bulletins), in all applicable languages, information about the application window, date of the lottery and lottery procedures.

- e. The lottery for the 2024-2025 school year will be conducted on February 7, 2024.
- f. Priority in the lottery will be given to applicants as follows:
 - 1. First Priority: Siblings of students currently enrolled in and attending the Charter School are given preference in the lottery for available seats. A “sibling” is defined as a brother or sister, by blood, marriage or adoption, living in the same household. Sibling preference will not apply unless the sibling is a Philadelphia resident, and the currently enrolled student is in a grade lower than 8th grade with successful completion of one full year at the Charter School. Nieces, nephews, cousins or unrelated children, even if living in the same household as the applicant, are not considered to be siblings.
 - 2. Second Priority: Applicants who reside in or attend approved feeder schools within the Attendance Zone.
 - 3. There are no additional priorities for enrollment besides the aforementioned First and Second Priority.
- g. Upon application submission, each applicant is automatically assigned a random lottery number. When the lottery is run, it will take the following into account: first, the priority group an applicant falls into, and, second, the applicant’s random lottery number. Seats will first be offered to applicants who fall into the first priority group in order of lowest random lottery number to highest. The lottery will then offer seats to applicants in the second, third, etc. priority groups, as applicable, in order of random lottery number, until the number of available seats has been exhausted. Applicants who were not offered a seat through the lottery will be waitlisted in order of their priority group first, and their random lottery number second. Enrollment is not on a first come, first served basis.
- h. Applicants who were offered a seat through the lottery will be notified on February 9, 2024 via email through Apply Philly Charter. Applicants will also be able to log-in to their Apply Philly Charter accounts on February 10th to view their application results. Applicants who were offered a seat through the lottery will have until March 8, 2024 to accept their seat offer on Apply Philly Charter by clicking “accept” in their Apply Philly Charter accounts. Applicants will then be required to submit enrollment paperwork to the school by April 19, 2024 (six weeks after acceptance date) in accordance with the Charter School’s enrollment policy and charter.

- i. Applicants who are offered a seat through the lottery will be advised of enrollment procedures. Enrollment paperwork will not be collected through Apply Philly Charter.

6.4 Notification of Applicants

- a. By February 9, 2024, all applicants selected for admission through the lottery will be notified in writing of their status, via the Apply Philly Charter email system or U.S. mail, postage pre-paid, in the event that an applicant's family does not provide an email address.
- b. By February 9, 2024, all applicants who submitted applications but who were not selected for admission through the lottery will be notified of their position on the school's waitlist in writing, via the Apply Philly Charter email system or U.S. mail, postage pre-paid, in the event that an applicant's family does not provide an email address.
- c. To ensure that the Charter School can contact prospective parents/guardians, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to update the Charter School with any changes in contact information.
- d. Posting of the lottery results on Apply Philly Charter provides additional notification to applicants.

6.5 Waitlist and Student Selection for Vacancies

- a. If there are more applicants than seats available in any particular grade, then the Charter School will generate a waitlist of applicants from Philadelphia by lottery results which is maintained in the main office.
- b. Applicants will be notified of their status, i.e. accepted or waitlisted, in writing.
- c. In the event that an opening occurs in any grade until May 15th of that school year, the next eligible applicant on the waitlist for that grade will be contacted and offered a seat, and given a one week deadline to respond and/or submit enrollment documentation to confirm their seat for compliance with the enrollment process. Admission will be offered on a first come, first served basis, if a waitlist no longer exists for that grade. New waitlists are generated every year.
- d. Any applications received after the lottery date will be placed at the bottom of the waitlist in the order received.
- e. Once all registration is complete, any additional vacancies designated by School Administration will be filled in order of highest to lowest priority waitlist. If no waitlist exists, the vacancy may be filled on a first come, first served basis.
- f. The waitlist is valid for one (1) school year only, and is based on the current year

applications. If an applicant is not notified of acceptance, they must reapply for the next school year.

7. Classroom Caps

7.1 The Board and Administration have full discretion to establish the number of students admitted to each grade and the grades to which they are admitted. However, the Board and the Administration may not exceed the school's cap pursuant to the school's charter, unless authorized otherwise in writing by the School District of Philadelphia or its Board of Education. Charter School also will not request payment for more students beyond the school's cap without District approval by resolution.

7.2 When a student attempts to register at Charter School but is unable to enroll because the Charter School is at its maximum enrollment or there are school-implemented grade and space limitations, then a review of the student's placement on the waitlist and an explanation of waitlist procedures will be given to the student's parent/guardian. Additionally, a letter from Charter School -- signed by an admissions official and documenting the attempted registration, date of placement on the waitlist, and number on the waitlist -- will be given to the parent/guardian to take to the Office of Student Enrollment and Placement at the School District of Philadelphia, for securing an appropriate alternative placement.

8. Registration Requirements

8.1 A student must successfully complete the grade prior to the grade to which they had applied. If at anytime during the application, registration and/or enrollment processes, up to and including the start of the school year, the student, for whatever reason, is unable to be officially assigned to the grade to which they had applied, but instead requires a different grade (based on official school records), the student's registration in the grade applied for may be affected. Unless there is immediate space available in the student's eligible grade, should official school records show that they did not successfully complete the grade prior to the grade to which they had applied, the student will be placed on the waitlist for their eligible grade.

9. Enrollment

9.1 Submission of Documents Required to Complete Enrollment

- a. Completion of the enrollment process requires submission of proof of age, residency in the Charter School's Attendance Zone, immunizations, Parent Registration Statement (Section 1304-A Sworn Statement), and home language survey. The required enrollment documentation is described as follows:

1. Proof of the Student's Age - Acceptable documentation includes any one of the following: birth certificate; baptismal certificate or copy of the record of baptism -- notarized or duly certified and showing the date of

birth; notarized statement from the parents or other relative indicating the date of birth; a valid passport; or a prior school record indicating the date of birth.

2. Documents Establishing Residency in the Attendance Zone- Acceptable documentation includes a copy of two (2) of the following in the name of the parent or guardian:

- a. Deed of home ownership
- b. Current lease to rent
- c. Property tax bill or receipt
- d. Vehicle registration
- e. Driver's license
- f. Department of Transportation identification card
- g. Current utility bill
- h. Current credit card bill
- i. IRS statement or other wage and tax statements e.g., W2, 1040, 1099
- j. Employer pay stub
- k. Bank statement
- l. Voter registration card
- m. Welfare card
- n. Health insurance card

Charter School will rely on the information provided above as proof of residency in the Attendance Zone and the student's eligibility to enroll at The Philadelphia Charter School for Arts and Sciences. Giving knowingly false, misleading, or inaccurate information is a crime. The Philadelphia Charter School for Arts and Sciences may refer any cases it suspects are knowingly false, misleading, or inaccurate for criminal investigation and prosecution.

3. Immunizations Required by Law - Acceptable documentation includes: student's immunization record, written statement from prior school district or a medical office that the required immunizations have been administered or that a required series is being administered (red card - Pennsylvania Department of Health Medical Certificate and Medical Plan), or verbal assurances from the former school district or a medical

office that the required immunizations have been completed, with records to be sent. In order to be exempt from this requirement, a parent/guardian must submit a written statement objecting to one or more vaccines because of religious beliefs or moral or ethical conviction, or the student's physician must have signed a "Statement of Exemption to Immunization Law" form.

4. Parent Registration Statement (Section 1304-A Sworn Statement) - As required by 24 P.S. Section 13-1304-A, during the enrollment process, but prior to admission to a charter school, a parent must provide the school with a sworn statement that their student has not been suspended or expelled for an Act 26 offense involving weapons, alcohol, drugs, infliction of injury, or violence on school property.
5. Home Language Survey - All students seeking first time enrollment in a school shall be given a Home Language Survey in accordance with requirements of the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Enrollment of the student may not be delayed in order to administer the Home Language Survey.
6. Custody Order (Only if Applicable) – A copy of a Court Custody or Dependency Order shall be required only when relied upon by the student's parent or guardian as the basis for enrollment.

10. Additional Optional Documentation Requested, But Not Required, for Enrollment

10.1 Charter School may request, but not require, additional optional documents during the enrollment process including, but not limited to:

- Accepted Student Information Form
- Residency Questionnaire
- Emergency Contact Form
- Photo Permission Form
- Walking Permission Form
- Release of Student Records Form
- Military Family Form
- Picture identification
- Health or physical examination records or forms (other than Proof of Immunizations or acceptable responses required for enrollment, per Section 10.1

- Academic records (report cards or transcripts of grades)
- Standardized test records/achievement scores
- Attendance records
- Special education record (including but not limited to current IEP and most recent evaluation or reevaluation)

11. Submission of Application Required for Withdrawn Student Residing in the Attendance Zone

11.1 A parent/guardian of a student who was withdrawn from Charter School, and who is desirous of the student being re-admitted, must re-apply through the regular application process and continue to reside in the Attendance Zone when doing so. No preference is accorded to an applicant for being a previously enrolled student.

12. Parent/Guardian Responsibility for Documents for Students In Order to Complete Enrollment

12.1 Parents/guardians of incoming students must submit all required documentation by the required deadline to Charter School in order to complete the enrollment process. All enrollment materials, required and requested, can be submitted to the school in the following manner:

E-mail: mdelgado@ap-schools.org

Mail:

ATTN: Mirta Delgado, Enrollment Secretary

2950 Memphis St.

Philadelphia PA 19134

In-Person:

ATTN: Mirta Delgado, Enrollment Secretary

2950 Memphis St.

Philadelphia PA 19134

12.2 Enrollment packets will be checked for completion, including all required signatures and proof(s) of residency within the Charter School's Attendance Zone.

12.3 Parents/guardians of incoming students will be provided a minimum of four (4) weeks to submit their enrollment packets.

12.4 Failure to submit documentation required to complete enrollment specified in Section 10 may jeopardize a student's seat, which may be offered to the next student on the waitlist. As long as all documents required for enrollment in Section 10 have been submitted, however, failure to submit other documents that were requested but not

required, though included in the registration forms will not affect a student's enrollment.

13. Current Students Automatically Enrolled

13.1. MSA does not require school-wide re-enrollment paperwork for each school year. All students currently enrolled and attending MSA automatically re-enroll for the following school year.

14. Special Student Classifications for Education Entitlement

14.1 Resident Students and Court Orders or Custody Agreements - Charter School may require a parent/guardian to provide a custody or dependency order when the student is being enrolled at Charter School pursuant to the parent or guardian's reliance on a court order or custody agreement as the basis for enrollment. Charter School will not require a custody order or agreement as a condition of enrollment in any circumstances other than the circumstance specified above.

14.2 Students Living with a Resident Adult other than a Parent - When a student is living with an adult other than a parent, who is supporting the student without personal compensation (gratis), the student may attend the public schools of that adult's school district, provided that the resident submits an application and supplies the required enrollment information upon acceptance. In addition, before enrolling the student, Charter School requires the resident to file one (1) of the following:

- a. A sworn and notarized statement from the resident of Philadelphia indicating that the signer is a resident of Philadelphia, that they are supporting the student without receiving personal compensation, that the student is living with the resident continuously and not just for the school year, and that the resident will accept all responsibilities relating to the student's schooling, or
- b. Appropriate legal documentation to show dependency or guardianship, which may include a custody order. Charter School may require other information to be submitted by the resident to substantiate the sworn statement. The natural parent(s) or former guardian(s) of the student may not be required to provide information. Once the requested information is provided, Charter School will enroll the student and permit them to begin to attend school without delay, but in no case more than 5 days, provided that space exists pursuant to the school's Admission Policy.

A resident's receipt of payments, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), pre-adoptive or adoptive support, maintenance on public or private health insurance, support from the military or military personnel or other payments for or on account of the student such as student support, will not be considered to be personal compensation or gain.

14.3 Foster Students - With respect to admissions, enrollment and provision of education and related services, Charter School will follow the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act and the Every Student Succeeds Act. Charter School will work collaboratively with the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) to promote educational stability for students in foster care, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding and Educational Stability Protocol and Transportation Plan.

14.4 Nonresident Students Living in Facilities or Institutions - A student who is living in a district in which there is located a licensed shelter, group home, maternity home, residence, facility, orphanage or other institution for the care or training of students or adolescents, shall be admitted to that district's schools if living at or assigned to the facility or institution. If the school district or residence of a student living at or assigned to a facility or institution cannot be determined, but the student is determined to be a resident of the Commonwealth, the student shall be permitted to attend the public schools of the district. This includes a student placed by the student's resident parents or guardians at a facility or institution and subsequently abandoned or deserted.

14.5 Emancipated Minors - An emancipated minor is a student under the age of 21 who has established a domicile apart from the continued control and support of parents or guardians or who is living with a spouse. The school district in which such student is living is their resident school district and the student may enroll at Charter School without any additional assistance from an adult.

14.6 Homeless Students - Charter School will ensure that each student of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other students and youth. Homeless students may reside in shelters, hotels, motels, cars, tents or be temporarily doubled-up with a resident family because of lack of housing. In the case of homeless students, traditional concepts of "residence" and "domicile" do not apply. Homeless students and homeless youth lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Included within the definition of homeless students and youth are those who are "awaiting foster care placement" and "unaccompanied homeless youth."

Unaccompanied homeless youth may enroll without documents and without the help of an adult. Unaccompanied homeless youth includes any student who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." Within this definition are students who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, or been abandoned or separated from their parents or guardians. Youth awaiting foster care placement include those who are placed in emergency, interim or respite foster care; kinship care; evaluation or diagnostic centers or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation. When necessary, School Administration will consult with the respective county students and youth agencies to determine if a student meets the definition of "awaiting foster care placement", including, on a case-by-case basis, whether a student who does not clearly fall into one of these categories is nevertheless a student "awaiting foster care placement."

Homeless youth are entitled to immediate enrollments, if a space exists pursuant to the Admission Policy and their families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment. These students are considered residents of the district where they are presently residing, or continue their education in the district of prior attendance.

14.7 Pre-Adoptive and Adoptive Students - The Federal Adoption Assistance Program, among other things, provides for adoption assistance payments to encourage the placement of certain hard-to-place students with adoptive parents. Pennsylvania has adopted companion legislation, known as the Adoption Opportunities Act. Students living with pre-adoptive parents who are receiving adoption assistance subsidies, pre-adoptive foster payments, or other payments such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are entitled to attend school in the school district in which the pre-adoptive parents reside. Regardless of receipt of any of the above payments, students living in pre-adoptive situations are considered residents of the school district in which their pre-adoptive parents reside. Students living with adoptive parents are entitled to all free school privileges according to resident school students of the respective school district.

14.8 School-Age Students of Military Personnel - When Pennsylvania residents who are military personnel are deployed and their school age students are living with relatives or family friends in a school district for that period of time, the students are entitled to attend school in the school district in which they are residing.

15. Parent/Guardian Involvement and New Parent/Guardian Orientation

15.1 New Parent/Guardian Orientation – Charter School will host an orientation for new parents/guardians of all enrollees.

15.2 Parent/Guardian Involvement – Charter School recognizes the importance of parent/guardian and volunteer involvement in helping to improve the success of students. At the New Parent/Guardian Orientation, Charter School will outline guidelines for parent/guardian involvement and volunteer responsibilities to Charter School.

16. Accountability and Transparency

16.1 The Charter School's Admission and Enrollment policies and procedures, and date of lottery if necessary, will be submitted to the Charter School Office via Epicenter annually.

16.2 The Admissions policy and open house information are made available on the school's website and/or at the school's main office.

17. Affirmation of Commitment to Equal Opportunity in Education and Equal Access of All Eligible Applicants to x.

17.1 Charter School affirms its commitment to the principle of equal opportunity in education. No student applying for or enrolled in the School will be denied opportunity for education or be subject to discrimination in any program or activity because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability.

17.2 Charter School thus will not deny enrollment or admission on any basis otherwise illegal for a school district. Accordingly, no student who has been admitted to Charter School when not otherwise eligible will be allowed to remain on the rolls of Charter School, in order to ensure equal access of all eligible applicants to Charter School.

17.3 Charter School will remove from its rolls any student whose residency information given to the school, for the purpose of enrollment, is determined to be false, in accordance with 24 P.S. Section 13-1302. Charter School also will seek prosecution and remedies as provided by this statute.

17.4 Charter School will remove from its rolls any student for whom, for the purpose of enrollment, false or misleading information has been provided pertaining to suspension or expulsion for an Act 26 violation. Such a student has no entitlement to continued enrollment or reinstatement at their prior school district, but may be legally excluded from its rolls. Accordingly, Charter School also will remove the student from its rolls, consistent with student's legal exclusion from their prior school district. Moreover, Charter School will seek prosecution as provided by 24 P.S. Section 13-1304-A(b) and 18 Pa.C.S.A. Section 4904.

NOTE: Knowing falsification of any legally required information that enabled a student to be successfully admitted through the lottery process and/or other documents required for enrollment including, but not limited to, proof of residency, will void the enrollment. It is the intent of Charter School to pursue prosecution of person(s) providing such false information to the fullest extent of the law in accordance with the Public School Code, 24 P.S. Section 1302(a), as follows:

- **Immediate removal from school after notice and an opportunity to appeal;**
- **A criminal penalty of a fine of up to \$300 and/or up to 240 hours of community service; and**
- **Any individuals involved in filing the false statement will be liable for tuition during the period of enrollment.**