



**Policy: Enrollment of Students**

<b>Purpose</b>	The Board of Trustees of Montessori Regional Charter School (“MRCS”) understands the importance of establishing fair and equitable criteria for student enrollment and shall fully abide with the Pennsylvania Charter School Law regarding admission policies and procedures, non-discrimination, as well as all other applicable state and federal provisions.
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b><u>District of Residence</u></b> shall be defined as the school district in which a student’s parent/legal guardian resides. When parents reside in different school districts due to separation, divorce, or other reason, the child may attend school in the district of the parent with whom the child lives for a majority of the time, unless a court order or court-approved custody agreement specifies otherwise. If the parents have joint custody and the child’s time is evenly divided between the parents, the parents may choose which of the two school districts the child will attend for the school year.</p> <p><b><u>Parent/Guardian</u></b> shall be defined as in 34 CFR 300.30 and also includes individuals appointed as foster parents under 55 Pa. Code §3700.4</p> <p><b><u>Sibling</u></b> shall be defined as a child related to a current student by blood or adoption living in the same household who shares a legal tie to at least one common parent. MRCS may request documentation to verify sibling status.</p>
<b>Mission</b>	The mission of Montessori Regional Charter School is to provide a superior Montessori program of study that will develop lifelong learners. Our children will be prepared academically, emotionally and socially by creating a love of learning through meaningful and fulfilling educational experiences. Our guiding principles are: to encourage independence and self-reliance; to honor, respect and value individual differences; a commitment to multiage, multi-ability, and multicultural classroom environments; to provide safe, prepared environments, filled with developmentally appropriate, tactile materials; to maintain a highly qualified staff and administration; recognize parents’ roll in our educational process and to be a resource for our community as a center for Montessori training, observation, and awareness.
<b>Authority</b>	The MRCS Board of Trustees shall enroll school age students eligible to attend Montessori Regional Charter School in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, Board policy and enrollment administrative policies as set forth below.
<b>Entitlement to Education</b>	<p>MRCS is open to any child residing in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as outlined in our Charter, in the following order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children of founding families of the Charter</li> <li>2. Siblings of children enrolled at the school</li> <li>3. Children residing in the Erie and Millcreek School Districts (chartering districts)</li> <li>4. All other children residing in Pennsylvania</li> </ol> <p>Every child of school age who is a resident of Pennsylvania is entitled to a public school education. Resident students include those residing with their parent(s) and non-resident students living with a Pennsylvania school district resident who is supporting the child gratis and seeking</p>

	<p>enrollment. Once the required enrollment documentation described below is provided, MRCS must enroll non-resident children and permit them to attend school. A child should be permitted to attend school on the next school day after the day on which the child is presented for enrollment, and in all cases within five business days of MRCS receipt of the required documents, if a space exists pursuant to the school’s enrollment/lottery policy.</p> <p>Parents of returning students and their siblings wishing to enroll in the following school year must fill out and submit a Re-Enrollment Commitment form by the established deadline. Enrollment is not guaranteed for students whose parents do not submit the Re-Enrollment Commitment form by the deadline. Reasonable attempts will be made by MRCS to secure the documentation for all returning students. If a student withdraws from school before enrollment is offered to a sibling, then the sibling preference is revoked.</p> <p>Students withdrawing from the school may be readmitted on the same basis as a new student enrolling for the first time and will be subject to the same conditions as a new student.</p>
<p><b>General Enrollment Policies</b></p> <p><b>Lottery Deadline</b></p> <p><b>Required Enrollment Documentation</b></p>	<p>The MRCS CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations in accordance with applicable law and regulations and the MRCS Charter for the enrollment of eligible students to Montessori Regional Charter School.</p> <p>Before the start of an open enrollment period, MRCS CEO or designee and administration shall set a lottery deadline to enroll an eligible student whose parents or legal guardians submit a timely Pre-Enrollment Form by the lottery deadline, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a grade level. In such cases, a random lottery will be conducted.</p> <p>Once the lottery is completed and parents or guardians of newly admitted students are chosen for a seat and accept the seat, they are notified in writing that they must complete and submit the required enrollment documentation to secure the student’s seat and formally enroll the student at Montessori Regional Charter School according to a deadline set by the administration. If the deadline is not met, the offer of enrollment is rescinded.</p> <p>A waiting list will be set for each grade level after the lottery, and any openings will be filled from this waiting list. The initial wait list will be established according to the results of the lottery and any applications received after the lottery deadline will be placed at the end of the waiting list on a first-come/first-served basis. If there is no waiting list and there is space in a grade level, then the student will be enrolled once the required enrollment documentation is received.</p> <p>Except when a child is homeless, whenever a child of school age is presented for enrollment by a parent, a Pennsylvania school district resident, or any other person having charge or care of the child, Charter School shall require that the following information be documented before enrolling the child and allowing the child to attend school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Charter School Enrollment Notification Form</b> A PDE 2008 enrollment form must be completed, signed and dated.</li> <li>2. <b>Proof of The Child's Age</b> Any one of the following constitutes acceptable documentation: birth certificate; notarized copy of birth certificate; baptismal certificate; copy of the record of baptism – notarized or duly certified and showing the date of birth; notarized statement from the parents or another relative indicating the date of birth; a valid passport; a prior school record indicating the date of birth.</li> </ol>

**Documents and items which may be Requested, but not as a Condition of Enrollment**

**3. Immunizations**

Acceptable documentation includes: either the child’s immunization record, a written statement from the former school district or from a medical office that the required immunizations have been administered, or that a required series is in progress, or verbal assurances from the former school district or a medical office that the required immunizations have been completed, with records to follow. Alternately, the parent may provide a written statement from a physician or the physician’s designee that immunization may be detrimental to the health of the child or a written statement from the parent, guardian, or emancipated child objecting to immunization on religious grounds or on the basis of a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief.

**4. Proof of Residency**

Acceptable documentation includes: a deed, a lease, current utility bill, current credit card bill, property tax bill, vehicle registration, driver’s license, or Department of Transportation identification card. While more than one form of residency confirmation may be required, Charter School should be flexible in verifying residency, and should consider what information is reasonable in light of the family’s situation. See the paragraph on Homeless Students for guidance in that situation. (Also see attached Residency Affidavit.)

**5. Parent Registration Statement (Grades 1-6)**

A sworn statement attesting to whether the student has been or is suspended or expelled for offenses involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, infliction of injury or violence on school property must be provided for a student to be admitted to any school entity. Charter School may not deny or delay a child’s school enrollment based on the information contained in a disciplinary record or sworn statement. However, Charter School may wait to enroll a student until a current period of expulsion has expired.

**6. Home Language Survey**

All students seeking first time enrollment in a school shall be given a home language survey in according with requirements of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Enrollment of the student may not be delayed in order to administer the Home Language Survey.

Although MRCS may ask for any of the information below, MRCS may not require it as a condition of enrolling or admitting a child and a child’s enrollment or attendance may not be delayed until these documents are provided. Among the documents that Charter School may request are:

- picture identification,
- health or physical examination records,
- academic records,
- attendance records,
- Individualized Education Program, and
- other special education records.
- MRCS may not require that a physical examination be conducted as a condition of enrollment.

**• Registration Form**

A registration form, filled out by families for student enrollment, may include the following: name, address, telephone number, name of parent(s) or guardian(s) or resident



- **Students Living with a Resident Adult other than a Parent**

When a child is living with an adult other than a parent, who is supporting the child without personal compensation, (gratis) the child may attend the public schools of that adult's school district, provided that resident makes application and supplies the required enrollment information noted in the section entitled Required Enrollment Documentation. In addition, before accepting the child as a student, MRCS shall require the resident to file only one of the following:

1. **A sworn and notarized statement** from the resident of the school district indicating that the signer is a resident of the school district, is supporting the child without receiving personal compensation, that the child is living with the resident continuously and not just for the school year, and that the resident will accept all responsibilities relating to the child's schooling (See Attachment B for a model statement), or

2. **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 child and permit him or her to begin to attend school without delay, but in no case more than 5 days, if a space exists pursuant to the school's Admission/Lottery 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 child such as child support, shall not be deemed to be personal compensation or gain.

- **Foster Children** While the Public School Code provisions governing nonresident children placed in foster care are not applicable to charter schools pursuant to the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, the Charter School will use such Public School Code provisions for guidance in such situations in conjunction with consultation with the Charter School's legal counsel.

- **Nonresident Children Living in Facilities or Institutions**

A child 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 children 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 child living at or assigned to a facility or institution cannot be determined, but the child is determined to be a resident of the Commonwealth, the child shall be permitted to attend the public schools of the district. This includes a child placed by the child's resident parents or guardians at a facility or institution and subsequently abandoned or deserted.

- **Homeless Students**

Charter School will ensure that each child 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 children 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 children and youth lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Included within the definition of homeless children and youth are those who are "awaiting foster care placement" and

	<p>“unaccompanied homeless youth.” Unaccompanied homeless youth may enroll without documents and without the help of an adult. Unaccompanied homeless youth includes any child who is “not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” Falling 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, Charter School administration will consult with the respective county children and youth agencies to determine if a child meets the definition of “awaiting foster care placement”, including, on a case-by-case basis, whether a child who does not clearly fall into one of these categories is nevertheless a child "awaiting foster care placement." Homeless youth are entitled to immediate enrollments, if a space exists pursuant to the Admissions/Lottery 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. (See Homeless Policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pre-Adoptive and Adoptive Students</b> The Federal Adoption Assistance Program, among other things, provides for adoption assistance payments to encourage the placement of certain hard-to-place children with adoptive parents. Pennsylvania has adopted companion legislation, known as the Adoption Opportunities Act. Children 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. Notwithstanding receipt of any of the above payments, children living in pre-adoptive situations are considered residents of the school district in which their pre-adoptive parents reside. Children living with adoptive parents are entitled to all free school privileges accorded to resident school children of the respective school district.</li> <li>• <b>School-Age Children of Military Personnel</b> When Pennsylvania residents who are military personnel are deployed and their school age children 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Issues Related to Enrollment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)</b> Some families may enroll a student using an ACP card which lists a post office box as their address. This is their legal address and school districts shall not require additional information about their residence. School records from the student’s former school will be forwarded through the ACP. If there are questions about the family’s eligibility for enrollment, MRCS CEO or designee shall contact the ACP at 1-800-563-6399</li> <li>• <b>Age</b> Children applying for Kindergarten must meet their home school district age requirement.  Children are considered school age from the time they are admitted to the public school educational program until graduation from high school or the age of 21 if identified pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004. Charter School will not refuse admission to a child who meets the age requirement.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children and Families with Limited English Proficiency</b> Children and families with limited English proficiency will be provided translation and interpretation services to the extent needed to help the family understand the enrollment process and enroll the student in school promptly per applicable federal law.</li> <li>• <b>Twins and Multiple Siblings</b> Twins or higher order multiple siblings are to be enrolled in the same manner as all other students. The School Code provides for parental discretion in the classroom placement of twins or higher order multiples. A parent or guardian of twins or higher order multiples who attend the same grade level at the same school may request that the children be placed in the same classroom or separate classrooms. The parent or guardian must make the request no later than ten days after the beginning of the school year or ten days after the first day of the student’s attendance, if the students are enrolled after the school year commences. The school district may recommend classroom placement to the parents and provide professional education advice to the parents to assist them in making the best decisions for their children’s education. The school district shall provide the classroom placement requested, unless, after consultation with the school district superintendent or designee, the principal determines that alternative placement is necessary. The law affords the parents the opportunity to appeal that denial. A school district is not required to place twins or higher order multiples in separate classrooms if the request would require the school district to add an additional class to the grade level of the siblings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Submitting Enrollment Complaints to the Department of Education</b></p>	<p>When a dispute arises regarding enrollment of a student, the person attempting to enroll the child or Charter School may bring the dispute to the attention of the Department’s School Services Unit. A complaint may be filed by mail, email or by phone with written follow up. After receipt of a complaint, a Department representative will contact Charter School, family or other involved parties to determine the facts, whether the child is entitled to enrollment at Charter School and to try to resolve the problem. These contacts, whenever possible, will occur within five (5) days of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is not amicably resolved, a written determination will be made and sent to Charter School and the individual who filed the complaint. If Charter School does not enroll the student within five (5) school days after receiving the written determination and space exists pursuant to the school’s Admissions/Lottery Policy, the Department will issue a letter to Charter School requesting its position on the situation. Charter School will have five (5) school days to respond to the request. If Charter School refuses to enroll the student or does not respond, the matter will be forwarded to the Department’s Office of Chief Counsel (OCC). The OCC and the Deputy Secretary for Elementary/Secondary Education will determine if Charter School’s response is valid to deny enrollment. If not, the Deputy Secretary will determine what additional measures may be necessary to assure enrollment.</p>
<p><b>Admission Policy</b></p>	<p>MRCS shall not deny enrollment or discriminate in admission policies or practices on the basis of a child’s disability or the child’s need for special education or supplementary aids or services.</p> <p>MRCS shall not discriminate in admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual ability.</p>

**TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.**

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary