

## ***Rising Tide Charter Public School***

### **Enrollment Policy**

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#### **General Policy Statements**

The Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) is a grades 5-12 public charter school whose enrollment policies and procedures are consistent with the Massachusetts Charter School Statute (MGL, ch.71, sec. 89), and the Charter School Regulations (603 CMR 1.00). As a public school, Rising Tide is open to all students who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In admitting students, Rising Tide does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, 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.

Rising Tide accepts applications for grades 5-11 for the upcoming school year. The primary entry point for the school is in grade 5. If spaces become available in grades 5-8 during the school year, the school will attempt to fill the vacant spaces up to February 15. If spaces become available in grades 9-11 during the school year, the school will attempt to fill the vacant spaces at the start of the school year. Whenever there is an opening in grades 9-11 after the start of the school year, Rising Tide will only fill the position with a student from the waitlist taking into consideration the following: overall school enrollment, ideal cohort size, academic programming, staffing, and/or financial considerations. When spaces become available after the lottery process, students are admitted according to their placement on the waiting list. The school's application process is not integrated with any other school district. Rising Tide will not admit students in excess of the school's approved maximum enrollment of 700 students. The total number of students attending the school in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students reported in the school's pre-enrollment submission to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5).

Residents of the following towns are included in Rising Tide's region and are given preference for admission over non-residents: Barnstable, Bourne, Carver, Duxbury, Falmouth, Halifax, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mashpee, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Sandwich, and Wareham. Students must be residents of one of the above towns at the time an offer of admission is made to receive preference. Rising Tide does not provide transportation to all residents of its charter region; the Town of Plymouth does provide transportation to Plymouth residents who attend Rising Tide.

All applicants are notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs in attending Rising Tide and receiving accommodations and support services, including students

who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. Information about the availability of services is shared on the school's website, in the student handbook, on outreach materials, and at information Open House sessions for the school.

The school designates the following personally identifiable information as Directory Information that can legally be made public: Student Name, Parent/Guardian Name, Home Address, E-mail Address, Home Telephone Number, Student Date and Place of Birth, Student Grade Level Designation (e.g., grade five), Dates of Attendance, Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities and Sports, Student Achievement Awards or Honors, Student Photograph, Most Recent Previous School Attended by Student Before Attending Rising Tide Charter Public School, and Post-High School Plans (e.g., the name of the college or university the child will be attending).

Parents/guardians or eligible students may elect to opt-out of the school's disclosing Directory Information. Unless written refusal to allow the use of Directory Information is provided to the school, Rising Tide Charter Public School will assume it has permission to disclose Directory Information without prior written consent for the following reasons:

- Sharing a student's name, address, and household phone number in a family directory to be shared only with Rising Tide families
- Providing the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house if requested by the sending district from which a student is enrolled, in conformance with M.G.L. c. 71, s. 89g
- Sharing the student's name, address, and phone numbers with military recruiters, as required for public schools in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as well as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002
- Sharing the parent/guardian contact information with the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association to enable the association to keep families informed of state issues that could impact charter public schools

The school asks parents/guardians to complete an opt-out form each year; however, a parent/guardian or eligible student may modify any permission for the disclosure of Directory Information in writing at any point during the year.

Rising Tide has developed a recruitment and retention plan that is implemented each year. Rising Tide does not charge an application fee for admission or use financial incentives to recruit students. The following policies and procedures have been created and developed by the Rising Tide Charter Public School Administration and Board of Trustees.

### **Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment**

1. Applicants are required to be residents of Massachusetts to apply, to enroll, and to attend Rising Tide Charter Public School. Applicants will be required to submit proof of residency by submitting a copy of a current utility bill or signed lease along with the Student Registration Form after an offer of admission is made. The school will work with applicants who may be homeless on a case-to-case basis to prove or establish that the child resides in the region in order for the applicant to receive preference for

admission based on their temporary or current residence. Enrollment eligibility for homeless applicants will not be affected by inability to submit a utility bill or signed lease.

2. The age ceiling for students enrolled at Rising Tide is twenty-three.
3. Applicants and their families are not required to attend informational sessions. While Rising Tide encourages families to learn about the school, attendance at an interview or an informational Open House session is not a condition for application, admission, or attendance.
4. Rising Tide does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate acceptance for admission on results from any test of ability or achievement.

### **Application Process**

Each autumn, Rising Tide opens the application process for the following school year. Information about the school and the application process is shared with potential applicants and their families through the school website, informational Open House sessions, weekly school tours, outreach presentations, newspaper articles, advertisements, and direct mailings. Potential applicants and their families are encouraged, but not required, to attend an informational Open House session. Upon request, school leaders are available to answer questions from potential applicants and their families.

### *Initial Application*

Through the application process, an enrollment application is available to any potential applicant on the school website and in the school office. Potential applicants must complete and submit an enrollment application before the application deadline in order to be considered for enrollment. All information provided in an enrollment application is not intended and will not be used to discriminate against an applicant. The enrollment application requires the signature of only one parent/guardian, unless court order indicates otherwise for an individual applicant. The enrollment application does not require submission of the student's social security number.

1. Public notice of all application deadlines will be given at least one month in advance.
2. The principal application deadline will be set no earlier than January 1 for the upcoming school year; the principal application process will conclude by March 15 for the upcoming school year.
3. Enrollment applications submitted after the application deadline for the principal enrollment period will not be included in the principal enrollment lottery. If a subsequent enrollment period is scheduled, late applications for the principal enrollment period may be included in the subsequent process.

### *Lottery Procedures*

If there are more eligible applicants than available spaces for students for the upcoming school year, an annual enrollment lottery is held at the end of the application process. The date for the enrollment lottery is publicized on the annual school calendar and the school

website, as well as through public notice to the community. The enrollment lottery procedures are as follows:

1. Rising Tide determines the number of available spaces in each grade level prior to the annual enrollment lottery, based on the school's capacity and the estimated number of returning students.
2. Public notice of the enrollment lottery date will be given at least one week in advance.
3. A lottery card is created for each applicant for the lottery's drawing process.
4. The enrollment lottery is held at the Rising Tide Charter Public School, located at 59 Armstrong Road, Plymouth MA.
5. The lottery is conducted manually in a public forum in which a neutral party will draw lottery cards. Lottery cards are organized by grade level and entered into one pool. All the lottery cards are drawn from that pool and an initial random rank order is created. After the rank order is created, then preferences for admission are applied to students at the time an offer of admission is made. Preferences are given first to siblings and then residents of the towns indicated in Rising Tide's charter.
  - a. Siblings (resident or non-resident) of students who currently attend Rising Tide at the time an offer of admission is made receive preference for admission over non-sibling students; siblings are students who have a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Siblings of alumni/ae are not given preference. Siblings of applicants who have been accepted for admission, but are not yet attending (including twins), are not given preference.
  - b. Residents of the towns indicated in Rising Tide's charter receive a preference for admission over non-resident students. The following towns are indicated in Rising Tide's charter: Barnstable, Bourne, Carver, Duxbury, Falmouth, Halifax, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mashpee, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Sandwich, and Wareham. Reasonable proof of current residence is required at the time an offer of admission is made, as described in the *Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment* section of this policy.
  - c. Students who are residents of Massachusetts but are not residents of any of the towns listed above are considered non-residents and are not siblings of current students at the time an offer of admission is made receive no preference for admission.
6. Students for whom an offer of admission at Rising Tide would cause the sending district to exceed their district's charter tuition cap may not be offered admission, but will be placed on the waiting list.
7. For those students to whom the above policy applies but who are also siblings of students currently in attendance at the school, and the school has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be offered admission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation.

8. All applicants entered in an enrollment lottery will have their enrollment card drawn in the lottery, and the names on the card will be publicly read. Parents/Guardians may opt out of having their child's name publicly read; in cases where parents/guardians have opted out, an applicant number, known to the parents/guardians in advance of the lottery, will be read from the enrollment card.
9. Applicants will be granted admission to Rising Tide in the order their lottery cards are drawn and after preferences for admission are applied until the available spaces for a grade are filled.
10. Once the available spaces for a grade are filled, the remaining applicants are placed on each grade's waiting list in the order their lottery cards are drawn, while also taking into consideration preference for admission.
11. If the principal application process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students for any grade level, the lottery process may be repeated as necessary for any grade level with available spaces; in such cases, the above procedures, including public notification of deadlines, will be followed. The school must exhaust the initial waitlist for a grade level prior to holding additional lotteries.
12. As spaces become available during the school year, Rising Tide may repeat the enrollment process to fill these openings and to meet the requirements of G.L. c. 70, § 89(n). 603 CMR 1.05(8). The school must exhaust the initial waitlist prior to holding additional lotteries.

### **Notification and Enrollment**

Within a week after the enrollment lottery, students who gain admission through the lottery process will be notified by telephone of their admission. A letter will be sent to the family of each admitted student, along with a Registration Form and a Family Agreement. Admitted students/families must accept or reject an offer of admission within a certain amount of time, dependent upon when the offer of admission is made. Admitted students/families have two weeks to accept or reject an offer of admission made in the spring after the principal enrollment lottery, one week for offers made in the summer, and three days for offers made during the current school year.

A student is considered enrolled at Rising Tide Charter Public School if an offer of admission is made and an acceptance is received in the form of the Student Registration Form and reasonable proof of sibling or resident status, if the student received preference for admission. A student who has received an offer of admission must begin to attend school within ten school days of their anticipated start date, e.g., the first day of the school year. In accordance with Rising Tide's attendance policies, if a student does not attend within ten school days of the anticipated start date, Rising Tide will attempt to reach the family to ascertain the reason behind not attending. After ten days, with no information from the family, the student will be considered withdrawn.

In accordance with the Student Handbook, a student's grade level cohort placement is based upon the academic record of the student with consideration to the Rising Tide academic

program. Once a child has enrolled at Rising Tide, the school will work with the applicant and the family/guardian to determine the appropriate grade level placement.

In accordance with the withdrawal section of Rising Tide's attendance policy, a student is considered to decline an offer for admission by any of the following criteria: by notifying the school in writing to decline the offer; by failing to return the Student Registration Form and reasonable proof of sibling or resident status within the established timeline set forth above, i.e., two weeks, one week, or three days from the date of notification of admission; by failing to attend within ten school days as outlined in the paragraph above; or by completing a withdrawal form after submitting the Student Registration Form.

Any student who declines an offer for admission, or withdraws from the school at any time, must re-enter a future application process in order to be eligible again for enrollment.

Information requested in the Registration Form assists the school in supporting each student and fulfilling state and federal reporting requirements for the school. None of the information requested is intended and will not be used to discriminate against a student or a student's family.

Each child's Student Record is protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and is kept in strict confidence by school staff. The student record consists of the transcript and the temporary record. Personal information about a student will not be shared with anyone other than the faculty and staff members whose access is necessary in the performance of their responsibilities at Rising Tide Charter Public School. Student Records will not be shared with any third party without written consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student; however, FERPA allows schools to disclose information from a Student Record under the following provisions:

- To comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena
- To comply with a request from state and local authorities within the juvenile justice system
- To communicate with appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- To comply with requests from federal, state, and local officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- To communicate with staff members of another school to which a student intends to transfer

### **Waiting List Policy**

When Rising Tide receives more applicants than available spaces for students, students will be placed on each grade's waiting list in the order their lottery cards are drawn, while also taking into consideration preferences for admission. Within a week after the enrollment lottery, students who are placed on the waiting list will be notified by letter of their placement on the waiting list. The waiting list is not static and is subject to change based on the changes to preferences that may occur over time for certain applicants.

1. If a space becomes available, for any reason, the next available student on the waiting list for that grade, taking into account preferences for admission, will be offered admission until the available space is filled.
2. No student will be admitted ahead of any other eligible student on the waiting list, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05 (10) (b). It is the responsibility of the family to notify the school when they move both in and out of the school's region and provide proof of new residence at the time an offer of admission is made, as described in the *Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment* section of this policy.
3. When a student gains sibling status, for example, when an older sibling begins attending the school, proof of sibling status will be required at the time an offer of admission is made.
4. Any student, who is not a sibling of a currently enrolled student, for whom enrollment at Rising Tide would cause the sending district to exceed their district's charter tuition cap, will be skipped but kept on the waiting list.
5. Any student, who is a sibling of a currently enrolled student, for whom enrollment at Rising Tide would cause the sending district to exceed their district's charter tuition cap, and the school has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be offered admission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation.
6. Students offered admission from the waiting list will be notified by telephone and email that a space has become available. If the offer of admission is accepted, a letter will be sent to the family of the admitted student along with a Registration Form.
7. Admitted students/families must accept or reject an offer of admission within the deadlines for response based upon when the offer of admission is made set forth in the *Notification and Enrollment* section of this policy.
8. Any student who declines an offer for admission must reenter a future application process in order to be eligible again for enrollment.
9. When a student in grades 5-8 has withdrawn from the school for any reason during the school year, the school will attempt to fill available spaces up to February 15. Any vacancy in grades 5-8 not filled after February 15 moves into the subsequent grade level to be filled for the following school year. The school will attempt to fill available spaces for grades 9-11 at the start of each school year. Whenever there is an opening in grades 9-11 after the start of the school year, Rising Tide will only fill the position with a student from the waitlist taking into consideration the following: overall school enrollment, ideal cohort size, academic programming, staffing, and/or financial considerations. New students will not be offered admission in grade 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission at Rising Tide, but have never attended, are exempt from backfilling.
10. On February 16, the existing waiting list for the current school year for any grade level will be purged. Those students on the waiting list who entered the lottery but have not yet been offered admission must re-enter a future application process to be eligible again for enrollment.

11. Rising Tide will maintain accurate records of its waiting list. Information for students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission must include, but is not limited to, students' names (first, middle, last); dates of birth; cities or towns of residence; grade levels; home addresses; and telephone numbers. In conformance with M.G.L., c. 71, s. 89n, the school will share the waiting list records with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.