

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

## **Enrollment Policy**

### **Introduction**

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, 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 enrolls new students for the start of the year in grades 5-11, but the primary entry point for the school is in grade 5. If spaces become available during the school year in grades 5-8, the school will attempt to fill the vacant spaces up to February 15. When spaces become available after the lottery process, students are admitted according to their placement on the waiting list. The enrollment process is not integrated with any other school district.

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 of application to get 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, the student handbook, and at information Open House sessions for the school.

Rising Tide has developed a recruitment and retention plan that is implemented each year. Rising Tide does not 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, with exceptions made in cases of homelessness.

2. The age ceiling for students enrolled at Rising Tide is twenty-three.
3. Rising Tide requires that applicants successfully complete the grade level preceding the grade level to which they apply.
4. 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 or enrollment.
5. Rising Tide does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement.

### **Enrollment Process**

Each autumn, Rising Tide opens the enrollment process for the following school year. Information about the school and the enrollment 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. Public notice of all application deadlines will be given at least one month in advance.

### *Initial Application*

Through the enrollment 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 by the end date of the enrollment process 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.

### *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 enrollment 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. The principal application deadline will be set no earlier than January 1 for the upcoming school year; the principal enrollment process will conclude by March 15 for the upcoming school year.

3. The deadline for accepting enrollment applications is two days before the enrollment lottery date. Public notice of the enrollment lottery date will be given at least one week in advance.
4. A lottery card is created for each applicant for the lottery's drawing process.
5. The enrollment lottery is held at the Rising Tide Charter Public School Middle School building, located at 6 Resnik Road, Plymouth MA.
6. The lottery is conducted manually in a public forum in which a neutral party will draw lottery cards.
7. Lottery cards are organized by grade level and then placed in three pools for each grade level, listed in order of preference for admission: sibling, resident and non-resident.
  - a. Siblings (resident or non-resident) of students who currently attend Rising Tide at the time of application have 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 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 of application to get preference.
  - c. Students are residents of Massachusetts but are not residents of any of the towns listed above are considered non-residents and are drawn in the third applicant pool.
8. Students for whom enrollment at Rising Tide would cause the sending district to exceed the 9% tuition cap may not be offered admission, but will be placed on the waiting list.
9. For those students to whom the above policy applies but who are also siblings of students currently in attendance at the school, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation.
10. 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.
11. Applicants will be granted admission to Rising Tide in the order their lottery cards are drawn until the available spaces for a grade are filled.
12. Once the available spaces for a grade are filled, the remaining applicants are placed on the appropriate waiting list for each pool (sibling, resident, non-resident) in the order the lottery cards are drawn.
13. If the principal enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, the lottery process may be repeated as necessary, including

during the school year; in such cases, the above procedures, including public notification of deadlines, will be followed.

14. Enrollment applications submitted after the deadline for the enrollment period will not be included in the enrollment lottery. If a subsequent enrollment period has been scheduled, late applications may be included in the subsequent process.

### *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 two weeks of the date of notification of admission.

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.

A student is considered to decline an offer for admission by notifying the school in writing to decline the offer, by failing to return the Student Registration Form within two weeks of the date of notification of admission, or 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 reenter a future enrollment 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

The school designates the following personally identifiable information as Directory Information that can legally be made public: Student Name, Parent/Guardian Name, Student Address, Student Date of Birth, Student Grade Level Designation (e.g. 5th grade, 9th grade), Student Extra-Curricular Participation, Student Achievement Awards or Honors, Student Photograph, and School or District Attended by Student Before Attending Rising Tide Charter Public School.

Parents/guardians or eligible students may elect to opt-out of the school 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 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.

Students who have gained admission through the lottery process and have been home schooled prior to attending Rising Tide will be asked to submit examples of grade level work to enable proper placement.

### **Waiting List Policy**

When Rising Tide receives more applicants than available spaces for students, students will be placed on the appropriate waiting list for each pool (sibling, resident, non-resident) in the order the lottery cards are drawn through the lottery process. Within a week after the enrollment lottery, students who are placed on the waiting list in any of the pools will be notified by letter of their placement on the waiting list. The waiting list procedures are as follows:

1. If a space becomes available because another student has declined an offer of admission to Rising Tide, or if another student has withdrawn from Rising Tide, the next available student on the waiting list for that grade will be offered admission until the available space is filled, taking into account the sibling and resident preference. The place in the school will be filled from the sibling pool first, the resident pool second, and the non-resident pool third. No student will be admitted ahead of any other eligible student on the waiting list within the

appropriate waiting list pools, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05 (10) (b). If a family claims a change in enrollment preference status to the resident pool, the family will be required to submit proof of residency by submitting a copy of a current utility bill or signed lease. If a family claims a change in enrollment preference status to the sibling pool, reasonable proof of sibling status is required.

2. 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 the 9% tuition cap, will be skipped but kept on the waiting list.
3. Any student, who is a sibling of a currently enrolled student, for whom enrollment at Rising Tide would cause the sending district to exceed the 9% tuition cap, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will provide tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation.
4. 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.
5. Admitted students/families must accept or reject an offer of admission within two weeks of notification of admission.
6. Any student who declines an offer for admission must reenter a future enrollment process in order to be eligible again for enrollment.
7. 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, 10 and 11 at the start of each school year. 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 refilling.
8. On February 16, the existing waiting list for the current school year, for each grade level and waiting list pool, will be purged. Applicants on the waiting list who have not yet been offered admission must reenter a future enrollment process to be eligible again for enrollment.
9. Rising Tide will maintain accurate records of its waiting list, containing students' names, dates of birth, cities or towns of residence, and grade levels of students who entered the lottery, but did not gain admission. 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.