

Davidson Charter Academy Admission and Enrollment Policy

Purpose:

This policy is in place to address the process for handling admissions at Davidson Charter Academy (DCA). The goal of this admissions policy is to declare the process and methods that will be used to admit students in a fair and consistent way that does not offer priority to any student except those specifically noted in North Carolina law.

DCA is a nonprofit, tuition-free charter school authorized by the state of North Carolina. As a charter school, DCA will be open to all students who would otherwise qualify for enrollment in North Carolina Public Schools. The school will not discriminate against any student based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability. The open enrollment period to submit applications for the lottery will begin in December. The open enrollment period will end in February. If needed, the lottery will occur within one week of the end of open enrollment. The lottery date, time and location will be published on the school's website by January 5th of each year.

No criteria for admission will be used except the completed application. The application may be completed online through our website, www.davidsoncharter.org, unless a family is unable to access the site. In this case, we will provide a paper application to parents when requested. The application will include the student's name, parent/guardian name, current address of student, phone number of parent/guardian, email of parent/guardian, county of residence, current grade level, student's date of birth, the name of any siblings already enrolled at the school, the name of any parent who works full-time at the school, and a declaration of the student's residence in the state of North Carolina.

Grade Level for the Lottery Application

Parents may not choose which grade they would like their child enrolled in for the coming year; they must enter the student's actual current grade and the student will be entered into the lottery for the next grade level. Parents wishing to have their child considered for retention must still submit their student for the subsequent grade level. If the student's current school recommends a student for retention and has it documented in the student's file, the student will be moved to the appropriate grade if they have been admitted to school and will retain enrollment status. If the student is on the wait list at the time the retention decision is made, they will be moved to the correct grade level and placed on the wait list of their new grade based on the number they were pulled during the lottery.

Returning Students

Current students at DCA will not be required to enter the lottery. They will be asked to sign a non-binding letter of intent for the coming year during the month of January to allow the school to plan appropriately for the lottery. Returning students will complete re-enrollment forms in the spring to update information.

Enrollment Priority

DCA will follow all rules and regulations regarding enrollment priority as required by applicable North Carolina law. The following groups will have enrollment priority at DCA in the order that follows, as space permits in each grade:

1. Children of full-time employees (may not exceed 15% of total school population)

2. Siblings of currently enrolled students who were admitted to DCA in a previous year. For the purposes of this section, the term "siblings" includes any of the following who reside in the same household: half-siblings, stepsiblings, and children residing in a family foster home.
3. Siblings of students who have completed the highest grade level offered by DCA and who were enrolled in at least four grade levels offered by the charter school.

Bundled Policy for Siblings

All children in a family are "bundled" together under one unique lottery registration number. If one child is admitted, all siblings bundled on the registration form will be eligible for placement in their respective grade level immediately, if there is an opening. In the event one or more spaces are not available, siblings applying for full grades will be placed on the general wait list for the respective grade level.

Multiple Birth Siblings

If multiple birth siblings apply to the school, they will be "bundled" together under one unique lottery registration number. If the multiple birth siblings are pulled in the lottery when there is still at least one spot remaining in their grade level, all multiple birth siblings shall be admitted. If their application is pulled after the spots are all filled, they will be added to the wait list under a bundled registration.

Lottery Results

If a student has been admitted to the school, the parent/guardian of the student will be contacted via email by our lottery system immediately following the lottery. Parents of students placed on the wait list will receive communication via email as to their student's place on the wait list.

Students Applying after the Open Enrollment Period

Any students applying after the open enrollment period will be placed in their respective grade if there is still space available. Otherwise, they will be placed directly after any wait-listed students from the lottery in the order the applications were received.

Enrollment

- Students admitted on or before May 15 will have 7 calendar days from the date their acceptance email is sent to accept or decline enrollment and 30 days from the time of the acceptance email to turn in enrollment paperwork.
- If a student is admitted after May 15, they will have 5 days to accept or decline enrollment at the school and 10 days to return the enrollment paperwork.
- If a student is admitted after July 15, they will have 48 hours to accept or decline enrollment at the school and 5 days to return the enrollment paperwork.

If the school does not receive enrollment confirmation and the paperwork back in the specified time period, the Director may decline enrollment to the student and offer the spot to the next student on the wait list. If enrollment is declined and then a parent later decides they would like to send their student after all, they will be asked to submit a new application and they will be placed on the wait list in the next available spot.

School's Right to Refuse Enrollment

- DCA reserves the right to refuse to enroll any student currently under a term of expulsion or suspension by his or her school until that term is over.
- DCA reserves the right to refuse to enroll a student if a parent willingly and knowingly provided incorrect information on the enrollment application.
- If a parent has accepted enrollment for their student at DCA but the student does not appear at the school in the first 2 days of school, the school will make reasonable attempts to contact the parents. If there is no response from the parent by the 3rd day of school, the school reserves the right to remove the student from their enrollment roster and offer the next student on the wait list the spot.

Handling of Errors

- If a student name is duplicated in the lottery and DCA administration determines that the student was intentionally registered more than one time, the student will be assigned the lowest priority placement number assigned to the student in the lottery.
- If an applicant has been incorrectly placed in a grade because a parent wishes to have their student retained, the applicant will not be admitted and may submit a corrected application, which will be subject to the process followed for students applying after the enrollment period.

Early Entry to Kindergarten Process

The North Carolina General Assembly passed BH-1099, allowing early admission to Kindergarten of a child who has reached his/her fourth birthday by April 16th if the child demonstrates extraordinary academic ability and maturity. The State of North Carolina has created standards for the principal to use in determining if a child is appropriate for early entrance to kindergarten. Once the principal receives the minimum requirements the principal shall confer with a committee of professional educators to consider for each child various standards that will indicate readiness.

Standards established by the state of North Carolina are described as follows:

- **Student Aptitude**- The child shall score at the 98th percentile on a standard individual test of intelligence such as the *Stanford-Binet*, *The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence*, *the Kaufman Anderson*, or any other comparable tests, that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist.*
- **Achievement**- The child shall score at the 98th percentile on either Reading or Mathematics on a standard test such as the *Metropolitan Readiness Test*, *the Stanford Early School Achievement test*, *the Mini Battery of Achievement*, *the Woodcock-Johnson*, *the Test of Early Mathematics (TEMA)*, *the Test of Early Reading Ability (TERA)* or any other comparable tests that shall be administered by a licensed psychologist.*
- **Performance**- The child shall be able to perform tasks well above same-age peers as evidenced by behaviors in one or more areas such as independent reading, problem-solving skills, advanced vocabulary, and some writing fluency. The parent shall submit a sample of the child's work that shows outstanding examples of ability in any area including, but not limited to, art, mathematics, writing, dramatic play, creative productions, science, or social interactions.

- **Observable Student Behavior/Student Interest-** The child shall demonstrate social and developmental maturity sufficient to participate in a structured setting for a full school day. The child shall be capable of following verbal instructions and functioning independently within a group. The parent shall provide two recommendation letters (from non-family members) with specific documentation of physical and social maturity from preschool teachers, childcare workers, pediatricians, or others who have direct knowledge of the child.
- **Motivation/Student Interest-** The principal or principal's designee shall conduct an informal interview with the child and a more structured interview to determine if the child displays a thirst for knowledge and seeks new and challenging learning situations.

***Parents are responsible for arranging and paying for these tests. DCA cannot provide a recommendation for a psychologist. It is recommended parents/guardians obtain recommendations from the child's pediatrician or family physician.**

Parents wishing to have their children considered must submit the above information by **July 1st** of the school's instructional year prior to the year of enrollment. All testing should be administered after the April 16th that follows the child's fourth birthday. The Director shall decide whether to grant the parent's request for enrollment within three weeks of receiving this information. The Director may conditionally enroll the child for up to ninety days to observe whether the child is able to adjust to the school setting. If the Director determines that the child has not adjusted to the school setting, the Director shall deny the request for enrollment. However, before the child is exited from school, the Director shall invite the parent to assist in the development of intervention strategies for the child. If those strategies are not successful, the Director shall provide the parents at least 10 days' notice before exiting the child from school so the parent may arrange childcare, if needed.