

WESTERN SIERRA CHARTER SCHOOLS

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

I. Introduction

The goal of the admissions policy of Western Sierra Charter Schools (hereinafter “Schools”) is to attract, enroll and retain children of parents (or guardians) who are seeking to be their child’s primary educator. This is sometimes called homeschooling, independent study, home-based education, or non-classroom-based education. Whatever the term, the fundamental matter is the primacy of the parent’s role and responsibility in the education of their child. The Schools will be nonsectarian in their programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations. The Schools will not charge tuition and the Schools will not discriminate in admissions or outreach against any pupil on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, or any other legally protected category pursuant to Education Code Section 220, including immigration status.

II. Admission and Requirements for Admission

The Schools are open to any student in the State of California who meets the admissions requirements described herein. If the number of pupils who wish to attend the School exceeds the school’s capacity, attendance (except for existing pupils of the charter school) shall be determined by a public random drawing, the process for which is described below.

The School shall admit all pupils who wish to attend the School. No test or assessment shall be administered to students prior to acceptance and enrollment into the School. The School will comply with all laws establishing minimum and maximum age for public school attendance in charter schools. In accordance with Education Code Sections 49011 and 47605(e)(2)(B)(iv), admission preferences shall not require mandatory parental volunteer hours as a criterion for admission or continued enrollment.

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(A), the School shall not discourage a pupil from enrolling or seeking to enroll in the charter school for any reason, including, but not limited to, academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), including pupils with disabilities, academically low-achieving pupils, English learners, neglected or delinquent pupils, homeless pupils, or pupils who are economically disadvantaged, as determined by eligibility for any free or reduced-price meal program, foster youth, or pupils based on nationality, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Similarly, in accordance with Section 47605(e)(4)(C), the School shall not encourage a pupil currently attending the School to disenroll from the School or transfer to another school for any reason, including, but not limited to the academic performance of the pupil or because the pupil exhibits any of the characteristics described in Education Code Section 47605(e)(2)(B)(iii), as listed above.

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(D), the School shall post a notice developed by the CDE on the Charter School website, outlining the requirements of Section 47605(e)(4), and make this notice available to parents.

Admission Eligibility and Requirements

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the Schools, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

WESTERN SIERRA CHARTER SCHOOLS

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

- All students must have successfully completed their education through the grade level prior to the grade in which they are seeking to enroll.
- All students must have been fully immunized and present the appropriate health examination record in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code.
- All Transitional Kindergarten students must be age 5 between September 2 and December 2 of the current school year.
- All Kindergarten students must be age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which he/she seeks enrollment.
- No student may concurrently attend a private school that charges the student's family for tuition.
- All students and their parents or guardians must read, agree to and sign the Schools' Master Independent Study Agreement.
- All students shall be documented as residents of the county the school is authorized in or an adjacent county.

In order to ensure that all students will be placed appropriately and benefit fully from the education program, the following documentation and procedures are required to complete registration and finalize student enrollment. Failure to comply with any of these procedures may result in denial of admission. An admitted student may be involuntarily withdrawn from the School if failure to comply with these procedures is discovered after admission has been granted.

- The Charter School shall require students who wish to attend the Charter School to complete an application form. After admission, students will be required to submit an enrollment packet, which shall include the following:
 - Completion of a student enrollment form
 - Proof of Immunizations
 - Home Language Survey
 - Completion of Emergency Medical Information Form
 - Proof of minimum age requirements
 - Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meal
 - Release of records¹
 - As applicable, current expulsion order
 - As applicable, prior evaluation by any previously-attended school as to whether remaining in independent study is in the best interest of the student pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(b).
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¹ In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(e)(4)(B), the School shall not request a pupil's records or require a parent, guardian, or pupil to submit the pupil's records to the School before enrollment.

WESTERN SIERRA CHARTER SCHOOLS

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

- Parents/guardians/caregivers shall attend an information meeting or its equivalent. At the Schools' discretion this meeting may be by phone.

The School shall follow any required procedures for the transfer of a program between SELPAs.

Upon a determination that a student selected in the lottery is under a current expulsion order from another local educational agency, registration of the student shall be strictly conditioned upon the requirements of Education Code Section 48915.2 and 48918. Upon a determination that a student selected in the lottery has been the subject of an evaluation pursuant to Education Code Section 51747(b), as to whether it is in the best interests of the student to remain in independent study, the Charter School will review the written records of the findings in the Student Record. If the Charter School or another local educational agency has determined that it is not in the best interest of the pupil to remain in independent study, registration will cease. The model of education within the Charter School is independent study and if independent study is not appropriate for an enrolling student, in accordance with Education Code Section 51746(b)(1), registration will not be in the student's best interest.

III. Preferences

Following the open enrollment period each year, applications shall be counted to determine whether any grade level has received more applications than availability. In the event that this happens, the Charter School will hold a public random drawing (or "lottery") to determine admission for the impacted grade level, with the exception of existing students, who are guaranteed admission in the following school year.:

- Children of staff and governing board members;
- Siblings of students admitted to or attending the School;
- Pupils matriculating from one WSCS school to another;
- Students residing within the boundaries of the authorizing district.

IV. Enrollment Process and Guidelines

There will be an open enrollment period each year, which will be advertised within the school community so that all interested students may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission. The deadline for accepting applications will be clearly stated.

The process for enrollment proceeds as follows, (not necessarily in the exact order provided):

- The Schools will determine class size/configuration for the school year;
- The Schools will solicit from current students and or their parents/guardians their intention to return the following year;
- The Schools will solicit from parents/guardians of current students their intention to apply for admission for siblings of current students;
- The Schools will host Information Open House Meeting(s) and record attendance;

WESTERN SIERRA CHARTER SCHOOLS

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

- The Schools will schedule school tours;
- The Schools will establish and hold an open enrollment period so that all interested students may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission;
- The Schools will determine the number of returning students at each level;
- The Schools will determine the number of new students at each level;
- After the students in the preferred categories are placed, the remaining students will be placed pursuant to a random public drawing;
- The Schools will hold a random public drawing, if necessary (See WSCS Public Random Drawing Policy);
- The Schools will notify the families of the applicants who are drawn accepted as well as those who were not drawn and thereby not accepted;
- Non-accepted families will be placed on the waitlist in the order in which the students are drawn from the random public drawing.

Once on the ranked, lottery wait list, a student will remain in that position until he/she is offered a spot in the school or expresses no further interest. If families from the wait list are offered a position, they must accept that position within 48 hours or if they decline or fail to respond within 48 hours they will be removed from the wait list.

Adopted: 1/20/2010

Amended: 5/16/23