**Neighborhood House Charter School**

# Admissions/Enrollment Policy

Last updated: January 2016

**Introduction**

Neighborhood House Charter School (NHCS) is chartered to serve students in grades K1-12. NHCS has been a K1-8 in the past and is currently expanding by adding one high school grade per year, starting fall 2017 with grade 9. NHCS will accept applications, and backfill vacancies, for all grades in existence during the applicable year, with the exception of grade 12 for which we will not accept applications or backfill vacancies. NHCS 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 a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. Any and all information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is not intended and will not be used to discriminate. All applicants will be notified in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend NHCS and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. Information regarding the availability of services is presented in the family handbook and on the NHCS website.

The school will develop and implement a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in G.L c. 71, § 89(f) and CMR 603 1.05(1). The school does not charge an application fee or use financial incentives to recruit students. NHCS’ enrollment process is not integrated with the Boston Public School District or with the other Commonwealth charter schools using the Boston Charter School Application online application system. The total number of students attending a charter school in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students in the school’s pre-enrollment report submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5) and the total number of students specified in the growth plan in the school’s charter.

**Eligibility**

Applicants must be residents of Massachusetts to apply for enrollment, and to attend NHCS. Applicants for grade K1 must be no younger than 4 years of age by September 1 of the year they begin attendance. For entry to K2, students must be no younger than 5 years of age by September 1. The maximum age for students at NHCS who have not yet obtained a high school diploma is age 21, and applicants must be no older than age 21 by September 1 of the year they begin attendance. NHCS does not require potential students or their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of application or enrollment. NHCS does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement. NHCS may administer diagnostic or placement tests after a student is admitted to determine which grade placement is most appropriate for the student; this diagnostic assessment will not impact student enrollment.

**Applications**

The application for admission is primarily made available online through the SchoolMint website and can be accessed via a link from the NHCS website. Interested families and students will be able to access the online application by typing in the URL directly (bostoncharterschools.schoolmint.net), or at www.thenhcs.org/enroll. Eligible applicants will be able to choose NHCS and/or a number of other Commonwealth Charter Schools to whom to send their application. The application for admission will also be available in physical copies in NHCS’ main offices, in public meeting places, and at Boston Public Schools Welcome Centers (locations can be found at: http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/page/6539). Physical applications should be mailed via USPS or hand-delivered to NHCS or to any of the schools participating in Boston’s Common Application. Applications will not be accepted by fax or email. The application, both online and in hard copy, will be available in multiple languages to reflect the major language groups in Boston.

NHCS will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1, and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15 of each year. The school will give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines. NHCS does not accept late applications submitted after the deadline.

NHCS will not disclose student information unless permitted by law. As required by law, NHCS will provide the names and addresses of students to the Boston Public Schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, any other schools and school systems in which the student has previously been enrolled, any governmental departments, health, or social service providers, or other offices whose activities bear directly on the programs or services with which the student is provided at NHCS. Also as required by law, NHCS will provide student names and addresses to a third party mail house for mailings unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child’s information. Furthermore, NHCS may provide all allowable directory information (including student names and addresses) under 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) to third parties unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child’s information. Parents wishing to request that their child’s information be withheld may indicate their request in the application process or follow the process outlined in the family handbook.

In accordance with the Massachusetts State Records Retention Schedule, Section H2, admissions and registrations records will be kept for three years for applicants who do not ultimately enroll. Applicants may request a copy before the documents are destroyed.

**Lottery Process**

NHCS will determine the number of student seats that are open for new applicants to enroll each year by grade level. In cases where there are fewer seats than eligible applicants, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process. There will be one lottery for all applicants. All applicants will receive a random number based on the order in which their name was selected through the lottery. Preferences will then be applied to determine the applicant’s ranking, as described below, and offers will be made. Applicants who do not receive an offer will be added to a waitlist (see section entitled “Waitlist” below). Reasonable public notice is given at least one week prior to each enrollment lottery. The principal lotteries are conducted at the NHCS dining hall at 21 Queen St. in Dorchester after the application deadline of February 28 at 11:59 pm Eastern time, and before March 15, and are open to the public. Lotteries for all grades are conducted electronically and a neutral party will certify that the process is fair and that selection is random.

If the principal enrollment process fails to fill the available admission spaces, or if spaces become available during the school year and there are no students on the waitlist, NHCS may repeat the process more than once. Such repeated process will be fair and open and the school will give reasonable public notice at least one month prior to the application deadline and at least one week prior to the lottery. No student may be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist for the applicable school year, except in cases where enrollment preferences change or as described in 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b).

**Offers**

Within five business days after any lottery is complete, NHCS will notify students of an offer of admission through telephone and email provided that both of these were included on the submitted application. If an offer is made:

* From March 15 until July 15: The offer must be accepted by telephone, email, or in person within 14 calendar days.
* From July 16 until the last day of the summer holiday: The offer must be accepted by telephone, email, or in person by 3:00 pm on the sixth business day.
* From the first day of school until the last day of school: The offer must be accepted by telephone, email or in person by 3:00 pm on the third business day.

If a family does not accept the offer within the applicable timeline, the family will be considered to have declined the offer.

**Preferences**

NHCS will adjust applicants’ ranking at the time an offer of admission is made, either after the lottery or off the waitlist, based on the following preferences:

* Applicants who are siblings of other students actively enrolled at NHCS at the time an offer is made will receive preference over all applicants who do **not** have siblings at NHCS. No other preferences are applied to sibling applicants. Their lottery number is then used to determine the order in which multiple sibling applicants in a given grade receive offers.
* For students who do not have siblings enrolled at the time an offer is made, those who are residents of Boston at the time of the offer receive a preference over those who are not residents of Boston. Their lottery number is then used to determine the order in which multiple Boston-resident applicants in a given grade receive offers.

If an applicant receives an offer based upon one of the above preferences, they must provide reasonable proof of sibling status and/or reasonable proof of residency when they accept the offer (i.e. during the registration process). If the applicant cannot provide reasonable proof during the registration process, the offer will be revoked and the applicant will be placed back on the waitlist with a new rank based on the initial lottery number with the *updated* preference applied.

By law, siblings are defined as students who have a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. Reasonable proof of sibling status includes but is not limited to: birth certificates from both siblings, a paternity order from a court, or proof of a legal adoption.

Reasonable proof of residency includes, but is not limited to:

* A Utility Bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days;
* A Deed, Mortgage Payment dated within the past 60 days, or Property Tax Bill dated within the last year;
* A current Lease, Section 8 Agreement, or Landlord Affidavit;
* A W2 form dated within the year or a Payroll Stub dated within the past 60 days;
* A Bank or Credit Card Statement dated within the past 60 days;
* A Letter from an Approved Government Agency\* dated within the past 60 days

 ***\****Approved government agencies:Departments of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead.

Homeless students are eligible to apply. In order to receive preference for admission based on residency, applications from students who may be homeless will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Waitlist**

NHCS shall place the names of students who submitted applications but did not receive offers of enrollment via the lottery on a waitlist in the order the names were selected (or ranked electronically). NHCS will take into consideration preference for admission when making offers of admission to students off of the waitlist. The preferences that apply to a particular applicant on the waitlist may change over time and will always be reviewed when an offer of admission is made from the waitlist. In order to ensure that preferences are accurately applied, applicants should be sure to call the school at (617) 825-0703 or email info@thenhcs.org any time their contact information changes.

NHCS backfills all grades except 12 through the end of the school year. That is, if a student leaves NHCS at any point during the school year, and provided that NHCS accepts applications in that grade, the student’s place in that grade is immediately offered to the next applicant on the waitlist subject to the preferences above, until the vacant seat is filled. If the waitlisted applicant does not accept the offer, the applicant is taken off the waitlist, and the next applicant on the waitlist is offered the available place. Applicants who decline offers would need to re-apply in order to seek admission.

Students on the waitlist will be informed of an offer of admission via telephone and email (provided both were included on the completed application). Refer to the section entitled “Offers” above for the timeframes in which applicant must accept offers. The school will make a reasonable attempt to reach the applicant in case the phone number is disconnected or the email address does not work, but this will not postpone the initial deadline to accept the offer. Failure to respond to the offer will be considered a decline of the offer.

Waitlists are maintained only for the year in which the student applies for admission. Candidates need to reapply for admission each year. That is, even if a student is currently on a waitlist for the present school year, the student must submit another application for the next grade for the upcoming school year in order to be considered again for admission. Students who withdraw will need to re-apply if they would like to seek re-admission. In cases where offering admission to an applicant, who is not a sibling of another student who is currently attending NHCS, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student should be skipped but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending NHCS would exceed the district charter school tuition cap, and NHCS 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. G.L. c. 71, § 89(i); 603 CMR 1.05(10)(b).

NHCS will keep accurate records of its waitlist containing students’ names (first, middle, last), dates of birth, cities or towns of residence, and grade levels for students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission.

**No-Shows**

Applicants who have accepted an offer must begin attending school based on their agreed-upon start date. In accordance with the school’s attendance policy, NHCS will contact the parent/guardian to investigate the cause if a student is absent for three consecutive days. If NHCS is unable to reach the family despite making reasonable attempts, NHCS will dis-enroll a student after 10 consecutive absences. If NHCS successfully reaches the family, NHCS will follow the attendance policy and work with the family to improve the student’s attendance, but will dis-enroll a student who has never attended the school after 10 consecutive absences.

**Growth Plan**

NHCS plans to grow its enrollment as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| K1 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| K2 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 1st | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 2nd | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 |
| 3rd | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| 4th | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 |
| 5th | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| 6th | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| 7th | 44 | 66 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 |
| 8th | 44 | 60 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 72 |
| 9th |  | 60 | 66 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| 10th |  |  | 66 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| 11th |  |  |  | 66 | 78 | 78 |
| 12th |  |  |  |  | 60 | 70  |
|  | **468** | **566** | **656** | **746** | **818** | **828** |

The above figures are projections and are subject to enrollment management based on natural fluctuations in enrollment (i.e., retentions). As reflected in the numbers above, NHCS will add one high school grade each year starting with grade 9 in fall 2017. Major entry points will be at K1 and grade 5 and minor entry points will be at grades 3, 7, and 9. NHCS will backfill vacancies in all grades K1-11 that exist in a given year.

The total number of students attending Neighborhood House Charter School in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students in the school’s pre-enrollment report submitted to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5) and the total number of students specified in the growth plan preceding.

***TEXT and QUESTIONS on COMMON APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LOCATION** | **CONTENT/QUESTION** | **RESPONSE TYPE** |
| Custom Message: Landing Page | Eligibility: Prospective charter school students must be residents of Massachusetts. Siblings of a student currently enrolled in a charter school have preference for admission to that specific charter school. The word “sibling” refers to persons who have a common parent, either biological or legally through adoption. Residents of Boston have preference for admission to Boston charter schools; residents of Chelsea receive preference for seats at Excel Academy Charter Schools (East Boston) and Brooke Charter School (East Boston campus). Proof of residency must be presented at the time an offer of admission is made. If a school receives false residency information, the application will be deemed invalid. Proof of residency may include a W2 form, a lease, or a utility bill. Applicant information will be kept confidential. | N/A |
| Custom Message: Landing Page | For entry to K1, prospective students must be age 4 on or before September 1, 2016.For entry to K2, students must be age 5 on or before September 1, 2016.Boston charter schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, homelessness, special needs, English language proficiency or foreign language proficiency, athletic ability or prior academic achievement.Boston families also have additional charter school choices beyond the schools included on this list. For more information, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions (with embedded link) section of this website. | N/A |
| Custom Message: Landing Page | The Common Application you are using will allow you to apply for multiple children to several charter schools (if you choose) at once; please follow the prompts, below, to establish your family’s account and to select schools appropriate for your child’s entering grade. | N/A |
| Custom Message: Landing Page | Note to applicants: Please make sure that all information provided is correct, including your email address. | N/A |
| Add Parent/Guardian informationScreenshot: https://monosnap.com/file/u4HNwcgZTsjASzvLtdtK7nuhLJYSaE | Info collected: Relationship to students, first name, last name, home address, mobile/home/work phone number, email address, contact preference | Reference screenshot in column A |
| Student InformationScreenshot:https://monosnap.com/file/wxDhqTWxANCIGMv3wkXRyEvmF3PETj | Info collected: First name, middle name, last name, birthdate, address information (this student does/does not live with one or both of the account's guardians) | Reference screenshot in column A |
| Application Form | Does applicant have a sibling currently attending a charter school?If yes, which school? (drop down with BCA participating school names)Sibling #1 (name, grade)Sibling #2 (name, grade)Sibling #3 (name, grade)Sibling #4 (name, grade) | - Yes/No- Dropdown with school names- First, middle, last name and grade fields for up to four siblings |
| Application Form: Mandatory | Consent to receive student information: In the event that my student has the opportunity to be enrolled in a Boston charter school, I hereby authorize that school to share and/or request any and all records, data, or information determined to be relevant to the education of my student: with the Boston Public Schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, any other schools and school systems in which my student has previously been enrolled, any governmental departments, health or social service providers, or other offices whose activities bear directly on the programs or services with which my student is provided at the receiving charter school. | - Checkbox- I acknowledge the above statement. |
| Application Form: Mandatory | Non-Consent to use student’s name in lottery resultsI DO NOT authorize any of the Boston charter schools to use my child’s name in the lottery results (full names are publically announced during the lottery drawing and first name and last initial are posted either to the school’s website or to a central location within the school). | - Checkbox- If you check this box your child will be identified using only the ID number emailed to you after receipt of your application |
| Application Form: Mandatory | Non-Consent to disclosure of student informationI DO NOT authorize any of the Boston charter schools to provide the name and address of my child to a third-party mail house. | - Checkbox- If you check this box we will withhold your child’s name if/when we provide student information to a third-party mail house for mailings. |
| Application Form: Mandatory | Non-Consent to disclosure of student information I do not authorize any of the Boston charter schools to provide all allowable directory information (including student names and addresses) under 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) with the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, or other schools or organizations. | - Checkbox- If you check this box we will withhold your child’s name if/when we provide student information to a third-party, such as the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, for communication |