



## ADMISSIONS & LOTTERY POLICY

Mountain City Public Montessori is a tuition-free public charter school. Any child who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to Mountain City Public Montessori. To qualify to attend a North Carolina public school, a student must be a resident of North Carolina. County boundaries or school attendance areas do not affect charter school enrollment.

Mountain City Public Montessori does not limit admission to students on any basis including intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry. The school shall be subject to any court-ordered desegregation plan in effect for the local school administrative unit. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, Mountain City Public Montessori may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school, or from a private school for any conduct that would have warranted suspension or expulsion from a public school under G.S. 115C390.5 through G.S. 115C390.11 until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

### **A. Application Period:**

The School will establish an application (“Open Enrollment”) period annually. The application period will generally align with the application periods of other schools in the region, and will be long enough to provide reasonable opportunity to submit applications (no less than 30 consecutive calendar days). The application period will be posted on the School’s website.

### **B. Lottery Policy**

As a tuition-free public charter school, Mountain City Public Montessori is subject to an enrollment cap. If the number of applications exceeds the number of enrollment slots available in any grade level, applicant names are drawn at random. The school uses Lotterease. A numbered waiting list for each grade level will be established in the order of the lottery. The lottery will be open to the public in compliance with North Carolina Open Meeting laws.

### **C. Weighted Lottery**

Weighted lotteries are defined as those that give additional weight to individual students who are identified as part of a specified set of students falling under the economically-disadvantaged definition. Mountain City Public Montessori conducts a weighted lottery as part of a schoolwide commitment to becoming an intentionally diverse school community. The Board of Directors, working in consultation with school leaders, will establish the target percentage of school enrollment slots to be set aside for the weighted lottery each year. The target percentage will be decided prior to the Open Enrollment Period. Additionally, since MCPM complies with the Federal Desegregation order for the Asheville City School district, families may enter a weighted lottery if they identify as a racial minority. These weighted lotteries are optional for eligible families.

Participation in the weighted lottery is optional. The weighted lottery will be held prior to the general lottery, on the same date, after general enrollment priorities are granted for siblings of currently-enrolled students and children of full-time employees and Board members (up to 15% of total enrollment) are given.

Students who opt into the weighted lottery will be placed in the weighted lottery and chosen randomly until the specified slots set aside for the weighted lottery are filled. Students not selected in the weighted lottery will be placed into the general lottery. Following the lottery, families whose students are selected in the weighted lottery will be required to provide verification of eligibility. Eligibility is based on the household income levels established for the National Free and Reduced Lunch program. The School will notify families and offer assistance in submitting necessary income verification items. If a family fails to submit verification of eligibility within the established time frame included on the application, all students in the family will be placed at the bottom of the general waiting list.

### **D. Enrollment Priorities**

The School may give enrollment priority in certain instances as stated in G.S. 115C218.45(f). The School will give the following enrollment priorities and will implement them in the manner described below:

1. Siblings of currently-enrolled students and siblings who apply to the charter school for admission beginning in the same school year. The term "siblings" includes any of the following who reside in the same household:

full siblings, half siblings, step siblings, and children residing in a family foster home.

- a. Should there be more siblings of currently enrolled students than there are open slots in any given grade, a lottery will be held to randomly select the siblings who receive a slot in the school. The lottery will follow the same procedures as outlined below for the schoolwide lottery and will be held on the same date, but prior to, the schoolwide lottery.
  - b. Any siblings who do not receive an enrollment slot will be placed at the top of the grade level waiting list for the school, in the order their names were drawn in the lottery.
  - c. Siblings who apply to the charter school for admission beginning in the same school year will be placed into the schoolwide lottery and will be given priority as follows: if one sibling is selected in the schoolwide lottery, remaining siblings will be offered slots in their respective grade levels, as long as a space is available. If there is no available space, the remaining siblings will be placed on the waiting list for the full grade level.
  - d. Multiple birth siblings may apply by the inclusion of one surname in the lottery. All multiple birth siblings shall be admitted if the surname is drawn.
2. Limited to no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the school's total enrollment, the following:
- a. Children of individuals employed full time by the School or working full time in the daily operations of the School,
  - b. Children of the School's Board of Directors.
  - c. Should the above two groups of students exceed 15% of the School's total enrollment, priority will be given as follows:
    - i. Each employee and director shall be granted one enrollment slot.
    - ii. Names of any additional children will be entered into a lottery. Names will be drawn at random until the 15% cap is reached.
    - iii. Any children not selected in the lottery may be entered into the schoolwide lottery with equal opportunity of selection as any other applicant to the School. In these cases, the parents/guardians shall submit a completed application within the Open Enrollment Period.
    - iv. In the following year, unenrolled siblings may be given priority under the sibling preference (number 1 above).

3. A student who was enrolled in the School within the two previous school years but left the school because of the vocational opportunities, including Active Duty of the student's parent(s) or guardians.

Evidence of Active Duty or vocational opportunities must be provided to the School prior to the end of the Open Enrollment Period. In any case where the validity of the academic program or vocational opportunity is in question, the Directors shall have the authority to investigate documentation supporting the program or opportunity and issuing a determination of the student's eligibility for the enrollment priority.

4. Capped at up to 10% of total student enrollment, a preschool student enrolled at least 75 days of the prior semester in a preschool program with a written enrollment articulation agreement with the charter school.

## **E. Applications**

The School will use a standard application form which is available through the website. The application will include the opportunity to identify enrollment priorities, as well as the opportunity to enter the weighted lottery. Applicants who are unable to complete the enrollment online may request a paper application form by mail or email. Completed paper applications may be submitted by mail or hand-delivered to the specified address.

The School will maintain a record of all applications received. Each completed application is assigned a number and logged with a record of the date and time of receipt, and the name, grade, and contact information of the applicant. Applicants receive email confirmation of application and/or may contact the School to verify receipt of their application.

Mountain City Public Montessori relies upon accurate and truthful information on the application forms. If a parent or guardian provides false or incorrect information on the application form, such as an incorrect grade level in order to obtain a better chance of enrollment, the application form will be considered invalid and the student will not be entered into the lottery. The parent/guardian

will be notified of the School's determination.

In a case where an application is submitted and the student is granted and accepts enrollment, and it is subsequently determined that the student is enrolled for the wrong grade through no fault or inaccurate information (e.g., student is retained or double-promoted), a determination shall be made between the parent/guardian and the School as to appropriate placement for the child. The School has the authority, under North Carolina law, to make the final determination of grade placement. In the case that the appropriate grade placement is not available at the School (e.g., 4th grade), the School may recommend or require that the parent/guardian withdraw the enrollment and reapply in the subsequent year.

## **F. General Lottery**

Mountain City Public Montessori utilizes Lotterease for Admissions Management (application/lottery/offer/waiting list management) and Registration (enrollment). This system complies with data privacy regulations under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Applications will be accepted via Lotterease or in paper form until the designated end of the Open Enrollment Period. At that time, should the number of applications for any specific grade level fall below the number of open slots, all applicants will be offered enrollment, and the School will continue to accept applications on a rolling basis until all slots are filled. Any applications received after all slots are filled will be added to the waiting list in the order of the date of receipt. Should the number of applicants for any specific grade level exceed the number of open slots, per State law, the School will schedule a lottery. All applicants will be notified of the date, time, and location of the lottery and have the right to be present.

Any paper applications received will be entered into the online system so that all applications will be maintained collectively. Every effort will be made to ensure a fair and accurate lottery process. Should the School learn of any errors in the lottery process (e.g. inadvertent omission of a student's name from the lottery), appropriate steps will be taken to rectify the situation. This may include re-drawing applicants for the affected grade level.

All applications received after the lottery will be added to the numbered waiting list in the order of the date of receipt. The original applications will be date and time-stamped and retained in MCPM's system. All applications will be kept until the next Open Enrollment Period. Students admitted after the lottery and before

July 1st will be given one week (7 calendar days) to accept or decline the enrollment slot and complete the Enrollment Packet. Students admitted after July 1st will be given 3 calendar days to accept or decline the enrollment slot and 7 calendar days to complete the Enrollment Packet.

### **G. Written Confirmation of Enrollment**

The School will notify all applicants of the results of the lottery, and their enrollment or waiting list status. Notice will be provided by email and/or phone/text. Prospective enrollees will be given one week (7 calendar days) to accept or decline the enrollment slot (except those admitted after July 1, as specified under C). Confirmation of the acceptance or declination through Lotterease is required. Applicants who are accepting enrollment must complete and submit the Enrollment Packet, as described below, within the one-week timeframe.

The School will make at least three separate and documented attempts to contact all individuals who do not submit written confirmation or declination of enrollment. Should an applicant decline enrollment or fail to submit the required Enrollment Packet by the deadline, the slot will be offered to the next student on the numbered waiting list and the waiting list will be updated accordingly.

The numbered list (numbers only, without student names) will be posted on the school's website, so that parents/guardians can verify their student's enrollment status online. Parents/guardians may also contact the School's designated contact person to determine their student's enrollment status.

Parents/guardians will be notified electronically of their student's enrollment status. Parents/guardians may also contact the School's designated contact person to determine their student's enrollment status.

### **H. Enrollment Packet**

The following items must be submitted along with acceptance of enrollment:

- Academic Records Request Form
- Information on IEP/504 Plans
- Disciplinary Status Affidavit
- Family Partnership Agreement
- Emergency Contact and Procedures Form
- Student Medical Information

- Student Medication Administration Form
- Field Trip Permission Form
- Volunteer Driver Insurance Form (optional)
- School Directory Information (optional)
- Computer Acceptable Use Form
- Permission for photo and press contact
- McKinney Vento Act information
- Income verification (free & reduced lunch qualification)

## **I. Failure to Enroll or Withdrawal**

- *Failure to Enroll:* If a student is absent on the first day of classes, the School will make at least two documented attempts to contact (phone call and/or email) the parents/guardians prior to the end of the day. The parent/guardian will be given until the close of the school day to explain the absence and provide any requested documentation. If on day two the student is absent and no reasonable explanation has been provided, the slot will be offered to the next student on the waiting list. The School Administrator has the authority to determine whether causes for absences are “reasonable”.

Reasonable absences will generally include illness, death of a family member. Family vacation is not an acceptable reason.

- Any enrollment slots that become available due to student withdrawal or failure to enroll will be offered to the next student on the waiting list. The school will accept applications throughout the school year and will offer enrollment slots as they are available.

Students may withdraw from the School at any time. Parents/guardians seeking to withdraw their students will be asked to complete a withdrawal form to include the student’s name, date of birth, grade, the planned withdrawal date, reason for withdrawal, and plans after withdrawal (including name of transfer school). Upon receipt of a written request from the student’s new school, the MCPM will provide a copy of the student’s record in a timely manner.

Students who have withdrawn from the School but seek to re-enter must submit an application during the next Open Enrollment Period.

## **J. Re-Enrollment**

Once enrolled at the School, students are not subject to the lottery for subsequent years. Parents/guardians will be asked to complete re-enrollment packets prior to a specified deadline to secure their student's slot for the next year, or to submit a formal declination or withdrawal. Failure to submit a re-enrollment packet by the deadline will be taken as a declination, and the slot will be made available for enrollment in the next enrollment period. Prior to releasing a student's slot, the School will make at least two documented attempts to contact the parent/guardian.

#### **K. Review**

The Board of Directors shall annually review the application and enrollment procedure to ensure it results in a fair and equitable enrollment process and results in a student body that reflects the surrounding community.