



The Laboratory Charter School of Communication and Languages

Enrollment Policy for the 2024-25 School Year Reviewed and Revised: May 2024

I. Date of Policy

This Enrollment Policy, reviewed and revised in May 2024, applies to the 2024-25 school year. The policy is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with current educational standards, regulations, and the specific needs of our school community. This regular review process ensures that our policies remain relevant and effective in promoting equitable access to education.

II. Philosophy and Guiding Principles

A. Commitment to Access and Equity

Laboratory Charter School is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable education environment. We believe that every child, regardless of background, ability, or circumstances, should have equal access to high-quality education. Our Enrollment Policy reflects this commitment by ensuring that the application process is straightforward, transparent, and free from bias or discrimination.

B. Legal and Ethical Compliance

This policy is designed to comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to the Pennsylvania Public School Code, Act 22 of 2012, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Laboratory Charter School also upholds ethical standards in all aspects of its enrollment process, ensuring fairness and accountability.

III. Application Process

A. Accessing the Application

Families wishing to enroll their children at Laboratory Charter School can apply using the Apply Philly Charter (APC) online platform, available at ApplyPhillyCharter.org. Alternatively, families can contact the APC toll-free number (1-800-891-3999) for assistance with the application process. To accommodate families who may lack internet access or need additional support, the school provides in-person assistance where families can access a computer or tablet to complete the application.

B. Language and Accessibility Support

Recognizing the diverse linguistic needs of our community, the APC platform includes translation capabilities for nine different languages. Additionally, the APC helpline offers multilingual support, including after-hours assistance. Laboratory Charter School is committed to making the application process accessible to all families, providing reasonable accommodations upon request, including assistance for those who prefer or need to apply in person.

C. Application Process Overview

The application process is designed to be simple and non-intrusive. It requires only the submission of an application form by the specified deadline. The deadline dates are: There are no additional requirements such as interviews, school tours, information sessions, or application fees. This ensures that all families can apply without unnecessary barriers. Once an application is submitted, families will receive a confirmation via email or text message. Enrollment applications for the 2025-26 school year open on September 20th, with a deadline of January 22nd. Applications can be submitted through the Apply Philly Charter (APC) online platform at ApplyPhillyCharter.org.

D. Materials can be submitted through one of the following methods:

- In person at the main office: 926 West Sedgley Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19140
- By email: enrollment@labcharter.com
- By fax: 267-817-3340

D. Late Applications

Applications submitted after the official deadline will be considered for admission on a first-come, first-served basis. However, priority will be given to students on the waiting list who applied before the deadline. This approach ensures fairness while accommodating families who may have missed the initial application window.

IV. Data Management and Privacy

A. Applicant Data Management

Laboratory Charter School manages applicant data through the Apply Philly Charter system. This data management process is fully compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). These laws govern the collection, use, and protection of personal information to ensure the privacy and security of all applicant data.

B. Confidentiality and Security

Applicant data is stored securely and is only accessible to authorized personnel involved in the admissions process. The school does not share applicant information with any schools or entities outside of those to which the applicant has applied. Laboratory Charter School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all applicant data and protecting it from unauthorized access or disclosure.

V. Non-Discrimination and Equity

A. Barrier to Entry / Application Bias

Laboratory Charter School's Enrollment Policy strictly prohibits any form of discrimination or bias that could prevent a family from applying. The policy ensures that the application process is open to all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, or any other protected characteristic. The school actively works to remove any potential barriers to application, ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to apply and enroll.

B. Inclusivity and Fairness

The school's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond the application process. Laboratory Charter School fosters an educational environment that values diversity and promotes equity. This commitment is reflected in our admission practices, our support services, and our overall school culture. We believe that a diverse student body enriches the learning experience for all students.

VI. Lottery and Enrollment Preferences

A. Overview of the Lottery Process

The lottery process at Laboratory Charter School is designed to be transparent, fair, and equitable. When the number of applications exceeds the available seats, a lottery is conducted to determine which students will be offered admission. The lottery is managed by Apply Philly Charter, ensuring impartiality and adherence to all relevant regulations.

Apply Philly Charter oversees the lottery process for Laboratory Charter School. Students not selected in the lottery are placed on a waiting list based on lottery results. Families are notified of their waitlist number via email. Accepted students receive written notification within one week of the public lottery. If accepted from the waitlist, students must respond within one week and provide enrollment documentation to confirm their seat. Applications submitted after the deadline are placed on the waiting list after those received before the deadline, following a first-come, first-served basis. The waiting list remains valid for one school year.

Lottery Preferences

Laboratory Charter School follows Pennsylvania charter school law, employing a lottery system for admissions. Sibling preference is granted to applicants with shared legal guardianship or custody or biological, half, or step-siblings. Staff preference is extended to children of Laboratory Charter School employees. Residency preference is given to Philadelphia residents, with separate waiting lists maintained for non-residents.

Response Time Expectations for Accepted Students

Upon acceptance from the lottery or being offered seats through the waitlist, families are expected to respond promptly to confirm enrollment. The following response time expectations apply, as guided by relevant Pennsylvania Legal Codes:

1. Lottery Acceptance:

- Families of students selected in the lottery will receive written notification within one week of the public lottery, in accordance with Act 22 of 2012 (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A). · Upon receipt of the notification, families must respond within one week to confirm enrollment and provide the required enrollment documentation, as outlined in 22 Pa.

Code § 17.24 (Charter School Admissions).

2. Waitlist Acceptance:

- Families of students offered seats from the waitlist will be notified of their waitlist number via email, following procedures set forth by the Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A).
- Upon receiving an offer from the waitlist, families must respond within one week to confirm enrollment and provide the necessary enrollment documents, as specified in 22 Pa. Code § 17.24.

It is crucial for families to adhere to these response time expectations to secure their child's enrollment at Laboratory Charter School. Failure to respond within the specified timeframe may result in the forfeiture of the enrollment opportunity.

Lottery Results and Notification

Families of students selected in the lottery will receive written notification within one week of the public lottery. This notification includes detailed instructions on the next steps for enrollment, including the submission of required documentation. Students not selected in the lottery are placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery results. Families will be informed of their child's position on the waiting list via email.

VII. Waitlist Management and Enrollment Confirmation

A. Activation and Management of the Waitlist

The waitlist is activated when more students apply than there are available seats. As seats become available, students on the waitlist are offered enrollment based on their position on the list. The waitlist is maintained for one school year, and if a student is not admitted during that time, families must reapply for the next academic year.

B. Notification and Response Time

Families of students offered a seat from the waitlist must respond within 3 or more days to confirm enrollment. This timely response ensures that the school can efficiently manage available seats and provide opportunities to other students on the waitlist.

VIII. Required Enrollment Documentation

A. Document Submission

To confirm enrollment at Laboratory Charter School, families must submit the following five required documents:

1. **Proof of Child's Age:**
 - Examples: Birth Certificate, Passport, Baptismal Certificate.
 - Legal Reference: Act 22 of 2012 (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A).
2. **Proof of Residency:**
 - Examples: Deed, Lease Agreement, Utility Bill.
 - Legal Reference: Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A).

3. **Immunization Records:**
 - Examples: Immunization Certificate, Medical Records, Official Letters from Healthcare Providers.
 - Legal Reference: Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A).
4. **Home Language Survey (HLS):**
 - Legal Reference: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
5. **Parent Registration Statement:**
 - Legal Reference: Act 110 of 2020 (24 P.S. § 17-1704-A).

B. Flexibility and Accommodations

Laboratory Charter School recognizes that families may face challenges in providing these documents. The school is committed to working with families to ensure that all required documents are submitted, offering flexibility and accommodations as needed.

IX. McKinney-Vento Act: Enrollment of Homeless Students

A. Rights and Protections Under McKinney-Vento

Laboratory Charter School fully complies with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which provides special protections and rights for students experiencing homelessness. Under this act, homeless students have the right to enroll immediately, even if they lack typically required documents such as proof of residency or immunization records.

B. Enrollment Process for Homeless Students

When enrolling a homeless student, the school works to identify any other students living in the same area who might be eligible to attend. Enrollment deadlines and requirements are adjusted or waived to ensure that homeless students have full access to educational opportunities. The school also provides additional support to address any challenges related to their living situation.

C. Ongoing Support and Services

In addition to facilitating enrollment, Laboratory Charter School provides ongoing support to homeless students, ensuring they have access to the resources and services they need to succeed academically. This includes referrals to community agencies, transportation assistance, and other necessary interventions.

X. Enrollment of Students with Disabilities

A. Identification and Support

Laboratory Charter School is dedicated to identifying and supporting students with disabilities. The school implements a comprehensive Child Find program to identify, locate, and evaluate students who may require special education services. This process is conducted in compliance with federal and state regulations, ensuring that all students receive the support they need to thrive academically.

B. Application and Enrollment

Students with disabilities and their families follow the same application process as all other students. The school's enrollment office provides additional support to ensure that families are informed and comfortable with the process. Upon acceptance, the school reviews any existing special education documentation, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), to ensure that appropriate services and accommodations are in place.

C. Transition for Transferring Students with IEPs

For students transferring from other Local Education Agencies (LEAs) within Pennsylvania or from out-of-state, Laboratory Charter School follows established procedures to ensure a smooth transition. This includes:

1. **Within-State Transfers (Intrastate):**
 - The school will adopt the existing IEP from the previous LEA or develop a new one consistent with federal and state regulations. Services are provided promptly to ensure no disruption in the student's education.
2. **Out-of-State Transfers (Interstate):**
 - The school will conduct an evaluation if necessary and develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that meets federal and state requirements.

Procedures for Within State Transfer (Intrastate):

1. **Collaborative Consultation:** Upon the transfer of a student with a disability to Laboratory Charter School from another LEA within the same state, the school initiates collaborative consultation with the student's parents/guardians. This consultation aims to gather essential information about the student's educational history, current needs, and existing IEP provisions from the previous LEA.
2. **Review of Existing IEP:** Laboratory Charter School's Special Education team conducts a thorough review of the student's existing IEP from the previous LEA. This review involves assessing the student's present levels of performance, annual goals, special education services, accommodations, and modifications outlined in the IEP.

3. **Determination of Services:** Based on the review of the student's existing IEP and consultation with parents/guardians, Laboratory Charter School determines the appropriate provision of services to ensure the student's access to FAPE. This determination considers the student's individualized educational needs and aims to maintain continuity in service delivery.
4. **Adoption or Development of New IEP:** Laboratory Charter School decides whether to adopt the student's existing IEP from the previous LEA or develop a new IEP tailored to the student's requirements within the new educational setting. If the decision is to adopt the existing IEP, the school ensures that the provisions of the IEP are implemented effectively. If a new IEP is deemed necessary, the school convenes an IEP team meeting involving relevant stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan aligned with federal and state regulations.
5. **Implementation and Monitoring:** Upon adoption or development of the IEP, Laboratory Charter School implements the documented provisions and services outlined in the IEP. The school continuously monitors the student's progress, reviews the effectiveness of interventions, and makes necessary adjustments to ensure ongoing educational success and compliance with regulatory standards.

By following these procedures, Laboratory Charter School ensures a seamless transition for students with disabilities transferring from other LEAs within the same state, facilitating their access to FAPE and addressing their individualized educational needs effectively.

(2) IEPs for children who transfer from another State: Likewise, if a child with a disability relocates to a public agency in a different state and enrolls in a new school within the same academic year, the new public agency is obligated to ensure the provision of FAPE. This involves providing services similar to those specified in the child's IEP from the previous public agency in another state. Additionally, the new public agency must conduct an evaluation if deemed necessary and develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP that adheres to the applicable requirements. This thorough process ensures that the child's educational needs are properly evaluated and addressed within the new educational setting.

Procedures for Out of State Transfers (Interstate):

When a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) transfers to Laboratory Charter School from another state, several regulatory requirements apply to ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and continuity of services. As outlined in 34 CFR 300.323, the new public agency, in this case, Laboratory Charter School, must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Conduct an evaluation pursuant to regulations 300.304 through 300.306 if determined necessary by the new public agency.
2. Develop, adopt, and implement a new IEP, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements outlined in 34 CFR 300.320 through 300.324.

Procedures for Transferring Students with IEPs from Another State (Interstate):

When a student with an IEP transfers to Laboratory Charter School from another state and enrolls in a new school within the same school year, the following procedures are followed:

1. **Initial Consultation:** Upon receiving notification of the student's transfer, Laboratory Charter School initiates an initial consultation with the student's parents/guardians to gather essential information about the student's educational background, individualized needs, and existing IEP provisions from the previous state.
2. **Evaluation Determination:** Based on the initial consultation and review of available records, Laboratory Charter School determines whether an evaluation is necessary for the student. If deemed necessary, the school follows the evaluation procedures outlined in regulations 34 CFR 300.304 through 300.306.
3. **IEP Development:** If an evaluation is required or if the existing IEP does not adequately meet the student's needs in the new educational setting, Laboratory Charter School convenes an IEP team meeting involving relevant stakeholders to develop a new IEP. This new IEP is developed in accordance with the applicable requirements outlined in regulations 34 CFR 300.320 through 300.324 and is tailored to address the student's individualized needs and ensure FAPE.
4. **Implementation and Monitoring:** Upon development and adoption of the new IEP, Laboratory Charter School implements the documented provisions and services outlined in the IEP. The school closely monitors the student's progress, reviews the effectiveness of interventions, and makes necessary adjustments to ensure ongoing educational success and compliance with regulatory standards.

By following these procedures, Laboratory Charter School facilitates the smooth transition of students with IEPs transferring from other states, ensuring their access to FAPE and continuity of services in compliance with federal regulations.

D. Ongoing Monitoring and Support

The school's Special Education Department continuously monitors the progress of students with disabilities, ensuring that interventions are effective and adjustments are made as needed. This ongoing support is essential to providing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students.

XI. Compliance with Regulatory Standards

A. Adherence to Legal Codes

Laboratory Charter School is committed to complying with all relevant federal, state, and local laws governing public school enrollment, including:

- **Child Find (34 CFR 300.111):** Ensuring that the school identifies and evaluates children with disabilities to provide appropriate services.
- **Timely Provision of FAPE (34 CFR 300.323):** Guaranteeing that students with disabilities receive appropriate educational services promptly, especially when transferring between schools or states.

According to 34 CFR 300.323, ensuring the timely provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is essential for children with disabilities. This regulation explicitly outlines procedures to guarantee that children transitioning between public agencies within the same state or from another state receive uninterrupted educational services. IEPs for children who transfer to public agencies in the same State: If a child with a disability moves to a new public agency within the same state and enrolls in a different school within the same academic year, the new public agency, in collaboration with the parents, must promptly provide FAPE. This includes offering services that mirror those outlined in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) from the previous public agency. The objective is to maintain consistency in the child's educational support despite the change in educational settings.

B. Non-Discrimination and Inclusivity

In accordance with Chapter 711.7, Laboratory Charter School upholds principles of inclusivity and non-discrimination. The school does not discriminate against any student based on disability, intellectual ability, race, gender, or immigration status. This commitment ensures that all students have the opportunity to enroll and succeed in a supportive and inclusive environment.

C. Transparency and Accountability

The school's enrollment procedures are designed to be transparent and accountable. Laboratory Charter School follows the Pennsylvania Department of Education's enrollment complaint process, ensuring that any concerns are addressed fairly and promptly.

XII. Enrollment Complaint Process

A. Procedure for Filing a Complaint

If any individual has a concern regarding the enrollment process, they may initiate a complaint by submitting a written statement to the school's designated authority. This complaint should clearly outline the nature of the concern, including relevant details and any supporting documentation.

B. Investigation and Resolution

Upon receipt of a complaint, Laboratory Charter School will acknowledge it within 10 business days and begin a thorough investigation. The investigation may involve gathering additional information, interviewing involved parties, and reviewing applicable policies. The school is committed to resolving complaints fairly and effectively, ensuring that corrective actions are implemented if necessary.

C. Communication and Final Decision

After the investigation, the school will communicate the findings and the resolution to the complainant in writing. If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, they may have the option to appeal the decision. The final decision will be communicated in writing, marking the conclusion of the complaint resolution process.

XIII. Continuous Improvement and Monitoring

A. Staff Training and Policy Dissemination

Laboratory Charter School ensures that all staff members involved in the enrollment process are thoroughly trained on the Enrollment Policy and its implementation. The policy is disseminated to all stakeholders, including staff, parents, and community members, to ensure widespread understanding and compliance.

B. Ongoing Evaluation

The school conducts regular monitoring and evaluation of its enrollment procedures to ensure they are effective and aligned with current regulations. This includes reviewing application data, assessing the effectiveness of the lottery and waitlist processes, and ensuring compliance with all legal requirements. Feedback from families and staff is also considered to continually improve the enrollment process.

C. Annual Policy Review

The Enrollment Policy is reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and effective. This review process involves considering changes in laws, best practices in education, and feedback from the school community. Any necessary revisions are made to ensure that the policy continues to support the school's commitment to equity, transparency, and compliance.

XIV. Statement Regarding Immigration Status and Admission

A. Non-Discrimination Based on Immigration Status

Laboratory Charter School upholds the principle that every child has the right to access education, regardless of their immigration status. The admission process does not inquire about a child's immigration status, and admission is not conditioned on such information. The school is committed to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students can thrive.

B. Inclusivity and Support

The school's commitment to inclusivity extends to all aspects of its community. Laboratory Charter School works to ensure that all students, regardless of immigration status, feel valued, respected, and supported in their educational journey.

XV. Summary and Conclusion

Laboratory Charter School's Comprehensive Enrollment Policy is designed to ensure a fair, transparent, and legally compliant admission process. By prioritizing equity, inclusivity, and support for all students, the policy aligns with the school's mission to provide high-quality education in an environment that values diversity and promotes academic success for every student. The school remains committed to continuous improvement and accountability, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential.