

301 *(Reviewed & revised 02/27/2020)*

ENTRANCE AGES

Minnesota Statute 120A.20, subd 1 requires children to be at least five years of age on September 1 of the school year for which the pupil seeks admission in order to be admitted to kindergarten, but permits school boards to establish a policy for admission at an earlier age.

Recognizing that a limited number of underage children may be ready for early school entry, families shall have opportunity to enter into kindergarten children whose birthdays occur no later than October 15. However, since decisions for early entry should be made only after careful deliberation, parents of children whose fifth birthdays occur September 2 through October 15 must participate in a School-sponsored parent-education/information meeting in order for their children to be eligible for kindergarten entrance. This meeting, which shall be well-publicized and conducted on a timely and convenient schedule, will present information designed to help parent/guardians reach decisions about that state of kindergarten readiness of children who are less than five years of age by September 1. An early entrance review team shall be made available at the school building if parents/guardians request assistance in making this important decision. In no case will children whose fifth birthday occurs September 2 through October 15 be admitted to kindergarten later than 10 days after the official start of the school year.

Minnesota Statute 120A.20, subd 1 requires children to be at least six years of age on September 2 through October 15 be admitted for which they seek admission, or to have completed kindergarten, in order to be admitted to first grade. Admission of children to other grades shall involve a consideration of chronological age, previous school history, and apparent readiness to meet the expectations of those grades.

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EARLY ENTRANTS POLICY APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The parents of any child whose birthday falls between September 2 and October 15 may request consideration for early entrance to kindergarten. The procedures to be followed are outlined below.

- A.** Parent contacts the School Director for information.
- B.** Parent information meeting held in April/early May – letter sent to parents who have expressed interest and notice meeting.
Information included in parent meeting –
 - * developmental information on five and six year olds
 - * information on kindergarten (expectation, curriculum)
 - * early entrants research – advantages and disadvantages
 - * other options (preschools, activities)
- C.** Parent and child meeting at elementary school – Parent with director, counselor, and other appropriate staff (psychologist, ESL Teacher, etc.) child with kindergarten teacher.
- D.** School staff reaches decision on a recommendation for or against early admittance. If a family moves into the school area in the summer, informational handouts from the parent session will be shared with the parent. A team of school staff will meet with the parents and the child.

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POLICY FOR ENROLLMENT

The HOPE Community Academy desires to provide enrollment options for students in grades K through 8 that meet the diverse needs and interest of HOPE Community Academy students and shall review these options as needed.

The Director and School Board shall determine the capacity of each grade level at the school and establish a random, unbiased selection process for the admission of students not presently enrolled at the school, consistent with the requirements of Minnesota law, as follows.

Minnesota Statutes Section 124E.11, subd. (b) provides: "A charter school shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. The charter school must develop and publish, including on its Web site, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot"

Minnesota Statutes Section 124E.11, subd. (c) provides: "A charter school shall give enrollment preference to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents and may give preference for enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lot."

Minnesota Statutes Section 124E.11, subd. (d) provides: "A person shall not be admitted to a charter school (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences, or (2) as a first grade student, unless the pupil is at least six years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten, except that a charter school may establish and publish on its Web site a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in paragraphs (b) and (c)."

Minnesota Statutes Section 124E.11, subd. (e) provides, "Except as permitted in paragraph (d), a charter school may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability; and may not establish any criteria or requirements for admission that are inconsistent with this section."

Minnesota Statutes Section 124E.11, subd. (f) provides, "The charter school shall not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term or condition of enrolling a student in a charter school."

Enrollment Procedures:

HOPE Community Academy establishes admission limits by grade level based upon the capacity of its programs, classes, grade levels, or building. The deadline for parents to submit applications for enrollment of their child or children is May 15 prior to the start of the school year. In case of multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.), each student seeking admission must complete an application (i.e. not one application for the family), and each student receives an individual number/lot in the lottery. A student whose application is received prior to May 15 will be admitted if there is space available in the grade for which the student is applying. Within ten (10) days of a new student's entry, teachers/staff will provide an orientation to the enrolling student and family. Once enrolled,

a student must fill out an annual registration packet form. The school shall have discretion to determine whether it will provide transportation outside of the school's attendance area.

This enrollment procedure will be posted on the school's Web site.

Lottery Policy and Process:

If HOPE Community Academy receives more applications for a grade level than the number of spaces available, a lottery (by grade level) will be held within a week following May 15. Families who submit applications after the May 15 deadline will be entered into a July 1 lottery for any open spaces, along with families whose students were not admitted following the May lottery. Each lottery will include all students with current and complete applications, except that first preference for enrollment shall be given to siblings of currently enrolled students and to foster children of such students' parents, and secondary preference shall be given to children of the school staff.

After preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students, foster children of such students' parents, and to children of school staff, the school will perform a randomized selection process to determine which remaining students will receive enrollment offers. Lotteries shall occur from lowest grade to highest grade. All students who are not admitted following the July lottery will be placed on an Application Waiting List. The Application Waiting List does not carry over from year to year and is valid only for the upcoming school year.

Age of Entrance Procedures:

Purpose: The purpose of this regulation is to implement the Entrance Ages Policy (Policy 301) by making provisions for the most appropriate placement of each student.

General Statement of Regulation

- A. Kindergarten Admission
 1. Children whose fifth (5th) birthday is on or before September 1 of the calendar year in which they are seeking admission to kindergarten are eligible for kindergarten entrance without assessment.
 2. Children whose fifth (5th) birthday is on September 2 or thereafter through October 15 of the calendar year in which they are seeking admission to kindergarten may be considered for admission to kindergarten based upon an assessment procedure that is described in Policy 302, "Early Entrants Policy Application Procedure".
 3. Children whose fifth (5th) birthday is on September 2 or thereafter but who have already started kindergarten in another public or a nonpublic school may be admitted to HOPE Community Academy kindergarten.
- B. First Grade Admission of Children Not Previously in School

If a child is six years old on or before September 1 of the calendar year in which the child is seeking admission to first grade at HOPE Community Academy, the child should ordinarily be placed in first grade unless there are some obvious signs of immaturity.
- C. Underage Children Previously in School, but Entering HOPE Community Academy for the First Time

Children who have attended kindergarten for a year in a public or nonpublic school may be admitted directly to the first grade even though they are underage according to this admission policy.

- D. After a Kindergarten student or newly enrolling first grade student is enrolled, they will be required to present a birth certificate or other evidence of birth date to verify the student's age.

Assessment Procedure for Early Admission to Kindergarten

- A. At the request of parents or legal guardians of a student whose fifth birthday falls between September 1 and October 15, HOPE Community Academy will screen the student for early admission to kindergarten.
- B. The early kindergarten assessment process will be consistent with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 124E.11:
 - 1. The student's academic and cognitive readiness will be assessed by school staff, using valid and reliable instrumentation and processes that are aligned with state kindergarten expectations and abilities and are developmentally appropriate.
 - 2. The student's parent or legal guardian must provide a report to the school, in a format requested by the school, of the child's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- C. Students applying for early admission to kindergarten who have successfully passed the assessment process will be conditionally enrolled in kindergarten only after all five-year-old students who have applied have been placed in kindergarten.
- D. The Director, or designee, will inform parents of children applying for early admission to kindergarten whether or not their children have been conditionally accepted based on the assessment process described above.
- E. Parents must sign a document acknowledging that their child has been conditionally accepted to kindergarten.
- F. During the first four (4) weeks of school, parents of students who are admitted early to kindergarten will receive weekly written communication regarding their children's academic and behavioral progress and needs.
- G. By the end of September, the teacher and the director, or designee, will recommend to parents or legal guardians of children who have been admitted early to kindergarten, in writing, whether the placement of their child in kindergarten should be continued in the current school year, or whether the child should instead be enrolled in the kindergarten class in the subsequent school year.