



## ABBY KELLEY FOSTER CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

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### **Enrollment Policy 2015-2016 Academic Year**

#### **Introduction**

The Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School is a classical liberal arts K-12 school, located in the Greendale neighborhood of Worcester. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will accept applications for students entering Kindergarten through Grade 6. The school does not enroll new students in Grades 7-12. The School's recruitment and retention plan has received approval from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and meets the requirements of Massachusetts General Law and regulations. The plan will be implemented in accordance with Massachusetts laws and regulations. [M.G.L. c. 71, § 89\(1\)](#); [603 CMR 1.06](#)

#### **Enrollment Preference**

Enrollment preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students and students residing in the towns designated in the charter: Auburn, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Sutton, West Boylston and Worcester. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School is open to all Massachusetts residents. Applicants are required to submit reasonable proof of residency at the time of admission.

#### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

Abby Kelley Foster does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, homelessness, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, or academic achievement in admitting students, nor may charter schools set admissions criteria that are intended to discriminate or that have the effect of discriminating on any of these bases.

#### **Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment**

- The applicant must be a resident of Massachusetts to apply for admission and to attend a Massachusetts charter school.
- Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years of age by August 31.
- All applicants must provide the school upon admission, proof of age (e.g. birth certificate) and proof of residency (e.g. driver's license, utility bill). In certain circumstances, such as homelessness, the school may waive the proof of residency requirement.
- Parents and applicants are not required to attend informational meetings but potential families are encouraged to attend Open House Sessions.

- All applications must include one parent/guardian signature.
- The school does not administer achievement tests as a condition of enrollment.
- The school's enrollment policy is available on the school website and with an enrollment application.
- All applicants not offered admission by the end of the school year, must reapply during the next open enrollment campaign.

## **Enrollment Process**

Each year, Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School determines the number of seats available for new students based on the number of returning students and the cap for each respective grade level. Applications are available on the school website or at the school. Public notice of all application deadlines is given at least one month in advance. Abby Kelley Foster requires parents/guardians to complete and submit an application for each child requesting admission.

Applications for enrollment are available November 1 through January 15 annually. If the application deadline date falls on a weekend, the applications must be submitted on the previous Friday. Applications may be emailed, mailed or submitted in person during the specified enrollment period. Siblings, residents and non-residents applications must be submitted in accordance with the school's enrollment policy. The School does not accept applications after the deadline.

If the school receives more applications than seats available a public enrollment lottery is held. A separate public enrollment lottery is held for each applicant category (Sibling, Resident and Non-Resident). The school will publicize the time, date and location of the public lottery one month in advance on the application, in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, school newsletters and school website. The lottery will be held the last week of February annually at the school.

If the school does not fill all available seats in accordance with the process stated above, the school will hold a second application cycle until all available seats have been filled.

The enrollment office will contact the parent/guardian by phone and/or email when their child has been selected in the lottery for an available seat. The parent has 24 hours to accept the offer of admission. Once a parent/guardian has accepted the offer of admission, the school will mail a registration form within 7 business days after the lottery. All applicants must complete and return the registration form within 7 business days. Registration forms that are not returned by the specified date will be considered withdrawn from the admission process.

Student and family information regarding race and ethnicity is required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Information gathered on the enrollment application will not influence the enrollment or lottery process.

With few exceptions, information in a student's record will not be released to a third party without written consent of the eligible students and/or a parent having physical custody of a student under the age of 18 years of age. Two notable exceptions are:

Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in official school extracurricular activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards and post-high school plans.

Upon request from military recruiters and/or representatives from postsecondary educational institutions, Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will provide the name, address and telephone listing for all secondary students. Under the No Child Left Behind Act and the National Defense Authorization Act, local education agencies are required to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they provide to postsecondary institutions and prospective employers.

Upon request, a charter school will provide the names and address of students enrolled to a third party mail house for mailings unless a parent requests the school withhold their child's information.

If an eligible student and/or parent do not want directory information or recruiting information released, they must notify the Principal/assistant principal in writing within 5 days of an offer of admission. Otherwise, the information will be released without further notification. A parent and/or eligible student may specify that only certain types of directory information or recruitment information may be released and that parent or eligible student may rescind a release at anytime during the school year by providing written notification to the Principal/assistant principal.

### **Description of the Lottery Procedures**

Abby Kelley Foster will determine the number of spaces available based on the number of returning students and grade level capacity annually.

All parents/guardians must complete an **ENROLLMENT APPLICATION** in order for a sibling, resident, and non-resident applicant to participate in the enrollment process.

Abby Kelley Foster will set a deadline for accepting student applications for the available new spaces, with reasonable public notice of at least one week in advance.

Abby Kelley Foster will publicize the application deadline and the fact that there will be a public enrollment lottery at the school if there are more eligible applicants than there are available spaces.

Abby Kelley Foster will set a date for a public enrollment lottery, with reasonable notice of at least one week before the lottery date. [603 CMR 1.06\(6\)](#).

After the application deadline passes, all applications are divided into three categories; **Siblings, Residents** and **Non-Residents**. [603 CMR 1.06\(4\)](#)

An impartial person will administer the lottery.

Siblings will be offered admissions first, residents second and finally non residents, in the order the names were drawn in the lottery.

Students not selected in the lottery for enrollment will be placed on the waitlist for each category (sibling, resident and non-resident) in the order the names were selected.

If the principal lottery fails to produce an adequate number of students, the lottery process may be repeated.

### **Wait List Policy**

Abby Kelley Foster will maintain a waitlist by grade and enrollment category (sibling, resident and non-resident) annually. Applicants will remain on the waitlist for the year in which the student applied for admission. Applicants who are not offered a seat during the school year are required to reapply during the next open enrollment period. Open enrollment is November 1- January 15 annually.

The waitlist is determined in accordance to the procedures detailed under the Lottery Section.

No student will be added to the waitlist except through the lottery process. No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the waitlist unless said student is either a sibling of a currently enrolled students at the time an offer of admission is made or a resident of the region.

If a student stops attending Abby Kelley Foster Charter School or declines an offer of admission the next student on the appropriate waitlist for the grade will be offered the vacant seat.

The school will offer admission to students on the waitlist for the grade applying in the following order: Siblings, Residents and Non-Resident.

Students placed on the waitlist will be notified in writing of their waitlist number and the process for admitting students from the waitlist within 7 business days after the lottery.

Parents or guardians will be contacted by phone and/or email as openings become available.

Parents/guardians must accept or decline an offer of admission from the waitlist verbally or in writing within 48 hours. If the school is unable to contact a parent/guardian regarding an open seat for admission or waitlist update for a student within 48 hours, the student's application will be considered declined and removed from our waitlist or applicant pool.

Once a parent/guardian has accepted the offer of admission, the school will mail a registration form within 5 business days after the lottery.

All applicants must complete and return the registration form by the date specified by the enrollment office.

Registration forms that are not returned by the specified date will be considered withdrawn from the admission process.

If an applicant's sibling, resident or non resident status changes at any time during the school year, the applicant's current waitlist status will be subject to change. The applicant will be removed from its current placement on the waitlist and placed in the next available spot on the appropriate waitlist.

Abby Kelley Foster will maintain the applicant's name, date of birth, address, contact number and grade level for each waitlist category (Sibling, Resident and Non-Resident).

Abby Kelley Foster may attempt to fill all vacancies in Kindergarten through Grade 6 by June 30 annually. If the school is unable to fill the vacancy at the end of the school year, the seat will move into the subsequent grade level.

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School's waitlist will be maintained in the school's student information management system. Information will include the student's name, date of birth address, grade, phone number and parent/guardian name.

## **ACADEMIC PLACEMENT**

Abby Kelley Foster reserves the right to determine the academic placement of a student at each grade level. Once a student has been enrolled, the school may determine through placement testing, that the student needs to be placed in a grade other than the one for which he/she applied. If this is the case, the Abby Kelley Foster is obligated to provide a space in the appropriate grade.

All new students entering our school are required to attend registration. Parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the dates, times and documentation they will need to bring in order to begin the registration process. Registration may include meeting with your building principal, completing required paperwork and academic placement testing. Students will be assessed in order for the School to complete class schedules and assign students to their academically appropriate grade level. All Kindergarten students are assessed through our first-year screening process.

Students are placed in their academically appropriate grade level based on current reports, progress reports and English and Math placement tests administered during the registration process. All parents are notified in writing if their child is required to complete the grade preceding the grade the student applied within 7-10 days of registration.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Charter schools must ensure they do not enroll too many students from a sending district and cause the student's sending district to exceed its net school spending cap as specified in G.L. c. 71, §89(i). If the enrollment of a student would cause the sending district to exceed its tuition cap, then the charter school must skip over the student and keep him/her on the school's waiting list. 603 CMR 1.06(4)(d). However, siblings of enrolled students are exempt from the provisions of G.L. c. 71, §89(i). A sibling of an enrolled student may enroll in the school regardless of the school district tuition cap. In such cases, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall provide the school with the tuition payment which is subject to appropriation.

Once a student is admitted to Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School, that student has a right to continue attending the charter school. This right to continued attendance exists even if the student's district of residence changes. The only exception to this rule would be if the new district of residence was at or above its net school spending cap and, for that reason, the school would not receive a per pupil tuition for that student.

## **WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS**

Parents/guardians must notify the school concerning the transfer of their child to another school. Parents must complete a permission to release records form at Abby Kelley Foster. All books and other School property must be returned to the School; any outstanding balances must be settled.

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School considers a student withdrawn from the school once the parent/guardian has completed and signed a withdrawal form and/or the school receives notice from a public or private school that a student is enrolled. We also consider it a withdrawal if a student does not attend class during the first five days of the school year. This applies specifically in cases where a parent has been unresponsive in signing a withdrawal form or we have credible information that the child is enrolled in another school or not living in the area.

### **Definitions:**

**Enrollment Preference:** Abby Kelley Foster Charter School must give enrollment preference to applicants of currently enrolled siblings (defined as attending in the current school year) and residents

**Siblings:** Applicants who currently have siblings actually attending the charter school at the time of the lottery. Siblings are children who share a common biological or legal parent as opposed to children who may live in the same household but do not share a common parent. For example, foster children are not considered to be siblings unless they share a common parent even though they may live in the same household. On the other hand, children who live in different households but share a common parent are siblings for purposes of the sibling preference.

**Sibling Status on Wait List:** If a student is accepted at anytime during the school year and has a sibling on the waitlist, that student's sibling must apply for sibling status during the next open enrollment application period. Students do not automatically receive sibling status upon the admittance of a sibling from the waitlist.

**Residents:** Students who live in the city or the town as defined by the school charter. Residents enrolled in district, charter, private or parochial schools get equal preference. Students residing in Auburn, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Sutton, West Boylston and Worcester receive enrollment preference.

**Non-residents:** Students who live in a city or town that is not specified above.

## **INFORMATION SESSIONS**

All potential families are invited to our information sessions. Information sessions are held October –January. The open house schedule will be posted on the school's website and on the application. The sessions include an overview of our academic program, tour and question and answer period with the principal/assistant principals. The Information Session schedule is determined at the beginning of each year.