



Enrollment Policy
Adopted February 25, 2021

I Guiding Principles

- 1) The Hillsboro Charter Academy (“HCA” or the “School”) is a public school open to all Loudoun County residents and does not charge tuition.
- 2) The HCA is committed to the town of Hillsboro, Virginia, and the surrounding rural community.
- 3) Children who reside within the 2015-2016 Hillsboro Elementary School (“HES”) attendance area (as defined by the Loudoun County Public Schools system (“LCPS”) or whose residence is closer by vehicle to HCA than any other elementary school in LCPS, shall be designated to be in the “priority geographic zone” and will be granted special status in the lottery.
- 4) HCA has a strong commitment to keeping families together. Every effort will be made to ensure that siblings are able to attend the School together, provided they can be accommodated in the classroom.
- 5) HCA recognizes the commitment that the families of HES made to the School and to the community and, as such, all families with children enrolled in the school as of March 1, 2016, were granted “founding family” status in a survey conducted in January of 2016. Founding family status remains in effect for all subsequent years that HCA is in operation.
- 6) For the purposes of this policy, a sibling shall be defined as any child who is related by birth to another child or is under the legal guardianship of at least one of the guardians of that other child.
- 7) HCA strives to maintain small classes and small student-teacher ratios. The enrollment target per grade is 24 children.
- 8) The Board of Directors and Principal, collectively, may choose whether or not to expand a class size to accommodate a waitlisted applicant who is a sibling or who is from the priority geographic zone.
- 9) The ongoing relationship between HCA and the Town of Hillsboro is evident in the combined campus and shared dedication to the concept that the school is a fundamental element of a thriving town. In recognition of that fact, children who reside within the historic district, as defined by the legal town boundary, will be placed first among those in the geographic proximity subgroup.

II Admission Eligibility and Priority

- 1) All children who are residents of Loudoun County and eligible to attend Loudoun County Public Elementary Schools, as determined by age, may participate in the HCA Lottery.
- 2) Lottery applicants will be divided by grade, and each grade will have its own lottery drawing.
- 3) There will be five (plus 1) priority subgroups created within each grade applicant pool, and these are described below. The subgroups shall be prioritized in the order set forth below, with the first subgroup having the highest priority, the second subgroup having the second highest priority, etc.:
 - a. Founding Families Subgroup: All children who attended HES as of March 1, 2016, and siblings of those children, shall be granted “founding family” status and the highest priority enrollment opportunity.
 - b. Sibling Subgroup: Any sibling(s) of: (A) currently enrolled child(ren) who are attending HCA at the time of the lottery, or (B) children who have been assigned a position at HCA for the following school year.
 - c. HCA and LCPS Employee Subgroup: Any child(ren) of an eligible faculty or staff member (as defined in the employee’s contract) currently under contract of employment with HCA or through LCPS assigned to HCA.
 - d. Pandemic Continuity Subgroup (temporary category): During the 2020-21 school year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, those families who elected to disenroll their scholars, will be placed in an additional priority subgroup, called the Pandemic Continuity Subgroup. Any such families who are eligible for a higher priority subgroup will be placed in the highest grouping for which they are eligible. The Pandemic Continuity Subgroup and related enrollment opportunities will remain in effect until the March 2022 lottery drawing. This temporary priority subgroup will expire at that time and not be considered in the March 2022 lottery process.

Limitations: To be considered for this priority subgroup, scholars must have attended class at HCA and subsequently disenrolled after March 2020 and before February 24, 2021.
 - e. Geographic Proximity Subgroup: Any child(ren) who qualify by residing (as a primary residence) in the geographic preference zone (as defined above in Guiding Principle #3 and 9). This is determined by the travel miles (as determined by Google Maps) from that student’s residence to the HCA building being less than or equal to the travel miles to any other LCPS elementary school.
 - f. Full-Year Waitlist Subgroup: Applicants within any subgroup (or in the general applicant pool) who applied prior to September 30th during the previous calendar year (i.e., the year prior to the current lottery) and were not offered a slot but remained on the waitlist for the entire time up to the current lottery.
 - i. Note: If an applicant qualifies for both the waitlist subgroup and any of the five other subgroups noted above, the applicant will be placed at the top of the other subgroup waitlist. This policy shall apply to both the lottery and to the filling of vacancies from the waitlist. (see waitlist procedures in Section V below). If two or more applicants qualify for this same allowance, they will be placed on the top of their respective subgroup wait list in the order the applications were received

III Timelines, Application Requirements, and Categorization

- 1) Applications for enrollment are continuously available online. Applicants may contact the HCA office for assistance.
- 2) Applications for inclusion in the lottery will be taken up until five days before the lottery, which occurs on or close to the second Wednesday of March. The lottery date will be announced well in advance.
- 3) Applications must include the following information:
 - a. Name and date of birth of child
 - b. Physical address for child and legal guardian(s)
 - c. Assertion of Loudoun County residency
 - d. Grade child is entering for the upcoming academic year
 - e. School for which child is zoned for the upcoming academic year (per LCPS guidelines)
 - f. Names and grades of any siblings who are also applying or who currently attend.
- 4) Applications will be divided into the following groups and subgroups
 - a. One grade group for each grade
 - b. Subgroups within the grade:
 - i. Founding Family Subgroup
 - ii. Siblings Subgroup
 - iii. HCA and LCPS Employee Subgroup
 - iv. Pandemic Continuity subgroup
 - v. Geographic Proximity Subgroup
 - vi. Waitlist Subgroup
 - vii. General Applicant Pool
- 5) No later than five days before the lottery, children who are currently enrolled in HCA and who intend to return for the following year will verify re-enrollment status.
- 6) After returners have been offered slots in a given class, HCA will calculate the number of remaining lottery slots available for each class based on the grade level caps determined by the HCA Board of Directors for that school year.
- 7) Applicants in priority groupings must maintain their qualifying status to maintain their positions on the waitlist / enrollment list. Prior to enrollment, verification will occur either by approximately July 1st for the upcoming school year or the date enrollment is officially offered, whichever comes later.

IV Drawing Procedures

For a given academic year, in the event that more students apply for admission to one or more grades within HCA than can be accommodated, the lottery drawing for such grade(s) shall take place on or close to the second Wednesday of March during the previous school year. Students will be selected for admission at random from each level of priority. The drawing may be conducted electronically or manually. The drawing shall be recorded on video and conducted by a neutral third party in the following manner:

- 1) Applications will be drawn for the grade level (1st-5th) that has the largest number of available slots. If more than one grade has the same number of slots, the lower grade shall be filled first.
- 2) Kindergarten will be filled last so as to accommodate children who attained sibling status in the lottery process.
- 3) If the grade group contains applicants from any of the aforementioned subgroups, those applicant pools shall be drawn in the priority order as stated above until each has been depleted.
- 4) If any application selected is identified as having sibling applicant(s) in the same grade pool (twins), the sibling application(s) will be granted a slot in the same class, subject to available space.
- 5) If any application selected has been identified as having sibling applicant(s) in another grade pool, the following shall occur:
 - a. If that sibling's grade has not already been drawn in the lottery, the sibling's application(s) will immediately be placed into the sibling subgroup for the appropriate grade for purposes of the lottery drawing.
 - b. If that sibling's grade has already been drawn in the lottery, the sibling's application shall be placed in the appropriate place on the sibling category of the waitlist.
- 6) After all applicants in the priority subgroups have been offered a slot, then the remainder of the slots will be filled from the general applicant pool for that grade group until all the slots have been filled or the group is depleted. Applications received after the lottery will be placed below lottery students in the appropriate subgroup in the order they were received.
- 7) The drawing shall proceed for each grade by repeating steps 1-6 until each grade has reached its enrollment cap.
- 8) If any grade group has been depleted, and the grade contains fewer than enrollment cap, the remaining slots will remain open to be filled later by targeted recruitment efforts.

V Drawing and Waitlist Procedures

- 1) The waitlist, as determined by a lottery, will roll over from year to year. Applicants do not need to be re-lotterized in successive years.
- 2) A waitlist for each class (and each subgroup within that class) will be maintained, and vacancies may be filled from that wait list until the day of the lottery with the following exception: During the period after the lottery is completed until the start of the next school year, a vacancy may not be filled if doing so would have the effect of taking away a spot already given to a student through the lottery for the coming year.
- 3) Except for the full-year waitlist subgroup set out in II.4.d above, no position on any waitlist will have any impact or effect during the lottery drawing itself.
- 4) All persons on any waitlist (or any subgroup within that waitlist) will be on equal footing within their respective subgroup during the lottery drawing regardless of when they came onto the waitlist.
- 5) Applicants who decline a slot may choose to remain on the waitlist in their original wait list position, however such applicants will not qualify for the “waitlist priority subgroups” defined above.

VI Enrollment Commitment

- 1) All applicants shall be notified whether they have been granted a slot or placed on the waitlist within a reasonable time frame. Waitlisted applicants shall be informed of their position on the list.
- 2) Applicants will be given a reasonable time period to accept or forfeit a slot in a given grade before the waitlist will be utilized.
- 3) Email confirmation is sufficient to document acceptance of an offered slot (but oral communication is not sufficient).
- 4) Should a waitlisted applicant who is offered a slot have a sibling who is also on the waitlist, reasonable attempts shall be made to accommodate that sibling as well.
- 5) All applicants who choose to forfeit their slots shall be required to reapply through the lottery process should they wish to attend in subsequent years. However, applicants who have declined a slot may ask to have their application reinstated, in which case they will reacquire their wait list position (but such applicants will not qualify for the “waitlist priority subgroups” defined above).

The Board of Directors of HCA reserves the right to redesign the lottery procedure for subsequent years, so long as such redesigned procedures continue to comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Changes may include but shall not be limited to: carry-overs of waitlisted applicants, the order of grades to be drawn, the order of subgroups to be drawn, the number of classes per grade, and the number of students per class.