Admissions Policy

POLICY #250

AMENDED 9/13/2023, 4/10/2024, 9/11/2024, 9/10/2025

The Board of Directors of Freire Charter School (the "School") understands the importance of establishing fair and equitable criteria for student admission and shall comply fully with § 1723-A of the PA Public School Code. Specifically, the School will be open to resident children in the City of Philadelphia by lottery.

The School values diversity and seeks students from diverse backgrounds. The School does not discriminate on the basis of age (to the extent applicable), race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, religion, marital status, ancestry, parental status, disability, achievement or aptitude, proficiency in the English language or any other basis that is unlawful.

Annual Admissions Timeline

Each year, the School's application window will be open in late September and will close late January. By early February, families will be made aware of the lottery results via Apply Philly Charter. In late February, the application will be reopened for those applicants who missed the initial deadline. In late March, all enrollment paperwork is due to the school. Specific dates of the admissions timeline can be found on the school's website. The timeline shall include the link to the application, application deadline, lottery date, information on the manner and method of communication of lottery results, acceptance deadline, and the enrollment packet deadline. The School's website is FreireCharterSchool.org.

Admissions Process

Applying for Admission

Families can obtain and submit an application for admission online at ApplyPhillyCharter.org or apply via the Apply Philly Charter toll-free number, 1-800-891-3999. Families are welcome to visit the School for assistance, and families will be provided with information on how to apply and, subject to availability, a computer or tablet to access ApplyPhillyCharter.org. The online application is available for translation into a variety of languages. The toll-free number has customer service representatives who can assist families in multiple languages and includes after-hours support. The school will provide reasonable accommodations in the event that an individual requests to submit an application in person. Paper applications are not available and the school will not accept or enroll any applicant whose application is not recorded through the Apply Philly Charter system.

The application process only involves submitting the application form by the deadline. No interview, school tour, information session, or fee is required.

Once the application is submitted, the applicant will receive an email or text message confirmation. Applicants who are unable to provide an email address will receive a confirmation of their application submission via postal mail to the address recorded on the application.

All complete applications submitted after the close of the application window may be offered admission to the School in the order received only after the school has exhausted the waiting list of students whose applications were received by the deadline.

In accordance with applicable laws (FERPA, PPRA, COPPA), applicant data is maintained through the Apply Philly Charter system. Applicant data will not be shared with any schools to which the applicant did not apply. The school shall provide a copy of its current wait list when requested by the Charter Schools Office.

The Lottery and Waitlists

Freire Charter School uses Apply Philly Charter (APC) to manage its lottery and waitlist. Beginning with enrollment into the 2026-27 school year, APC will utilize a “ranked choice” or “Single Best Offer” (SBO) process. When families apply through APC, they submit a ranked list of their preferred charter schools that participate in the lottery, listed in order of preference (e.g., 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.). The APC system makes offers to students for their highest-ranked school where there is an available seat and/or their desired Renaissance school, based on each school's individual lottery structure and the student's random lottery number, if applicable. Students are placed on waitlists only for schools ranked higher on their application than the school where they got an offer. For additional information and support, please visit applyphillycharter.org or call 1 (800) 891-3999.

Applicants will receive notification of lottery results two days after the lottery via email through Apply Philly Charter on a Common Notification date. Applicants will also be able to log in to their Apply Philly Charter accounts on the Common Notification date to view their lottery results.

Applicants who were offered a seat through the lottery will have 14 days until the Common Acceptance Date to accept their seat offer on Apply Philly Charter by clicking “accept” in their Apply Philly Charter accounts, or by calling the APC helpline. Applicants will then be required to submit enrollment paperwork to the school through PowerSchool Enrollment within four weeks of the Common Acceptance Date. Enrollment paperwork will not be collected through Apply Philly Charter.

Any student who applies after the application deadline will be placed on the waiting list after those students who applied before the application deadline on a first come, first served basis.

All students currently enrolled and attending are automatically re-enrolled for the following school year; we do not require school-wide re-enrollment paperwork. Applicants who are not offered a seat or who decline or forfeit a seat must reapply annually.

Lottery Eligibility & Preferences

As required by PA charter school law, a lottery system is used for admitting its students.

Sibling Preference: As used in this policy, "siblings" are individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption to a currently enrolled student(s), and who share the same legal guardian(s) or legal custodian(s). In order to be eligible, applicants must indicate the sibling preference on their application. Freire will not retroactively apply sibling preference for anyone who did not request the sibling preference at the time of application prior to the application deadline. Freire reserves the right to determine if an applicant is eligible for sibling preference.

Siblings of currently enrolled students will be placed on a priority list prior to the lottery. In the event there are more applicants with a valid sibling preference than seats that are available in a particular grade, a random lottery consisting of these applicants will be held.

Preference will also be extended from newly enrolled students to their siblings, provided that all siblings seeking enrollment indicated the sibling relationship on the application. When a student selected in the lottery has submitted complete enrollment paperwork to the School, they are considered a "current student" and their siblings will then be placed at the top of the waiting list.

Actively Participated In The Development Of The School: In addition to siblings, applicants whose parents have "actively participated in the development of the School" shall be given an enrollment preference. In order to be eligible under this preference, the Applicant's Parent must have: (1) served on the founding coalition of the School, the School's Board of Directors, or a School committee or (2) made a substantial contribution to the life of the School such as, but not limited to, active participation in the parents organization, advocating for the School, or volunteering regularly in the School.

Non-Residents of Philadelphia: Please note that applications containing Philadelphia addresses have a higher priority than applications with a non-Philadelphia address in the lottery. Any application containing a non-Philadelphia address will be placed at the end of the waitlist. If additional applications are submitted with Philadelphia addresses, these applications will be placed above the non-Philadelphia applications on the waitlist. Furthermore, proof of residency will be required if a student is selected in the lottery to continue in the enrollment process. Any applicant who cannot provide proof of a Philadelphia address during the proof of residency check will be placed at the top of the non-resident wait list. Freire does not typically accept non-resident waitlisted applicants until after August 1st prior to the start of the new school year, and students will be drawn from this list only if spaces are still available in a particular grade level.

Enrolled students who move from Philadelphia may remain at the school.

Sibling preference will not apply for families who do not reside in Philadelphia.

Confirming Enrollment

It is important to understand that being selected in a lottery is only one step involved in enrolling. The next step involves submitting the required documents by the proper deadline.

Enrollment paperwork can be submitted by online form, through mail or email to the Admissions Office or by scheduling an in person appointment by emailing admissions@freirecharterschool.org. Families admitted during the lottery will have four weeks to submit enrollment paperwork. Families admitted post-lottery until June 30th will have two weeks. Families admitted after June 30th will have one week to submit paperwork.

Failure to meet this deadline forfeits your spot. Exceptions will be made for families with language barriers and those experiencing housing instability. At the discretion of staff, exceptions may be made for families facing other extenuating circumstances who provide notice to the School of those circumstances. When a spot is forfeited, applicants can be assigned a new wait list number and be placed at the end of the waitlist.

The only required material to continue the enrollment process is as follows:

- Proof of Age (1 is required)
    - Child's original birth certificate
    - Notarized copy of the child's birth certificate
    - Original baptismal certificate indicating the child's date of birth
    - Copy of the record of baptism – notarized or duly certified and showing the date of birth
    - Child's valid passport,
    - Notarized statement from the parents or another relative indicating the date of birth
    - Prior school records indicating the date of birth
- Proof of Residency (1 is required)
    - A current deed;
    - A mortgage statement no more than three months old;
    - An active residential lease agreement;
    - A utility bill no more than three months old;
    - An internet bill no more than three months old;
    - A credit card bill no more than three months old;
    - A bank statement no more than three months old;

- A tax bill no more than three months old;
- An insurance document no more than three months old; or
- A piece of mail sent in the past three months by the federal or state government such as benefits information, voter registration, or tax documents.

Note: A child whose parent or legal guardian is an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including a reserve component, who has received official military orders to transfer into or within the Commonwealth may establish residency for purposes of this section by providing a copy of the official military orders to the Charter School and proof of the parent or legal guardian's intent to move to the Commonwealth. Proof may include a signed contract to purchase a home, a signed lease agreement, or a signed statement from the parent or legal guardian stating their intention to move to the Commonwealth. If enrolled under this provision, the parent or legal guardian must provide proof of residency to the Charter School within forty-five (45) days after the arrival date stated in the military orders.

- Record of Required Immunizations
- Act 26 Form / Parent Registration Form
- Home Language Survey

Students who submit these five required documents by the enrollment deadline are considered enrolled.

McKinney/Vento Act

Upon acceptance through the lottery, in accordance with federal and state guidelines under the McKinney/Vento Act, Freire Charter School is committed to removing barriers to education that face students experiencing homelessness. Freire Charter School shall immediately enroll identified homeless/displaced students, even if the student or parent/guardian is unable to produce the required documents, in accordance with Board policy, laws and regulations.

Immigration Status

A child's right to be admitted to Freire Charter School may not be conditioned on the child's immigration status. Freire Charter School shall not inquire regarding the immigration status of a student as part of the admission process. A student whose immigration status is not documented must provide the residency and other documents required for enrollment

Reporting

The School will submit its Admissions Policy and Enrollment Packet to the School District of Philadelphia annually. The School will provide a copy of its waiting list at any time during the term of the charter within ten (10) business days after requested by the Charter Schools Office. This policy will be posted on the School's website.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER OR APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS AND/OR CHARTER CONTROL.