



Merit Academy Enrollment Policy

In accordance with admissions process outlined in our charter application and contract with the Woodland Park School District (WPSD). Merit Academy will not make any distinction on account of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry of any student who seeks admission. Merit Academy will provide the opportunity for admission to all families if the parents value our philosophy and educational offering. The Merit Academy Intent to Enroll forms do not collect demographic data (preventing any perception of bias or discrimination for the Lottery or enrollment process), but our outreach plan includes marketing and conversation with families representing all students.

Vacancies exist whenever the number of students enrolled in class is below that class' capacity. As vacancies occur, those vacancies will be filled using a lottery system.

The following lottery enrollment procedure will be implemented in the following order of precedence:

- Currently enrolled students
- Founding parent's children
- Children of qualified staff
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Students on the lottery list residing within the WPSD School District
- Students on the lottery list residing outside the WPSD
- All other students on the lottery list

If the MA Intent to Enroll forms received exceed the spaces available, students shall be selected by a random lottery, subject to the enrollment preferences described above. The Merit Academy Board of Directors will oversee this lottery process. The lottery will contain the names taken from the Intent to Enroll forms received by the school prior to the close of business on February 15th and the names that have not been removed by request of the parent/guardian or as a result of a previous offer that was declined or a non-response to an offer. Within the priority listed above, lottery number for each child in each grade will be randomly assigned for the upcoming academic year only. The lottery will be conducted from the highest grade level with available spaces in descending order down to the kindergarten spaces. As a name is drawn, all younger siblings of that child will be given sibling priority for their grade levels. After reviewing applying a student's academic data, the administration will provide a grade recommendation for the student. For children entering Kindergarten or First grade, placement in programs is prescribed by the student's age as of October 1.



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Invitations to enroll will first be extended to families assigned the lowest lottery number. After all spaces for each grade level have been filled by the lottery, remaining students will be placed on a waitlist for openings that may arise in the upcoming school year, with September 30 being last day of available enrollment. Lottery numbers are valid for one (1) lottery cycle. To participate in subsequent year's lottery, families must indicate that they want to be considered for that future lottery and must update their enrollment form by completing the appropriate paperwork prior to February 15th. The Merit Academy Board of Directors and Administration will review the current lottery process annually and reserves the right to change the lottery application process to better meet the needs of the school and community. Merit Academy will also design solution to minimize the possibility that families may be randomly placed for years on the waitlist from missing enrollment due to the lottery.

If a parent/guardian whose child is on the waitlist declines or does not respond to an enrollment offer within the designed timeframe as noted in this policy, they will be removed from the MA database and a new Intent to Enroll form must be submitted to be included in future lotteries.

Enrollment Acceptance

Merit Academy will notify Families who have drawn a lottery number for an available placement for the upcoming school year via e-mail or phone call beginning the day of the lottery and will follow-up with a phone call if no response is received within 72 hours. After the family is contacted and enrollment is offered, the school will require a verbal decision within 72 hours. Parents/guardians of the student(s) will provide a reasonable way for MA to reach them regarding enrollment and will tell the school of any change to their contact information. While MA will make every attempt to notify families, the school is not responsible for the inability to contact families should they be unreachable (e.g., traveling, inaccurate information on the Intent to Enroll form, etc.). After the first day of school, families who are contacted about immediate openings will need to give a verbal decision within 48 hours of the enrollment offer. MA reserves the right to cease new student enrollment after September 30.

Siblings receive priority, but not guaranteed enrollment as listed above. Every effort will be made to ensure enrollment for siblings in the future. Sibling status will begin after a sibling is enrolled or an older sibling is selected in the lottery and continue in future years while a student from that family is continuously enrolled. If an incoming kindergarten student has accepted enrollment and is determined by staff and parents to benefit by waiting a year, MA will reserve a kindergarten spot for the following year for that child.



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All admitted families must complete an enrollment packet that documents proof of residency, current immunizations and health appraisal, and if applicable, a 504-service agreement Individual Education Plan for special education, a Behavior Plan, a Safety and/or Containment Plan, a literacy and/or tutoring plan, etc. and a home language survey. In addition, families must attend an orientation meeting that will introduce the child and family to his or her teacher, school culture and discipline expectations, etc.

Families may choose to withdraw their children from the school at any time. To the extent possible, the school will hold exit interviews with the parents/guardians of withdrawing students to gather as much information as possible regarding reasons behind the withdraw. The data collected will be used to shape future school decisions.