

# RIVER MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL

## Admissions and Enrollment Policy

### **I. Introduction**

The goal of the admissions policy of River Montessori Charter School (hereinafter “School”) is to attract, enroll and retain at the School the broadest spectrum of students and families representative of the rich diversity existing in the River Montessori Charter School/Old Adobe Union School District. The School will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations. The School will not charge tuition and the School will not discriminate in admissions or outreach against any pupil on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or any other legally protected category.

### **II. Admission and Requirements for Admission**

The School is open to any student in the State of California who meets the admissions requirements described herein. If the number of pupils who wish to attend the School exceeds the school’s capacity, attendance (except for existing pupils of the charter school) shall be determined by a public random drawing, the process for which is described below.

#### **A. Admission Eligibility and Requirements**

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the School, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- All students must have been fully immunized and present the appropriate health examination record in accordance with the California Health and Safety Code.
- All kindergarten students must be age 5 on or before September 1 of the school year in which he/she seeks enrollment. If a student turns five years of age after September 1 during the school year, that student may be eligible for admission on a case by case basis in the discretion of the Board of Directors, in accordance with the Board’s age-admission policy and in accordance with law.
- For those children who do not meet the minimum age for admission into kindergarten, the School offers a voluntary transitional kindergarten (“TK”) program for eligible children. The School’s TK program is the first of a two-year kindergarten program and students shall not attend more than two years of a combination of TK and kindergarten. The School’s TK program will admit children whose fifth birthday falls after December 2 but during that same school year, with the approval of the parent or guardian; provided the governing board of the School determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the child and that the parent or guardian is given information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and any other explanatory information about the effect of this early admittance. The curriculum offered in the TK program shall be age and developmentally appropriate. TK students may be placed in the same classroom as other kindergarten students, provided that the instruction given is that designed for TK students.

- For children who have a birthday after December 2, but during the same school year, with the approval of the parent or guardian, the school may admit a child in the TK program as an Extended TK (ETK) student, subject to the following conditions: 1) the governing board of the School determines that the admittance is in the best interests of the child; and 2) the parent/guardian is given information regarding the advantages and disadvantages and other explanatory information on the effect of this early admittance. No student admitted early shall generate average daily attendance until the student has attained his or her fifth birthday, regardless of when the student was admitted during the school year. A list of those interested in enrolling as an ETK student is organized by month and will be numbered according to each month.
- All students must be at least age 6 by September 1 of the school year in which he/she seeks enrollment in first grade, (with some exceptions in accordance with the Board's age-admission policy and in accordance with law).
- No student may concurrently attend a private school that charges the student's family for tuition.
- All students shall be documented as residents of the State of California.
- A student that has been otherwise expelled may be admitted to the school at the discretion of the governing board on a case-by-case basis.

In order to ensure that all students will be placed appropriately and benefit fully from the education program, the following pre-admission procedures will be enforced. Failure to comply with any of these procedures will result in denial of admission. An admitted student will be removed from the School if failure to comply with these procedures is discovered after admission has been granted. All eligible students must meet the following requirements:

- Complete applications for admission must be timely submitted to the School no later than the deadline published for that school year.
- The application for admission shall include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Authorization for the School to request and receive student records from all schools the student has previously attended or is currently attending;
  - Proof of full immunization or exception from the requirement;
  - Proof of health examinations required by the Health and Safety Code;
  - Proof of age with the application for admission through documents such as the following: birth records, statements by the local registrar or a county recorder certifying the date of birth, baptism certificate duly attested, a declaration from the parent/guardian or a passport.
  - Proof of residency through documents such as the following: parent or guardian's drivers' license, ID card or DMV printout, a copy of a lease, utility bill or similar showing the address of the residence, etc., California tax returns giving California as

the home address (within acceptable dates); car registration and/or car insurance; California health insurance or Medi-Cal ID;

- If any information provided to by the parents/guardians could indicate immigration status, citizenship status or national origin information, the School shall not use the acquired information to discriminate against any students or families or bar children from enrolling in or attending the School. If parents or guardians choose not to provide information that could indicate their children's immigration status, citizenship status, or national origin information, the School shall not sue such actions as a basis to discriminate against any students or families or bar children from enrolling or attending school.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers should attend a pre-admission Information Open House Meeting or its equivalent.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers are strongly encouraged to attend a School Tour
- The Parent Involvement Agreement shall be signed and returned to the School with the Student Enrollment Packet. The body of educational research shows a compelling correlation between parent participation in a school and their child's academic success. Therefore, in order to be admitted into the School, the student's family will be required to sign a parent involvement agreement that strongly encourages the parents to volunteer (40) hours per year of service to the school. A fair policy will be developed that states the many ways families or their representatives can satisfy this requirement. No student will be released from the School's program if his/her parents or representatives fail to satisfy the required hours of the parent involvement agreement.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers and students shall sign and return to the School an acknowledgement of receipt and review of the Community Handbook with the application for admission.

The School shall follow any required procedures for the transfer of a program between SELPAs. Additionally, each application will be reviewed by staff to ensure it is complete before the student will be considered for admission. Each application will include a description of the School's dispute resolution process. Any student that has been denied admission for failure to meet the School's Admission Requirements and Process may avail him/herself to this process for reconsideration.

The School's personnel shall not inquire specifically about a student's citizenship or immigration status or the citizenship or immigration status of a student's parents or guardians; nor shall personnel seek or require, to the exclusion of other permissible documentation or information, documentation or information that may indicate a student's immigration status, such as a green card, voter registration, a passport or citizenship papers. Where any law contemplates submission of national origin related information to satisfy the requirements of a special program, School personnel shall solicit that documentation or information separately from the school enrollment process.

Pursuant to this policy and where permitted by law, the **Executive Director** of the School shall enumerate alternative means to establish residency, age or other eligibility criteria for enrollment or programs, and those alternative means shall include among them documentation or information that are available to persons regardless of immigration status, citizenship status or national origin, and that do not reveal information related to citizenship status or immigration status.

If the School solicits the last four digits of an adult household member's Social Security number to establish eligibility for a federal benefit program, the School shall explain the limited purpose for which the information is collected. It is the School's policy that a failure to provide this information will not bar the student from enrolling in or attending the School, and such policy will be explained at the time the School asks for this information.

### **III. Preferences**

Open classroom positions for each school year are determined through a process of annually requesting current year's parents to state their intent to re-enroll student(s) for the next occurring school year. In accordance with the School Charter, a public lottery is held on a specified date to fill open classroom positions. In the event that there are more students applying for admission than available space, preferences shall be extended in the following order of priority:

- Pupils currently attending the School;
- Siblings of students currently enrolled in the School;
- Children of the School's founding families (not to exceed 10% of the school's total population);
- Children of the School's Governing Board members (not to exceed 10% of the school's total population),
- Students residing within the boundaries of the Old Adobe Union School District.. If enrollment was based on the preferential treatment received due to the in-district residence, the student must continue to reside in the district in order to remain enrolled in the following school year;
- Children of staff (not to exceed 10% of the total student population).

### **IV. Enrollment Process and Guidelines**

There will be an open enrollment period each year, which will be advertised within the school community so that all interested students may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission. The deadline for accepting applications will be clearly stated.

The process for enrollment proceeds as follows, (not necessarily in the exact order provided):

- The School will determine class size/configuration for the school year;
- The School will solicit from current students their intention to return the following year;
- The school will solicit from parents/guardians of current students their intention to apply for admission for siblings of current students;
- The school will solicit from founders and staff members their intention to apply for admission for their children;
- The School will design program informational materials;
- The School will plan one or more Information Open House Meetings (attendance at which is strongly encouraged for admission);
- The School will issue press releases and utilize other communication strategies;

- The School will actively recruit students throughout the community;
- The School will host Information Open House Meeting(s) and record attendance;
- The School will schedule School Tours beginning the second year of the program (attendance at which is strongly encouraged for admission);
- The School will establish and hold an open enrollment period so that all interested student may have an equal opportunity to apply for admission;
- The School will determine the number of returning students at each level;
- The School will determine the number of new students at each level;
- After the students in the preferred categories are placed, the remaining students will be placed pursuant to a random public drawing;
- The School will hold a random public drawing, if necessary;
- The School will notify the families of the applicants who are accepted and rejected;
- Non-accepted families will be placed on the waitlist in the order in which the students are drawn from the random public drawing. Children who complete the application process after the published deadline will be added to the next lottery pool if a wait list already exists.

A wait list is maintained from year to year. Once on the wait list, a student would remain in that position until he/she is offered a spot in the school or expresses no further interest. During enrollment, volunteers and paid employees return calls and answer questions from prospective families. If families from the wait list are offered a position, they must accept that position within three business days or if they decline or fail to respond within three business days they may be removed from the wait list or placed at the bottom of the wait list of they desire.

**Reference:**

*Admissions*

*drafted in compliance with the Model Attorney General Policies required by the Education Code.*

***Non-Discrimination in Admissions Policies:***

*Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (discrimination prohibited based on race, color and national origin); Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (discrimination prohibited based on gender); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (discrimination prohibited based on disability), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, California Constitution, Art. 1, § 31 (Proposition 209 prohibiting schools from giving preferential treatment to any individual or group in public education on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin) and California’s Education Code section 235 (discrimination prohibited based on sex, race or ethnicity).*

*Some of these laws only apply to charter schools if they receive federal funds (e.g., Title VI, Title IX). Others, however, apply irrespective of whether the school receives federal funds (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and California’s Constitution and Education Code section 235).*

***Statement of Non-Discrimination on Applications and Outreach Programs:***

*The federal Office of Civil Rights has determined the following notice meets the requirements of the various regulations implemented requiring such notice.*

Adopted: 06/18/2018

Amended: