

## Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School Enrollment Policy and Application for Admission

The Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School (AMSA) is a public charter school open to all Massachusetts students on a space available basis. AMSA serves students in grades six through twelve and accepts applications for students in grades six through nine. *M.G.L., c.71, §89 (m); 603 CMR 1.05 (1)(12)*

AMSA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students as described in *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (m) and 603 CMR 1.05 (2)*. AMSA shall notify all applicants in writing of the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend the charter school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English language learners. The availability of services is presented in the student handbook. *603 CMR 1.05 (4)*

There is no application fee for admission to AMSA. There is no tuition charge for students attending AMSA. AMSA will not use financial incentives to recruit students. *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (m); 603 CMR 1.05 (3) (a)*

Transportation: AMSA utilizes two busing programs for families.

- Local Marlborough resident busing, which is supervised by the Marlborough Public School system. At present, there is no charge to parents for Marlborough transportation.
- Privately contracted regional busing is available for families who are not residents of Marlborough at a cost subject to and determined by student ridership. Families pay for regional busing. Financial assistance is available for eligible families. Families receive an application, which includes the regional busing policies, a fee schedule, and the preliminary bus routes and stops.

Student transportation information can be found on the AMSA website, [www.amsacs.org](http://www.amsacs.org). Select "Student Life" and then select "Transportation" for instructions.

AMSA implements a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (f) and 603 CMR 1.05 (1)* that is updated annually and included in the AMSA Annual Report. AMSA's enrollment process is not integrated with that of the four core sending districts, Marlborough, Maynard, Hudson, and Clinton. *603 CMR 1.05 (11)*

The Recruitment Plan includes AMSA's outreach materials and along with the AMSA Student Handbook, can be found on the AMSA website [www.amsacs.org](http://www.amsacs.org).

DEFINITIONS: *As amended per Charter School Statute, M.G.L., c. 71, §89 and the Charter School Regulations 603 CMR 1.05*

**Enrollment Policy:** The document that clearly communicates AMSA's adherence to applicable laws and regulations with the objective of creating a transparent and fair enrollment process.

**Application:** The primary document/form used to submit a request for admission to AMSA; available on the AMSA website [www.amsacs.org](http://www.amsacs.org). Parents who are unable to access the online application may contact the school at 508-597-2400 for assistance or the Registrar directly at 508-597-2487. The Registrar will be able to assist with the application process by phone or in person by appointment.

**Applicant:** Someone who formally applies for admission to AMSA.

**District Tuition Cap:** In any fiscal year, no public school district's total charter school tuition payment to a Commonwealth charter school shall exceed 9 per cent of the district's net school spending or 18 per cent for those districts that qualify under *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (3)*. This is also referred to as the *net school spending cap*.

**Maximum Enrollment:** The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has granted each charter school a maximum enrollment of a specific number of students per its charter.

**Siblings:** Students who share a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption. *603 CMR 1.02*

#### Children Who Receive Sibling Preference

- Children who live in different households but share a common biological or legal parent.
- Siblings of students who are attending AMSA at the time of application and lottery.
- Siblings of students who are due to graduate at the end of the school year in which the lottery is held.
- If a student moves out of the local city or town but remains enrolled, that student's siblings have preference in admission even though they are non-residents at the time of application.

#### Children Who Do Not Receive Sibling Preference

- Children who live in the same household but do not share a common biological or legal parent.
- Foster children.
- Siblings and children of alumni/alumnae.
- Siblings of applicants who have been accepted for admission but are not yet attending (including twins).

**Residents:** Students who live in AMSA’s region of service, also referred to as Core Towns and specified in the school’s charter as Marlborough, Maynard, Hudson, and Clinton. Residents enrolled in district, charter, private, or parochial schools get equal preference for Commonwealth charter schools.

**Non-residents:** Students who live within Massachusetts but outside of AMSA’s region of service, also referred to as Non-Core Towns. All applicants must be residents of Massachusetts to apply for admission, and to attend a Massachusetts charter school.

Homeless students are eligible to apply and to attend AMSA. In order to receive preference for admission based on residency, proofs of residency for students who may be considered homeless shall be handled on a case-by-case basis with the school.

**Admitted:** To accept an offer of admission.

**Currently Attending/Attending:** A student is considered “attending” if they are participating in classes. Newly enrolled students must begin attending school within 10 school days of the first day of school (or anticipated start date in accordance with AMSA’s attendance policy). If a student does not attend school by day 10, the student will be considered no longer enrolled and their seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

**Enrollment:** A student is considered enrolled at AMSA when their registration form is submitted, all applicable documentation has been verified in accordance with ASMA’s enrollment policy, an offer of admission is made, and an acceptance is received. If a student’s documentation is not complete, AMSA may withhold attendance, and the student will be marked absent each day until the registration process has been completed.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are available online on the AMSA website, [www.amsacs.org](http://www.amsacs.org). AMSA begins accepting applications in **November** for the following school year. Applications for admission will be accepted until the **first Friday in February**.

**AMSA will not accept applications past the application deadline.**

AMSA will give reasonable public notice of at least one month, of all application windows and deadlines. Dates will be announced on the school website, in the local newspapers, and social media (*Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube*). *603 CMR 1.05 3 (c)(5)* AMSA will not set any principal application deadlines or hold any enrollment lotteries for student admission for the upcoming school year until after January 1<sup>st</sup> and shall conclude its principal enrollment process no later than March 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. *603 CMR 1.05 (3) (c)*

The application does not require dual parent or guardian signatures.

Applications do not carry over from year to year and applicants must reapply each year if not offered admission. Students who have officially withdrawn from AMSA and wish to be considered for admission are required to reapply.

Parents or guardians who are unable to access the online application may contact the school at 508-597-2400 for assistance or the Registrar directly at 508-597-2487. The Registrar will be able to assist parents or guardians with the application process, either by phone or in person by appointment.

Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to take a school tour prior to applying for admission. AMSA will hold an informational meeting in the fall for parents and guardians of prospective applicant. These meetings are specifically designed to offer interested parents and guardians the opportunity to meet key administrators and learn about AMSA's program and services. Notice of tours and meetings will be posted on the AMSA website [www.amsacs.org](http://www.amsacs.org) and in local newspapers and social media (*Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube*).

AMSA does not require potential students or their families to attend school tours, interviews, orientations, or information meetings as a condition of application and/or enrollment. AMSA does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate enrollment on results from any test of ability or achievement. 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(a)

It is important to submit accurate residence information when applying for admission. AMSA reserves the right to **rescind** enrollment if documentation and/or proof of residency is determined to be fraudulent during the enrollment process.

#### ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT

**All applicants must be residents of Massachusetts to apply, to enroll, and to attend a Massachusetts charter school.** AMSA may not admit foreign exchange students or offer a leave of absence outside of Massachusetts.

Students who may be considered homeless are eligible to apply and to attend AMSA regardless of being able to provide proof of residency. In order to obtain preference for admission, however, proof of current or temporary residence must be provided. The school's homeless liaison will work with each student who may be considered homeless on a case-by-case basis to support the completion of their application and other document submission requirements.

Proof of residency must be provided for a student to be eligible for enrollment. ~~For students who may be considered homeless, preference for admission based on proof of residency will be handled on a case-by-case basis.~~ Examples of proof of residency must have the name and address of the applicant's parent or guardian on the bill and include **THREE** of the following documents below (items cannot be from the same category):

- A Utility Bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days.
- A Deed, Mortgage payment dated within the past 60 days, or Property Tax Bill dated within the

last year.

- A current Lease, Section 8 Agreement, or Landlord Affidavit.
- A W2 Form dated within the year, or a Payroll Stub dated within the past 60 days.
- A Bank or Credit Card Statement dated within the past 60 days.
- A Proof of Residency Card or Letter from the Town/City Clerk's office.
- A copy of current Town Census Form.
- A Letter from an Approved Government Agency \* dated within the past 60 days.

*\*Approved government agencies: Department of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, and communications on Commonwealth Letterhead.*

The proofs of residency must reflect the place where the child and parent/guardian **actually reside** in the city or town indicated on their application.

For purposes of enrollment preference, AMSA may establish “a presumption that an applicant student resides in the school district in which they or their siblings attend public school. Such a provision must specify that the applicant student may rebut this presumption through evidence indicating that they reside in a school district that is different from the one in which they attend school. Evidence submitted may include, but is not limited to, admission to the attending district through school choice, *M.G.L., c. 76 §12 (b)*: through an agreement between school committees; or through provisions of a collective bargaining agreement.”

AMSA requires students to successfully complete the grade prior to the grade for which they seek admission. AMSA will honor the grade placement determinations made by the applicant's sending school district. 603 CMR 1.05 (12).

#### DESCRIPTION OF LOTTERY PROCESS

AMSA will determine the number of seats available each year by grade level. In such cases where there are fewer seats than eligible applicant, students will be accepted for admission by a lottery process. 603 CMR 1.05 (6)(a)(c)

The lottery is conducted in public at the school, located at 201 Forest Street, Marlborough, Massachusetts. The lottery is conducted electronically, and a neutral party will certify that the process is fair, and the selection is random. 603 CMR 1.05 (9)

The electronically generated lottery corresponds to the identification number of each applicant. The parent or guardian of each applicant will receive their child's identification number in advance of the drawing to ensure transparency and fairness of the process. Reasonable public notice is given at least one week prior to the lottery date, held no later than March 15 of each year. 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(c)(9)

**IMPORTANT:** Admission will only be offered to those families who have completed an application and submitted the application prior to the application deadline. A child will not be considered for admission or be eligible to be included on a waitlist if an application is not

submitted. **Please note that a sibling of a currently attending AMSA student will only be given first preference if they have completed an application by the deadline.**

Once the application window is closed, and if there are more applicants than seats available for a particular grade, then all those applicants will be entered into the lottery. The lottery will electronically determine an initial randomly generated order for each grade level. After this randomly generated order has been electronically created, then preference for admission will be applied. The order of preference in which they will be applied are as follows:

- Siblings of currently attending AMSA students
- Residents of Marlborough, Maynard, Hudson, and Clinton (Core)
- Non-residents (Non-core)

Sibling preference is only given if the sibling is currently attending AMSA. Being on the waitlist or making the lottery does not qualify other siblings to be eligible for sibling preference. The sibling must be currently attending at the time the offer of admission is made, not just enrolled or given the option to enroll, to receive sibling status when determining preference.

The parent or guardian will be notified by email or phone if their student is selected in the lottery. The parent or guardian will have five school days to accept the offer of admission. The results of the lottery will be posted on the school website, providing the identification number and corresponding lottery number of all applicants.

If AMSA's principal enrollment process fails to fill the available admission seats, AMSA may repeat the process more than once, providing such process is fair and open and if a waitlist does not exist. AMSA will meet the requirement of *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (n)*. No student entering a lottery process may be admitted ahead of other eligible students who were previously placed on a waitlist during a prior enrollment process for that school year, except in cases of a change to the enrollment preference status, or as described in *603 CMR 1.05 (8)(10)(b)*.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE WAITLIST

When all eligible seats are filled, the remaining applicants will be placed on a waitlist. One waitlist will be maintained for each grade level that will take into consideration the preference of admission for each student.

- Siblings of currently attending AMSA students
- Residents of Marlborough, Maynard, Hudson, and Clinton (Core)
- Non-residents (Non-core)

If a seat becomes available, the seat will be offered to the student at the top of the waitlist, taking into account current sibling and resident preference status. The student at the top of the waitlist will be notified by phone and/or email. The student will have five school days to respond. Reasonable proof of current residency or sibling status is required at the time an offer

of admission is made. If no response is received by day 5, or the student declines an offer of admission, the student will be permanently removed from the waitlist and the next student on the waitlist will be offered the seat. Any student who has declined an offer of admission and/or is removed from the waitlist would need to reapply for admission in a subsequent school year.

Parents and guardians should update their contact information if they move during the enrollment process, since a change in residency may impact their student's position on the waitlist. For example, a student moving into Clinton from Worcester would be moved up on the waitlist, while taking into consideration their initial randomly generated lottery number.

**In cases where the enrollment of a student, who is not a sibling of another currently enrolled student, from the waitlist would exceed the district charter tuition cap, the student will be skipped over but kept on the waitlist. In cases where the enrollment of a student who is a sibling of a student already attending a charter school would exceed the district charter school cap, and the school has not admitted other students prior to admitting the sibling, the sibling may be enrolled with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts providing tuition for the sibling, subject to appropriation. M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (i) 603 CMR 1.05 (10)(b)**

If a student stops attending AMSA or declines admission, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade (six through nine) will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled up to February 15<sup>th</sup>. A vacancy not filled after February 15<sup>th</sup> moves into the subsequent grade, to be filled the following September if such grade is not in the last half of the grades offered and is not grade 10, 11, or 12. Seats for students who have accepted an offer of admission in the charter school but have never attended are exempt from this provision. M.G.L., c. 71 §89 (n) 603 CMR 1.05 10 (c)

Every year, AMSA will keep accurate records of the waitlist that contain the name (first, middle, last), date of birth, city or town of residence, grade level, home address, and telephone number of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission. AMSA does not maintain a waitlist from year to year. The application and lottery process starts over each consecutive year. 603 CMR 105 (10)(a)

#### DESCRIPTION OF ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

Once a student has been notified of acceptance by phone and/or email, they will have five school days from the time they receive notification to accept a seat at AMSA. Upon acceptance, the parent or guardian will be asked to submit an acceptance form along with all applicable documentation. **Reasonable proof of current residency or sibling status is required at the time an offer of admission is made. Proof of successfully completing the prior grade must be submitted no later than one week before the start of the upcoming school year.** Students who are unable to provide proof of successfully completing the prior grade will have their offer of admission rescinded and they will be unenrolled. Students who have been homeschooled should have a verified homeschooling plan that had been signed off on by their sending school district.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS

All newly enrolled students will take a placement test to determine their level of ability, which determines their class schedule. The placement test does not impact the enrollment status of the student. The placement test will identify the grade that the student will best be served, which may be different from the grade they applied for. Parents and guardians will be asked to complete, sign, and submit the registration form along with all medical documents requested by the school nurse.

Although enrolled, not submitting proper registration documentation will impact a student's ability to attend school.

AMSA reserves the right to rescind enrollment if documentation and/or proof of residency is determined to be fraudulent.

Enrollment may be rescinded if attempts are made to influence the admissions process through the offer of gifts and/or gratuities in accordance with *M.G.L., c. 268A §3*.

Newly enrolled students must begin attending school within 10 school days of the first day of school (or anticipated start date in accordance with AMSA's attendance policy). If a student does not attend school by day 10, the student will be considered no longer enrolled and their seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

## THIRD PARTY MAIL HOUSE

To ensure that a Commonwealth charter school shall fulfill its obligations under its recruitment and retention plan, AMSA will provide the names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailing unless the parent requests that the school withhold their child's information. *M.G.L., c. 71, §89 (g) 603 CMR 1.05 (6)(e)*

AMSA submits a form to each family at the start of each school year whereby a parent or guardian may choose to request the school to withhold distribution of student information to a third party mail house. AMSA does not disclose student information unless required to do so.