

Policy Title: Lottery for Admission to School  
Policy Number: PSA-OPR053.0  
Date Reviewed by Administration: 11/16/2020  
Date Approved by PSA Board: 11/17/2020  
Stand Alone or Handbook:  Employee Handbook  
 Student/Parent Handbook  
 Stand Alone Policy  
Policy References: South Carolina Code of Laws Title 59, Chapter 40  
PSA Charter Section 4.b. Admissions Policies and Procedures  
PSA-FED013.0\_Federal\_Student Privacy and Parental Access to Information (FERPA)

Policy:

### Lottery for Admission to School

The Board of Palmetto Scholars Academy (PSA) adopts the following policy, effective on the date of adoption by the Board.

#### SECTION 1. Student eligibility.

SECTION 1.1. Palmetto Scholars Academy is open to all students eligible to attend public school, subject to space limitations.

SECTION 1.2. Palmetto Scholars Academy will not limit or deny admission or show preference to any individual or group of individuals except under the following conditions:

- PSA will give enrollment preference to students enrolled at PSA the previous school year for grades 7-12. Enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering into the lottery.
- If applicants exceed the available enrollment slots applicants will be entered into a Lottery to determine placement
- Students who withdraw from PSA or enroll at another school forfeit entirely and definitively their status as a current student of the school. Such students can only re-enroll by observing and complying with the Lottery process and its subsequent procedures and rules.

Procedure:

### PSA LOTTERY PROCEDURES

#### I. PROCESS

- a. Timing and Notice. As directed under PSA's Charter, when the number of applications received exceeds the number of pupils permitted per grade, a lottery will be conducted for that grade level(s), in compliance with Section 59-40-50 of the South Carolina Charter School Act (SCCSA). Parents or guardians of all affected applicants will be notified of the date that the lottery will occur, as well as the designated place and time of the meeting.
- b. Conduct. The lottery will be conducted by Palmetto Scholars Academy administration and staff and overseen by at least one Board Member and a SC Notary Public to ensure lawful operation of the lottery.
- c. Procedures. The lottery process will proceed as follows: (a) each student applicant will be registered in an electronic database by grade level; (b) a randomizing computer program will generate a list of sorted names for each grade; (c) the Board Member, Notary and administrators will use the generated list to draw the name of the applicants in the order that they appear on the randomized list for each grade level; (d) a record of the order in which the names are recorded and called will be kept on file by the Principal and the Registrar. The school may choose to contract with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor specializing in conducting Charter School Lotteries to provide those services in lieu of a manual drawing.
- d. Class Roster and Wait List. The class roster for the affected grade(s) will include the students whose names were drawn in lottery order equaling the number of enrollment openings for that grade. The remaining names will compose the wait list for the affected grade(s) by order of their lottery number.
- e. Single Year Wait List. There is no appeal process when an applicant is denied admission because of lottery results. Acceptance to the school, through standard enrollment or lottery, may not be deferred to another school year.
- f. Student Appeals Process. In the event that an applicant believes they were denied admission for a reason other than the results of a lottery, the student may appeal the denial to the school's sponsor, South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD). The appeal must be in writing and state the grounds on which the appeal is based, and the written appeal must be provided to both SCPCSD and to the school. The decision made by that Board will be binding on the student and the school per Section 59-40-50(C)(1) of the SCCSA.

## II. PREFERENCE CLASSES & PRIORITY

- a. Enrollment Priority. PSA shall give enrollment priority to students enrolled at PSA during the previous school year (previous to the year for which they Lottery is conducted). An enrollment preference for returning students excludes those students from entering into a lottery.
- b. Preferred Classes. In alignment with its charter and its physical location, Palmetto Scholars Academy honors these special exceptions for priority enrollment per Section 59-40-50(8) of the SCCSA (1996):
  - Siblings of students currently enrolled and attending,
  - Siblings of any PSA student who attended the school for at least one complete academic year within the last 6 years, and
  - Children of current PSA Charter School Employees, and
  - Children of the PSA Charter Committee, and
  - Students who are dependents of military personnel living in military housing on Joint Base Charleston or who are currently stationed at Joint Base Charleston.

Requests for consideration as a preferred class must be submitted at least 10 working days prior to the general deadline for Lottery applications to permit the school time to verify applicant qualifies for the preference.

Qualification of student applicants for the first four preferred classes will be verified by PSA Administration from their records.

Qualification of student applicants for Military Preference will be verified by a representative of Joint Base Charleston Leadership prior to inclusion in that preferred class.

c. Definitions related to preference classes:

- ***“PSA Student” or “Existing Student”*** - a child eligible to attend public school that is currently enrolled in Palmetto Scholars Academy.
- ***“Children”*** – a legal dependent, as indicated by a birth certificate, adoption decree, custody arrangement, or documented guardianship.
- ***“Sibling”*** – children who share at least one common biological or legal parent whether through natural or adoptive means. Parents may choose to submit evidence in the form of a Birth Certificate or adoption decree showing common parent(s), or if step siblings Birth Certificates for both children and a Marriage Certificate linking the two parents to indicate a sibling relationship. ***“Siblings” may be further categorized as follows:***
  1. ***“Twins”*** Multiple offspring produced by the same pregnancy. For the purposes of this policy Triplets, Quadruplets, etc. will be considered “Twins”. If a student who is a twin is admitted to PSA the remaining twin will move to the front of the Sibling wait list.
  2. ***“Siblings in the same grade”*** Siblings who are to be enrolled in the same grade will be treated similar to, but behind twins. If a student with a sibling in the same grade is admitted to PSA the remaining sibling will move to the front of the wait list, behind only twins already on the wait list.
  3. ***“All Other Siblings”*** when a student is admitted to PSA all of their siblings will be moved to the front of the wait list, behind only twins and siblings in the same grade.
- ***“PSA Student who has graduated within the last 6 years”*** – students who have received a diploma or certificate of graduation from Palmetto Scholars Academy in one of the preceding 6 graduating classes.
- ***“PSA Charter Committee”*** – the original committee of parents and community members who developed the Charter for Palmetto Scholars Academy. The names of all members of this class are documented in the original Charter.
- ***“PSA Charter School Employee”*** – employees of the Palmetto Scholars Academy. Only individuals who are currently employed as of the date of the Lottery draw and who have an Employment Agreement with the school are considered Employees for the purpose of this preference class.

- **“...military personnel living in military housing on Joint Base Charleston or who are currently stationed at Joint Base Charleston”** – individuals who are enlisted or commissioned into one of the 6 branches of the United States Military (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, or U.S. Space Force), whose major command and work location are included under the command structure of the military area governed by the Leadership of Joint Base Charleston and whose ETS (Expiration of Term of Service) date is after the first day of the school year for which the Lottery is being conducted. This may include service members who are on either active duty or reserve status, with status verified by the JBC School Liaison Office. Reservists seeking preference must provide a copy of orders assigning them to Joint Base Charleston or proof that they are residents living on Joint Base Charleston.
- d. Preferred Class Limitations:
- Children of PSA Charter Committee members and Children of PSA Charter School Employees shall not exceed 20% of available enrollment slots.
  - Children of Military personnel shall not exceed 20% of available enrollment slots.
- e. Racial Composition. Palmetto Scholars Academy serves students statewide and strives to mirror the racial composition of South Carolina. Racial composition is not used as a factor in lottery placement.

### III. LOTTERY DRAW ORDER

Class size is determined by facility space and capacity at each grade level.

- a. Sixth Grade. 20% of the sixth grade class spaces will be offered to dependents of Military Parents stationed at JBC as per the school’s Charter. If there are more military applicants than spaces, a sub-lottery will determine which students are offered spaces for this preferred class of applicants and which students are wait listed among the preferred classes of applicants. Wait listed preferred class applicants will additionally be entered into the general lottery.
- b. 7th through 12th grades. In the remaining classes, priority is given to currently enrolled returning students. 20% of open spaces will be offered to Active Duty Military Parents as per the school’s charter. If there are fewer than 5 open slots in any class and there are multiple applicants with preferred status a sub-lottery will be held to determine placement. Any other remaining seats will be filled through the general lottery and wait list.
- c. Sibling Order on Wait List. The general lottery will be worked from the lowest grade to the highest (6th - 12th). Should a space be offered to an applicant with an applying sibling, that sibling will remain in the general lottery to determine their space of enrollment or wait list. When the accepted sibling enrolls, the wait listed sibling will be moved to a priority entrance space as a sibling on the wait list after the conclusion of the lottery. Twins will be prioritized first on the wait list, followed by Siblings in the same grade, and then all other siblngs.
- d. Vacancies During the School Year. The wait list will be used to fill available slots as vacancies arise during the school year. Priority is given to the preferred classes outlined above. Again, if there are fewer than 5 slots in any class and there are multiple

applicants with preferred status a sub-lottery will be held to determine placement. The 5 slot threshold has been established to ensure compliance with the 20% set aside preference for military families.

IV. NOTIFICATION AND ENROLLMENT

e. All families, both accepted and wait listed, will receive an email within 72 hours of the lottery. This email will either extend an invitation to enroll or list the child's wait list position. Should the child be granted an invitation to enroll, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will have 3 business days to submit online and physical forms and documents required for enrollment. Below is a list of required documents:

- Birth Certificate (this must be the "long form" which shows parent(s)' names)
- DHEC Immunizations (this is the form requested from the student's pediatrician)
- Proof of Residency (lease, mortgage agreement or major utility bill)
- Most recent report card. Students 8th grade and above will also require a transcript by July 1<sup>st</sup>
- Any testing documentation the student has available (this is optional, but helpful to school administration and staff)
- The above items, as well as forms which the school will provide, must be completed within an allotted amount of time in order to hold the child's space. If the required documentation is not received by the deadline provided, the student's space will be deemed forfeited and offered to the next student on the appropriate wait list.

Periodic updates will be sent to all families remaining on the wait list throughout the remainder of the year.

f. Sixth Grade Military Space Timing. To accommodate relocations of military personnel, PSA will hold any remaining available military spaces until June 1 of the year prior to the enrolling school year. After that date, the wait list will be used to fill unclaimed seats.

PSA will schedule individual enrollment appointments with those offered a space. Parents who fail to respond to the enrollment request within 3 business days will be considered to have declined enrollment at PSA. Parents who fail to schedule an enrollment appointment within 3 business days of accepting enrollment will be considered to have declined enrollment at PSA.

Effective Date: 10/27/2020

Revision Record

Revision	Purpose	Date
0.0	Original form created by Policy and HR committee from PCSASC template	10/15/2020

<b>1.0</b>	Revised order of enrollment priority for preferred classes to mirror SC Title 59 Chapter 40 Section (8) order. Revised "Sibling" definition to "Parents may choose to submit" from "Must submit" for documentary evidence in support of sibling relationship. Deleted requirement that students failing 6 <sup>th</sup> grade reenter the lottery to bring policy into compliance with SC 59-40.	11/17/20