

COLOGNE ACADEMY
MANUAL OF SCHOOL POLICIES APPROVED BY THE BOARD

POLICY 301: APPLICATION, ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND LOTTERY POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is two-fold.

1. This policy was created to explain enrollment and admissions at Cologne Academy, so that families may make enrollment decisions in an informed and timely manner.
2. Admission to Cologne Academy is open to all Minnesota students, without regard to intellectual or athletic ability, gender, race, religion, measures of achievement or aptitude, English language ability, place of residence or lack of residence, or any other factors, other than the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

Cologne Academy is a PreK- 8th grade public school and enrolls eligible Minnesota students who submit a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. When that occurs, the school conducts a lottery; students not enrolled through the lottery are placed on the applicable waiting list.

Sibling: For purposes of this policy, “sibling” means one of two or more individuals having one or both parents, including step or foster parents, in common.

Lottery: The School conducts all lotteries through a method of random selection.

Lottery Grade Order: Applicable lotteries occur from highest grade to lowest grade. For example, if a lottery is required in grades K and 3, the grade 3 lottery is conducted first, followed by the K lottery.

Sites: Cologne Academy Public Charter District has two options , Cologne Academy- in-person instruction (CA) and Cologne Academy Online-on line instruction (CAO). Cologne Academy (in person only offers

PreK through the state's VPK program) Pre-K is located in the STARS Building at 1111 Village Parkway, K-8 is located at 1221 Village Parkway, Cologne, MN. CAO does not offer PreK.

Already-enrolled PreK-8th grade students (other than non-Minnesota residents) remain enrolled at their site until formally withdrawn. Already-enrolled CA students may apply to transfer to and will be accepted in CAO if there are available seats in CAO. Already-enrolled CAO students who have completed at least one trimester at CAO may apply to transfer to and will be accepted in CA if there are available seats in CA.

Pre-K students enrolled in VPK (28 seats total), in accordance with Policy 604 for the purpose of this policy, would receive first seats in Kindergarten. (See section on PreK lottery)

Preferences & Order of Enrollment PreK-8: After already-enrolled students fill seats, as described above, Cologne Academy provides enrollment preferences to siblings of already-enrolled students for the applicable site, and children of staff employed at the school, in that order. Accordingly, Cologne Academy provides enrollment in the following order:

1. Already-enrolled students at the site in which they are enrolled.
2. Already-enrolled CA students who apply to transfer to CAO, and already-enrolled CAO students who have completed at least one trimester and apply to transfer to CA.
3. Siblings of already-enrolled students at the site for which they are applying.
4. Children of Cologne Academy staff.
5. All other applicants.

Preferences & Order of Enrollment PreK

VPK is a mixed model delivery. This means that the school district provides public education to 4 year olds in a location that is off the district's campus.

To apply for enrollment the student must be 4 on or before September 1 of the year of starting PreK and student cannot be five on August 31 of the enrolling year. **There are no exceptions.**

1. As such, those families that have been enrolled at STARS ELA full time for at least the previous 6 continuous months and maintain enrollment through the first day of PreK will be enrolled first. Three year old preschool at STARS is limited to 20 students.
2. Siblings of already-enrolled students at the site for which they are applying.
3. Children of currently employed Staff Members at time of enrollment and remain continuously employed through the start of the school year.
4. All other applicants.

No waiting list carry over from year to year: Each waiting list is subject to a lottery and redrawn during the admission process each year. All applicants still on the waiting list at the beginning of the next enrollment period must submit a new written application for enrollment and all applicants are subject to the enrollment process described in this policy. The waiting list does not carry over from year-to-year.

Siblings in the Same Grade or Multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.): Each student seeking admission completes an application (i.e. not one application for the family). In a lottery situation, each student receives

an individual number/lot in the lottery. Siblings enrolling in the same grade must each submit an application and each will have a separate entry in the lottery. If one of the multiple siblings is drawn in the lottery, the other sibling(s) is/are automatically enrolled.

III. APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Site-Based Enrollment. The application and enrollment procedures described are for each school site. Transfers of already-enrolled students from one school site to another occur as described above under “Sites” and “Preferences & Order of Enrollment.”

Enrollment Period. The annual open enrollment period shall be determined by the school administration and shall be published no later than November 1st of each school year. Generally, open enrollment is held from the Tuesday after Labor Day through the third Friday in January. By January 5th, each year, the school board will establish and publish the available enrollment by grade applicable to the following school year. All prospective students must complete and submit a timely application for admission in order to be considered for enrollment in the school year following the enrollment period. This timely-application requirement applies to all currently-enrolled non-Minnesota residents and all applicants on any waitlist. An application is considered to be timely if it has been marked as “received” in the main office of the school before the end of the enrollment period. Each enrollment application received is date-stamped and also either time-stamped or sequentially stamped by number designating the order in which applications were received for each such date.

Admissions. All applications received during the open enrollment period are automatically accepted for enrollment (i.e. admitted) unless more applications are received than the available enrollment/seats established by the Board for the applicable grade(s). In this situation, all submitted applications for such grade(s) are placed in the lottery subject to enrollment preferences.

Siblings of Admitted Students: Siblings, who submit an application before the expiration of the open enrollment period, of currently admitted students are automatically admitted, unless the number of sibling applications exceed the available enrollment established by the Board for the applicable grade(s). If the number of sibling applications exceeds available enrollment in any grade, a sibling lottery is held for each such grade. Siblings are admitted in the order in which they are drawn in the lottery. If all available enrollment in a grade is filled by siblings, the sibling lottery continues and establishes the sibling waiting list, which has preference over both the staff-children waiting list and the general waiting list.

Children of Staff Employed at Cologne Academy: Children of staff employed at the school who submit an application before the expiration of the open enrollment period, are automatically admitted provided that all siblings (of already admitted students) who submitted a timely application are admitted, and provided there is available enrollment as determined by the Board for the applicable grade(s). If the number of children of staff exceeds the available enrollment established by the Board for any grade (and after all siblings (of admitted students) who submitted a timely application are admitted), a staff-children lottery is held. Children of staff are admitted to the school in the order in which they are drawn in the lottery. If all

available enrollment in a grade is filled by children of staff, the staff-children lottery continues to establish the staff-children waiting list for each such grade, which has preference over the general waiting list.

General Lottery: If the number of applications received during the open enrollment period exceeds available enrollment established by the Board for any grade, and after all enrollment preferences are provided or applicable waitlists established for the enrollment preferences, the school conducts a general lottery. All applications for each such grade(s) (excluding applications subject to enrollment preferences) received before the expiration of the open enrollment period are included in the general lottery. Students are admitted to the school in the order in which they are drawn in the lottery, as long as there is available enrollment as determined by the Board for the applicable grade(s). If all available enrollment in any grade is filled, the lottery continues and establishes the general waiting list for each such grade in the order drawn, until all applications are drawn. If a student is admitted through the general lottery and that student has one or more siblings in other grades also subject to a lottery, those siblings are automatically admitted as long as available enrollment as determined by the Board remains in the applicable grade(s).

Applications received after the open enrollment period expires are automatically admitted as long as there is available enrollment as established by the Board in the applicable grade, in the order received. If, or once, there is no available enrollment in any grade, applications are added to the applicable waiting list for each such grade, in the order received.

Family/Student Declines Enrollment. If a student declines an available seat, the next child on the applicable waiting list will be offered the seat. Students who decline an available seat must re-apply/submit a new application in order to be considered for enrollment.

IV. OTHER CONDITIONS

An applicant to Cologne Academy may apply only for one grade.

In all instances, Cologne Academy may place an enrolled student in the most academically appropriate grade regardless of the student's age.

Early Kindergarten Admission. Applicants who wish to be considered for early entrance to kindergarten must follow the procedures set forth in Cologne Academy's board policy (607.1).

Due to the VPK funding set forth by MN state statute, students MUST be 4 years old by September 1 to be enrolled in PreK. Similarly, students over 5 years old will not be enrolled in Pre K.

If two or more applicants move to a higher-preference waiting list on the same day, they will maintain the ordinal ranking that they had before the move.

Staff-Child Preference Qualification. An applicant is eligible to receive preference as the child of a current member of Cologne Academy's staff after the staff member has begun his or her employment at Cologne Academy. The applicant shall immediately be placed at the end of the existing staff-child waiting list.

Again, if two or more applicants move from the general waiting list to the staff-child waiting list on the same day, they will maintain the ordinal ranking that they had before.

Applicants from the waiting lists will be contacted as seats become available.

Open seats in grades PreK-7th grade can be filled at any time. Open seats can be filled in grade 8 until the final day of the second trimester with the exception of students enrolling with sibling preference.

V. APPLICATION REJECTION

- A. Providing False Information. Cologne Academy may reject an application which contains false information.
- B. Exclusion. Cologne Academy may reject an application for a student who was expelled pursuant to Minn. Stat. 121A.45 during the term of the expulsion if the student was expelled for:
 - a. possessing a dangerous weapon, including a weapon, device, instruments, material, or substance, animate or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, with the exception of a pocket knife with a blade less than two and one-half inches in length, at school or a school function;
 - b. possessing or using an illegal drug at school or a school function;
 - c. selling or soliciting the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function; or
 - d. committing a third-degree assault involving assaulting another and inflicting substantial bodily harm.

VI. Termination of Enrollment

The school may terminate the enrollment of a nonresident student enrolled under an enrollment options program pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 124D.03 or 124D.08 at the end of a school year if the student meets the definition of a habitual truant, the student has been provided appropriate services for truancy under Minn. Ch. 260A, and the student's case has been referred to juvenile court. A "habitual truant" is a child under 16 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for seven school days if the child is in elementary school or for one or more class periods on seven school days if the child is in middle school, junior high school or high school, or a child who is 16 or 17 years of age who is absent from attendance at school without lawful excuse for one or more class periods on seven school days and who has not lawfully withdrawn from school under Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 8.

General Admission Procedures:

1. **Order of Admission:** An enrolled and current attending student at CAO for a minimum of 1 semester (including 4 year olds enrolled in VPK at STARS) Siblings of Already Admitted Students, then Children of Staff Employed at the School, then General Admissions.
2. **No waiting list carry over from year to year:** Each waiting list is subject to a lottery and redrawn during each admission process each year. All applicants still on the waiting list at the beginning of the next enrollment period must submit a new written application for enrollment and all applicants are subject to the enrollment process described above. The waiting list does not carry over from year to year.

3. **Multiple births** (twins, triplets, etc): Each student seeking admission completes an application (i.e. not one application for the family). In a lottery situation, each student receives an individual number/lot in the lottery. Siblings enrolling in the same grade will be considered individuals and each will have a separate entry in the lottery. If one of the multiples is drawn in the lottery, the other sibling(s) is/are enrolled. The siblings would be first on the waitlist if there are no more available seats.
4. **Lottery Grade Order:** Applicable lotteries occur from highest grade to lowest grade. For example, if a lottery is required in grades K and 3, the grade 3 lottery is conducted first, followed by the K lottery.

B. Standards that may not be used for rejection of application. The Director shall establish lottery and enrollment procedures consistent with Minnesota State Law 124D.10. The school may not use the following standards in determining whether to accept or reject an application for open enrollment:

1. previous academic achievement of a student;
2. athletic or extracurricular ability of a student;
3. disabling conditions of a student;
4. a student's proficiency in the English language;
5. the student's place of residence; or
6. previous disciplinary proceedings involving the student. This shall not preclude the school from proceeding with exclusion as set out in Section D. of this policy.

C. Exclusion

1. Director's initial determination. If a school director knows or has reason to believe that an applicant has engaged in conduct that has subjected or could subject the applicant to expulsion or exclusion under law or school policy, the director recommends whether exclusion proceedings should be initiated.
2. Director's review. The Director may make further inquiries. If the Director determines that the applicant should be admitted, he or she will notify the applicant and the school board chair. If the Director determines that the applicant should be excluded, the Director will notify the applicant and determine whether the applicant wishes to continue the application process. Although an application may not be rejected based on previous disciplinary proceedings, the school reserves the right to initiate exclusion procedures pursuant to the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act as warranted on a case-by-case basis.

**AVAILABLE ENROLLMENT BY GRADE
FOR SCHOOL YEAR FY26
COLOGNE ACADEMY**

Upon consideration of the number of currently-enrolled students at Cologne Academy, who are each by law provided enrollment preference, the Board of Cologne Academy establishes the following available enrollment/seats in each grade:

Open seats in grades PreK-7 can be filled at any time by an eligible Minnesota student. Open seats can be filled in grade 8 until the final day of the second trimester with the exception of students enrolling with sibling preference.

In addition, from January 15th- March 15th each year , Cologne Academy will over-enroll grades K-8 by 6%. There are only 30 seats (at this time) for PreK

<u>Grade Available</u>	<u>CA Enrollment Seats</u>	<u>CAO Enrollment Seats</u>
Pre-Kindergarten	30	0
Kindergarten	78/82	Asynchronous
1st Grade	78/82	Asynchronous
2nd Grade	78/82	Asynchronous
3rd Grade	108/113	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous
4th Grade	81/86	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous
5th Grade	81/86	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous
6th Grade	81/86	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous
7th Grade	108/113	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous
8th Grade	50	Asynchronous/ 25 Synchronous

The Board reminds interested applicants of the Order of Admissions for Available Enrollment/Seats: preference for enrollment to: (1) an enrolled and current attending student at CAO for a minimum of 1 semester, (2) current enrolled CA student (3) a sibling* of an enrolled student and to a foster child of that student's parents before accepting other students by lot, (4) children of Cologne Academy staff before accepting other pupils by lot, and (5) remaining students will be selected by lottery.

COLOGNE ACADEMY LOTTERY PROCESS

Preparing for the lottery:

1. Enrollment dates and procedures will be posted on the website, in the school office, and other places as the school deems necessary.
2. As applications are received during open enrollment, applications are stamped with the date received, but all applications are on equal footing during this period (i.e. it is not first-come, first-serve situation).
3. A spreadsheet will be set up for each grade level. For grades with full enrollment, the lottery is simply a placement on a wait-list. No spots can be officially offered to families until current families formally withdraw.
4. For incoming CAO students or siblings, we will place them first (according to MN Law 124D.10 which allows for sibling preference) according to lottery day procedures noted below.
5. Before the lottery, all students' names will be filled out on separate slips of paper. Also on that slip of paper are the siblings' names and grade levels. This needs to be carefully cross-referenced to make sure there are no omissions or errors.

The day of the lottery:

1. The slips of paper with each prospective student's name on it must be cut apart, sorted by grade level, and put in alphabetical order according to last name within grade levels.
2. The spreadsheet will be projected on the wall, if possible, so people can see as names are drawn and typed in.
3. The lottery is open to the public, seating should be arranged for any parents who may want to attend.
4. One person will be designated as the person who draws the names, one person will type in names, and one person will cross-reference all names drawn for siblings, etc. If possible, one person will be designated to keep track of all forms, name slips, etc., after they are drawn.
5. A sibling lottery will be held for one of two reasons. A) if there are more siblings than space available such as in Kindergarten, or B) to determine placement on the wait-list for all other grades. This portion of the lottery will be done first and will start with the highest grade, going grade-by-grade down to Kindergarten.

6. As names are typed into the spreadsheet, it is important to list all siblings and siblings' grade levels. There will be a significant amount of cross-referencing siblings among grade levels throughout the process.
7. Once all open slots are filled, we start placing names on the wait-list.

After the lottery:

1. All parents will be informed via U.S. postal service that they have been given a spot in next year's enrollment or a numbered spot on the wait-list. The office will keep a copy of all letters sent out.
2. Parents will have a finite period of time, to be determined by the office, in which they have to fill out a full enrollment packet or decline their spot. Parents declining their spot should do so in writing. Email notice is considered written notice of decline.
3. The office will devise a spreadsheet to track the status of each student's enrollment.
4. If a parent declines a spot and we go to the next student on the wait-list, we need to check to see if that student has siblings and if enrolling that student moves the siblings up on the wait-list or provides them with an "in" spot. For this reason, we discourage parental calls to the office asking where they are on the wait-list. There are many variables that can affect a student's standing. Office policy is to inform families when they move into the top 3 on the wait-list and then again when we have an "in" spot for them, but not to keep giving updates on a regular basis.
5. When a Kindergarten space opens, the top family on the wait-list is contacted and may choose to accept or may choose to retain their place on the waitlist and allow the opening to go to the next family on the wait-list.
6. If families are notified of a cleared wait-list and do not respond by the due date, the office will make three documented attempts to contact the family. On the third and final attempt, it shall be by mail, informing the family that if we don't hear back from them by the second designated date, we will assume they are no longer interested in Cologne Academy and will be giving their spot to the next family on the wait-list. This documentation must include the kind of contact made (e.g. phone call, email, letter), the date of the contact, the person making the contact, and the response.