

BLUFFVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL
POLICY 509-540 ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to **set forth admission and enrollment procedures that Bluffview Montessori School utilizes.** ~~provide guidelines for enrollment of students to BMS.~~

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Bluffview Montessori School Board of Directors believes that parents have the responsibility to select the most appropriate educational programs for their children and that parental commitment to the educational program is a significant and positive choice. The Board also recognizes that choice in the selection of a public school provides parents and learners an opportunity to seek a school that best fits their needs and interests. This policy addresses the terms and conditions of student applications and enrollment into Bluffview Montessori School.

III. ADMISSION LIMITATIONS

- A. Bluffview Montessori School, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), may limit admission to:
1. pupils within an age group or grade level;
 2. pupils who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under Minnesota Statutes section 124D.68; or
 3. residents of a specific geographic area in which the school is located when the majority of students served by the school are members of underserved populations.
- B. Bluffview Montessori School shall comply with the Minnesota Human Rights Act, which prohibits educational institutions from discriminating against students based on a protected class including race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation or disability.

- C. Bluffview Montessori School must disseminate information about the school's offerings and enrollment procedures to families that reflect the diversity of Minnesota's population and targeted groups. Targeted groups include low-income families and communities, students of color, students at risk of academic failure, and students underrepresented in the school's student body relative to Minnesota's population. The school must document its dissemination activities in the school's annual report. The school's dissemination activities must be a component of the authorizer's performance review of the school.

[NOTE: The 2024 Minnesota legislature significantly revised Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.17; the update appears in Paragraph C. above.]

IV. OPEN ENROLLMENT

A. General Application

1. Applications for all levels will be available on the school website or by request via phone or email.
2. Student applications for a school year that is in progress are accepted during the year. Students may be admitted if space is available throughout the year.
3. Applications will be made available for an upcoming school year on the first working day in January. Any applicants to be considered for the lottery process must have an application submitted to administration by the end of business on the last calendar day of that January.
4. Applications received beginning February 1st will be accepted and processed in the order they are received.
5. Applications for students may only be submitted for one grade.
6. A new application must be submitted each year for any student that is not currently enrolled. They do not carry over from year to year.
 - a) Families of enrolled students will be sent an "Intent to Return" form each January to formally identify students that will not be returning the following year (for the purpose of potential recruitment).

- b) Students that do not submit an Intent to Return Form will remain enrolled.

B. Eligibility

1. Tuition-based Pre-K

- a) Children must be 33 months of age by their first date of attendance.
- b) Enrollment in each classroom environment shall not exceed 20 children, with a ratio of one adult per every ten children enrolled.
 - (1) There are 35 full time spots in total.
- c) No preference for K enrollment may be given to BMS Pre-K students based on their attendance or enrollment in the Pre-K program.

2. BMS Public Charter School (K-8)

- a) To attend Kindergarten, a student must be “at least 5 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences.” MN 124E.11
- b) To attend first grade, a student must be “at least 6 years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed Kindergarten.” MN 124E.11
- c) Bluffview has philosophically chosen not to offer early Kindergarten (September 2 or later) or early first grade enrollment:
 - (1) “A charter school may establish and publish on its website a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in [MN Statute 124E.11] paragraphs (b) and (c).
- d) Student must be a Minnesota resident

- (1) At least one of the student's parents/legal guardians must be a MN resident.

C. Enrollment

1. Bluffview Montessori School, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), shall enroll an eligible pupil who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, pupils must be accepted by lot. Bluffview Montessori School must develop and publish, including on its website, a lottery policy and process that it must use when accepting pupils by lot.

~~All eligible students who submit a timely application shall be enrolled, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a class, grade level, program, or building.~~

[NOTE: The Minnesota Department of Education recommends that charter schools include their local lottery process in this policy. This step helps to ensure that the policy and the lottery process are consistent.]

- a) Students will be enrolled as indicated by their chronological ages.

- (1) Students who transfer from another school will be placed in the grade indicated by transfer records.

- b) If the number of applications exceeds the given capacity, students will be accepted by lottery.

- (1) Levels

- (a) CH: 60 students
- (b) Elementary I & II: 75 students each
- (c) Erdkinder: 40 students

- (2) Grades

- (a) Kindergarten: 25 students
- (b) Elementary grades 1-6: 25 students each
- (c) Middle school grades 7 & 8: 20 students each

- (3) Entire K-8 Public Charter school program: 215 students

- (4) Entire Tuition based pre-k: 35 full time spots

- c) The classroom or program level may only be overenrolled under special circumstances and at the discretion of the teaching level team.
- 2. Admission to Bluffview Montessori School (K-8) must be free to any eligible pupil who resides within the state. Bluffview Montessori School must give enrollment preference to a Minnesota resident pupil over pupils that do not reside in Minnesota. Bluffview Montessori School must require a pupil who does not reside in Minnesota to annually apply to enroll in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.11, paragraphs (a) to (f).
- 3. Bluffview Montessori School must give enrollment preference to a sibling of an enrolled pupil and to a foster child of that pupil's parents and may give preference for enrolling children of the school's staff before accepting other pupils by lottery. A staff member eligible for an enrollment preference for their child, including a foster child, must be an individual employed at the school whose employment is stipulated in advance to total at least 480 hours in a school calendar year.

[NOTE: The 2024 Minnesota legislature added the final sentence in Paragraph C.]

**Since the BMS pre-k program is tuition-based, no preference may be given for enrollment into kindergarten based on pre-k enrollment. Refer to the previous two options.*

- 4. A person may not be admitted to Bluffview Montessori School (1) as a kindergarten pupil, unless the pupil is at least five years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences; or (2) as a first grade student, unless the pupil is at least six years of age on September 1 of the calendar year in which the school year for which the pupil seeks admission commences or has completed kindergarten; except that Bluffview Montessori School may establish and publish on its website a policy for admission of selected pupils at an earlier age, consistent with the enrollment process in paragraphs 1 and 2.
- 5. Except as permitted in paragraph 4, Bluffview Montessori School, including its preschool or prekindergarten program established under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.06, subdivision 3, paragraph (b), may not limit admission to pupils on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic ability and may not establish any criteria or requirements for admission that are inconsistent with this section.

6. Bluffview Montessori School or any agent of the school must not distribute any services or goods, payments, or other incentives of value to students, parents, or guardians as an inducement, term, or condition of enrolling a student in Bluffview Montessori School.
7. Once a student who resides in Minnesota is enrolled in the school in Kindergarten or higher, that student is considered enrolled until the student is formally withdrawn, the school receives a request for the transfer of educational records from another school, the school receives a written election by the parent or legal guardian of the student withdrawing the student, or the student is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act in Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.40 to 121A.56.

[NOTE: The 2024 Minnesota legislature amended Paragraph 7.]

8. Once a Pre-K student is enrolled, that student is considered enrolled in the Pre-K program until the student is formally withdrawn, is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act, or until they apply for admission to and are enrolled in Kindergarten.
9. Delaying Kindergarten by one year (Kindergarten redshirting) is allowed, but discouraged, at the request of the parent.

D. Lottery Process

1. The lottery will be held in the front office by the end of business of the 2nd full week of February each year.
2. Applicants are populated onto a spreadsheet by grade
3. All returning K-7 students are enrolled in the next grade
4. All enrollment preferences are filled
5. Any grade that has more applications than spots (end of January) will have all of the applications entered into a lottery and drawn at random.
 - a) Students are admitted to the program in the order they are drawn (Randomize function, beginning with kindergarten then ascending through the grades), as capacity allows.

- b) Once individual grades/levels have been filled, remaining applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order they were drawn.
 - c) If a student is admitted through the general lottery and that student has one or more siblings/foster siblings in other grades also subject to a lottery, those students will be given preference.
 - d) If there are more siblings/foster siblings and/or staff children than available spots, separate lotteries will be held for those categories before the general lottery is held.
 - e) Multiple birth/foster siblings are entered into a lottery (each by their own name), then if one of the siblings is drawn, the other siblings shall be admitted to the program.
 - (1) In the event that admission of multiple siblings fills the enrollment to capacity without each of them being enrolled, they will be placed as next on the waiting list.
6. If a student is not granted entrance into Kindergarten through the lottery, the parent/guardian may choose to enroll their child in an additional year in the tuition based preschool program as outlined above in IV., C., 5.
- a) These students will apply to grade 1 the following school year.
 - b) All enrollment is subject to the lottery as required.
 - c) These students, as tuition based preschoolers, will not have access to specialist programs with the Kindergarten class (eg. music and physical education).

E. Waiting Lists

- 1. Waiting lists are constructed in the order drawn in the lottery. After conclusion of the drawings, Bluffview shall add to the waiting lists on a first come first serve basis. This waiting list is used to fill subsequent openings for the following academic year in the order populated onto the list.
 - a) If the applicant being placed on the waiting list has sibling/staff preference they will move to the top of the

waiting list but below any other sibling/staff preference students already on the waiting list.

V. REQUIRED FORMS

A. Application process

1. Appropriate application form

B. Enrollment process

1. Enrollment form for new students
2. Student Information form
3. Health form including immunization records
4. Emergency information
5. Contract form and deposit for Children's House students
6. Early Childhood Screening records (Kindergarten only)
7. Previous school records including any Individual Education Plan (IEP) information.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. §§ 121A.40-121A.56 (Pupil Fair Dismissal Act)
Minn. Stat. § 124E.11 (Admission Requirements and Enrollment)
Minn. Stat. § 124E.17 (Charter School Information)
Minn. Stat. § 363A.13 (Educational Institution)

Cross References: None