

Policy 538 Enrollment Policy



HEARTLAND LAKES COMMUNITY
SCHOOL EXISTS TO EMPOWER
SCHOLARS TO:
BRAVELY LIVE THEIR TRUTH,
TO BECOME WISE STEWARDS OF
THE LAND AND RESOURCES
AND TO IGNITE LASTING
CURIOSITY THAT LEADS TO
POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR
SCHOOL, THEIR COMMUNITIES,
AND THEMSELVES.

Adoption:	November 16, 2023
Revision History	Amended January 22, 2024
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Next Board Review: November 2025	
Review Frequency: Annually (per Policy 208)	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to explain the application and enrollment process at Heartland Lakes Community School (HLCS) so that families will have information to make decisions regarding their children's school attendance.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy establishes guidelines for admission into Heartland Lakes Community School that are consistent with the admission requirements of Minnesota Statute 124E and other applicable laws.

III. LIMITATIONS ON ENROLLMENT

- A. Heartland Lakes Community School places age appropriately for all students.
- B. Pursuant to the contract with its authorizer, HLCS has limited eligible pupils to: Pupils within K-6th grade
 - 1. HLCS does not accept applications for Kindergarten students who are not age five on or before September 1st of the school year for which the student seeks admission.
 - 2. HLCS does not accept applications for first grade students unless the student is at least six years of age on September 1st of the calendar year in which the school year for which the student seeks admission **or has completed Kindergarten.**

IV. PUBLICATION AND COMMUNICATION OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- A. Information regarding enrollment deadlines and procedures will be published on the Heartland Lakes Community Schools website. Information regarding Minnesota Statute 124E will be included on the application form.
- B. Each year, Heartland Lakes Community School will inform the public of the open enrollment period. Interested families are required to submit an application form for admission for the following school year.
- C. Each year, HLCS will publish a date for its lottery for admission for the following school year.
- D. The lottery will be held on a scheduled date in a setting open to the public. If the lottery must be postponed due to inclement weather conditions, the lottery shall be conducted at the scheduled time on the following day.

V. GENERAL ENROLLMENT PROVISIONS

- A. Heartland Lakes Community School is a public school and pursuant to state law, must enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building. When that occurs, HLCS will begin lottery procedures described in section IX.
- B. Before admitting a student by lottery, HLCS shall give preference to currently enrolled students, siblings of current students, a foster child of that pupil's parents, and children of the school's staff.
- C. HLCS shall not discriminate against any student based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, religion or creed, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, disability, intellectual ability, prior measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, or for any other basis that would be unlawful for a public or charter school.
- D. HLCS shall not seek any information about any applicant that may be used to discriminate against the applicant in either school's policies or governing laws. This does not preclude the school from seeking such information for a lawful purpose about a student after the student has been admitted.
- E. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy to the contrary, in compliance with the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education and with the 2011 settlement

agreement in ACLU v. TIZA, et al. litigation, HLCS shall not select students based on religious preference.

- F. HLCS will not distribute any services or goods of value to students, parents or guardians as an inducement, term or condition of enrolling a student unless required to do so by Minnesota's Pupil Fee Law.

VI. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CURRENTLY ENROLLED STUDENTS

- A. HLCS will provide an email notice to parents of currently enrolled students with guidance on how to complete the Annual Update paperwork for the following school year.
- B. HLCS will request that current families complete and submit the Annual Update forms for each child returning for the following school year. Completion of forms will not impact enrollment status for the following school year, but will ensure that the school maintains current information on students from year to year. Students are considered enrolled in the school year to year until the family formally withdraws the student or the student is expelled under the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.
- C. Annual Update forms will be available to current families starting the first Monday in April until the last Friday in August, beginning in 2025.
- D. If a current family has not completed the Annual Update forms by the last Friday in August, the student will remain enrolled at HLCS for the following year.

VII. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SIBLINGS OF ENROLLED STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF STAFF MEMBERS

- A. If a family wishes to enroll a sibling of a currently enrolled student, the application form must be completed within the assigned time frame in order to receive preference.
 - 1. A "sibling" is defined as a student applicant who is related to an enrolled student with the same father and/or mother either (1) genetically, or (2) through legal process, i.e., adoption, guardianship, or foster parent. Sibling preference does not apply until one of the siblings is actually enrolled.
- B. If an HLCS staff member wishes to enroll their child, the application form must be completed within the assigned time frame in order to receive preference.

1. If a staff member's employment is ended for any reason, the child moves to the end of the non-preferential waiting list.
- C. If there are more sibling's of currently enrolled students and students of staff members than spots in a particular grade, applicants will be shuffled by lot and a separate lottery for these students will occur. Offers of enrollment will be made following the lottery. After all open slots are filled, the siblings of currently enrolled students and students of staff members who were not offered an enrollment slot will be placed on the top of the waiting list in the order in which their names are drawn by the electronic lottery.

VIII. APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

- A. HLCS will accept application forms for admission for Kindergarten through 6th grade. The board of directors may increase one or more grades' capacity by resolution and without changing this policy prior to the date on which applications are no longer accepted.
- B. HLCS welcomes inquiries and scheduled tours throughout the school year. The school will encourage families to meet with faculty, staff, and/or board members to discuss the value of HLCS and its expectations of students and their families.
- C. Families are required to submit one application form for each student. All application forms are time and date-stamped and labeled sequentially, designating the order in which they were received.
- D. A completed application is required for anyone wishing to be considered for enrollment. It is the responsibility of the applicant to retain confirmation from HLCS of the receipt of the application. If confirmation of receipt is not received, it is upon the applicant to follow up with HLCS to request the confirmation.
- E. Each year, the open enrollment period will begin on the **first Monday in December and end on the third Friday in January of the following calendar year**. All applications must be received by 2:30 PM on the last date of the published open enrollment period. All applications received after that date and time will be processed in the order they are received. The board of directors may change the deadline for applications for the next school year by resolution without changing this policy.
- F. HLCS is not responsible for mistakes or omissions on submitted application forms. An incomplete application form will not be considered for enrollment and therefore will not be processed until complete.

- G.** All parents/guardians of applicants will be notified within one week following the close of the open enrollment period. Notification will also include their child's enrollment status and information regarding any necessary lottery.
- H.** If the number of new applicants exceeds the number of enrollment slots that remain available, all timely new applicants will be placed in the lottery.

IX. LOTTERY

- A.** If a lottery is necessary, it will be conducted within 10 business days after the close of the open enrollment period.
- B.** The lottery will be open to the public.
- C.** All timely applicants will be placed on one of two lists by grade: (a) a preference list of students given preference by state law or this policy, and (b) all other applicants. Both lists will be shuffled and offers of enrollment will be made to students in the order in which they are electronically sorted, first exhausting the preference list, and then proceeding to the non-preference applicants.
- D.** Families who have received notification of the lottery as stated in section VIII are not required to attend the lottery.
- E.** Families will be notified electronically by email of their child's admission status within 10 business days of the lottery taking place.
- F.** Parents/Guardians of students admitted through the lottery will receive an acceptance email using the email address provided by families during the admissions process. Parents will be notified at this time to complete the required enrollment documents by the deadline set forth in the acceptance email. If all enrollment forms are not returned by the date set forth in the acceptance email, the enrollment spot will be considered forfeited.
- G.** Students who did not get accepted into the program through the lottery will be put on the waitlist and will be admitted to the program as enrollment slots become available.
- H.** Students who apply after the lottery is held will be added to the waiting list in the order in which they turn in an application form.

X. WAITING LIST

- A.** If any student, whether enrolled or on the waiting list, cancels their application or withdraws from HLCS, they shall lose their place. If they later re-apply, they shall be treated as a new applicant.
 - 1.** In the case an enrollment space becomes available, the applicant will be notified via email. The applicant will then be provided with enrollment paperwork which must be completed in order to secure a spot.
 - 2.** If the email address provided on the application is not valid, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide HLCS with current contact information. HLCS is not responsible for enrollment slots forfeited due to incorrect contact information.
- B.** Once the applicant has been notified, as defined above, the applicant has 48 hours to complete the enrollment paperwork or the spot will be considered forfeited.
- C.** If the applicant chooses not to enroll their student or does not respond within the allocated time frame, HLCS will continue contacting applicants in the order in which they are listed on the waiting list.
- D.** All applicants still on a waiting list at the beginning of the next enrollment period must submit a new application form for enrollment and will be subject to the enrollment process described above. The waiting lists do not carry over from year to year.

XI. STUDENT RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

- A.** HLCS shall market itself before and during the enrollment period to recruit students to meet its enrollment goals as set by the board of directors.
- B.** In accordance with its marketing strategy, HLCS may use the measures below, among others, to recruit student applicants.
 - 1.** Post flyers and notices in local newspapers and/or blogs and online newspapers.
 - 2.** Post the admissions policy and application (available for download) on the school's website.

- C. HLCS will provide translation services, as necessary, for all promotional materials and any person-to-person interaction.

XII. INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

- A. Should any question or unanticipated scenario occur regarding the admission and enrollment policy, the director is responsible for final interpretation and implementation of the policy above and recommendations for any appropriate updates.

Note: The applicability and enforceability of this Policy 538 is limited to, and qualified by, Minnesota or Federal law that, at the time any such circumstance within the scope of the policy arises, may be contrary to some aspect or all of the policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. 124E.11 (Admission Requirements)
 Minn. Stat. 123B.36-.37 (Authorized Fees; Prohibited Fees)