



Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School

Enrollment and Admissions Policy

Updated with Authorizer Approval on April 1, 2021

Non-Discrimination Statement:

All recruitment, application and enrollment materials, including Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School's (BuffSci) website, paper applications, and the online enrollment system shall contain the following non discrimination statement:

BuffSci shall not discriminate against or limit the admission of any student on any unlawful basis, including on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, race, creed, national origin, religion or ancestry. BuffSci may not require any action by a student or family (such as an admission test, interview essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant to either receive or submit an application for admission.

Enrollment:

BuffSci Charter School is a free, public school that enrolls students in grades K-12. Students who will turn five years old on or before **December 1st of the school year** for which enrollment is sought may submit an application. When the school is fully enrolled, BuffSci maintains a waitlist. Both the applications and the waitlist are kept for one year.

Application Period and Process:

Applications may be submitted after **November 1st for the upcoming school year**. Applications are accepted year-round through:

1. Applying online through the online application at: <https://enrollbuffalocharters.schoolmint.net> or <https://buffsci.org>;
2. Calling the admission office at (716) 854-2490 and completing the application with a trained staff member over the phone; or
3. Making an appointment to complete the application in-person at the school.

Occasionally BuffSci has seats available at some grade levels during the course of the academic year and the school shall use the applicable grade-level waitlist if one exists (as described below) or continually recruit and enroll students in order to fill any such seats.

Enrollment Lottery:

Generally, BuffSci seats are very limited and the number of students who apply is greater than the number of seats available. When this occurs, the school holds a lottery in accordance with its Charter. In order to participate in the lottery, applications must be completed online or received by BuffSci **by April 1st**. If the number of applications submitted by April 1st exceeds BuffSci's enrollment capacity, a lottery will occur.

The lottery is a random selection process conducted using technology-based software and overseen by a neutral third party to assign seats as described below. **By March 15th**, the date, time and location of the lottery shall be posted in the same manner in which the school posts notices of regularly scheduled Board of Trustee meetings and in accordance with State regulations¹.

Enrollment Preferences:

Upon timely receipt the required paperwork where applicable (e.g., birth certificate, custodial paperwork, and/or other school records establishing designation into one or more of the categories below) students will be given admissions preference in the following order:

1. *Returning Students*: All students who are currently enrolled in BuffSci are automatically given a seat for the upcoming school year.
2. *Siblings*: Brothers and sisters of currently enrolled students have second priority. "Siblings" is defined as two or more children who are related either (1) by birth by means of the same father or mother; or (2) by legal adoption.
3. *The children of BuffSci Staff* : up to the maximum allowable 15% of the charter school's total enrollment.
4. *Buffalo City School District Residents*: Eligible children whose primary residence is within the Buffalo City School District boundaries have third priority.
5. *Students outside the Buffalo School District*: Eligible children whose primary residence is outside the Buffalo School District boundaries have fourth priority.

Weighted Lottery:

¹ Notice of the date, time and place of the lottery, shall be consistent with [Public Officers Law §104](#), and the lottery shall occur in accordance with section 119.5 of the Commissioner's Regulations

BuffSci is committed to enrolling students with disabilities² and English language learners³ commensurate with K-12 enrollment percentages in the Buffalo City School District. In addition to targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, the school uses a weighted lottery for the applicants with disabilities or who are English language learners in order to increase those students' chances of being randomly selected for an available seat.

To identify as many students with disabilities and English language learner applicants as possible, BuffSci shall include the following on its application:

Optional Application Questions: BuffSci is committed to enrolling students with disabilities and English language learners, and answering the following questions helps the school identify eligible students. *You are not required to answer* these questions but doing so may provide the school with information that may increase your child's chances of being admitted.

1. Does the student have an individualized education plan (IEP)?
2. If your child is currently in pre-k or not yet enrolled in kindergarten, does your child currently receive early intervention services (such as special education, speech and language, occupational or physical therapy) through the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process?
3. Does the student receive special education services?
4. Does your student have a disability or impairment?
5. Do you have concerns about your child's development, learning, and/or behavior that you believe required a special education evaluation or special education services?
6. Does your child currently receive services related to being an English language learner?
7. Is your child's native language a language *other than* English?
8. Is your child currently in a Spanish-speaking pre-K program or daycare center?
9. Is your child still learning to speak English?
10. Does your child speak a language other than English at home most of the time?
11. Does your child speak a language other than English with family most of the time?
12. Is your child able to learn effectively in English?

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions and you are offered a seat through the lottery or waitlist process, you will be required to provide appropriate documentation related to your answers prior to your child's enrollment. If a seat is offered based on insufficient information, the offer will be rescinded, and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

Prior to April 1st each year, the school identifies targets for enrollment of students with disabilities and English language learners, and applies weights based on gaps between the

² "Students with disabilities" means students who are classified under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).

³ "English language learners" means students identified as such based on a NYSITELL assessment.

actual current enrollment and the targets for each of the two subgroups. The targets are established by the enrollment and retention targets set forth in the NYSED Charter Schools Office performance framework at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/regentsoversightplan/section3/PerformanceFramework2019.pdf>.

If the school is more than 5% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of two will be applied. If the school is more than 10% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of three will be applied. If the school is more than 15% below the target for a subgroup, a weight of four will be applied. Students who meet both subgroup criteria will be awarded no more than a weight of four:

Difference between Actual and Target Enrollment	Weight Applied
Actual subgroup enrollment is between > 5% and 10% below the target	2 x 1 lottery entry
Actual subgroup enrollment is between >10% and 15% below the target	3 x 1 lottery entry
Actual subgroup enrollment is between > 15% below the target	4 x 1 lottery entry

Waitlist:

During the lottery process, names will continue to be drawn in the same manner and applying the same preferences and weights after all available seats have been filled in order to form nine numbered waitlists, one for each grade level. These waitlists will be the only official, legal document identifying the names of students by grade level with applications to BuffSci pending acceptance for the subsequent school year, or when vacancies arise. The waitlist expires annually immediately prior to the next year’s lottery drawing.

Whenever a vacancy occurs after the lottery, BuffSci shall follow the waitlist order and notify a parent via email and/or text message that a seat has become available and is being offered to the student. In addition, the school may contact the parent via phone call. A parent has three business days from the time of the first notification as recorded by the school to accept the seat by contacting the school per the instructions in the offer. A parent may request and the school may grant an extension of no more than two additional business days in order for the parent to make a final decision regarding acceptance. If a parent declines the offer, the student is determined to not be eligible, or the school does not receive a response from the parent within three business days, the seat shall be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

Record-Keeping:

The school shall keep written and/or electronic documentation related to this policy sufficient for the authorizer to identify the process used and compare the process used to the lottery procedures required by the school's Charter. Records include: applications; targeted recruitment activities; lottery, weighting, and waitlist processes; logs related to parent contacts and offered/accepted/rejected seats; relevant data stored in and formulas used by SchoolMint; names and titles of third-party lottery administrators/overseers; recordings (if any) related to remote lotteries; records related to posted notices; and any other records that the school deems material to the lottery process.

Admission and enrollment for homeless children

The McKinney Vento Act applies to the matter of children and youth who are homeless. It pertains to students in a wide range of temporary living situations, including but not limited to emergency or transitional shelters, such as,

- Motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds
- Shared housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Hospitals secondary to abandonment or awaiting foster care placement
- Cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar situations
- Public or private places not ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations for human beings

In an effort to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as housed children, Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School adheres to the following practices:

The McKinney Vento Liaison ensures that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel through admissions/outreach. The McKinney Vento Act requires LEAs to immediately enroll homeless students, even if they are missing records, and to take an active role in contacting students' prior schools for school records and immunization information. Our BuffSci Policy is to have our Admission/ Outreach contact provide incoming students and their parents/guardians with an Enrollment Packet and Housing Questionnaire (see attachments) that will provide our school with the essential information of students who are homeless or temporarily homeless.

Transportation for Homeless Policy

Under the McKinney Vento Act, it ensures that parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of transportation services. Our BuffSci Policy makes certain that

any identified homeless students receive transportation through the duration of their homelessness, through the remainder of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed, and possibly an additional year if it's the student's terminal grade. Transportation is provided up to 50 miles each way and for students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities and/or summer school programs.

Cit:

N.Y. Public Officers Law 104

8 N.Y.C.R.R. 119.5
