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## ALMA DEL MAR CHARTER SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT POLICY

### Section 1: General Policy Statements

**1.1 Introduction:** Alma del Mar is a K-8 public school governed by the applicable charter school and education laws and regulations of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Alma del Mar enrolls a new Kindergarten cohort annually and backfills available spaces as they become available in grades K-8 on or before February 15 of a given year, in conformance with G.L. c. 71, § 89. The school maintains and implements a student recruitment and retention plan as outlined in G.L. c. 71, § 89(f) and CMR 603 1.05(f).

Alma del Mar currently operates two campuses- Alma del Mar: Ottiwell Campus (515 Belleville Ave, New Bedford) and Alma del Mar: Frederick Douglass Campus (145 Davis St, New Bedford). The Ottiwell Campus serves 450 scholars total, with 50 scholars each in grades K-8. The Frederick Douglass Campus opened in the fall of 2019 and began serving 50 scholars per grade in grades K, 1, 2, and 6. The Frederick Douglass Campus will continue to add additional grades in accordance with its growth plan (see Section 7). In cases where there are fewer spaces than eligible applicants, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process in accordance with Alma del Mar's Lottery Policy (see Section 4). The total number of students attending a charter school in a given school year cannot exceed the total number of students in the school's pre-enrollment report submitted to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5) and the total number of students specified in the growth plan.

Alma del Mar's enrollment process is separate from all public school districts in the state 603 CMR 1.05(11). Alma del Mar does not charge an application fee for admission and does not utilize financial incentives to recruit students 603 CMR 1.05(3)(a).

**1.2 Non-Discrimination Policy:** Alma del Mar shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students in its enrollment activities (M. G. L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2)). Any and all information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is

intended for data collection or student support purposes only and will not be used to discriminate (M. G. L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2)).

**1.3: Written Notice of Rights of Students with Diverse Learning Needs:**All applicants will be notified in writing that the school provides accommodations and support services for diverse learners, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or are English Language learners (CMR 1.05(4)). This information is presented on the School website, in outreach materials, and in the school handbook (603 CMR 1.05(4)).

**1.4: Disclosure of Student Information:**Alma del Mar will not disclose or release any student-specific information from the application, except as required by law, without parental consent. Alma del Mar will provide names and addresses of students to a third party mail house for mailings unless the parent or legal guardian requests that the school withhold their child's information (G. L. c. 71, § 89(g); 603 CMR 1.05(6)(e)). Parents and legal guardians will have an opportunity to consent or deny disclosure of student information in writing prior to the beginning of each school year and consent forms will be available to students and parents during the student enrollment process. (G. L. c. 71, § 89(g) and (n)).

## **Section 2: Description of Eligibility Criteria**

**2.1: Eligibility for Enrollment:** To be eligible to enroll in Alma del Mar, a parent or legal guardian must submit an application. To be considered for enrollment during the school's principal enrollment process, the application must be submitted by the application deadline. Any student who meets the following criteria is eligible to apply:

- Student must be a resident of Massachusetts to apply and to attend a Massachusetts charter school (see proof of residency requirements in section 2.3)
- If applying to kindergarten, the student must turn 5 years old on or before September 1st of the school year of admission (see proof of age requirements in section 2.3)
- If applying to 1st grade, the student must turn 6 years old on or before September 1st of the school year of admission (see proof of age requirements in section 2.3)

At least one parent/guardian must sign the application in order for the student to be eligible for enrollment. Alma del Mar does not require dual parental signatures.

**2.2: Absence of Additional Application Requirements:**Though the school encourages families to participate in informational sessions and other activities held prior to the start of the school year, Alma del Mar does not require potential students or their families to attend interviews or informational meetings as a condition of application, admission, and attendance 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(a). Alma del Mar does not administer tests to potential applicants or predicate acceptance for admission on results from any test of ability or achievement 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(a).

### 2.3: Proof of Residency

- Residency is determined by where a student actually lives, irrespective of guardianship, custody, and domicile.
- Families must provide proof of residency at the time an offer of admission is made except in the case of homelessness or if the applying student is a confirmed sibling of a currently enrolled Alma del Mar scholar.
  - Homelessness does not prohibit students from applying to or enrolling at Alma del Mar. Homeless students may apply regardless of residency documentation and may not be barred from attending due to a lack of required documentation. However, to receive preference, homeless students must provide documentation about their residency. Such preference will be based on the location of the student's current or temporary residence; if the student's current or temporary residence is location within New Bedford, they are entitled to receive a residential preference for admission. The location of a student's permanent or prior residence does not provide a residency preference for admission. See Section 4.2 for additional details about admission preferences. Applications for students who may be homeless will be handled on a case by case basis by the school's homeless liaison.
- Proof of residency is determined by a family's ability to provide ONE of the following documents:
  - A utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days
  - A Deed, Mortgage Payment dated within the past 60 days, or Property Tax bill dated within the last year
  - A current Lease, Section 8 Agreement, or Landlord Affidavit
  - A W2 form dated within a year or a Payroll Stub dated within the past 60 days
  - A Bank or Credit Card Statement dated within the past 60 days
  - A Letter from an Approved Government Agency\* dated within the past 60 days
    - \*Approved Government Agencies: Department of Revenue (DOR), Children and Families (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead.

**2.4: Proof of Age:** Alma will require reasonable proof of age at the time an offer of admission is made for kindergarten or 1st grade. Acceptable proof of age will include, but not be limited to, birth certificates, official state or federal records, passports, medical records, affidavit from a medical physician, or other equivalent documentation.

### **Section 3: Description of the Application Process**

**3.1: Access to Applications:** Applications for enrollment are available and accepted from October 15th through the application deadline. Applications are primarily made available through the school's website ([www.almadelmar.org](http://www.almadelmar.org)) and hard copies may also be picked up in the front office of either campus. The application, both online and in hard copy, will be available in multiple languages to reflect the major language groups in New Bedford.

- Alma del Mar: Ottiwell Campus -515 Belleville Ave, New Bedford
- Alma del Mar: Frederick Douglass Campus- 145 Davis St, New Bedford

**3.2 Application Information:** It is the applicant's parent or legal guardian's responsibility to confirm that the school has received the student's application prior to the application deadline (see section 3.3 below). Once an application is submitted, it is the family's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the information provided in the application (i.e. contact information, residency, etc.)

If any of the information supplied through the application is factually inaccurate (i.e. the application says the student is going into 5th grade but he/she is going into 6th grade), the application is considered void unless it is corrected by the application deadline.

**3.3: Application Deadlines:** Alma del Mar conducts one principal application deadline and enrollment lottery each year after January 1, but before March 15, for the upcoming school year. Alma del Mar will give reasonable public notice, of at least one month, of all application deadlines. Reasonable public notice will be given at least one week prior to each enrollment lottery 603 CMR 1.05 (3)(c).

Following the initial application deadline, Alma del Mar will not continue to accept applications. In the case that the waitlist from the initial lottery is exhausted, Alma del Mar will reopen the application, and announce and hold subsequent lotteries following all guidelines as set forth in this policy.

**3.4: Campus Preference:** On the application, applicants must rank their preferences for the campus they most wish to attend by ranking one campus as their first choice and one as their second choice. Campus ranking is mandatory. While Alma del Mar will take preference into account to the extent possible, campus assignment is ultimately made at the discretion of the school and may be based on geographic proximity, student safety, or program delivery.

**3.5: Application Records:** If an applicant is admitted to and enrolls at Alma del Mar, his/her application becomes part of the student's temporary record and shall be maintained in accordance with governing laws and regulations concerning education records.

If an applicant is not admitted or elects not to enroll at Alma del Mar, the school shall maintain that child's application as a temporary student record for 7 years after the student's name is no longer on the waitlist. Applicants have the right to receive a copy of the application and will be notified prior to its destruction.

**3.6: Non-Discrimination of Application Information:** Any information requested in the application will not be used to discriminate. Alma del Mar shall not charge an application fee to any applicant seeking enrollment at the school. Alma del Mar shall include on its application and all enrollment materials a notice to all applicants concerning the rights of students with diverse learning needs to attend the school and to receive accommodations and support services, including students who may have disabilities, require special education, or who are English Language Learners. The application shall also include Alma del Mar's non-discrimination statement.

#### **Section 4: Description of Lottery Procedures**

**4.1: Reason for Lottery:** If the number of applicants who satisfy the eligibility criteria for a particular grade level exceeds the number of available seats at that grade level, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery process 603 CMR 1.05(6)(a) and (c). The purpose of the lottery is for Alma del Mar to determine the applicants who will receive an offer of admission.

**4.2: Lottery Process:** The school will determine the number of spaces available each year in each grade. The number of seats will be based on the school's annual budgeted enrollment requirements and the number of students who left the school on or after February 16th of the previous year. This single lottery will include all sibling applicants, resident applicants, and non-resident applicants. A single lottery enables Alma del Mar to track the original random lottery order while still maintaining and tracking admissions preferences, as sibling and resident preference may change over time.

All lotteries will be public. The date, time, and location will be publicized on Alma del Mar's website at least one week in advance. The lottery will occur at one of the Alma del Mar campuses on or before March 15th each year, but not before January 1st. The lottery will be conducted electronically and a neutral party will certify that the process is fair and that selection is random. The electronic lottery will conclude when all applicants in each grade level have been assigned a random lottery order and preferences for admission have been applied. Offers of admission will be given out based on the number of seats available. Students who do not receive an offer of admission will be placed on the waitlist.

Siblings, regardless of residency, are preferred over non-siblings, and residents are preferred over non-residents. Alma del Mar shall avoid admitting students in excess of a sending district's net school spending cap pursuant to G.L. c. 71, § 89(i)(2). If admitting a particular student would cause that student's sending district to exceed its tuition cap, Alma del Mar shall place that student on the waitlist.

Families may, but are not required to, attend the lottery.

**4.3: Need for Additional Lotteries:** If the principal enrollment process fails to produce an adequate number of enrolled students, the lottery process may be repeated if a waitlist does not exist and the required lottery process is strictly followed, including public notification and deadlines. The initial waitlist must be exhausted prior to holding additional lotteries. G.L. c. 70, § 89(n) and 603 CMR 1.05(8)

**4.4: Lottery Preference:** Alma del Mar Charter School grants enrollment preference to

- students whose siblings, residents or non-residents, attend Alma del Mar at the time an offer of admission is made, regardless of the campus at which the sibling is enrolled. (See Section 4.5 for Alma del Mar's Sibling Policy)
- students who reside in New Bedford. (See Section 2.3 for Alma del Mar's Proof of Residency requirements)

Each campus will be filled based on the initial rank order, sibling preference, residency preference, and the preferred campus listed on the application. If all of the available seats at one campus are filled, the rest of the offers of admission will go to the other campus. Once each campus is full, all remaining students will be placed on a single waitlist in random lottery order.

While the applicant's preferred campus will be taken into consideration when making offers of admission, Alma del Mar may assign students, in accordance with this enrollment policy, to a specified campus for reasons of geographic proximity, student safety, or program delivery.

See Section 5 for a description of the Waitlist and Section 6 for a description of the Enrollment Process

**4.5: Sibling Policy:** In compliance with G.L. c. 71, § 89 and 603 CMR 1.05(6), Alma del Mar shall provide an enrollment preference to siblings of students who are attending the school when an offer of admission is made to the applicant. The enrollment preference shall apply to siblings of students who are scheduled to exit Alma del Mar at the end of the school year in which the

lottery is held. However, the enrollment preference shall not apply to siblings of students who have applied, but have not yet enrolled at Alma del Mar.

For the purpose of this policy “siblings” are defined as children having a common parent, either biologically or legally through adoption.

The following receive the sibling preference:

- Children who live in different households but share a common biological parent;
- Siblings of students who will graduate at the end of the school year in which the lottery is held;
- Situations where if a student moves out of the local city or town but continues to attend Alma del Mar, that student’s “siblings” have preference in admission even though they are non-residents at the time of application

The following do not receive the “sibling” preference, or any enrollment preference:

- Children who live in the same household but who do not share a common biological or legal parent;
- Foster children;
- Siblings and children of alumni/ae; and
- Siblings of applicants who have been accepted for admission but who are not yet attending (including twins)

**4.6: Lottery Results:** Lottery results are available in person immediately following the lottery for families who attend in person. Families may, but are not required to, attend the lottery. For entry grades, Alma del Mar will make offers of admission within five (5) business days. For all other grades, families will be notified of their wait list number either in person at the lottery or via the school’s website. In addition to posting lottery numbers on the website, within ten (10) business days Alma del Mar will email the wait list number to all families who included an email address on their application. Families are always welcome to call the front office to find out their current wait list status.

Alma del Mar will communicate with families using the contact information provided in the application, and it is the family’s responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the information provided in the application.

See Section 6 for Enrollment Procedures.

## **Section 5: Description of the Waitlist:**

**5.1: Waitlist Maintenance:** When the number of applicants requires, Alma del Mar shall maintain waiting lists for siblings, residents, and non-residents. Alma del Mar shall maintain a single waitlist for the grades that the school accepted applications that year. The waitlist is formed with students who are not offered admission during the principal enrollment process in the order in which they are drawn, taking into consideration sibling and residency preference.

The school will keep accurate records of its waitlist including the student names (first, middle, last), dates of birth, cities or towns of residence, grade levels of students who entered the lottery but did not gain admission, home addresses, and telephone numbers G.L. c. 71, § 89(n); 603 CMR 1.05(10)(a). Alma del Mar shall maintain waitlists only for the school year in which the student applied 603 CMR 1.05(10)(a).

If a student declines admission or withdraws from the school according to the school's withdrawal process, the next available student on the waitlist for that grade will be offered admission until the vacant seat is filled, subject to preferences at the time the offer of admission is made M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(n). A student who declines an offer of admission or withdraws from the school is not eligible to reenroll without going through the application process again. No student will be admitted ahead of other eligible students on the waitlist unless that student is either a sibling of a currently attending student at the time an offer of admission is made or a resident of the charter school's city or town. A vacancy that is not filled after February 15 will move into the subsequent grade, to be filled at the start of the following school year.

**5.2: Change of Waitlist Status:** Alma del Mar recognizes that the order of a student's placement on the waitlist may change depending on the preferences that exist at the time an offer of admission is extended (e.g., a student may move up on the waitlist if a waitlisted student's sibling begins to attend Alma del Mar or if the waitlisted student became a "resident applicant" between the date of the lottery and the offer of admission). Alma del Mar shall rely upon family members of waitlisted students to notify the school of any changes in residence or sibling status that may impact their student's position on the waitlist.

## **Section 6: Enrollment Procedures**

**6.1: Process for Extending Offers of Admission:** As described in Section 4.6 above, Alma del Mar will post lottery results on our website and email lottery results to families who include an email address on their application. If the scholar has applied to an entry grade and is accepted at the time of the initial lottery, Alma del Mar will offer a student admission in accordance with the timeline laid out in Section 4.6. In the case that a scholar is offered admission from the waitlist, Alma del Mar will notify applicants of their acceptance in the order of their random lottery number, taking sibling and residency preference into account.



**All offers of admission will be extended via phone call.** If we do not reach a family member, Alma del Mar staff will leave a voicemail extending the offer of admission and will send a follow up text message. If the number is no longer in service or no longer reaches the parent/guardian of the student, Alma del Mar staff will email the address provided in the application. If Alma del Mar has not been able to reach a family via these modes of communication, Alma will send the offer of admission via mail. Alma del Mar will communicate with families using the contact information provided in the application, and it is the family's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the information provided in the application.

### **6.2: Timeline for Accepting an Offer of Admission:**

- Families who receive an offer of admission before the last day of the current school year will have ten (10) business days to accept or decline.
- Families who receive an offer of admission before August 1st, families will have five (5) business days to accept or decline.
- Families notified after August 1st will have three (3) business days to accept or decline.

If the school does not hear from parents of accepted students within the timeline to accept their offer, the school removes the student from the list of accepted students and will follow the lottery numbers to offer the seat to the next student. At this point, the student is taken off the waitlist and has no further special standing. The student must apply again in a future application cycle if the family wishes to be considered again for enrollment.

**6.3: Process for Accepting an Offer of Admission:** To accept an offer of admission and reserve a seat at Alma del Mar, parent(s)/guardian(s) of accepted students must:

- Submit proof of residency (see Section 2.3)
- Verbally confirm that their scholar intends to enroll

All children who are accepted for enrollment, either directly through the lottery or off the waiting list, will be asked to complete an enrollment packet that provides the school with pertinent contact information, school background information, and other data.

**6.4: Attendance:** Students must attend school within the first ten (10) days of the school year in accordance with the School's attendance policy; if they do not, the school removes the child from the list of accepted students and offers their seat to the next scholar in the lottery order. At this point, the student is taken off the waitlist and has no further special standing. The student must apply again in a future application cycle if the family wishes to be considered again for enrollment.

**6.5: Grade Level Assignment:** In almost all cases, scholars will be placed in the grade level for which they applied. If a scholar is retained at a previous school after applying to Alma del Mar, Alma staff will work with the family to determine the most appropriate grade level for their

scholar. This may result in the scholar staying in the grade level of the application, or being shifted to the previous grade. These decisions will be made with the best long-term interest of the scholar in mind. Retention has no impact on the scholar’s application, eligibility, or enrollment status.

**Section 7: Growth Plan**

Alma del Mar Charter School is chartered to serve up to 1,044 scholars in grades K-8 by the 2022-2023 school year.

The school currently operates two campuses:

- Alma del Mar: Ottiwell Campus -515 Belleville Ave, New Bedford
- Alma del Mar: Frederick Douglass Campus- 145 Davis St, New Bedford

The total number of students attending a charter school in a given year cannot exceed the total number of students reported in the school’s pre-enrollment submission to the Department in the previous spring in accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5).

Year	Sarah D. Ottiwell Campus										Frederick Douglass Campus Reflects new or expanded grade level										Total Enrollment
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	K-8	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	K-8	
2019-2020	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	50	50	50	0	0	0	50	0	0	200	650
2020-2021	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	50	50	50	50	0	0	98	50	0	348	798
2021-2022	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	50	50	50	50	50	0	98	98	50	496	946
2022-2023	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	50	50	50	50	50	50	98	98	98	594	1,044
2023-2024	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	450	50	50	50	50	50	50	98	98	98	594	1,044

**Section 8: Application for Admission**

**Alma del Mar Charter School**  
**[YEAR] Application**  
 Applications must be received by 5:00 PM on [DATE].

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*First Middle Last*

Current Grade [YEAR]: Not in School Preschool Kindergarten First Second Third Fourth Fifth Sixth Seventh

Application Grade [YEAR]: Kindergarten First Second Third Fourth Fifth Sixth Seventh Eighth

*Below, in order of preference, please rank each campus with #1, #2, with #1 being your first choice. Final decisions regarding campus assignment are at the discretion of the school. Please see Enrollment Policy for more details*

#\_\_ **Alma del Mar: Sarah D. Ottiwell Campus** (515 Belleville Avenue, New Bedford, MA, 02746)

#\_\_ **Alma del Mar: Frederick Douglass Campus** (145 Davis Street, New Bedford, MA 02746)

Current School: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male Female Non-binary Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_ Home Address  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street number and name City State Zip code*

Parent #1/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lives w/ child (please check)  
*First Last*

Preferred Language for Communication: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent #2 (optional)/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Lives w/ child (please check)  
*First Last*

Parent #2 Address if lives separately:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street number and name City State Zip code*

Language for Communication: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling Currently Attending Alma del Mar Charter School?  Yes  No

If Yes, Provide Sibling Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Sibling Attends: \_\_Ottiwell Campus \_\_Frederick Douglass Campus

Please indicate whether the applicant has any siblings who are also applying for admission for [YEAR]. **You must fill out a separate application for each child.** Writing names below *will not* enter them in the lottery. (Please note that sibling preference does not apply until a child's sibling has attended at least one day of school at Alma del Mar.):

Name of Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade for [YEAR]: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Sibling: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade for [YEAR]: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Only one parent/guardian signature is required, unless a court order indicates otherwise for an individual applicant.

Alma del Mar shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting or admitting students in its enrollment activities (M. G. L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2)). Any and all information requested in the application, such as language

spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is intended for data collection or student support purposes only and will not be used to discriminate (M. G. L. c. 71, § 89(m); 603 CMR 1.05(2)).

Any and all information requested in the application, such as language spoken at home or race/ethnicity, is not intended, and will not be used, to discriminate G.L. c. 71, § 89(m) and CMR 1.05(2).

If an applicant is not admitted or elects not to enroll at Alma del Mar, the school shall maintain that child's application as a temporary student record for 7 years after the student's name is no longer on the waitlist. This document will be destroyed by March 1, [YEAR]. Families have the right to receive a copy of the documents to be destroyed for applicants who were not admitted.