ADMISSIONS POLICY

POLICY ADOPTED: 1/13/20

I. INTRODUCTION

A. River Oak Charter School (ROCS) is non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. Students in grades K–8 who reside in the state of California will be considered for admission to ROCS without regard to actual or perceived disability, gender, race or ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, or association with individuals with one or more of the above characteristics. Admission to ROCS is subject only to capacity and the school's admission requirements.

B. ROCS is open to all grade K – 8 students, including those with special education needs. ROCS will support the administration of all special education services at the school site through an agreement with the charter-authorizing agency or other approved entity and recognizes that students are mandated to receive all services as delineated in an IEP. No student will be denied admission based on disability or lack of available services. The staff will notify Ukiah Unified School District (UUSD) when a special education student enrolls, becomes eligible, becomes ineligible, or leaves ROCS on the monthly report provided to the district. If the student's district of residence is not UUSD, the staff will notify the designated person at that district.

C. Recruitment and admission practices will support the enrollment of a diverse student population which is reflective of the racial and ethnic balance of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the UUSD.

D. ROCS is a public school. ROCS does not charge tuition.

E. Mission: "River Oak Charter School strives, as a dynamic community of teachers and parents and students, to inspire in the child a love of life and learning beginning with one's own heart and head and hands and working toward making a contribution to the community."

F. ROCS offers an educational program in a stimulating, nurturing, and safe environment, which stresses natural developmental stages. The instructional method emphasizes the whole child; its academic components are framed within an artistic, creative and imaginative context allowing each child's full potential to unfold.

II. CAPACITY

A. Total school enrollment capacity = 246

B. The ROCS Charter Council has the sole authority to change total school enrollment capacity with the approval of the UUSD Board of Trustees.

C. The ROCS Charter Council will approve the maximum class capacity ("class cap") for each grade level for the following school year at the December Annual Charter Council meeting of the preceding school year, or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. Open spaces, if any, in each class will be determined on the basis of the approved class caps, compared with the number of returning students. The Charter Council will approve appropriate enrollment limits for each grade, based on administrator and faculty recommendations, budget considerations, facility constraints, and the pedagogical requirements of the school's curriculum which is guided by the core principles of Public Waldorf Education. These class enrollment limits may be revised during the school year with the approval of the Charter Council.

III. ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

A. For All Students

1. Parent/guardian submits enrollment lottery application. The enrollment lottery application may be submitted for only one grade level per student. Incomplete or falsified applications may be grounds for denial of enrollment or disenrollment.
2. Parent/guardian proves student residency by attaching one of the documents enumerated by bullet points below to the enrollment lottery application. **Students will not be entered into the enrollment lottery without proof of residency.** Copy of document or written statement offered as verification of residency is retained in mandatory student record.
   - Original and complete PG&E or other utility statement within past 30 days;
   - Current rental agreement with landlord contact information (rental amounts may be obscured);
   - Current year property tax statement (tax amount may be obscured);
   - Current pay stub or bank statement showing activity within previous 30 days (financial figures and other confidential information may be obscured, but address must be apparent);
   - Major credit card statement showing activity within previous 30 days (figures may be obscured, but address must be apparent);

   Special case 1: Applicants to the school who reside within the District's boundaries and who believe that they qualify for in-district enrollment preference, but whose circumstances do not conform with the bullet points enumerated above, should submit a detailed explanation in writing, including relevant supporting documentation, to the school at least one month prior to the lottery date. Determination of in-district status in special cases will require written approval of the Administrator.

   Special case 2: Proof of residency is not required for homeless students in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 and Education Code Section 48850.

3. Parent/guardian and student should visit classroom by appointment. For grades 1 – 8, the visit is from 8:20 – 10:20 am. For kindergarten, the visit is one hour during the early morning. During summer recess, visits are not possible. Failure of homeless students to meet this procedure does not disqualify them from admission.
4. Parent/guardian, student, teacher, and administrator (as needed) should attend an intake meeting by appointment. A phone call meeting with the parent/guardian, or detailed written instructions may take the place of the intake meeting in extreme extenuating circumstances, as determined by the administrator. Failure of homeless students to meet this procedure does not disqualify them from admission.

B. For Seventh Grade Students

Parent/guardian presents evidence of immunizations required to enter seventh grade, or documentation of a valid medical exemption from The California Immunization Registry If the student is homeless and needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Administrator or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the School Liaison. The School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

C. For Kindergarten Students

1. Parent/guardian submits enrollment lottery application for the kindergarten program that corresponds to the student's date of birth (ref. IV.A-IV.C). Parent/guardian cannot appeal kindergarten program placement. The student's date of birth determines placement.
2. Parent/guardian presents evidence of immunizations required to enter kindergarten, or documentation of a valid medical exemption from The California Immunization Registry only. If the student is homeless and needs to obtain immunizations or does not possess immunization or other medical records, the Administrator or designee shall refer the parent/guardian to the School Liaison. The School Liaison shall assist the parent/guardian in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records for the student. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C).)

3. Parent/guardian presents evidence of minimum age required to enter kindergarten. However, a parent or guardian shall not be prevented or discouraged from enrolling a student, because the student lacks a birth certificate or has records that indicate a foreign place of birth, such as a foreign birth certificate. Typical documents to verify age include:
    - Certified copy of a birth record or a statement by the local registrar or a county recorder certifying the date of birth;
    - Hospital or physician's certificate showing date of birth;
    - Passport;
    - Baptism certificate duly attested;
    - Entry in a family Bible;
    - An adoption record;
    - Previously verified school records;
    - Affidavit of the parent, guardian or custodian of the minor;
    - Any other appropriate means of proving the age of the child.

D. Registrar completes compliance with other state law requirements.

IV. KINDERGARTEN AGE REQUIREMENTS

A. The School bases its age requirements for kindergarten on the core principles of Public Waldorf Education and state kindergarten minimum age requirements. ROCS offers two kindergarten programs; applicants are entered into the enrollment lottery for the kindergarten program that corresponds to the child's date of birth. No exceptions are permitted. All kindergarten classrooms are mixed age and include students enrolled in both kindergarten programs. The registrar notifies parents/guardians of eligible students of the availability of each program and the age requirements of each.

B. One-year Kindergarten Program

For students who are five years old at the beginning of the school year, having turned five years old on or before May 31 previous to starting kindergarten. Students are enrolled in kindergarten for one year.

C. Two-year Kindergarten Program (includes Transitional Kindergarten)

For students who turn five years old after May 31 and by December 2 of the school year. Within this age group, ROCS offers transitional kindergarten which applies only for those students turning 5 years old between September 2 and December 2. Two-year kindergarten students will matriculate to the conventional one-year kindergarten program the following year.

V. FIRST GRADE AGE REQUIREMENTS

A. The School bases its age requirements on the core principles of Public Waldorf Education.

B. Students who turn six as of May 31 of the school year are admitted to first grade.

Decisions about first grade placement are first determined by age. Exceptions to age-determined first grade placement may be permitted after teacher determination of a minimum of 70% proficiency on assessments of grade level standards based upon teacher generated assessments, observation, and testing. Both the parent and the school must agree to the exception.

C. The School gives first grade admissions preference to enrolled kindergarten students who turn six as of May 31 of the school year. An enrolled student who turns six after May 31 of the school year, and who is determined by the parent and the school to be first-grade-ready, is admitted to first grade on a space available basis. If no space is available, the student is placed on the first grade wait list. When more than one enrolled student is wait listed for first grade, students are ranked from oldest to youngest.

VI. ENROLLMENT PRIORITY (PREFERENCE IN ADMISSIONS)

A. An enrollment priority is a condition that gives an applicant a higher preference for admission. Statutory enrollment priorities are applied first.

B. Students who are presently enrolled in the school will be exempted from the enrollment lottery and will have guaranteed enrollment for the subsequent school year (statutory). Currently enrolled students must notify the school of their intent to re-enroll by submitting the school's Intent to Re-Enroll form by the deadline stated on the form. If, however, at any time the school determines that the student did not qualify for an enrollment priority status through which he or she was initially granted admission, the School reserves the right to disenroll the student. In the event of disenrollment, a new enrollment lottery application may be submitted and will be processed in accordance with the student's current enrollment priority status and any current wait list.

C. Students are considered for enrollment with the priority statuses listed below. When a student qualifies for more than one priority status, the sum of the enrollment priority points is applied to the student's enrollment lottery application.

N/A	Students presently enrolled in ROCS (guaranteed enrollment in the following year)
10 points	Students who reside within the Ukiah Unified School District (statutory)
5 points	Students who are the children of employees of ROCS
4 points	Students who have siblings enrolled in ROCS. (Siblings include children living in the same household who share at least one parent, stepparent or guardian).
1 point	Students who are currently enrolled in or who reside within the elementary school attendance area of the Public elementary school(s) in which River Oak Charter School is located *Education Code* Section 47614.5(c)2

D. River Oak Charter School does not accept Enrollment Lottery Applications from out-of-state residents.

VII. OPEN ENROLLMENT WINDOW

A. The School accepts enrollment lottery applications during a widely publicized open enrollment window. The School does not permit selection of students based upon the order in which applications are received—no "first come, first served". A public random drawing (enrollment lottery) determines admission when the number of students who wish to attend ROCS exceeds the school's capacity (ref. II.A-II.C).

B. **Fall Registration:** The School publicizes an open application window which begins January prior to the new academic year. When more applications are received than space is available, admission is determined by a public random drawing. The School closes classes to further enrollment at any point when classes are determined to be full.

C. **Mid-school Year Registration:** When a vacancy becomes available during the school year, and when no wait-listed student is available to fill the vacancy, a secondary open enrollment window may be developed and admissions procedures reapplied. The receipt of a new application for a mid-year vacancy triggers a brief open enrollment window of five (5) school days. When more applications are received than space is available for a mid-year vacancy, admission is determined by a mid-year public random drawing.

VIII. PUBLIC RANDOM DRAWING (ENROLLMENT LOTTERY)

A. A public random drawing determines admission when the number of students who wish to attend a specific grade exceeds the class capacity. The School also generates waiting lists from students not admitted through its public random drawing. A neutral third party conducts the public random drawing. The school registrar keeps signed and dated public random drawing records in permanent files at the school.

B. Annual procedures to follow in advance of the public random drawing
   1. Registrar sets open enrollment window by December 15.
   2. Charter Council sets total school capacity and individual class capacities at the December Annual Charter Council Meeting. (Ref. II.A-II.C)
   3. Registrar develops application packet: (1) enrollment lottery application and (2) admissions information document which is retained by the parent/guardian, and which includes details about the open enrollment window date, public random drawing date, enrollment priorities, proof of residency, kindergarten age requirements, and rules about notifications, replies, and wait lists.
   4. School advertises admissions information broadly to attract a diverse population, which is reflective of the racial and ethnic balance of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of UUSD.

C. Procedures for accepting enrollment lottery applications
   1. Registrar begins accepting applications on the first day of the open enrollment window.
   2. Registrar dates and signs applications upon receipt.
   3. Registrar reviews applications for completeness and timeliness.
   4. Registrar applies admissions requirements to applications, and documents with specific findings, those applications that do not meet admissions requirements.
   5. Registrar stops accepting enrollment lottery applications on last day of the open application window.

D. Procedures for preparing the public random drawing
   1. Registrar applies enrollment priorities (ref. VI.C) to applications.
   2. Registrar completes one lottery ticket for each applicant. Exception: when siblings from the same family are entered concurrently into the lottery, all siblings are listed on the same lottery ticket. This includes twins and multiples.

E. Procedures for holding the public random drawing
   1. Registrar takes lottery tickets to neutral third party.
   2. Neutral third party uses lottery tickets to conduct the public random drawing.
   3. When one lottery ticket lists more than one applicant (siblings), the listed siblings are assigned consecutive lottery numbers.
   4. Neutral third party enters the name and grade level of each applicant on a public random drawing record in the order in which the name is drawn. The hand written record is dated and signed by the neutral third party, and returned to the registrar to retain with permanent school records.

F. Procedure for assigning lottery numbers to each applicant
   1. The registrar assigns a unique lottery number to each applicant after the public random drawing is held.
   2. Part one of the number is the date of the drawing: "012909"
   3. Part two of the number is the applicant's position (draw number) on the public random drawing record: "02"
   4. Sample complete number: "012909-02"
   5. Sample ranking: Lottery number 012909-02 ranks higher than 012909-03

G. Procedure for assigning applicants to openings or to wait lists
   1. Registrar assigns each successful applicant to the appropriate grade level that has an opening.
   2. Registrar sorts each unsuccessful applicant onto the appropriate grade level wait list according to his or her position on the public random drawing record.

H. Notification of parent/guardian
   1. The registrar notifies parent/guardian by telephone and by email when their student is admitted to ROCS. Telephone notification is within five school days (or five business days when school is not in session) of the public random drawing. Written notification is postmarked within five school days (or five business days when school is not in session) of the public random drawing. Written notification includes a copy of admissions procedures (ref. III.A-III.C).
   2. The registrar notifies parent/guardian by email when their student is not admitted to ROCS, and alternatively, is placed on a wait list. Telephone notification is within five school days (or five business

days when school is not in session) of the public random drawing. Written notification is postmarked within five school days (or five business days when school is not in session) of the public random drawing. Written notification includes a copy of wait list rules (ref. X.A-X.L).

I. Replies by parent/guardian
   1. Parent/guardian of the successful applicant must reply to the registrar's invitation to enroll within seven school days (or seven business days when school is not in session) of the postmark on the written notification. **If the parent/guardian does not reply by the deadline, the School will consider the student declined**.
   2. Parent/guardian may apply to the school administrator for an exception to the seven-day reply deadline under extreme extenuating circumstances. Documentation may be required.
   3. The registrar keeps all student enrollment lottery applications for whom parent/guardian declined enrollment invitation, or for whom parent/guardian did not reply to enrollment invitation, in permanent files at the School.

IX. WAIT LISTS

A. The School generates wait lists from students not admitted through its public random drawing. Wait lists are created after the public random drawing.

B. Ranking students
   1. Higher preference point values → higher wait list placement
   2. Lower draw number values → higher wait list placement
   3. Higher preference point values trump lower draw number values

X. WAIT LIST RULES

A. Wait lists are generated only from students entered into the public random drawing.
B. Wait lists are established only following the public random drawing.
C. Wait lists are established only after a class has reached capacity.
D. A student may be ranked on only one grade level wait list at a time.
E. Wait-listed applicants rise or fall when a higher-ranking applicant is withdrawn or added to the list.
F. Wait-listed applicants forfeit sibling preference points when the sibling withdraws from ROCS.
G. Wait-listed applicants gain sibling preference points when a sibling is admitted to ROCS.
H. When an offer of admission from the wait list is declined, the applicant is removed from the wait list.
I. Wait-listed applicants may be contacted to confirm their continued interest in staying on the wait list.
J. Wait lists **do not** carry over from year to year.
K. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the registrar when his or her priority status changes.
L. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the registrar when his or her contact information changes (telephone, email, address).

XI. CHANGES TO PRIORITY STATUS

A. A change in sibling or residence priority status for a wait list applicant may allow the applicant to obtain a higher priority on the wait list. Current wait list applicants may request a change in priority status at any time during the year with a written request from the parent/guardian and proof of changed status, and their status on the corresponding wait list will be adjusted accordingly.

B. The children of staff hired after the enrollment lottery will be granted the relevant priority status on the appropriate wait list(s) and may subsequently be enrolled at the School. If this preemption requires an increase in the class cap in order to provide an open space in the class, it is subject to approval by the Administrator, and to approval by the Charter Council of an adjustment in class cap.

XII. CHALLENGES

A. Any parent or guardian who believes the Admissions Policy has been misapplied to his or her child may seek redress through the following process:
   1. Meet with the Administrator.
   2. Meet with a designated Charter Council Member

B. A final decision, if necessary, will be mutually agreed upon by the Administrator and the designated Charter Council member.

XIII. DISENROLLMENT/ABANDONMENT

A. The School notifies students and families in writing two weeks in advance of a student's disenrollment from ROCS.

B. The School disenrolls students who transfer to another school.

C. The School disenrolls students, if after 30 consecutive days of unverified absences, no forwarding address or request for records from another school is received.

D. If a student's attendance over a three-month period falls below 80%, the School cautions the family about the compulsory education law, and the School and Family Partnership Agreement is reviewed. If the poor rate of attendance continues for a six-month period, SARB strategies will be exercised.

E. Students are disenrolled if they are expelled from the school. Acts enumerated in Education Code Section 48900 may be grounds for recommendation for expulsion. A hearing (due process) with the Charter Council is offered to any student recommended for expulsion.

F. The school district or county office of education of the student's residence will be notified when any student is disenrolled for abandonment or expulsion.