

STUDENT ADMISSION POLICY

For the purpose of this policy, the school year is defined as beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending the following June 30<sup>th</sup> in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations.

**A. Legal Residents**

Students whose parents or legal guardians are considered legal residents of Hamilton or Wenham shall be eligible to attend the schools on a full-time basis in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.

When a student registers for school, or at any other time upon request of the Superintendent, parents or legal guardians must furnish a Certification of Address (form attached) and appropriate evidence of residency in either Hamilton or Wenham. This evidence may include the following:

1. An executed lease or rental agreement stating the beginning date of residency and duration of the lease/rental agreement and proof that the student will be residing in the community.
2. An executed Purchase and Sales Agreement stating the closing date and proof that the student will be residing in the community.
3. A property tax and utility bill.
4. A driver's license.
5. A voter's registration card.
6. Proof of guardianship, if appropriate.

The school district reserves the right to require additional documentation where, in the judgment of the Superintendent, a student's actual residence has not been established.

Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present proof of vaccination and immunizations as required by the state.

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**B. ENTRANCE AGE**

1. Kindergarten: To be admitted to kindergarten, a child must be five years old on or before August 31 of the current year.
2. First Grade: To be admitted to the first grade, a child must be six years old on or before August 31 of the current year.
3. A child who moves to Hamilton-Wenham from another community during his/her public school kindergarten year will be allowed to continue in kindergarten and will be allowed to enter grade 1 of the following year, if the kindergarten year is successfully completed.
4. A child who moves to Hamilton-Wenham during the summer following successful completion of public school kindergarten in another community will be allowed to enter grade 1 in the coming year.

**C. Non-residents**

As a general policy, non-residents of Hamilton or Wenham are not permitted to enroll in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District nor are students accepted in the schools on a tuition basis.

Students who reside within the District and who have not graduated from high school, but whose parents or legal guardians are not legal residents, may attend District schools with the permission of the Superintendent and/or School Committee. In such cases, the student or the student's parents or legal guardians must submit a written request for permission to the Superintendent. The request must include the following:

1. The request shall state the reasons preventing the student from residing with his/her parents or legal guardians.
2. In accordance with Chapter 71, §§ 5 and 6 and if, in the judgment of the Superintendent, a student temporarily resides in Hamilton or Wenham and the legal residence of the parents or legal guardians is not Hamilton or Wenham, and the Superintendent determines that the child is residing in Hamilton or Wenham for the "sole purpose" or "special purpose" of attending school, the student may attend school in the District with the approval of the Superintendent and/or School Committee. The parents or legal guardians must agree to pay the established tuition for said student.

Originally Adopted: January 9, 2012

Policy Review: May 9, 2012

Approved: May 21, 2012

Vote: 9-0-0

Chairperson, HWRSD School Committee: Alexa McCloughan  
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3. The Superintendent will base his/her decision and/or recommendation to admit a student based upon information provided by (a) the written request, (b) total school enrollment; (c) class size; and (d) budget constraints or other pertinent information.
4. Non-resident children residing for more than 50% of the time in a home in Hamilton or Wenham for purposes other than attending school will be accepted in cases where the Hamilton or Wenham resident with whom they have been living has been given legal guardianship.
5. The Superintendent and/or the School Committee reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy in cases where extraordinary circumstances create a true hardship.
6. Faculty children of non-resident members of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional Education Association are accepted in accordance with state law, School Committee policy and collective bargaining terms between the School Committee and its employees.
7. Homeless students will be accepted in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act and the District's Policy on Homeless Students.

**D. Admission of Transfer Students**

1. The school district will enroll and place students who have left Commonwealth charter schools by adhering to the same policies and procedures in place for any other student enrolling in the school district including, but not limited to, examination of the course of study and level of academic attainment of the student when determining the student's appropriate grade placement or eligibility for high school graduation.
2. To the same extent provided for other students enrolling in the school district, students who enroll in the school district from a Commonwealth charter school shall be subject to the graduation requirements of the school district, may have certain graduation requirements waived, and may make-up certain graduation requirements.

**E. International Exchange Students**

The School Committee recognizes that after graduation, District students will live throughout the nation and the world, and thus, diversity in make-up of the student body helps broaden the understanding and perceptions of the nation and the world for large numbers of resident students. In view of the overriding goal of providing broadly enriching opportunities, an effort will be made to give priority admission to international students from a variety of countries.

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1. A non-resident international "exchange" student will be accepted to attend school in the District on a space available basis and contingent upon the following:
  - (a) In accordance with state and federal laws, and
  - (b) Under the provisions of programs sponsored by Rotary International, American Field Service or a program approved in advance by the School Committee and/or Superintendent.
2. It shall be the policy of the District to enable young people from foreign lands to attend the District, in a capacity other than as an "exchange" student, under the following conditions:
  - (a) In accordance with state and federal laws;
  - (b) The Superintendent shall receive applications from international students and may, at his/her discretion, require formal papers attesting to the health, character, motives, ability to communicate in English, and other criteria which he/she may deem pertinent;
  - (c) Prior to acceptance, a student must present a valid visa, evidence of health insurance, and evidence of a responsible family in the District with whom the foreign student is to reside;
  - (d) Requests must be received prior to July 1 to be considered for enrollment in the ensuing School Year, except in unusual circumstances.
  - (e) Students will be accepted on a space available basis for enrollment, course selection, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

**F. Investigation of reported or suspected non-residents**

Whenever it is reported or suspected that a student is a non-resident, the building principal and/or his/her designee will:

1. Refer the investigation, if necessary, to the school attendance officer and/or to a police officer assigned to the school.
2. Refer cases, on a needs basis, to the Superintendent.
3. If residence cannot be substantiated, then the parents or legal guardians will be notified that the student is to be withdrawn from the District.

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**G. Continuity of Education**

1. Students who move during the school year

If a student's parents or legal guardians move from the District during the school year, that student may complete the semester provided:

- (a) The parents or legal guardians agree to pay the District a prorated tuition rate for the semester based upon the [Department of Education] per pupil cost reported for the District. At the end of the semester the student shall transfer immediately from the District to the school district in which his/her parents or legal guardians reside.
- (b) The parents or legal guardians will provide the transportation for their child. The District will not provide transportation to a student who attends school in the District pursuant to this section.
- (c) The Superintendent and/or the School Committee reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy in cases where extraordinary circumstances create a true hardship.

2. Students who move from the District prior to or after July 1 of senior year

A twelfth grade student who has been in the continuous attendance in the District since kindergarten and who will qualify to graduate in June of said senior year and whose parents or legal guardians move from the District must notify the Superintendent by July 1<sup>st</sup> of the student's senior year may be allowed to complete his/her senior year, contingent upon the following:

- (a) If the School Committee of the new community, where the student is residing, makes a request to have the student continue in the District for the remainder of his/her senior year. It is the responsibility of the student's parents or legal guardians to make such a request to the school committee of the new community in which they are residing.
- (b) The parents or legal guardians will provide the transportation for their child. The District will not provide transportation to a student who attends school in the District pursuant to this section.
- (c) The parents or legal guardians agree to pay the approved tuition rate based upon the [Department of Education] per pupil cost reported for the District.
- (d) The Superintendent and/or the School Committee reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy in cases where extraordinary circumstances create a true hardship.

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**III. Legal References**

MA General Law Chapter 76, Section 5 and Section 6  
Chapter 12, Section 11 of the Acts of 2010

Original Policy Adopted – 1975; Amended – 10/95; Amended – 12/04

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