

River Falls Public Montessori Elementary School (RFPME)

Student Admission Procedure

GENERAL POLICY

RFPME uses an application process for admission. Once the number of applicants exceeds the number of open slots for any grade level, RFPME implements a lottery system for the entire pool of applicants.

RFPME uses the lottery system to accept and enroll students in our school entering grades K-6. There are two lotteries, one for in-district students and one for out of district students. Students, in-district or out-of-district, are eligible for the lottery. Those not meeting lottery deadlines will be placed on a waiting list and may still gain acceptance into the RFPME if space is available and criteria are met.

RFPME does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability, in conformity with the River Falls School District (RFSD) Nondiscrimination Policy. The following three steps will be discussed within this policy:

1. Application Process;
2. Enrollment Process; and
3. Admissions Process.

The maximum number of students that can be accepted in each grade level shall be recommended and approved by RFPME administration and the school board.

Application and Enrollment Timeline

The following is a summary timeline and may not be all-inclusive. Exact dates are available upon request from RFPME administration.

- RFPME begins accepting lottery applications for the following school year on the first day of school for students.

In-district Application and Enrollment Timeline

- Applicants must apply in writing, email, or by phone prior to 3:00 pm on the first Monday of February.
- If the number of applicants exceeds the number open seats, a lottery will be conducted following the description below. The number of open seats will be based on board approval.
- Notification of acceptance to in-district students will occur by the first Monday in March.
- Students not accepted will be placed on the waiting list.
- Registration packets for accepted in-district students are due for the upcoming school year to RFPME (421 Maple St., River Falls, WI) by the first Monday in April. If registration packets are not received by this time, placement will be forfeited and offered to the next student on the waiting list.

Out of district Application and Enrollment Timeline

- Students in this category must follow the state mandated open enrollment process.
- Lottery applications for out-of-district students are due, the last day the Wisconsin state open enrollment application window closes.
- Notification of acceptance to out of district students will occur by the second week of June.
- Students not accepted will be placed on the waiting list.
- Registration packets for out of district students are due for the upcoming school year to RFPME (421 Maple St., River Falls, WI) by the 2nd Monday in July. If registration packets are not received by this time, placement will be forfeited and offered to the next student on the waiting list.

Waiting list Application and Enrollment Timeline

- Students not meeting application deadlines will be placed on either the in-district waiting list or the out-of-district waiting list, respectively.
- A new application period starts in September and re-application is required every year for those applicants that are not admitted and wish to be considered in subsequent years.
- Notification of placement will be made as soon as space is available up to October 1 of the subsequent school year.
- Registration packets are due for the upcoming school year to RFPME (421 Maple St., River Falls, WI) within one week of acceptance and must occur prior to the first student day.
- If registration packets are not received within one week of acceptance placement will be forfeited and offered to the next student on the waiting list.

*Returning students are automatically granted admission for the subsequent school years.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

RFPME will give preference in enrollment to the following categories of students, in the following order:

1. Returning students
2. Children of RFPME staff
3. Siblings of returning students who are RFSD residents;
4. Children who are RFSD residents
5. Siblings of returning students who are RFSD non-residents
6. Children who are RFSD non-residents.

Once a student has been admitted to RFPME, he or she is automatically guaranteed a seat at RFPME for all subsequent grade-levels, unless the student withdraws from RFPME. In addition, siblings of accepted students who will later become school age will be guaranteed a seat at RFPME if they have enrolled by the first grade. In the case of a lottery, lottery applications received simultaneously for siblings for the same grade level will be processed sequentially. For example, if one sibling's name is drawn during the lottery, their same grade sibling is then exempt from the lottery and automatically assigned the next available seat. If there is not an opening for the sibling, the sibling will be placed in a priority position at the top of the wait list.

If space is still available after the application of the first level category, the RFPME shall apply the next category. If the application of a category exceeds the School's capacity within a single grade level, the school will conduct a lottery within that category. This process will be applied beginning with kindergarten and then each successive grade level until RFPME is at capacity. The school will grant enrollment preference according to the aforementioned criteria. A lottery will be held, as necessary, to determine enrollment.

When a lottery is required the following will occur:

1. For each grade level one card will be placed into a container for each applicant participating in the lottery.
2. The card includes the applicant name, grade, and the category of enrollment preference, such as if a sibling applied at same time as applicant and is in the same grade.
3. The lottery team, consisting of one RFPME staff member, an RFPME administrator, and a school board member, will select the cards, one at a time, until all cards have been drawn or all open seats have been filled.
4. A lottery spreadsheet is broken into grade and preference categories and each name and number is entered into the spreadsheet in the appropriate preference categories in order of selection.
5. The students' names in the number of available spots will be announced in preference category order as the lottery seat-holders, whereas the remainders stay on the waitlist.

The school will notify lottery applicant parents in accordance with aforementioned timelines of the outcome as to whether their child has been accepted or has been placed on a wait list.

Enrollment Determination and Acceptance

Enrollment is determined by the parent completing and delivering the elementary registration packet to the main office of RFPME which is located at 421 Maple St., River Falls, WI within one week of acceptance notification. If the enrollment slot is declined, if no response is received, or a registration packet is not delivered to RFPME by the deadline, the enrollment slot will be forfeited and the next student on the waitlist will be contacted. If the parent declines the enrollment slot, the name of the parent declining the slot, as well as the date and time of day is notated and the next name on the wait list is contacted. Once all vacant enrollment slots for each particular grade level and section are filled, enrollment will be closed.

Wait List

After all available enrollment slots (seats) are filled, wait lists will be created and maintained for each grade. The initial wait list will be created as part of the public lottery. Following the lottery, additional students will be added to the wait lists based on the previously mentioned preference criteria. When a slot becomes available in a grade level, a student will be drawn from the waiting list following the enrollment preference criteria and lottery process previously mentioned.

Parents/guardians will be contacted by phone. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached by phone an email is sent. If the parent/guardian does not return voicemail or respond to the email within one Working Day, the Acceptance Letter is mailed to the parent/guardian and they are given one week to accept the slot. See the "Enrollment Acceptance" section above for additional information.

EXCEPTIONS AND APPEALS

Any exceptions to these procedures must be approved by the RFSD administration and the school board. Appeals may be sent to:

River Fall Public Montessori Elementary
Attn: Nate Wells
421 Maple St.
River Falls, WI 54022

It is the responsibility of each parent to familiarize themselves with the admission policy, including deadlines. All deadlines are final, and no exceptions will be made.