

# **Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School**

## **Admissions and Enrollment Policy**

### **Introduction**

Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School (BUGS) is non-sectarian and its admissions policy does 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. BUGS does not require any action by a student or family (such as an admissions test, interview, essay, attendance at an information session, etc.) in order for an applicant either to receive or submit an application for admission to the school. Any child who is a resident of New York State and is qualified under New York State law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to BUGS. BUGS is a middle school that enrolls students entering 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The school will ensure compliance with all applicable anti-discrimination laws governing public schools, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Section 2854(2) of the New York Education Law, which governs admissions to charter schools.

### **Recruitment and Eligibility Criteria**

An essential aspect of the Brooklyn Urban Garden Charter School (BUGS) mission is to serve a diversity of learners in a highly supportive and challenging learning environment. BUGS shall demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch, and English Language Learners when compared to the enrollment figures for students in New York City Department of Education Community School District 15 (CSD 15), where BUGS is located. Outreach efforts focus on attending community events and fairs, and conducting outreach at after school programs, elementary schools and community-based organizations serving the very diverse populations of Sunset Park, Gowanus and Red Hook neighborhoods all of which serve CSD 15. BUGS also holds periodic open houses and information sessions on site at the BUGS location (or remotely, if needed) throughout the school year. BUGS participates in the annual District 15 middle school fair and other District-wide middle school information events held each fall.

Each year, BUGS admissions will be open to entering 6th graders, as well as students in 7th and/or 8th grade, in the event that seats are available. In its admission policies and procedures, BUGS will not engage in any of the following:

- (1) Requiring parents to attend meetings or information workshops as a condition of

enrollment;

- (2) Having an unduly narrow enrollment period;
- (3) Requiring parents to sign agreements or contracts imposing certain responsibilities or commitments to BUGS, regardless of their virtue, as a condition of enrolling their children (e.g. correcting a child's homework, volunteering, etc.);
- (4) Mandating that students or parents agree with BUGS mission or philosophy;
- (5) Giving preference to or unduly targeting students interested or talented in a particular BUGS program, or;
- (6) Requiring admissions tests, interviews, or essays.

## **Applications**

Applications for admissions will be made available online, by email, or at the school at the request of a student or family. BUGS will use the uniform application form created by the State Department of Education, which will be available in English, Spanish and any other languages requested by families. Applications can be mailed, emailed, or hand delivered to BUGS by April 1. Applications submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than April 1 to be included in the lottery. If the number of timely submitted applications of eligible students for admissions exceeds the capacity of the grade level, students will be accepted for admissions from among the applicants by a random selection process (lottery).

## **Admissions Preferences**

Admissions preferences are as follows and in the following order of priority:

- (1) Students returning to BUGS;
- (2) Siblings of students already enrolled in BUGS;
- (3) Students who are children of current BUGS employees at the time of lottery, provided that children of such employees may constitute no more than 15% of BUGS's total enrollment;
- (4) Students residing in the school district in which BUGS is located (CSD 15)

For purposes of this policy, BUGS defines “**siblings**” as students who:

- (1) Have one or two identical parents, by blood, adoption, or marriage,
- (2) Live together in the same foster household,
- (3) Have parents who live together under a domestic partnership arrangement registered with any state or local government.

For purposes of this policy, BUGS defines “**ELL**” as a student who:

(1) Is classified as an English Language Learner

or

(2) If a student is new to the New York City public schools: Indicates that they (the student) speaks a language other than English most of the time or that English was NOT the first language the student learned to speak.

For purposes of this policy, BUGS defines a student who is eligible for the Free and Reduced Priced Lunch Program (FRPL) as:

- (1) A student who qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch, by using the USDA eligibility chart at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/income-eligibility-guidelines>
- (2) A student whose household qualifies for SNAP or TANF benefits
- (3) A student who lives in New York City public housing

### **Admissions Lottery**

If the number of applications received exceeds the number of seats available, BUGS will conduct a lottery. The lottery will be independently observed by a disinterested party (8 NYCRR 119.5), a person who is not a board member or an employee of the school and who is not the parent, person in parental relationship, sibling, aunt, uncle or first cousin of any applicant to the school or of any student enrolled in the school. It will be conducted in a transparent, equitable and random manner.

The lottery will be held in a space that is open and accessible to the public as required by 8 NYCRR 119.5 and capable of accommodating the anticipated number of attendees. If it is anticipated that attendance will exceed capacity, separated grade level lotteries will be held in separate locations and each lottery will be publicized in a manner consistent with Public Officers Law Section 104(1). At least one week prior to each lottery a public notice will publicize the lottery and the number of spaces anticipated to be available each year by grade level. If such lottery is provided during a school closure ordered pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor pursuant to a state of emergency for the COVID-19 crisis, such notice shall also be posted on the charter school's website. Parents, guardians, persons in parental relationships and/or students will not be excluded from or required to participate in the lottery process. Consistent with Executive Order No. 202.1, if such lottery occurs during a school closure ordered pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor for the COVID-19 crisis, such lottery may be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the opportunity to view or listen and such lottery is recorded and later transcribed.

The random process used in the lottery may be generated by a traditional ball system, technology-based software, paper ticket process or other methodology that generates random

results. BUGS will have weighting for ELL and FRPL applicants: An interested applicant who is an ELL (as defined above) will be given ten times the chance of having her or his name selected in the lottery, should a lottery be required in that year. An interested applicant who is FRPL eligible (as defined above) will also be given ten times the chance of having her or his name selected in the lottery, should a lottery be required in that year. If a student is eligible to receive both the ELL and the FRPL weightings, they will not receive both weightings cumulatively, e.g. they will go into the lottery a maximum of 10 times, resulting in the applicant receiving no more than 10 chances in the lottery.

After enough students have been selected via lottery to fill all available spaces, a waitlist for each grade level will be formed from the remaining names. This waitlist will be based upon the random selection from the lottery and will be the only official, legal document identifying the names, home addresses, telephone numbers and grade levels of grade-eligible students with applications to the school pending acceptance. When vacancies arise, based upon the order of random selection from the lottery, families on the waitlist will be contacted by phone, mail, or email. Students applying for admission after the lottery is conducted will be admitted throughout the year on a space-available basis, or placed on the waiting list in the order in which their applications were received. The waiting list for the current school year will expire annually on June 30 of that year.

Whenever a vacancy occurs, either prior to the start of a particular school year or during the course of that school year, BUGS will contact the parent of the student next on the appropriate waiting list. Reasonable and multiple attempts (at least 3) will be made to contact the family of the student on the top of the waiting list and to obtain confirmation that the student is still interested in enrolling at BUGS before proceeding to the next name on the list. At least one attempt to contact the family will be via an alternate form of communication (for example, by phone if prior contact was via email). If reasonable and multiple attempts to contact the student's parents are unsuccessful, then BUGS may remove the student from the waitlist. Documentation of the attempts made to contact the parents of any student removed from the waitlist will be maintained by the school. Waiting lists will not be carried over from year to year. Instead, the annual admission lotteries will be used to create newly randomized waiting lists.

Detailed documentation of the lottery process will identify the process used and demonstrated consistency with the procedures described above. The documentation will be recorded and made available to NYSED and the Board of Regents upon request.

### **Student Registration and Enrollment**

Once the lottery has been conducted, BUGS will, within two weeks of the lottery, notify parents and guardians of applicants by electronic means, telephone or mail whether their child has been granted a seat at the school or if they are on the waiting list. The school will require each parent

of a child who has been selected for admission to confirm (within the specified period of time stated in the offer) their intent to enroll or not to enroll the child in BUGS. If the parent does not confirm (within the specified period of time stated in the offer), the child's name may be removed from the enrollment list. The offer will notify families of this policy. The school will ask currently enrolled students to confirm their intent for the student to remain in the school the next year.

Prior to the commencement of each academic year, families of children who enroll at the school must complete the enrollment process. As part of this process, parents must provide verification of a student's residency (with the exception of homeless students). Proof of residency must be established by presenting at least two of the following documents:

- A residential utility bill (gas or electric) in the resident's name issued by National Grid, Con Edison, the Long Island Power Authority, or other utility service dated within the last 60 days;
- An original lease agreement, deed or mortgage statement for the residence;
- A current property tax bill for the residence;
- A water bill for the residence dated within the past 60 days;
- Official payroll documentation from an employer such as a form submitted for tax withholding purposes or payroll receipt; a letter on the employer's letterhead will not be accepted; must be dated within the past 60 days; and/or
- Documentation or letter on letterhead from a federal, state or local government agency, including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), City Housing Authority, Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Administration for Children Services (ACS), or an ACS subcontractor indicating the resident's name and address; all must be dated within the past 60 days.

In addition to proof of residency, families must provide a copy of the student's birth certificate, health form and immunization record. BUGS staff will be available to assist parents in understanding the registration requirements, obtaining required information and completing the required forms.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

BUGS is a public school of choice, both for application and withdrawal. At any time, a parent wishing to withdraw his or her child from the school will be asked to complete a student withdrawal form. BUGS personnel will offer to meet with the family and discuss their reasons for withdrawing from the school, as well as to seek solutions to any problems that arise from these discussions. If the parents still wish to transfer the child to another school, BUGS will ensure timely transfer of any necessary school records to the student's new school.