



Discovery Schools

Admissions Policy Book

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Mission

The mission of Discovery Health Sciences Academy is to provide a rigorous learning environment where students achieve academically, develop intellectual curiosity, and practice environmental responsibility while exploring health and science topics and careers.

About this Policy Book

Discovery Schools does not and shall not discriminate against students, parents, or guardians on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), family situation, intellectual or athletic ability, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

For the purposes of this policy book: Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy at the John Martyn Campus may be abbreviated as “DJOD”; Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy may be abbreviated as “KDHS”; Baton Rouge Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy may be abbreviated as “BROD.”

Defined Terms

- **Discovery Schools Employee:** Any employee working in any capacity directly for Discovery Health Sciences Foundation, Discovery Schools, Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy or Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy at the John Martyn Campus. (i.e. business office employee, teacher, administrator, facilities team, board member).
- **Ochsner Health System Employee:** A full-time Ochsner employee or a part-time Ochsner employee regularly working at least 24 hours per week as determined by Ochsner’s Human Resources department.
- **Sibling:** Must have the same biological parent(s) or legal guardian(s) by court-ordered foster or adoption AND reside at the same address as each other. Provisional Custody by Mandate does not qualify a student for this preference.
- **Legacy:** Sibling(s) of a Kenner Discovery High School graduate that has(have) the same biological parent(s) or the legal dependent (child) of a Kenner Discovery High School graduate. Jefferson Parish residency requirements still apply. Provisional Custody by Mandate does not qualify a student for this preference.

Admissions Process

In order to be eligible for admissions, applicants must provide the following **required** documents:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization record (Expiration date on records should be current)
- The most recent report card or official state home study approval notification (to verify grade placement)
 - Not required for PreK or Kindergarten
- 3 proofs of residency - all proofs of residency must be in the parent/legal guardian's name and the same address as the student. If there is joint custody, a copy of the custody order will be requested to determine who the domiciliary parent is and, thus, who has the primary responsibility for making educational decisions and where the student primarily resides.

Applications with missing required documents will not be eligible for the admissions lottery.

In addition, the following documents are requested (not required):

- [Free and Reduced Lunch form](#) (please contact the school for the form)
- Current IEP if applicable
- Current IAP/504 Plan if applicable
- Proofs for Students who intend to qualify for Economically Disadvantaged status

All Discovery Schools will utilize the SmartChoice/SchoolMint application for the application cycle, lottery, and admissions.

Once the application is completed, applicants receive an electronic receipt indicating submission.

All applications submitted within the application period will have an equal opportunity for admission, regardless of whether they are submitted on the first day or the last day of the application period. Students will be considered for admission without regard to race, religion, national origin, gender, or physical disability.

ADMISSIONS TIMELINE (changes annually)

JEFFERSON PARISH - TYPE 1 DISTRICT CHARTER SCHOOLS:

KENNER DISCOVERY & DR. JOHN OCHSNER DISCOVERY

- Application Window: **11/1/2022-2/3/2023 at noon**
- Seat Acceptance Deadline: **3/31/2023**

Kenner Discovery Lottery

- Enrollment Preferences: Faculty, Siblings of KDHSA students and Legacy of KDHSA graduates, Kenner Economically Disadvantaged students, Jefferson Parish Economically Disadvantaged students, Kenner residents, Jefferson Parish residents
 - Siblings of currently enrolled Kenner Discovery students will **NOT** receive a sibling preference if applying to Dr. John Ochsner Discovery
 - Legacy applicants will **NOT** receive a preference if applying to Dr. John Ochsner Discovery
- Lottery Date: **3/14/2023**

Dr. John Ochsner Discovery at the John Martyn Campus Lottery

- Enrollment Preferences: Discovery Schools Faculty students, Siblings of DJOD, Ochsner Employees (50% of open seats), Neighborhood Economically Disadvantaged Students, Jefferson Parish Economically Disadvantaged Students, Neighborhood, Jefferson Parish
 - Siblings of currently enrolled DJOD students will **NOT** receive a sibling preference if applying to Kenner Discovery K-8
 - Siblings of currently enrolled DJOD students will receive a sibling preference if applying to Kenner Discovery grades 9-12
- Lottery Date: 3/14/2023

STATEWIDE - TYPE 2 STATE-AUTHORIZED CHARTER SCHOOLS:

BATON ROUGE OCHSNER DISCOVERY

- Application Window: 10/3/2022 - 12/13/2022 at noon
- Seat Acceptance Deadline: 2/3/2023

Baton Rouge Ochsner Discovery Lottery

- Enrollment Preferences: Discovery Schools Faculty students, Siblings of BROD students*, Ochsner Employees (50% of open seats), Economically Disadvantaged Students, SPED Students
 - *In year 1, sibling preference will be administered for siblings applying. The lottery will be run for 4th grade first. Lotteries will then be run in reverse chronological order for each grade level (4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st, K, PreK4). If a sibling is accepted in the lottery at previous grade levels, then sibling preference will apply to eligible applicants during the current grade level lottery.
- Lottery Date: 1/18/2023

Preferences such as economically disadvantaged and special education students may be revised and/or implemented until state requirements are met.

Lottery Overview

1. Lottery refers to the selection of applicant names by a random method in a computer-generated process.
2. A lottery shall be conducted by the school to include all grades in which the number of applicants exceeds the number of expected seats available.
3. If the number of applicants is less than the number of seats anticipated to be available, seats will be awarded and no lottery shall be conducted for that grade.
4. All applicants (students not already attending a Discovery school for which they are applying, including siblings of those already attending) participate in the lottery.
5. Only completed applications received prior to the end of the application deadline are eligible to participate in the lottery.
6. All applicants offered a seat shall be required to confirm their enrollment status within the designated time.
7. All preference categories shall be published prior to the lottery being conducted.

8. All applicants entitled to receive a lottery preference shall be identified PRIOR to the lottery.
More specifically:
 - a. Sibling preference: applicants must be eligible as of the last day of the application period.
 - b. Ochsner preference: applicants must be eligible as of the lottery date; in addition, this preference is audited regularly and applicants must remain qualified (no note of a break in service) to retain an Ochsner seat.
9. Preference status applicants are entitled to a percentage of open seats ahead of applicants without a preference status.

Faculty Application / Discovery Employee Preference**

Employees of Discovery Schools who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for a seat for their child at any Discovery School (Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy, Baton Rouge Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy or Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy) due to the faculty dependent preference policy:

- Employees may apply for a seat for their child during their first year of employment (and any year beyond their first year) with Discovery Schools for the following school year. For example, if an employee begins working at Kenner Discovery in August 2020, he or she may apply for their child beginning in November 2020 for the following school year (2021-2022).
 - No applications for faculty students will be considered outside of the application window.**
- Residency in Jefferson Parish is not required while employed with Discovery Schools.
- Employees who complete the term of their offer letter but leave the following year must retain any other general enrollment requirements in order for their dependent to remain a student at a Discovery School. (i.e. must be a Jefferson Parish resident to remain at KDHS or DJOD)
- Once an employee dependent is enrolled at a Discovery School, the student must remain at the campus/school where they were first enrolled. Employees may request a campus/school change by doing so in writing to the Head of School; however, it is not guaranteed. The Head of School will notify Admissions if the campus/school change request is granted or denied.
 - Step Children: the employee must have joint custody of the student by court order and the student must reside at the same residence as the employee

****COVID EXCEPTION**

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated teacher shortage, a waiver of the wait period and normal application process has been granted starting in the 2020-21 school year and continues to carry forward until otherwise voted on by the Board of Directors.
- The employee may enroll their student immediately in conjunction with their employment start date; however, they must complete the terms of their offer letter to retain the seat for the following year.
- In addition, the employee must take advantage of this benefit within the first 30 days of employment or prior to the below deadlines, whichever is sooner. Failure to take advantage of this benefit during the “enrollment period” will render the employee ineligible until the next “open enrollment.”
 - Employees hired with a start date between June 1 and October 1 of the current school year may have any dependent enroll in grades 9-12 as long as the

Principal at the chosen campus acknowledges that there is sufficient staffing to accommodate the student to Discovery standards.

- Employees hired with a start date between June 1 and January 31st of the current school year may have any dependent enroll in grades PreK-8, as long as the Principal at the chosen campus acknowledges that there is sufficient staffing to accommodate the student to Discovery standards.
- Employees hired outside of these dates (February 1 or later) and/or circumstances will be allowed to submit an application for the following school year (even outside of the application period), and upon fulfillment of their offer letter/remaining in good standing, shall be offered the benefit opportunity for those dependents applied for the next school year, as long as the Principal at the chosen campus acknowledges that there is sufficient staffing to accommodate the student to Discovery standards.
- If an employee does not complete the term of their offer letter or remain in good standing, the dependent will be allowed to complete the current school year but will not retain the seat for the following school year.

These policies have been established in the best interest of both the guardian employee and the dependent student(s). Hardship appeals can be made in writing to the Admissions Team with the final decision being made by the Head of School upon review of the Admissions Committee of the Board.

Sibling / Legacy Preference

The goal of Discovery Schools is to be family-centered; therefore, a sibling preference is offered.

- The sibling preference is applicable after one year of enrollment at a Discovery School.
- Siblings of Dr. John Ochsner Discovery (DJOD) or Kenner Discovery students who are applying for Kenner Discovery grades 9-12 will have sibling preference at KDHSA.
- Siblings of Dr. John Ochsner Discovery students who are applying for elementary and middle school grades available (PreK-8) will have sibling preference only at DJOD.
- Siblings of Kenner Discovery students who are applying for elementary and middle school grades available (PreK-8) will have sibling preference only at Kenner Discovery.
- The legacy preference is applicable only if the sibling or parent/guardian is a graduate of Kenner Discovery High School.
- Siblings must have the same biological parent(s) or legal guardian(s) by court-ordered foster or adoption AND reside at the same address as each other. Provisional Custody by Mandate does not qualify a student for this preference.
- Legacy students will have legacy preference only at Kenner Discovery.

Ochsner Employee Preference

Employees of Ochsner Health System who meet the following criteria are eligible to apply for a seat(s) at Dr. John Ochsner Discovery Health Sciences Academy at the John Martyn Campus or Baton Rouge Ochsner Discovery

- In order to qualify for Ochsner Employee Lottery Preference, an applicant must be a full-time Ochsner employee or a part-time Ochsner employee regularly working at least 24 hours per week as determined by Ochsner's Human Resources department.
- No minimum years of service requirement.
- Should an employee leave Ochsner Health System, voluntarily or involuntarily, prior to the first day of school for the application year (July audit) or seat offer date, if after the start of the school year, the student will lose his/her spot, if granted.
 - Admissions staff will verify Ochsner employment status with Ochsner HR for single seats off the waitlist prior to placement if offered after the lottery or July audit date (filling seats during the school year).
- If an Ochsner employee leaves Ochsner voluntarily or involuntarily at any point during an audit period, the student will be allowed to finish the current school year, but will not be able to keep his/her seat for the next school year without reapplying.
- Dependents may be biological child(ren) or legal dependent(s) by court-ordered foster or adoption or under custody of the employee by provisional mandate.
- Residency in Jefferson Parish is required for students applying to DJOD.
- Louisiana residency is required for students applying to BROD.

Waitlist Overview

- If the number of applicants exceeds the number of seats available for any grade level, a computer-generated, random lottery will be run in order to determine who is offered a seat at the school.
- Since Discovery is a high-demand school with a 96 percent student retention rate, we expect to conduct a lottery for all grade levels with open seats.
- Applicants applying to grades with zero open seats will be entered into the lottery to determine their number on the waitlist. The waitlist remains active until:
 - January 31st each year for grades PK4 - 8th
 - October 1st for grades 9th - 12th due to Carnegie Units
- Applications submitted each school year (or any previous year) will not be valid, rollover, or processed in the following year. In addition, the waitlist does not carry over from year to year. If a student is not awarded a seat, a new application must be submitted during the application period each year in order to be considered for a seat the following school year.

Enrollment Policies

- **Changing Discovery Schools:** Students are unable to switch campuses without reapplying and going through the entire application process. This is because each Charter is an independent school with different admissions preferences.
- **Residency Requirements:** Students must reside in Jefferson Parish in order to attend Kenner Discovery (KDHS) or Dr. John Ochsner Discovery (DJOD). Students may reside anywhere in the state of Louisiana to attend Baton Rouge Ochsner Discovery (BROD). This is audited annually during re-enrollment.

KDHS & DJOD:

If a student's family moves from Jefferson Parish at any point during the school year, they should notify the school office immediately.

Once the Admissions Department has gained knowledge that a student no longer meets residency requirements the Admissions Director will contact all listed guardians for whom contact information is provided in OnCouse to confirm this information. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have 10 days to produce proof of Jefferson Parish residency or submit a [Discovery Schools Student Residency Questionnaire](#) to determine if the student is McKinney-Vento eligible or if their living arrangement is one described in the Act's definition of homeless. Proof of residency or completion of the Residency Questionnaire must be provided within the designated time period indicated by Admissions.

If it is confirmed that a student no longer meets the residency requirement or if the parent/guardian does not comply with the proof of residency request, the withdrawal timelines below will be used in order to minimize academic interruption in the best interest of the student while coming into legal compliance related to student enrollment:

- Notification is received prior to the start of a new school year (1st day of school): the student will not be allowed to attend and withdrawal is effective immediately.
- Notification is received after the first day of school but before the mid-semester holiday break (prior to January 1): the student will not be allowed to return after the holiday break
- Notification is received after students return from the mid-semester holiday Break (after January 1): the student will be allowed to complete the remainder of the school year but will be withdrawn effective the 1st day following the last day of school.
- The seat for the following school year is forfeited in all circumstances.

BROD:

If a student's family moves out of state, the student will be withdrawn immediately.

- **Grade Applying**

A student must be eligible for the grade applied for in order to accept a seat offered. For example, a student who applies for 9th grade but does not successfully complete 8th grade will not be eligible to accept a seat if it is offered in the lottery without successfully completing a summer school program.

A parent may choose to have a student repeat Kindergarten if the student has never repeated it prior. However, if the student begins first grade at the beginning of the school year and is offered a seat in kindergarten the student will not be eligible to accept the seat and can be placed at the bottom of first-grade waitlist.

The final decision for the grade being applied for lies with the parent/guardian. Students who are not eligible for the seat applied for, based on their final report card or homeschool determination letter, will be placed at the bottom of the waitlist for the grade they are eligible for.

- **Late Enrollment** (after the start of the school year)

Students accepted to a Discovery School after the first regular school day of the year will begin school on the first Wednesday following their seat award provided that the following are completed by the parent:

- The parent has accepted the seat in Smart Choice no later than the Monday before the Wednesday start date.
- The parent has completed all necessary paperwork, including receipt of a withdrawal from the student's previous school, no later than the Monday before the Wednesday start date.

Every attempt will be made to have a student start as soon as possible after acceptance to avoid learning days lost.

- **Holding Seats**

Seats will only be held under the following conditions:

- Medical circumstances allowing for exempt absences. (see student-parent handbook)
- If a student is placed in an alternative school for a defined period. The student must successfully complete the terms of the placement in order to be considered for re-admission.

Each scenario shall be brought before the Admissions Committee of the DHSF Board for a final decision related to whether:

- The student qualifies to have a seat held for the same school year.
- The student will be re-admitted or resume regular attendance during the same school year OR
- The student will not be re-admitted or resume regular attendance and must reapply for the following school year.
- The student is not eligible to return to Discovery Schools.

For students who are incarcerated:

- KDHS or DJOD students:

[Jefferson Parish policy](#) dictates that the student will undergo suspension, and possibly expulsion, and may not be re-admitted immediately. They must go through an application process for an alternative program and Jefferson Parish will also decide if the student is eligible to return to their school of origin based on the offense and trial results.

- **BROD students:**

Per guidance provided in [Bulletin 741](#), the student will undergo suspension, and possibly expulsion, and may not be re-admitted immediately. They must go through an application process for an [alternative program](#). The DHSF Board will also decide if the student is eligible to return to their school of origin based on the offense and trial results.

All approved scenarios require an academic plan created by a student support team. Certain scenarios may require legal counsel.

Families who choose on their own accord to travel out of the country and are delayed in their return to the United States for any circumstance will not have seats held. Please see the attendance policy and subsequent policies surrounding the automatic withdrawal of a student due to a lack of attendance.

Withdrawal Policies

Guardians who wish to withdraw their student(s) must submit a request in writing to the Admissions Department (admissions@discoveryhsf.org). Admissions will then send a withdrawal form to all legal guardians on file. To complete the form, at least one legal guardian must indicate the school the withdrawn student will be attending once they leave a Discovery School as well as acknowledge via signature any outstanding fees or equipment returns. Failure to provide this information could result in required reporting to local authorities.

Any appeals, including hardship, related to Admissions will be submitted to the Admissions Director who will then convene the Admissions Committee of the Board for the final decision.

NOTED REVISIONS:

**COVID Exception Policy Board Revision Adopted 4/25/2022