



Section: 500

Policy: 005

Revised: September 20, 2016

Revised: November 7, 2017

Cooperative Participation Procedures and Expectations Policy

Policy:

Once a student enrolls in Forest Charter School (“FCS”), the school strives to create a personalized learning program for each student. During the orientation meeting, the administrator or designee will discuss the various educational opportunities with the family and work to place students where they will thrive. One such option is the FCS cooperatives. Participation in a cooperative is not a condition of enrollment in FCS. Student participation in cooperatives is optional. FCS shall not discriminate on any protected classification of student, as described in Education Code Section 220, in determining participation in cooperatives.

As part of FCS’s unique approach to education, FCS has developed small programs (cooperatives) within the larger FCS program in which students may participate. Due to the limited space and unique nature each of these cooperatives, participation in one of these programs is subject to capacity and to students meeting the minimum expectations of cooperative. To the extent there are more applicants for a cooperative than spaces available, participation in a selected cooperative will be determined by lottery with preferences as described below. If a student is unable to participate in a cooperative, the student may choose to be placed on the wait list for a space in the cooperative even if they do not choose to otherwise be enrolled in FCS absent participation in a cooperative.

Students wishing to participate in a cooperative program will be given priority in the lottery in the following order:

1. Students advancing a grade level within the same co-op (e.g., PACE, Global Studies) even if they are moving to a new Supervising Teacher. (This includes eighth grade students moving from PACE to ninth grade Global Studies.)
2. Children or grandchildren of administrators, office staff, special ed staff, supervising teachers, and any other learning center employees currently working at FCS.
3. Current students of FCS who have been enrolled at FCS for at least two full Learning Periods.
4. Sibling of a student already enrolled in a specific co-op for at least one half of one semester trying to enroll in the same co-op.
5. All other applicants

Participation Periods for fall applicants to Cooperatives

- February, March, and April – Beginning the first Monday of the month and ending the last school day of the month that the office is open.
- May and June – Three (3) two-week cooperative participation periods will be held beginning with the first Monday in May. Each enrollment period will run for ten school days (except that Memorial Day will count as a school day). If necessary, an additional open participation period will be established for one week in June.
- If these cooperative participation period dates need to be changed, the new dates will be posted on the website, and at the main office.
- If there are more cooperative applicants than available spots for any open cooperative participation period, a public lottery will be held at 3:30 the next school day after any cooperative participation period closes to determine who is eligible for participation in the cooperative and the order of the waiting list.
- If space is still available in August and beyond for current year cooperative participation, FCS will first place students in a cooperative based on the waiting list and then hold weekly lottery sessions every Friday as needed (i.e. when there are more interested students than there are spots available in the cooperative). The weekly cooperative participation period will close each Friday at 3:00 and the cooperative lottery will be pulled that same Friday at 3:30. Other students will be kept on a cooperative waiting list and FCS will contact these students in the order of the wait list to offer a space.

Other Considerations

- Students must be able to regularly attend the cooperative during its meeting days.
- In order to maintain balance in a multi-grade cooperative, availability may be based on space being available at a specific grade level. If a cooperative receives more applications than capacity, participation will be determined by lottery as described above.
- Twins – Twins will be placed in the cooperative lottery as one student and receive the same lottery position. If there is only one spot available, the family will be offered cooperative placement for one twin. If the family declines the offer of placement in the cooperative, the twins will remain on the cooperative lottery list in the same position and the applicant next on the list will be offered the placement. Twins will not be dropped from the list or dropped to the bottom of the list if they decline a spot unless there are two participation spots available at the time of declining.

Acceptance of Participation

- After a student has been drawn in the cooperative lottery, FCS will contact the family via phone and email (if provided). Once contacted by the school, the family has two business days to contact Forest Charter School and accept the spot in the cooperative. If FCS does not hear from the family within these two business days, the spot in the cooperative will be given to the next student on the waiting list, and the student who was originally called will be moved to the next spot on the waiting list.
- FCS will attempt to contact a family for two different open spots in the cooperative. After two attempts to contact a family with an open participation spot in the cooperative where the family does not respond to the school, the family will be removed from the cooperative waiting list.
- If a family declines a participation spot in the cooperative the student will be removed from the waiting list.

Wait List

- Cooperative waiting lists are created based on the specific co-op and grade level.
- Students will remain on the cooperative wait list from year to year in the same order as long as they re-contact FCS and establish their continued interest. However, at the end of each participation period, the list may be adjusted if a new applicant meets one of the articulated priorities (e.g., the child of a staff member) that the original applicant does not.

Cooperative Participation Requirements

In order to participate in a Forest Charter School Cooperative program, students/parents must meet the following expectations. These cooperative expectations are meant to ensure that students participate in FCS program options where they may receive an educational benefit. Due to the unique, multi-grade, learning structure of the Forest Charter School cooperatives, trying to support a student whose academic skills are too far below grade level does not foster student success. Therefore, Forest Charter School believes that there are minimum academic skills that a student must possess in order to succeed in any of the cooperatives. With these considerations in mind, Forest Charter School has developed the following expectation to qualify for the cooperative:

Family

- Prior to participating in a Co-op, the Co-op Supervising Teacher or an administrator will meet with the family to review program and homeschooling expectations.

Student

- FCS seeks to ensure that each student who chooses to participate in a Co-op is enabled to receive an educational benefit. Each co-op involves a great deal of written assignments and pacing that requires academic skills that are no more than one grade level below the student's assigned grade level. As such, students seeking to participate in a Co-op must independently demonstrate that their English Language Arts proficiency is equivalent to scoring 80% or higher on a basic language arts assessment that is no lower than one grade level below his or her enrolled grade level. This skill level can be demonstrated in a number of ways including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
 1. Scoring 80% or higher on a basic language arts assessment that is no lower than one grade level below his or her enrolled grade level.
 2. Independently writing a letter/paragraph to the teacher (and in front of the teacher) that demonstrates the required language arts ability.
 3. A recommendation from the student's former FCS teacher ensuring that this student meets the language arts requirement articulated above.
- If there is any uncertainty as to whether or not the student has met the minimum cooperative language arts expectations, FCS reserves the right to defer to a basic language arts assessment. FCS shall also ensure that when considering the participation of any student with a disability under Section 504 or under the IDEA or who is identified as an English Learner, the student's participation is considered with appropriate accommodations/services to ensure equal access to co-op participation for all students. If a student is not recommended to participate in a Co-op, FCS shall offer interventions designed to assist the student to qualify for co-op participation in the future.
- This policy can also be used to evaluate if it is appropriate for a student currently enrolled in that cooperative to continue with the cooperative the following year.
- Exceptions to this language arts requirement can be made by the Forest Charter School administration on a case-by-case basis if there is a reasonable belief and evidence that the student can receive an educational benefit in the cooperative program.