

Maritime Academy Charter School Annual Notice
2023-2024

Maritime Academy Charter School provides special education and related services to students with disabilities who are grade (2) through age twenty-one (21). The purpose of this notice is to describe (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education program and related services that are available, (3) the process by which Maritime Academy Charter School screens and evaluates such students to determine eligibility, and (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians.

Special Education Programs:

Services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual disability (previously mental retardation)
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic disability
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, including blindness

In compliance with State and Federal Law, Maritime Academy will provide, to each protected handicapped student, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide access for a student to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. Services are provided based on need rather than disability category.

REFERRAL OF CHILDREN FOR SCREENING AND EVALUATION:

Maritime Academy Charter School has procedures to identify children needing special education. Those procedures are “screening” and “evaluation.” If a disability is suspected, teachers, other school personnel or parents may refer a child for screening and/or evaluation. Parents suspecting that a child may have a disability and need special education can request a screening or evaluation at any time by contacting the Director of Specialized Services. Screening activities include: reviewing immediately available data sources such as prior school records, health records, parent interview and history; functional vision and hearing evaluations; determining the student’s response to attempted remediation; occupation therapy and speech and language screenings. If the screening leads to a recommendation for evaluation, the evaluation team will conduct the parent. No evaluations may be conducted without written parental permission. Consult the Director of Specialized Services for further information. State and federal law affords many rights and protections to children with disabilities and their parents. A summary of this rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by the law, together with information about free or low cost legal services and advice, by contacting the Director of Specialized Services.

RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS:

Prior Written Notice: Maritime Academy Charter School must notify you in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program or placement of a child or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement requested by a parent. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the reasons for the proposal or refusal, the options considered, if any, and the reason why such options were rejected.

Consent: Maritime Academy Charter School cannot proceed with an evaluation or with the initial provision of special education and related services without the written consent of the parent. Maritime Academy Charter School may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of parental consent to an initial placement in special education. Maritime Academy Charter School may override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer of judge following a hearing. If the parent fails to respond to a written request for permission to re-evaluate, however, Maritime Academy Charter School may proceed with the proposed reevaluation without consent.

Protection in Evaluation Procedure: Evaluations to determine eligibility and current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. Evaluations cannot consist of a single test or assessment and testing must be a valid measure of the psychological, social, emotional or other learning characteristic or behavior that the school is using it to measure. Testing and assessment must be administered in accordance with professional standards and the criteria established by the publisher. It must be administered in the native language of the child.

Confidentiality: The records and documents that are part of the evaluation and screening process are confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). School districts, intermediate units, and charter schools maintain records concerning all children enrolled in the school, including students with disabilities. All records are maintained in the strictest confidentiality. Your consent, or consent of an eligible child who has reached the age of majority under State law, must be obtained before personally identifiable information is released, except as permitted under FERPA. The age of majority in Pennsylvania is 21. Each participating agency must protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction stages. One official at each participating agency must assume responsibility for ensuring the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Each participating agency must maintain, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information. For additional information related to student records, the parent can refer to FERPA. This notice is only a summary of the Special Education services, evaluation and screening activities, and rights and protections pertaining to children with disabilities, children thought to be disabled, and their parents.

MORE INFORMATION:

Information and communications are in English, but will be provided in the native language or other modes of communication used by parents, if appropriate.

Charter schools (CSs) are required to conduct child find activities for children who may be eligible for services via Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, some school-age children with disabilities who do not meet eligibility criteria outlined above might be eligible for protections and adaptations, and accommodations, if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to a school program. For additional information related to Section 504/Chapter 15 services, the parent may refer to Section 504, Chapter 15, and the Basic Education Circular entitled Implementation of Chapter 15.

For further information on the procedural rights of parents and their children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose, time and location), you may contact the Director of Specialized Services, 215-535-4555, ext. 1208.

Maritime Academy Charter School offers programs for students who have English as their second language. The ESL program at Maritime Academy provides support and intensive instruction in English and American culture to Non- and Limited English Proficient (NEP and LEP) students which will enable them to become successful in the mainstream classroom, the school environment, and the community at large.