



WAIT LIST (Ranked and Lottery) **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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NOW THAT MY CHILD’S APPLICATION HAS BEEN PROCESSED...

Q – What do I do now?

A – Go to the website ffca-calgary.com, Menu/Parents/Wait List and click on the Online Wait List System link (not the family login link!!). Once you login, you will be able to see the children you have added to the wait list as well as the campus they are designated to, and their grade. Instructions to login are available in the Online Wait List System section of this document and also on the login page of the Online Wait List System. We do not email out the id/passwords but can confirm that you are using the correct parent name and phone number. Please email the id/password you are trying, your child’s full name and the home phone number for assistance. If there is incorrect information or you do not see all of your children listed, please let us know.

FFCA'S AGE POLICY

Q – At what age can my child begin kindergarten?

A – As of the 2020/21 school year, the child must be five (5) years old on or before Dec 31st. You will be required to produce your child's original or notarized copy of his/her birth certificate as proof of age.

Q – Can my child repeat kindergarten?

A – Alberta Education will only fund kindergarten once. If you send your child to a different school the year prior, you'll need to email us after you have renewed in October. His/her name will be moved to the grade one wait list at that time. Your child may be on the wait list for an additional 7 – 10 years before we reach his/her name. Alternatively, you may pay the amount equivalent to the AB Ed grant in order to have your child repeat kindergarten with FFCA. This amount is due upon registration and totals approximately \$4600 (plus an additional \$590 on top of the bus fee if you choose to access transportation).

Q – Am I guaranteed admission if I keep my child out of school and wait for the kindergarten program at FFCA?

A – No. Your child's name is still on the wait list and the usual admission procedure will need to be followed.

Q – What are my chances of admission to grade one if my child attends kindergarten at a different school?

A – You may experience an additional 7 to 10 year wait before we reach your child's name on the wait list for admission to our school. He/she will be sorted on the new wait list according to the original application date or added to the lottery pool; however, we can only accept a grade-level child from the wait list if a current student transfers out.

FFCA'S RANKED WAIT LIST

Q – How does the RANKED wait list work?

A – Includes children added prior to Oct 1, 2016 and renewed on time each October since. Each grade and campus has its own wait list. Grade level students are placed on the wait list according to the grade they are in. Pre-school children are placed according to the year they will start kindergarten and our age policy. The campus is determined according to home address. All children added to the wait list on or after October 1, 2016, declined a seat or assessment, or renewed late will be part of the future weighted lottery system. They will not be ranked.

Q – Will my child be contacted before he/she is ready to start school?

A – No. When a child is entered into the system, he/she is added to the appropriate kindergarten wait list according to our age policy. You will only be contacted in December of the year prior to which your child is to start school.

Q – I have three children - will they all be admitted to the school at the same time?

A – When a child is accepted, their brothers/sisters receive sibling status AFTER one year. Chances are your children will not all be accepted in the same year. Some siblings have waited on the wait list for 3 to 4 years before a seat becomes available.

Q – My child has been offered a spot in FFCA. We have decided not to attend this year but would like to remain on the wait list. Will we be called next year?

A – This is considered a decline. In this situation, your child's application date will be removed and your child will become part of the future lottery system. If you do not ask to remain on the wait list, your child will be removed.

Q – What happens if my child is not high enough on the wait list for Kindergarten, do I have to reapply?

A – In this situation, your child's name will be moved to the grade 1 wait list for the following year as long as you renew the application in October.

Q – Will I still have to renew my child's wait list application annually?

A – Yes! If your child was added before Oct 1, 2016, your child will still be sorted by his/her application date if the renewal is done on time each year. As long as you continue to renew, he/she will be offered a seat before the lottery comes into effect.

Q – I've been told my child won't gain admission for another 7 to 10 years! Why can't you implement the Lottery now?

A – We understand the frustration with such a long wait! We sought legal guidance in this matter and were counselled to leave the system as is for all children added before Oct 1, 2016 because it was understood at the time that it was managed on a first-come, first-served basis and that the wait was very long. We have started with a brand new wait list (2022/23) so that every parent will now understand that they are adding their child to a future lottery system.

FFCA'S WEIGHTED LOTTERY WAIT LIST

Q – What is the lottery system?

A – All children added to the wait list since Oct 1, 2016 are added to the Weighted Lottery System. For each year of renewal, they will have one entry in to the lottery. Any child can be added to the wait list as soon as they have a birth certificate. Applications received before the last business day of September will be eligible for the October renewal and the additional entry. Applications received on the last business day of September or later, will gain their first entry the following October.

Q – When will the lottery system take effect?

A – Beginning with the 2022/23 kindergarten class, seats will be filled first by siblings then by the lottery pool. As of October 1st, 2016, any other wait list that exhausts all ranked students will use the lottery pool to fill the available seats. Currently there is a lottery carried out for grades 10, 11, & 12.

Q – Who will it affect?

A – Any child added to the wait list on October 1st, 2016 or later (except sibling and priority status students). This includes children on the wait list whose applications are not renewed on time and children who decline an offered seat or assessment.

Q – Who will NOT be affected by the change to a lottery system?

A – Children added to the wait list before October 1, 2016, as long as their applications are renewed on time each October. They will still be ranked/sorted on the wait list according to their current application date.

Q – Will I still have to renew my child's wait list application annually?

A – Yes! For children added Oct 1, 2016 or later, our board has approved implementing a 'weight' within the lottery so that a child who has been on the wait list and renewed for 5 years, for example, will have a higher chance than a child who was added right before the deadline.

Q – How will the wait list be managed when the lottery comes into effect in 22/23?

A – Students with sibling status will remain at the top, followed by priority status students. Beginning with the 2022/23 academic year, all remaining kindergarten seats will be filled using the lottery pool. At grade level, seats available after sibling and priority lists are exhausted, will be filled first by students who were on the wait list prior to October 1st, 2016 then by the lottery pool if there are remaining seats.

Q – My child was added after October 1, 2016. What will happen to the kids that are eligible for kindergarten between 2017 and 2021?

A – We will fill the classes with the ranked children from the wait list. Any child not offered a seat will be rolled over onto the grade 1 list for the following year and so on. Once all of the ranked children have been removed from the wait list (either they are accepted, declined, or forgot to renew) we will start filling seats with the lottery pool.

Q – I have one daughter waiting for 2020/21 and one child that will be born in December of 2017. How will the lottery system affect me?

A – Your daughter will be considered by the current, first-come, first-served system for 2020/21. If she becomes a registered student, your second child will receive sibling status after one year and move to the sibling list on the 2022/23 wait list. If your daughter is not offered a seat in 2020/21, she will be sorted by her current application date and remain on the wait list, moving ahead one grade each year until either she reaches the top of the wait list and a seat becomes available or her application is not renewed on time. In the case of a late renewal, she would be added to the lottery pool for the future. If your youngest child, added to the wait list after October 1st, 2016, does not receive sibling status, he/she will be on the general wait list for Kindergarten 2022/23 and added to the lottery pool.

Q – How will the Lottery Draw be supervised?

A – Draws will be supervised by more than one person, including the Chief Financial Officer, a school council member, the principal or campus designate, and the wait list coordinator. All applicants will be assigned a number before the lottery. An accurate record of the lottery outcome will be created and maintained for audit purposes. The lottery system used will be determined at a later date.

Q – What is the deadline to apply to be considered for the lottery and when will the lottery draws take place?

A – All deadlines and draw dates will be posted well in advance on the website once finalized for each academic year.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Q – My child requires special programming (eg. IPP). Can he get this at FFCA?

A – FFCA's distinctive approach provides a positive, effective learning experience for students while responding to the broad range of learning needs through the provision of appropriate learning interventions. These interventions provide support for those students who are experiencing difficulties and are implemented outside the development of individualized program plans.

Q – What if my child does very well on the admission interview and later we find out that he/she is gifted?

A – While there are many gifted students presently attending our school, FFCA does not offer unique programs to accommodate gifted students. The Principal Educator will discuss options with you at your request.

RANKS

Q – Why doesn't my child have a rank?

A – Any child added to the wait list on October 1, 2016 or later will not have an associated rank (except sibling and priority status students). This includes children whose application was not renewed on time or who have declined an assessment or offer of a seat. Children without a rank will be included in the future lottery pool.

Q – What does my Preschooler's rank mean?

A – The NW Elementary School has approximately 56 seats available each year. They sometimes go as high as 90 on the wait list to fill those seats (some people move or change their mind). The rank shows the place your child is on the list. If your child is number 300, that means there are 299 children on the waitlist ahead of your child for the same school and same year as your child's year of Kindergarten (so between now and the year your child starts Kindergarten only people who move or forget to renew will come off the wait list).

The NE, SW, and SE Elementary Schools have approximately 84 Kindergarten seats available each year. They sometimes go as high as 120 on the waitlist to fill those seats (some people move or change their mind). The rank shows the place your child is on the list. If your child is number 300, that means there are 299 children on the waitlist ahead of your child for the same school and same year as your child's year of Kindergarten (so between now and the year your child starts Kindergarten only people who move or forget to renew will come off the wait list).

Q – What does my Child's rank mean if they are already in school or if they are too far down to be offered a seat in kindergarten?

A – Children waiting for grades 1 through 8 can have a very long wait before their name reaches the top of the wait list. Even children with a rank of 1 or 2 are not guaranteed a seat as we cannot accept a student from the wait list unless a current student decides to transfer out.

North elementary and middle schools: In general, we find the North Schools wait lists move very slowly. Your child will likely be in High School before being offered a seat.

South elementary and middle schools: In general, your child will likely be in Middle School before being offered a seat. Often the middle school wait time is approximately 2-3 years.

High School: We can generally only accept siblings in grade 9. We usually see the wait list move faster at the grade 10, 11, & 12 levels, often children will experience a 1 to 2 year wait.

Q – Why has my child’s rank changed?

A – **Siblings:** Siblings always have first preference on the FFCA wait list. As they are identified, the ranks on the general wait list will drop. This usually happens in the spring when we register new students, but can occur at any time of the year.

Moved: as people move from one quadrant to another within the city, their designated campus may change. After moving, children are sorted on the new wait list according to their original application date.

Wrong Wait List: if we realize that a child is on the wrong wait list (due to their grade or address) we will move them to the correct wait list.

Late Renewal: if you did not renew the application on time, your child’s application date will be removed and your child will become part of the future lottery system.

Grade 5 or grade 9 Wait List: there are two lists that merge together to create the grade 5 and grade 9 lists. We have two feeder elementary schools going to each middle school and two feeder middle schools going to the high school. Children will still be sorted by their original application date, but now there are twice as many of them.

New age policy: wait lists for 2020/21, and 2021/22 will be affected by the new age policy. Children born Oct to Dec 2015 or later will be able to attend kindergarten the year they turn 5 rather than having to be 5 by September 30th. Any students who change wait lists according to the updated age requirements will be sorted on the new list according to their original application date. This may affect the wait lists and the ranks of children on those wait lists.

Q – What is Priority Status?

A – Registered FFCA students who withdraw from FFCA may obtain priority status from the Principal Educator prior to their departure for a maximum period of two years. Students are sorted after siblings and before the general wait list children.

Q – What is Sibling Status?

A – Sibling status is assigned to children on the wait list who have a brother and/or sister already attending FFCA for at least one full year. Sibling status provides preference within the wait list over those applicants without siblings in the school. Cousins and other children residing in the same home are not considered siblings. Siblings must share at least one parent. They are sorted on the top of the wait list according to the date they received sibling status. Admission is dependent on a seat becoming available so the wait can still be a few years.

ADMISSION – Grades 1 through 12

Q – What happens when a spot becomes available for my grade level child?

A – You will be contacted by email and an appointment will be made for your child to come to his or her designated campus to participate in an admission interview. The purpose of the interview is to confirm that your child is at grade level.

Q – What happens if my child struggles with the admission interview?

A – The Principal Educator of the designated campus will call you to discuss your options. (Some options include: a second admissions interview, regular grade placement with some required help from parents, or alternate grade placement, including retention in the current grade).

Q – What if I don't want my child to be retained?

A – You may remain on the wait list for the following school year and your original entry date will not be affected. In the spring, if there is an opening, you will be called to participate in an admission interview. In the meantime, it is highly recommended that you spend that year seeking additional help for your child.

ADMISSION – Kindergarten

Q – What is the Parent Information Night?

A – You will be invited by email to a Parent Information night in January of the year your child is eligible to begin school. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about the program and the expectations of the school in regard to homework, uniform, school rules, etc. This is for parents only, no children please.

Q – What happens after the Parent Information night?

A – Parents complete a registration package. You must show one of the following original documents: citizen or landed immigrant document or Canadian birth certificate and have proof of address (driver's license, utility bill, or lease).

Q – What happens during the interview? How can I prepare my child?

A – The meeting with the teacher does not require advanced preparation. It is not a pass or fail situation. The teacher wants to ensure your child is ready for kindergarten and may give feedback regarding things you can work on with your child over the following months before school begins (zippers, buttons, speech therapy, multi-step instructions, etc). Sometimes it may be suggested that your child wait an additional year to start kindergarten, but that's a decision made between the principal and the parents.

Q – My child is extremely shy, and I don't want to leave him/her alone during the interview.

A – Kindergarten interviews are really only effective one-on-one. You will not be permitted to stay with your child during the interview. Our kindergarten teachers are very skilled in working with all types of children in this one-on-one environment.

Q – My child meets the age requirements for kindergarten, but I feel he/she is not ready for school. Can I keep them back for another year?

A – As long as he/she does not turn 7 by September 1st, they can still receive funding. If your child is not ready for school, there is no need to enroll them immediately. Let the administrative staff know of your decision, and your child will be added to the wait list for kindergarten for the following year. Their entry date on the wait list will remain the original date on which you first added them to the wait list. **This policy will remain in effect until the 2021/22 academic year. As of the 2022/23 year, only a child whose name is drawn in the lottery system and is offered a seat can decide to wait for a year and gain priority status for the following year. If your child's name is not drawn and you choose to wait an additional year there will be no priority status.

Q – What times/days are your kindergarten classes?

A – Our kindergarten classes are half days, Monday to Friday. Start and end times vary slightly among campuses. See the campus website for specific times.

Parents can state their class preference at the time of registration; however, requests are sorted by wait list rank or the order your child's name was drawn in the lottery. We may not be able to accommodate all requests.

Q – What happens after the interview with the kindergarten teacher?

A – You will be contacted by the campus after intakes are completed and in the order of ranking. This process takes time.

CAMPUS DESIGNATION

Q – Which elementary campus will my child attend?

A – FFCA has four elementary campuses, one in each quadrant of the city. In general, they include addresses from that particular quadrant; however, there are some exceptions. The boundaries split some of the areas listed, so if you would like clarification please email.

NE Elementary(1140 Mayland Dr NE): includes the Downtown Boundary (outlined below) as well as any SE communities north of Peigan Trail.

NW Elementary(719 – 44 Ave NW): includes NE Communities west of Deerfoot (except those listed in the Downtown Boundary below) as well as the SW community of Crestmont.

SE Elementary(9711 Academy Dr SE): includes communities south of the Downtown Boundary, south of Peigan Trail, and east of Macleod Trail.

SW Elementary(898 Sylvester Cres SW): includes communities south of the Downtown Boundary and West of Macleod Trail as well as Chaparral, Sundance, Midnapore, Walden, Legacy.

Downtown Boundary(designated to the NE campus): south of 30 AV NW, north of 17 AV SW and east of Crowchild (includes Winston Hts, Tuxedo, Mt Pleasant, Capitol Hill, Briar Hill, West Hillhurst, Hillhurst, Rosedale, Sunnyside, Crescent Hts, Renfrew, Bridgeland, Sunalta, Connaught, Victoria Park, Ramsay, Inglewood).

Q – I live outside the city limits. Can my children attend FFCA? To which campus will they be designated?

A – Children who live outside the city limits are able to attend FFCA. However, there is no transportation outside the city. Parents are required to either drive their child to and from school, or access an existing bus stop within the city limits. Families who live outside the city limits can choose the campus they would like to attend and they will be placed on the appropriate wait list.

Q – My child already attends an FFCA elementary campus and we are planning to move. The new house places us within the boundary for a different FFCA campus. What happens now?

A – In order for children to request an Internal Transfer, they must have been a registered student with FFCA the year prior. Students will transfer internally at the start of each school year if there is space at the requested campus. The deadline to fill in the Internal Transfer Request form is March 1st for the following academic year. Requests received after March 1st may not be accommodated for the upcoming school year. If there is no space, the student may remain at his/her current campus, but parents will be required to provide their own transportation. There is no bus service to campuses outside the designated area.

MOVING or CONTACT INFORMATION UPDATES?

Q – I am moving. What do I do and how does that affect my child?

A – Send an email with your name, phone number and child's name as well as the old and new address. Include a scanned copy of one of the following documents in one of the parent's names to show the new address: driver's license, offer to purchase or lease, utility bill. Your address will be updated and if required, your designated campus will be changed. Children are then sorted on the new wait list according to their original application date, if they are on the Ranked System. If your child is in the Lottery System, they will be added to the lottery pool for the new campus.

Q – What should I do if I see an error or have an update to some other information?

A – You login to the Online Wait List system and type the change in the box labelled "Email Student Services" and click "Email". For a child's name change, please email a copy of either the birth certificate or the Name Change Document.

Q – How do I change my phone number and/or email address?

A – You login to the Online Wait List system to update your own phone numbers and email address, then click "Update."

TRANSPORTATION

Q – Will I have bus service to my home?

A – No. FFCA's transportation service is not door-to-door. It is based on community stops and is revised each year based on the distribution of student residences. Not every community will have a bus stop so you may have to drive your child to/from the closest stop.

There is no bus service available downtown. You will be responsible for your child's transportation to/from school. This includes most areas South of 30 Ave NW, North of 17 Av SW, East of Crowchild and West of Deerfoot Trail.

Q – Will my half-day kindergarten child have two-way transportation?

A – No. There is only one-way bussing. If your child attends the morning class, a school bus will bring them to school and a parent will pick them up at the school. If your child attends the afternoon class, a parent will drive them to the school and a school bus will drive them to their designated bus stop after classes end for the day.

MISCELLANEOUS

Q – Do you teach a second language?

A – The second languages taught at FFCA are Spanish and French. Spanish classes are taught from grade four to 12 and French classes are taught from grade nine to 12.

Q – Do you take International Students – children who are not Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents?

A – To date, FFCA has not had any International Students. However, special arrangements in this regard may be made by contacting the Superintendent. Students would still have to be on the wait list and have their name reach the top or be drawn in the lottery in order to be offered a seat.

Q – What are the school fees?

A – As a publically funded Charter School, we do not charge tuition. School fees can be checked on our website under Menu/Parents/Fees. They include a mandatory annual resource fee, an optional bus fee and a uniform estimate. In addition to those fees, parents will be required to pay for field trips and school supplies.

ONLINE WAIT LIST SYSTEM

Q – What is my username and password?

A – Parents with a child on the wait list have a system generated username and password. There is only one username/password that is accessible by both parents. Generally, the account is made using the parent that was listed first on the application. An exception to that is when one parent has a hyphenated or really long last name, in that case, we would use the other parent's name. If both last names are hyphenated, please put the last names together, without a space or hyphen, and do not capitalize the second part of the hyphenated name, only capitalize the first letter of the first last name.

Username:

First initial of the first name of one parent whose name was entered first on the application, then full last name of the same parent (First two letter are uppercase, ex BSmith or BSmithkennedy).

Password:

Use the first initial of the parent (same as above) then first two letters of the same parent's last name, followed by the last four digits of the main phone number and then F for Father or M for Mother (First two letters and M or F are uppercase, ex BSm1234F).

Q – I cannot login to the Online Wait List System. What should I do?

A – If you are using Google Chrome or an Apple Device, try a different browser or computer. If you haven't followed the login instructions on the login page of the Online Wait List System, please do so. You may need to try any cell phone numbers or old home phone numbers you may have had in the past. If you still can't login please email us the EXACT id and password you are trying so that the issue can be identified.

Q – Why is an email address required on all applications?

A – Email is how you will be notified when a spot becomes available for your child. We do not process applications or renew them without a valid email address.

Q – Can I change my personal and contact information?

A – Parents can add/edit their own phone numbers. Double click on the area and enter the numbers. There is no need to enter the same number multiple times. If you use only a cell phone, that number will be used as your 'home number' and does not need to be repeated in the work and/or cell phone areas. Click the UPDATE button and the system will save the information. For address changes, see below.

Q – How do I change my address?

A – Send an email with your name, phone number and child's name as well as the old and new address. Include a scanned copy of one of the following documents in one

of the parent's names to show the new address: driver's license, offer to purchase or lease, utility bill. Your address will be updated and if required, your designated campus will be changed. Children are then sorted on the new wait list according to their original application date, if they are on the Ranked System. If your child is in the Lottery System, they will be added to the lottery pool for the new campus.

Q – I want to add another child to the wait list.

A – Download the wait list application, fill it out, and mail to Central Office, along with a copy of the birth certificate and report card, if already in school.

ANNUAL RENEWAL

Your application will require RENEWAL every October in order for your child to remain Active on the wait list. To renew your application, login to the Online Wait List System any day during the month of October, and click the RENEW button.

Ranked System: Applications that are renewed on time will retain their original application date and be sorted on the wait list accordingly. If you do not renew in October, you can still login to the Online Wait List System and renew; however, the application date will be removed and your child will become part of the future lottery pool. There are no exceptions to this policy. Please write it on your calendar or set a reminder in your phone so that you do not lose your application date!

Lottery System: Applications that are renewed on time will gain one additional entry in to the lottery. If you do not renew in October, you can still login and renew, however your child will not receive the entry for that year into the lottery. Please write it on your calendar or set a reminder in your phone so that you don't lose your additional entries!

Please see the Renewal FAQ document for further information.