

# NORFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

Approved by the NCAHS Board of Trustees on October 9, 2013  
and MA DESE Final Approval December 9, 2013

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

An admission process is necessary in vocational technical schools where space is a limiting factor. Vocational technical laboratories (shops) are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students safely. Consequently, a complex of such laboratories lacks both the space and flexibility to accommodate the possible needs and/or interests of all applicants. Therefore, a selection process is necessary to determine which applicants may most benefit from such educational opportunities. All applicants to grades nine through eleven at Norfolk County Agricultural High School will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. The Norfolk County Agricultural High School Board of Trustees approved this policy on October 9, 2013.

### **II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

The Norfolk County Agricultural High School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or handicap in its education activities or employment practices as required by Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments, by Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and by Chapter 622 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

If there is a student with limited English proficiency, a qualified representative from Norfolk County Agricultural High School will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting during the entire application and admission process upon the request of the applicant.

Disabled students may voluntarily self-identify for the purpose of requesting reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admission process.

Information on limited English proficiency and disability submitted voluntarily by the applicant, for the purpose of receiving assistance and accommodations during the entire application and admission process, will not affect their admission to the school.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY**

Norfolk County Agricultural High School serves students who reside in Norfolk County as well as students who attend on a tuition basis from outside the county. Admission to the school is available to any student who wishes to apply to grade nine, ten or eleven. Successful completion of the preceding grade is defined as promotion to the next grade in the applicant's sending school, is an eligibility requirement. In addition, they must pass courses in English language arts or the equivalent and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment at Norfolk County Agricultural High School.

Students who are not residents of Norfolk County are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Norfolk County Agricultural High School provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by

their local district. Nonresident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

Students who actually reside (ie. live in) a town or city in Norfolk County, whether with their parents/guardians or other relatives, by themselves or in a foster or group home, or in virtually any other situation are legally entitled to attend the town's or city's public schools including the Norfolk County Agricultural High School if they meet the selection criteria.

Transfer students from other vocational technical schools are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Norfolk County Agricultural High School provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their current school. Transfer students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy and may be admitted as space permits.

#### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Norfolk County Agricultural High School is a public agricultural school located on a scenic campus in Walpole, Massachusetts. Norfolk County Agricultural High School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and serves the residents of Norfolk County. The towns in Norfolk County are Avon, Bellingham, Braintree, Brookline, Canton, Cohasset, Dedham, Dover, Foxboro, Franklin, Holbrook, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Milton, Needham, Norfolk, Norwood, Plainville, Quincy, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, Wellesley, Westwood, Weymouth, and Wrentham. Norfolk County Agricultural High School is committed to providing quality vocational technical programs.

It is the responsibility of the Norfolk County Agricultural High School Superintendent-Director to supervise the administration of the policies and procedures required to admit and enroll applicants in conformity with this Admission Policy.

Norfolk County Agricultural High School has an Admissions Committee appointed by the Superintendent-Director. The committee consists of the Superintendent-Director, the Principal, Vice-Principal, Director of Student Services, a Vocational Coordinator and a member of the faculty. Responsibilities of the Admissions Committee include:

- A. Providing input on standards of admissions
- B. Processing of applications
- C. Ranking of students
- D. Recommending acceptance of students according to the procedure and criteria in the admission policy
- E. Establishment and maintenance of a waiting list of acceptable candidates

The Norfolk County Agricultural High School Admissions Office is responsible for disseminating information through press releases, mailings, school visits and for collecting applications.

Norfolk County Agricultural High School does not participate in the School Choice Program.

#### **V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

1. Procedures for disseminating information about the school to students.

- a. An Open House is scheduled at NCAHS in early October each year. This Open House provides students and their families with an opportunity to tour the campus, observe demonstrations and speak with students, parents, staff and alumni. Invitations to attend the Open House are mailed to all Norfolk County seventh and eighth grade students and to others upon request. These fliers are also provided to sending school counselors. Attendance at the Open House is not mandatory.
- b. News releases announce the Annual Fall Open House. The releases provide information about the school's programs, the application and admissions process.
- c. Small group presentations are scheduled at sending schools. These sessions are conducted by NCAHS staff and are coordinated through the sending school guidance department. A DVD presentation is also available to sending school guidance departments.

**VI. APPLICATION PROCESS**

**APPLICATION PROCESS-FOR FALL ADMISSION TO THE NINTH, TENTH, AND ELEVENTH GRADE**

- 1. Students interested in applying to Norfolk County Agricultural High School for fall admission in grades 9, 10 or 11 must:
  - a. Obtain an application upon request from NCAHS or from sending school guidance departments. Students may begin the application process as early as the summer prior to the year they plan to attend the school.
  - b. Complete the application and have it signed by the parent/guardian.
  - c. Submit the application to the Admissions Office at the Norfolk County Agricultural High School.
- 2. It is the responsibility of the sending school counselor to:
  - a. Forward a transcript/report card of the applicant's last full year and first semester/trimester of the current year.
  - b. Complete the recommendation form and discipline/conduct report.
  - c. Forward attendance records with unexcused and excused absences for the current year and last full year.
- 3. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. The Admissions Office at Norfolk County Agricultural High School will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the required forms that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
  - b. The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Norfolk County Agricultural High School Admissions Office in the event that the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.
  - c. If after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete for sixty (60) days, the application will become inactive.

**LATE APPLICATIONS**

Applications received after March 1st will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be integrated in rank order on the established waiting list.

### TRANSFER STUDENTS

Applications from students who are enrolled in a state-approved (Chapter 74) vocational technical high school program in another school (transfer students) will be considered for admission (including admission during the school year) if they relocate away from their current school and wish to pursue the same program of study at Norfolk County Agricultural High School. All transfer applicants must attend an interview at the Norfolk County Agricultural High School. If the applicant, parent or guardian cannot provide transportation, an official from Norfolk County Agricultural High School will go to the local school to meet with the applicant. Applications will be evaluated according to the provisions of this Admission Policy.

### WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

Students who withdraw from Norfolk County Agricultural High School and who are attending or not attending another high school may reapply for admission in a subsequent year following the procedures contained in this Admissions Policy.

## **VII. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Completed applications are processed by the Admissions Committee using weighted admissions criteria. Each applicant will be assigned a score derived from the sum of the sub scores of the following criteria:

- A. Scholastic record: A total of 26 points are available for this criterion. Grades for the applicant's last year and at least first term of the current year will be averaged in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and social studies. Thirteen points are available for each year using the following chart:

Grade Average	Current	Previous
4.0-3.0 (A,B)	13 points	13 points
2.9-2.0 (C)	8 points	8 points
1.9-1.0 (D)	3 points	3 points
Below 1.0 (F)	0 points	0 points

In the case of home schooled students, a portfolio of work in English, Math, Science and Social Studies may be substituted for grades. The portfolio will be evaluated using the criteria listed above according to the rubrics developed by the Department of Education for MCAS alternative assessment. The samples will be scored by certified content area teachers at the Norfolk County Agricultural High School.

- B. Attendance: 20 points are available for this criterion. Ten points will be divided between each year and will be based upon the last full year (previous year) and at least the first term of the current year. The source of this information will be the student's transcript or an attendance report from the sending district. Only unexcused absences will be considered. In the case of home schooled students, attendance will be waived and the number of available points will be reduced accordingly.

Absences	Current	Previous
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0-3 days	10 points	10 points
4-8 days	7 points	7 points
9-12 days	5 points	5 points
13-16 days	2 points	2 points
17 or more days	0 points	0 points

- C. Conduct and Discipline grades: A total of 20 points will be available for this criterion. Points will be awarded based upon the last full year and at least the first term of the current year. If a general conduct grade is not available then conduct grades for each subject will be averaged. The sources of this information will be the transcript, recommendation form, report card and discipline record. In the case of home schooled students, conduct and discipline grades will be waived and the number of available points will be reduced accordingly.

Conduct/Discipline	Current	Previous
Excellent (A)	10 points	10 points
Good (B)	8 points	8 points
Fair (C)	6 points	6 points
Poor (D)	2 points	2 points
Unsatisfactory (F)	0 points	0 points

4. Sending School Recommendation: Maximum 10 points

Rating	Points
Advanced (9-10)	10
Proficient (6-8)	7
Needs Improvement (3-5)	3
Limited Ability (0-2)	0

In the case of home schooled students, the sending school recommendation will be waived and the number of available points will be reduced accordingly.

5. Interview: Maximum 24 points

Rating	Points
Very Strong	20-24
Strong	15-19
Average	10-14
Weak	5-9
Very Weak	0-4

After points are given in each area, the points are totaled for each applicant. A maximum total of one hundred (100) points can be earned.

## **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS**

The Admissions Committee at Norfolk County Agricultural High School will examine, discuss and make recommendations for action on the applicants.

Norfolk County Agricultural High School can accommodate approximately 125 grade nine students each year. New grade ten and eleven students are accepted on a space available basis. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings, students will be placed on a waiting list. When openings occur, applicants on the waiting list will be admitted in the order of highest to lowest rank.

The Admissions Committee considers scholastic record, attendance, conduct/discipline record, sending school recommendation and interview results. Applications are reviewed, processed and assigned points.

NCAHS will notify grade nine applicants in writing of acceptance, non-acceptance or waiting list status by mid May. Upper class students will be informed beginning in June as space becomes available. In order for an application to be acted upon, all supporting documentation must be submitted. Incomplete applications will become inactive if repeated requests for full documentation are not addressed within sixty days.

Each application is scored and students are accepted based on highest to lowest score. Students who meet admissions criteria may be placed on a waiting list. They will be accepted from the waiting list as space becomes available. Students who are wait-listed and are not accepted or who do not meet the admission requirements may re-apply the following year.

Applications received after March 1st will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be integrated in rank order on the established waiting list.

Students who are accepted must participate in a Placement Testing Program.

Students who apply in grade ten or eleven are accepted and placed in an agricultural program on a space available basis using the same criteria as ninth grade students.

## **IX. ENROLLMENT**

In order to enroll at Norfolk County Agricultural High School for the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they wish to enter by their local school district. In addition, they must pass courses in English language arts or the equivalent and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment at Norfolk County Agricultural High School.

**X. VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT**

Students who are accepted into grade nine participate in an introductory agricultural program. Placement in a specific program area is made at the conclusion of grade ten. Students select one of three broad career clusters: Animal and Marine Science, Diesel and Mechanical Technology or Plant and Environmental Science. Every effort is made to place students according to their interest and aptitude. In grade ten, students select a cluster in which to focus with elective courses from the other two clusters.

**XI. REVIEW and APPEALS**

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from Norfolk County Agricultural High School indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a waiting list, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter or email requesting a review by the Admissions Committee within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may submit additional documentation to support their request for a review. The Principal will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within thirty days.

If, after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the review they may do so by sending a letter or email requesting an appeal to the Superintendent-Director. The Superintendent-Director will respond in writing to the letter with their final decision on the appeal within thirty days of the letter.

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And by the MA DESE December 9, 2013*

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