

Frequently Asked Questions

What grades does CCSC offer?

Community Charter School of Cambridge offers grades 6 through 12. Students may apply to enter in grade 6, 7, 8 or 9.

Do CCSC students have to live in Cambridge?

No. CCSC students may live in any town in the Commonwealth, though Cambridge residents and siblings of current students have first preference. Along with our large Cambridge cohort we have students from Boston and over 20 other towns. Proof of Massachusetts residency is required with the [lottery application](#).

What are the school hours?

Doors open: 8:00 a.m.
School day begins: 8:30 a.m.
Classes end: 3:40 p.m. (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri.); 1:30 p.m. (Wed.)

The early release on Wednesdays allows our faculty and staff to work collaboratively on ways to continually improve instruction, curriculum, and special programs to support all students' success.

Are there after-school programs that extend the school day?

Yes. Students in all grades may attend our [After School Learning Center](#) (3:45–4:45 p.m. on Mon., Tues., and Thurs.) for help from teachers. Most extra-curricular activities and sports meet after classes end, and many students remain on campus for activities until 5 or 6 PM. There is no charge. (The activities we offer are listed below.)

Does CCSC provide bus transportation? What about discounted MBTA cards?

Cambridge residents in grades 6–8 who live more than 1.5 miles from CCSC may take the school bus. All students may purchase discounted monthly T passes through the school. Our Kendall Square location is a short distance to both the Kendall/MIT (Red Line) and Lechmere (Green Line) stations. [More information about transportation.](#)

Is there a dress code or uniform?

Yes. We strive to create a professional environment so that students can focus on their work without the distraction of staying in fashion. Boys and girls must wear a collared shirt (white, red, or black), khaki or black pants or a skirt (no denim jeans), and a belt. Shirts must always be tucked in, pants must not sag or be skintight, and skirts must be of an appropriate length. No high heels. Our dress code is explained in detail on our website. [More information about our dress code.](#)

Does CCSC provide breakfast and lunch?

Yes. CCSC contracts with a local caterer to deliver meals that meet the

federal guidelines for school nutrition. Meals do not contain pork products. Students may purchase the school breakfast and/or lunch, and many qualify for the free or reduced priced meals. Refrigerators and microwaves are available for lunches brought from home. [More information about meals at school.](#)

What are the unique aspects of the CCSC academic program and student experience?

CCSC provides a rigorous and challenging academic program designed to prepare *all* students for post-secondary success. We hold all students to high expectations and standards for both academics and behavior.

Our small size (360 students) and low student-faculty ratio ensure that every student is known well and supported by our highly skilled and dedicated faculty. Our Advisory Program makes a small school even smaller. Advisors check in with their advisees every morning and advisory groups meet twice a week. Advisors regularly communicate with parents and guardians, updating them on academic progress and apprising them of any concerns.

Other unique features: Our "[Drop Everything and Read](#)" literacy program requires all students to read for pleasure during school and at home. At the end of the year, all students (except seniors) must make a successful [Roundtable](#) presentation to demonstrate mastery of their learning. All seniors are required to participate in our [Senior Internship Program](#).

Will my child be well prepared for college?

Yes. Since our first class graduated in 2009, every CCSC graduate has gained admission to college, over 90% to four-year schools. Five graduates have won prestigious Posse Scholarships, and we help all families apply for financial aid and scholarships. We measure our success not only by rates of college acceptance, but by how many of our students ultimately earn a college degree. We are proud that over 75% of our graduates have either earned a degree or are still enrolled in college. [See our college list.](#)

How well do CCSC students score on the MCAS tests?

Very well. CCSC is a Level 1-rated school, and for the past four years our 10th grade MCAS scores and median rates of student learning growth have placed us among the top public schools in the state. In 2014 our 10th graders scored 98% advanced or proficient in ELA and 97% in math. In 2012 and 2013, our 10th graders earned a #1 ranking (100% advanced or proficient) on the ELA MCAS. In 2011 and 2012, our 10th graders earned a #1 ranking on the math MCAS. Our Student Growth Percentiles are also among the highest in the state, which shows our program is highly effective at catching up students who may have entered working below grade level and challenging *all* students,

regardless of where their skills are when they start.

My child is a strong student; will he/she be challenged at CCSC?

Yes. We believe that the rigor of every class at CCSC is comparable to honors classes elsewhere. Additionally, every high school course offers an honors credit option, and we currently offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses in calculus, chemistry, English, and Spanish for additional challenge. Our outstanding college acceptance rates are evidence that colleges recognize and appreciate the high quality of our academic program. Our alumni report that they feel very well prepared for their college courses.

Can CCSC help my child become a better student?

Yes. We support students of all abilities and expect all to work hard and to think of themselves as scholars. In grades 6–8, teachers help students develop the study habits and skills they will need to succeed in our high school. For students with learning differences, we offer in-class support from trained learning specialists. All students are encouraged to seek extra help from teachers during our After School Learning Center and to keep up their GPAs.

How much homework will my child have?

CCSC has very high academic standards, and the workload is demanding. Our faculty and staff work very hard and in return we expect all students to do the same. Younger students have 1–2.5 hours of homework and high school students have 2.5–4 hours of homework each night. Homework is assigned on the weekends and during vacations, too. All homework assignments are posted daily on the CCSC website, so parents can check what work is due. Parents and guardians have access to grades online and receive progress reports every four to five weeks.

Does CCSC have sports teams?

Yes. Our soccer, cross country, basketball, track, volleyball, lacrosse, and softball teams compete against other schools in the Massachusetts Charter School Athletic Organization. [More information about Athletics.](#)

What extra-curricular activities are offered?

Students may participate in a broad range of activities including: robotics, chorus, dance, student council, Pride Acceptance Circle, mock trial, yearbook, prom committee, art club, math club, outdoors club, community service, and male and female mentoring. Our community partners include ACE Mentoring (architecture, construction & engineering), Constitution in the Classroom (law), and The Possible Project (entrepreneurship). [More information on Extracurriculars.](#)

What is the Senior Internship Program?

All CCSC seniors are required to fulfill a 100-hour career exploratory

internship in order to graduate. Seniors intern with local firms one day a week during the second semester of senior year. Internship sponsors include Akamai, Broad Institute, Mass. General Hospital, MIT, the Red Cross, and many other others. More information about our [Senior Internship Program](#).

What is the school culture?

Our core values are commitment, citizenship, scholarship, and courage. Our Code of Conduct reinforces positive behavior and helps students develop the strong work habits and sense of personal responsibility they will need to succeed in school and the workplace. We believe in policies that create focused classroom environments, mutual respect, and a very safe school community. And, we believe in students having fun, building strong relationships with their classmates and their teachers, and loving learning. [More information on the Code of Conduct and all school policies in our handbook](#). The Code of Conduct section begins on page 41 of the handbook.

Is there a close sense of community?

Yes. All students are known well by their teachers and other caring adults. We have a strict anti-bullying policy, and are committed maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for every member of our school community. CCSC is located across the street from the Cambridge Police Department headquarters, and the Kendall Square neighborhood is considered quite safe.

Which grades can students apply to enter?

Community Charter School of Cambridge offers grades 6-12. We hold lotteries for new students to apply to enroll in grades 6, 7, 8 or 9.

Are there any seats for 2014-15?

CCSC is fully enrolled for 2014-15 and there is a wait list.

What is the application process?

To apply for enrollment, please complete our [1-page lottery application form](#) and return it to the school by mail or fax (617-354-3624). To improve your chances of obtaining a seat in 2015-16 we encourage you to apply to the first 2015-16 lottery. The deadline to apply to the first lottery round is Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 4 pm. The first lottery will be held on January 21, 2015.

Is proof of residency required to apply?

Yes. State law requires that all families provide proof of Massachusetts residency at the time they submit the lottery application. You must provide one of the following documents: a gas bill, an electricity bill, a cable bill, or a lease agreement. If you are unable to provide one of these forms of proof of address, we ask that you submit an [Address Verification Form](#).

How does the lottery process work?

The CCSC enrollment lotteries are open to all Massachusetts residents

entering 6th, 7th, 8th or 9th grade. Our first lottery takes place on January 21st, and subsequent lotteries will be held until all available seats are filled. Your child's chance of being offered a seat is much greater if you enter the earliest possible lottery. Applications are drawn at random.

In accordance with CCSC's charter and Massachusetts Charter School Law, applicants are admitted in the following order of preference:

1. Massachusetts residents with siblings currently attending CCSC. Eligible siblings are children who share a common biological or legal guardian with a student enrolled at CCSC, and who reside in the state of Massachusetts as of the application deadline. Children who live in the same household but do not share a common biological or legal guardian are not considered siblings for the purpose of the lottery. A student is defined as "currently in attendance" after he/she has attended at least one full day of school at CCSC and remains enrolled in CCSC.

2. Cambridge residents: Applicants whose residence is within the Cambridge city limits as of the application deadline.

3. All other Massachusetts residents: Applicants whose residence is outside the Cambridge city limits, but in the state of Massachusetts as of the application deadline.

When will I be notified if my child gets a seat in the lottery?

We will mail enrollment offer letters the day of the lottery. You will have 2 weeks to return your confirmation of enrollment to hold your child's seat.

What is the orientation process for new students?

All new students and their parent-guardians must attend an orientation and testing session in the spring. Students will take a grade-level placement assessment, and families will learn about school policies.

What is the required Summer Academy for new students?

All new students entering grades 6–9 are required to attend our 4-week Summer Academy in July (Mon.-Fri., 8:30–12:30). Summer Academy builds math and English language arts skills and introduces students to our academic expectations and classroom routines. Attending Summer Academy prepares new students to make a smooth transition when classes start in the fall. If a student already plans to attend an outside summer program with a comparable level of academic rigor, he/she may apply for a waiver.

What if my child does not get a seat in the lottery?

Your child will be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available, or until enrollment closes for the current school year (in Feb. 2015). *Wait-listed applications for one school year do not carry over to the next school year's lottery cycles, but you are welcome to reapply.*

What if I register my child for a seat but later decide to attend another school?

Since we typically have a long waiting list for seats, we ask that you notify us promptly if your plans change, so that we can give the seat to a student on the waiting list.

Whom should I contact if I have questions about the lottery or enrollment process?

Phone the school's main number at 617-354-0047 and ask for Lianne Swanson or Monica Tecca.