

THETFORD ACADEMY POLICY ON STUDENT ADMISSIONS

Originated with Administrative Team
Proposed to Executive Committee: November 14, 1996
Revised at Full Board First Reading: January 13, 1997
Adopted at Second Reading: March 13, 1997

Admission Philosophy:

Thetford Academy is an approved independent school serving students in grades 7-12. We welcome students who are prepared to join a learning community based on five fundamental principles: excellence, commitment, cooperation, diversity, and caring.

Thetford Academy does not discriminate on the basis of handicapping condition and/or disability, race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, or sexual orientation in its admissions or in the administration of its educational policies, hiring, and school programs. It affords all students the rights, privileges, and social, academic, and athletic opportunities that are made available at the school.

Students Served:

Thetford Academy serves all students in designating Town School Districts, and admitted students from other sending communities.

Designation:

Thetford Academy may accept designation to serve as the public secondary school for Town School Districts according to the provisions of Vermont statute (VSA 16 §827). Designation and its acceptance constitute a commitment to partnership in provision of educational programs. Evidence of this commitment on the part of a Town School District includes: participation of a town-appointed representative in Board decision-making and committee work; communication between the Town School Board and TA regarding operations, finance, student placements, and other matters of mutual concern; and reasonable effort to comply with TA policy and procedure. Acceptance of designation is reviewed annually at the winter quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees, with written notification no later than March 15 in 1997, and February 15 in years thereafter, of the decision to accept or decline designation for the following year. A contract for designation will be provided for those Towns whose designation has been accepted.

Residence:

Thetford Academy relies upon each designating Town School Board's determination as to residency, in accordance with VSA 16 § 1075, and will refer any questions as to residency to the appropriate Superintendent.

Admission of Students from Designating Towns:

Any student who is a resident of a designating town is eligible to attend Thetford Academy or to be served by Thetford Academy as the secondary school for his or her town, subject to the provisions below.

Thetford Academy accepts all students in grade 7-12 from designating towns whose needs can be met in regular classrooms or with supplementary instructional services. Supplementary services to meet the needs of individual students, in addition to classroom modifications and accommodations, include: basic skill remediation, learning strategies and organization/study skills, tutorials, alternative classes, behavior management plans, adaptive physical education, transition services and interagency coordination. Student, whose need exceed those above, but whose needs can be met at the Academy with additional professional and paraprofessional services, including but not limited to counseling, speech-language therapy, occupational/physical therapy, supervision beyond the level usually required for attendance, personal care, medical support, transportation, and adaptive equipment, are entitled to attend Thetford Academy provided that they have the approval of their town's school directors in accordance with federal requirements and that the extra costs of such additional services are paid by the town in accordance with Thetford Academy and Town School District policy.*

Thetford Academy has been approved by the State of Vermont to provide services to publicly placed students with the following categories of disability:*

1. learning impairment
2. specific learning disability
3. visual impairment
4. deafness or hard of hearing
5. speech or language impairment
6. orthopedic impairment
7. chronic or acute health impairment
8. emotional-behavioral disability
9. autism
10. traumatic brain injury

Admission will not be automatic if a student resident in a designating town has chosen to attend another school and has been suspended, dismissed or expelled from that school before seeking entrance at Thetford Academy. In this case, the student will submit an application for review by the Thetford Academy Admissions Committee. If this committee denies admission, the request for acceptance may be appealed by the applicant student to the Head of School. The Head's decision may be appealed to a

joint committee appointed by the Thetford Academy Board of Trustees and the Town School District Board. The decision of this Joint Appeals Committee shall be final.

Admission of Students from Non-Designating Towns:

Application: Students wishing to apply for admission must submit an application for review by the Admissions Committee, appointed annually by the Head of School. The Admissions Committee will determine application procedures in consultation with the Head of School. Application procedures will be modified as appropriate to accommodate students with identified special needs.

Criteria for Admission:

A. Acceptance of students from non-designating towns will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Admission Committee, in accordance with the criteria set forth below.

1. The first factor considered in reviewing an application for enrollment for a student from a non-designating town is the availability of space in the program or class appropriate for the student, after meeting the needs of students from the designating towns. Availability of space is generally indicated by class or program size, as well as existing facilities and staff.

2. If space is available, the Admission Committee will review the applicant's potential to benefit from and contribute to the educational program at the Academy, with an emphasis on responsible effort and school citizenship. Preference will be given to those applicants who are best prepared to join a learning community based on five fundamental principles: excellence, commitment, cooperation, diversity, and caring.

3. The Admission Committee will also review two additional factors: the presence of an applicant's siblings already enrolled at Thetford Academy, and the applicant's membership in an alumni family. These will not be solely determining factors, but will be given consideration in decisions.

Reasons for denial of admission may include, but are not limited to, the following, as determined by the Admission Committee, in its discretion:

A. The student has a documented history of behavior which is determined to be potentially detrimental to the operation and educational environment at Thetford Academy and which is not related to a documented disability.

1. If such behavioral history is related to a disability, consideration will be given as to whether the programs and services offered at Thetford Academy can meet the student's needs as set forth in his/her IEP or Section 504 plan. A meeting between Thetford Academy staff and the student's IEP or Section 504 team may be necessary in order to consider IEP or Section 504 plan implementation, but the admission decision rests with the Thetford Academy Admission Committee's assessment of the school's

ability to serve the student adequately .

B. An applicant student has exhibited poor academic performance and/or poor attendance, not as a result of a documented disability.

1.If poor performance or attendance is related to a disability, then consideration will be given as to whether the programs and services offered by Thetford Academy are sufficient to meet the student's needs as set forth in his/her IEP or Section 504 plan. A meeting between Thetford Academy staff and the student's IEP or Section 504 team may be necessary in order to consider IEP or Section 504 plan implementation, but the admission decision rests with the Thetford Academy Admission Committee's assessment of the school's ability to serve the student adequately .

Waiting List:

The Committee will maintain a waiting list of acceptable applicants in the event of later openings for enrollment.

Appeal of denial of admission:

In cases in which the Admission Committee denies admission to a student of a non-designating town, the request for acceptance may be appealed by the applicant student to the Head of School. The decision of the Head of School shall be final.

*Per Policy adopted 1/28/93