

Applying to Pin Oak for 2017-2018

Frequently asked questions

There are several changes to the application system this year. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions:

Q: I live near Pin Oak, can I just come to the school and register my child?

A: Pin Oak is an application-only school and we encourage each and every child who is interested in our school to apply. We have a magnet program for languages other than English, and a “boundary option” program.

Q: My relator/my landlord told me that my home/apartment was zoned to Pin Oak. Why do I have to apply?

A: Pin Oak does not have a designated attendance zone, instead Pin Oak becomes an option for students residing within the Long MS, Meyerland MS, or Pershing MS attendance zones. Because demand exceeds space, Pin Oak uses a lottery system to fill the seats in our Boundary Option program.

Q: How do I apply for the magnet program at Pin Oak?

A: You can apply online at hisdchoice.com. All magnet applications will be scored using a matrix. Applicants need to score a minimum of 80 on the matrix to qualify for Pin Oak’s magnet lottery.

Q: What does “boundary option” mean, and can my child apply for it?

A: Students who are zoned to Pershing, Meyerland, or Long Middle Schools are eligible to apply to Pin Oak as a “boundary option.” Because of the high volume of applications we’ll receive for boundary option, we will run a lottery of all boundary option applications received between September 30th and December 9th.

Q: When can my child apply to Pin Oak?

A: The Phase I application season is from Friday, September 30-December 9th.

Q: What’s the difference between “magnet” and “boundary option”?

A: As we are a Languages-Other-than-English magnet school, magnet students at Pin Oak are required to take a language other than English. Boundary Option students are not required to take a language, but have access to the foreign language program, including French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Spanish for Native Speakers, and AP Spanish.

Q: If my child is zoned to Pershing, Meyerland, or Long can my child apply for both magnet and boundary option?

A: All applicants apply to our magnet program through hisdchoice.com. Those eligible for a boundary option spot (because they reside in the zones for one of Meyerland, Jane Long, or Pershing) are also included in the boundary option lottery for our boundary option program.

Q: What does “lottery” mean?

A: Every qualified application for our magnet program and every boundary option application will be placed in two separate lotteries (one lottery for magnet, one lottery for boundary option). Qualified applicants will be picked at random for acceptance from both lotteries.

Q: What is a “matrix”?

A: A matrix is a scoring system. Applications for magnet schools in Houston ISD are scored using data from grades and standardized test results.

Q: Do kids who have straight A’s on their report cards have a better chance of getting in?

A: Applications for magnet schools in Houston ISD are scored using data from grades and standardized test results. Students who score an “80” or above on the matrix will be placed into the same lottery. A student who scores an 80 on the matrix has the same chance to get into our magnet program as a student who scores a 100 on the matrix.

Every qualified application for our magnet program and every boundary option application will be placed in two separate lotteries (one lottery for magnet, one lottery for boundary option). Qualified applicants will be picked at random for acceptance from both lotteries.

Q: Where can I get more information about HISD’s matrix?

A: Houston ISD’s office of school choice’s website has more information on the matrix and how it works: Here is a link: <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/135803>

Q: Do I need to bring in copies of my child’s test scores and grades?

A: Fifth graders currently attending a Houston ISD school who attended that same school in the fourth grade **do not** need to bring us their grades and test scores. All of that information is already in the system for HISD students.

For those applying from outside of HISD, please upload the grades and test results that you have to your application on hisdchoice.com. HISD will calculate a matrix score for your application. Should your child be accepted to Pin Oak, some more information may be requested to ensure proper class placement.

Q: My child has not qualified as “GT.” Can they still apply to Pin Oak?

A: Yes. Applicants **do not** need to qualify as “GT” to be accepted to Pin Oak. However, we do offer Pre-AP/GT classes in our boundary option and in our magnet programs.

Q: If my child is accepted for boundary option and my family moves, can they still attend Pin Oak?

A: Residency guidelines for zone campuses are applied. If you move out of the Meyerland, Long, or Pershing attendance zone you will no longer be eligible for a boundary option transfer.

Q: I have an eighth grader currently attending Pin Oak, and I have a fifth grader applying to Pin Oak. Will my fifth grader get preference because they have a sibling going to Pin Oak?

A: We can reserve up to 25% of our seats in 6th grade for siblings of students who will be attending Pin Oak *at the same time* as their younger brother or sister in 6th grade.

Q: I have a sixth grader attending Pin Oak, and I have a seventh grader applying for eighth grade. Will my older child get preference because they have a sibling currently attending Pin Oak?

A: In Middle School, sibling preference ONLY applies when a fifth grader is applying for sixth grade.

Q: Do I need to bring in a copy of a water bill, electric bill, gas bill, or lease agreement when I apply?

A: You do not need to submit a water bill, electric bill, gas bill, or lease agreement at the time of application. However, if your child is accepted to Pin Oak and accepts their seat, we will require proof of residency (water bill, electric bill, gas bill, or lease agreement).

Q: I heard Pin Oak has a wait list. How many students will you accept from the wait list?

A: Each year we access the wait list to fill open spots. The wait list number each year fluctuates and there is no way of knowing what number we will get to on the waiting list. We will continue calling throughout the summer as seats become available.

Q: If I apply early does that increase my chances of being accepted at Pin Oak?

A: All qualified applications received between September 30 and December 9 will be placed into the same lottery.

Q: Is Pin Oak an International Baccalaureate (IB) school?

A: Pin Oak is not an IB school. However, several students from IB elementary schools come to Pin Oak every year and flourish! Furthermore, many of our graduating eighth graders have gone onto IB Programmes for High School.