

Life After Montcrest



Montcrest School

Table of Contents

1) Step 1: Get Informed

- a) Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Options
- b) Independent or Private School Options
- c) Support at Montcrest School

2) Step 2: Application Process

- a) Applying to a Public School
- b) Applying to an Independent School
- c) Factors to Consider before Applying to a Private or Independent School

3) Step 3: The Waiting Game

4) Step 4: Decision Making Process

5) **Appendices**

- a) Montcrest Graduates' Destinations Over the Past 10 Years
- b) Montcrest Graduates' Destinations by Type of School
- c) Unique High School Programs
- d) Questions for Parents to Ask Private Schools
- e) Sample Interview Questions

The transition from elementary to high school is an important time in a student's social, emotional and academic development. It often marks the first significant decision that a child will actively participate in that will help shape their future. It is a time during which parents have the opportunity to model for their child how to research, analyse, and determine a path forward that best suits their interests in life.

The purpose of the *Life After Montcrest* program is to help inform, support, and guide students and parents throughout this decision-making process. This document is meant to help you understand your options for high school in both the public and independent school systems. This process has been designed as a step-by-step checklist to ensure your family has explored all options and that your child finds the best learning environment for their high school experience. Furthermore, there are additional resources and articles that have been hyperlinked throughout this material. In order to access this material you will need to go to the Montcrest website, find the *Life After Montcrest* link in the 'Parents' menu, and use the following login information:

Username: montcrest

Password: parent

You can then follow the underlined hyperlinks within this document.

The best way to begin this journey is to identify and understand what type of learning environment would allow your child to develop their confidence and thrive academically as they grow into young adults. As parents, you will understand your child as a person and know their emotional needs; however, Montcrest has a team of caring and supportive teachers who can help provide the social and academic pieces required in selecting the correct high school for your child. This team includes Ms. Klein, Ms. Cohen, and Mr. Barry.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact us.

Ms. Klein	dklein@montcrest.ca	416-469-2008 (ext. 258)
Ms. Cohen	dcohen@montcrest.ca	(ext. 286)
Mr. Barry	mbarry@montcrest.ca	(ext. 279-5)

Step 1: Get Informed

The first step in the transitions process is ensuring your hopes for your child's high school experience match their hopes, along with their learning needs. To help with this process, we have designed a questionnaire to be completed separately by both yourself and your child. The information gathered will help guide your initial interview with the transitions team at the start of September. During this interview we want to help ensure that the schools you are looking at best suit your child.



The second step is to research the diverse and exciting options that exist both in the public, independent, and private sectors for high school. The more you learn ahead of the interview in September, the more satisfied you will be throughout this process.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Options:

The TDSB provides some excellent videos and guidance on the transition from elementary to high school. The first link you should explore is ['Going to High School'](#). This site provides valuable information about the wide range of learning opportunities available to you throughout the TDSB. Next, you should explore the ['Beyond 8: Choices for 9 Interactive Guide'](#) link, which answers a number of questions you may have about Grade 9, including course types and what it takes to earn a secondary school diploma. You may, however, still have questions on how to make the right decision for your child. These are addressed on the ['Making Decisions'](#) page. It is here where you will find the link on how to ['Find Your School'](#). The TDSB recommends that parents attend as many [High School Information Evenings](#) as possible. This will allow you to see firsthand what each school has to offer in terms of programs, courses, and extracurricular activities. Before you rush out to these events, you should read the PDF overviews for each school to appreciate the unique offerings of each high school.

Alternatively, the TDSB offers a variety of ['Specialized Schools and Programs'](#) beyond just your local school. Students can access many of these specialized programs through a process called Optional Attendance, which can offer an alternative high school experience. For example, there are schools within the TDSB which focus on:

- Arts
- Cyber Arts/Studies
- Elite Athletes/Arts
- Integrated Technology
- Leadership Pathway
- Math, Science & Technology
- Media Arts
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Advanced Placement (AP)

Furthermore, the following links provide information about the '[Secondary School Boundaries for Students with Gifted Exceptionalities](#)' for students who have been recommended a Gifted ISP placement. These recommendations are made through the TDSB [Identification, Placement Review Committee \(IPRC\)](#) or [Special Education Program Recommendation Review Committee \(SEPRC\)](#) process. It is possible that a program at any given site can reach capacity, which may result in some students being directed to another location with available program space.

Independent or Private School Options:

If your family wants to continue with an independent school education, the '[Our Kids](#)' website provides some excellent resources that can help you find the right school for your child. Having surveyed the Canadian private school landscape for almost two decades, 'Our Kids' has accumulated a treasure trove of insights. [The Essential Parent Guide to Private Education](#) identifies: *Private School Basics; Types of Schools; Trends in Education; Choosing a School; Applying to Schools; and Paying School Tuition.*

However, picking a school for your child involves juggling competing priorities and considerations. This guide, titled [Choosing a School](#), may help you identify, categorize, and prioritize these considerations in order to help you maximize the time spent researching and contacting prospective schools. **Searching for the right school is not a sprint; it's a marathon, requiring committed preparation.** The [Five Steps to Finding the Perfect School](#) provides a step-by-step guide, starting with carefully considering your needs.



If you are struggling with sifting through the numerous options, we recommend visiting the [Toronto Private School Expo](#) at Roy Thomson Hall on **Saturday, September 28th, 2019 from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**, as there are more than 70 schools in attendance.

Once you are ready to research specific schools, the 'Our Kids' website has developed an extensive [school profile](#) library along with objective, detailed [school reviews](#) of more than 350 private and independent schools. Moreover, it is recommended to use the [comparison tool](#) to help narrow down the schools you are looking at before you begin the application process.

Since the application process to independent schools can be a significant time and financial commitment, you should review these resources with your child before the start of Grade 8.

Support at Montcrest School:

Since the research and application process becomes such a significant part of a student's final year at Montcrest, the initial parent-teacher interview in September will focus on this transition. During this meeting a pair of teachers will review the questionnaire results with you before reviewing the options available to your child in the TDSB, as well as other independent or private schools. Therefore, it will be important that you and your child have spent some time prior to this meeting exploring the links found throughout this document.



To identify a school that best suits your child and to determine which school open houses to attend, Montcrest suggests booking an appointment to see either Ms. Klein or Ms. Cohen.

Step 2: Application Process

Applying to a Public School:

Families should register with their local high school, which is done by contacting the school directly. All contact information can be found by following the links on the '[Find Your School](#)' page. Montcrest recommends that families register for their local school before applying to any other school in order to provide reassurance to their child that they are attending a high school.

Students who are interested in applying to a specialized program will have to follow the specific requirements and unique admission criteria for each program. Application to specialized programs is made directly to each program through '[Optional Attendance](#)'. Students have the opportunity to access schools outside of the school designated to serve their residential address by applying on optional attendance. Acceptance at these schools is subject to space availability and program suitability. The procedures, conditions, and timelines relating to optional attendance are described in the [Optional Attendance Policy](#) and the [Optional Attendance Operational Procedure](#). Ensure you read the '**Important Dates**' section, which is the last page of this document. To apply, families will need to complete the [Optional Attendance Form](#).

- Each year in December, schools are classified as **limited** or **closed** to optional attendance based on the space they have available for the upcoming school year.
- A school classified as **limited** can accept students on optional attendance. A limited school is not obliged to accept all students who apply on optional attendance. Acceptance is conditional upon space being available in the appropriate grade and program.
- A school classified as **closed** cannot accept any students on optional attendance. Only students residing within the school's attendance area will be accepted.
- If a school is classified as limited, and you are interested in applying to that school, please contact the school's principal.

Those families who choose a specialized school and program may need to travel outside of their local district, so the TDSB presently offers students in Grades 9 to 12 TTC tickets as part of their [‘High School Transportation’](#) program. Applications are accepted year-round. Before [applying](#), be sure to check out the eligibility guidelines and the [transportation policy](#).

Applying to an Independent School:

Every private or independent school has its own application and admissions process; however, most will follow a similar process. This will involve a school tour or visit, an interview, and an entrance test, along with the application documentation. The type of documentation required will include an application form, a non-refundable application fee, a confidential school report from Montcrest faculty, and previous report cards (Grade 7 June report card, Grade 8 progress report & Grade 8 January report card). Some schools may also require test scores (depending on the school, it may be necessary for your child to write the SSAT or some other entrance requirements).



1. The *confidential school report* can be completed by any of your child’s regular academic teachers. As a parent, you will want to select a teacher who knows your child well and has taught your child within the last year. These reports, once completed, are mailed directly to the school that you will be applying to.
2. The *previous report cards* are requested so a school can look at your child’s academic growth and character development over a period of time. Schools will review your child’s academic achievement, their learning habits, and their involvement within the school community along with any awards, and finally they look at a child’s attendance record, including the number of late arrivals.
3. The [entrance exam](#) is used as an independent assessment to compare all applicants. These can include assessments of math, reading comprehension skills, and an independent writing

exercise. The writing exercise has two purposes: it is intended to give the applicant an opportunity to express themselves thoughtfully and creatively. The writing sample is not graded. Some schools have developed their own entrance exam, while others use the Secondary School Assessment Test ([SSAT](#)). Some families choose to enrol in an [SSAT preparation](#) course to ensure their child understands the SSAT format, while others purchase one of several SSAT prep books from a bookstore. The following is a [list of schools](#) that require the SSAT as part of their application process.

4. The [interview](#) is one of the most important parts of the application process, but its main purpose is simply seeking to provide a clearer view, beyond the paper application, of whether or not your child is a good fit for the school and vice versa. Here is a sample of the types of [questions students get asked at private school interviews](#) (Appendix 2). The interview is another opportunity to decide whether the school is a good fit for your family values, and for the school to determine whether your values are a good fit for the school community. Therefore, it is important to understand the [role of parents](#) in this process. The Our Kids magazine suggests the following [questions to pose to private schools](#) to help you determine if the school you are applying to is a good fit for you and your child.

Montcrest will prepare students for school interviews by conducting a mock interview. These interviews should be booked through Maggie Zegas-Tepper (mzegas@montcrest.ca or at extension 283). These should take place about 1-2 weeks prior to a student's first interview, and all interviews will be conducted with Mr. Barry.

Factors to Consider before Applying to a Private or Independent School:

“All parents want the best for their children. That’s certainly true when it comes to their children’s education. However, good intentions sometimes lead to decisions or actions that negatively impact a child’s learning. I will share with you the five most common mistakes parents make when it comes to their children’s education.” -Bryan Ide, Education Director of KEY Enrichment Centre



The Our Kids magazine suggests that parent should avoid the following “[Five Common Mistakes Parents Make](#)” when applying to a private or independent school.

Secondly, if your child has specific learning needs there is an excellent comparison tool that allows you to filter schools based on their [special needs support](#). Simply click on the corresponding colour to the type of special needs you are looking for (**see image on next page**). However, this will only

parent' or a 'helicopter parent' if they become a part of the school community. Likewise, if families have personal contacts at the school, whether it be a teacher, administrator, or family, it is equally advised not to ask for excessive influence from these contacts as this can have a similar effect to calling.

Many admissions departments operate independently from other parts of the school in order to ensure objectivity throughout the admissions process. Therefore, attempting to influence this process can have a negative consequence. Please remain patient and allow the strength of your family's application to be the basis for the school's decision.

Finally, if you have any questions or have heard information that requires clarification, please contact Ms. Klein, Ms. Cohen, or Mr. Barry. They understand the admissions process and departments at each school very well and are best suited to address your concerns rather than rather than listening to any to any kind of hearsay or rumours.

Step 4: Decision Making Process

It is becoming increasingly popular among independent schools to offer special days ahead of the February offer date. Although these special days have been established to provide parents and students an opportunity to experience "A day in the life" of a school, it also gives the schools another opportunity to see how a student might integrate into the school community. These special days might be an evening event or an opportunity for a student to visit and experience classes during a typical school day. When families attend such events, they need to be aware that the admissions departments will often debrief how the day went with both teachers and students. However, it also provides families the opportunity to determine if the school they are applying to is a good fit for their child.



Many independent and private schools attempt to give preference to families if a sibling already attends the school; however, this preference only becomes a factor once it has been decided that a student is the right fit for the school. Furthermore, when families have a legacy at an independent school because a parent or grandparent is an alumnus, this also becomes a factor once the student has passed the admissions process. Therefore, families should not rely on these factors to influence the decision-making process.

Independent and private schools handle the admissions process in two distinct ways:

1. The first process is called rolling admissions. This is when the school makes an offer when your child has met all the admission requirements and the application process has been successful. These offers can happen at any point during the year, and some families like knowing sooner rather than waiting to hear.
2. The second process is when a group of independent schools have a communal offer date; for example, this past year it was on February 22, 2019. When this is the case, offers are often made before the start of the school day. Families are given five days to make a decision as to whether they will accept or pass on an offer.

All decisions and offers to specialized programs within the TDSB are made by mid-February, or approximately a week before the communal offer date from most independent schools. For example, this past year it was on February 15, 2019. Parents will then need to accept the offer within a 2-week period, which this past year ended on March 1, 2019.

Since the communal offer date is a significant one, families should understand the different school's [acceptance rates](#)¹ for entry years in order to prepare and discuss a variety of different possibilities that could take place on this date.

For example:

1. What would families do if they receive multiple offers?
 - a. *Parents and children should have already ranked the schools that they would prefer to attend. This will simplify the decision-making process and will allow families to accept the offer and provide the initial deposit to hold the child's spot within the five-day period.*
2. What would families do if they receive a single offer?
 - a. *Parents will need to accept the offer and provide the initial deposit to hold the child's spot within the five-day period.*
3. What would families do if they do not receive an offer and are told they are on a waiting list?
 - a. *Parents will need to decide if their child will attend a TDSB high school, attend a school with rolling admissions where they have already been accepted, or contact Montcrest to learn about next steps.*

The offer date is a stressful and complex one for both families and schools. It has become common practice by admissions departments to place students on a "waiting list" instead of saying no. This is because schools are waiting on acceptances from families where an offer was made, and often more offers are made than there are spots available. This is due to the fact that not everyone who was made an offer will decide to come to their school. Therefore, it is important that students

¹ These acceptance rates may not accurately reflect the current rate.

already know they are already enrolled in a public high school or in a school that has a rolling admissions policy ahead of this communal offer date.

If families have decided to accept an offer from a specialized public school program, private, or independent school, you should then call your local high school and ensure you have unenrolled your child for the next school year.

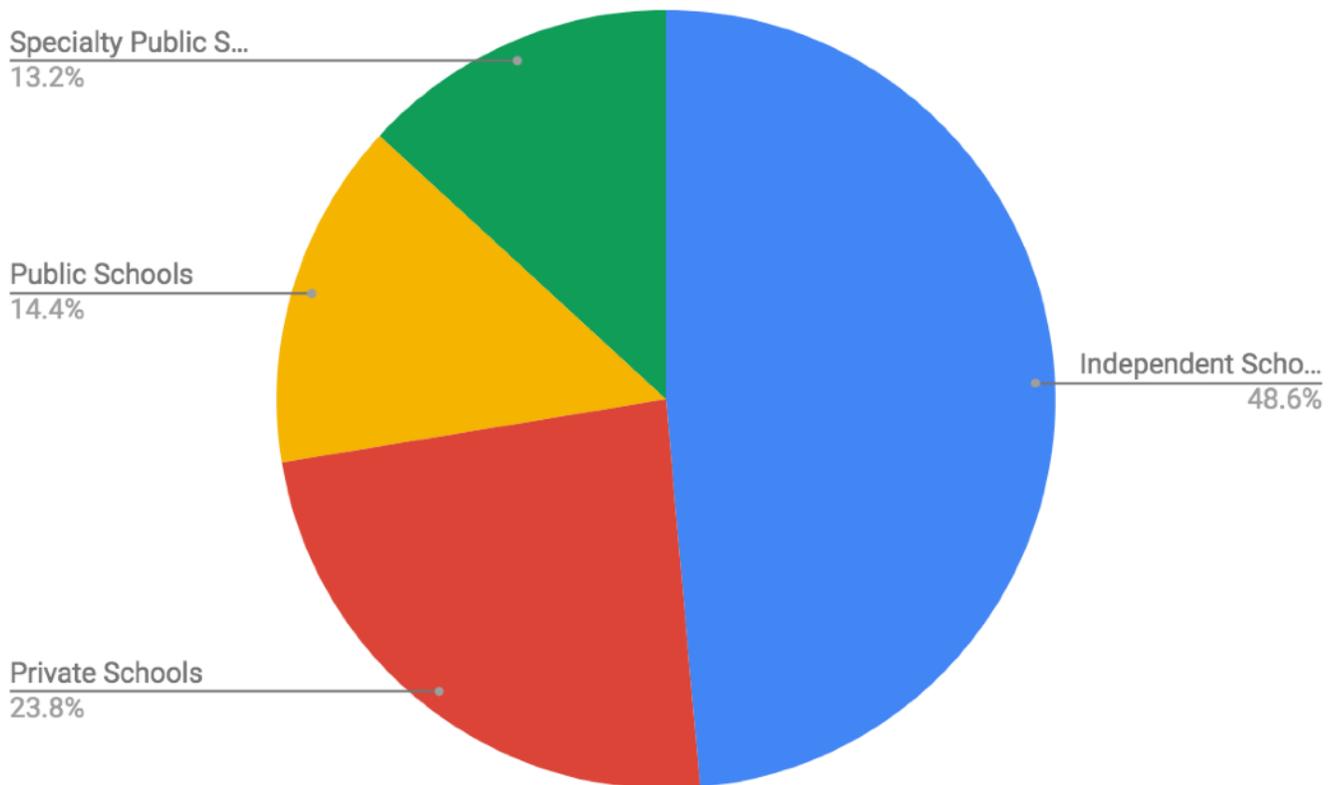
Once students know where they are going to high school it is critical that they finish the year off strong. The last few months are as important as the first part of the year in preparing students for Grade 9, especially considering that most **offers are conditional** on students maintaining an acceptable level of conduct throughout the remainder of the school year.

We hope you have found this guide helpful in preparing you for the transition process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Montcrest Graduates' Destinations Over the Past 10 Years:

Independent Schools	Private Schools	Public Schools	Specialty Public Schools
Bayview Glen School	The Abelard School	Collingwood Collegiate Institute	TOPS on Bloor Program at Bloor Collegiate
Branksome Hall	Crestwood Preparatory School	Danforth Collegiate & Technical Institute	Claude Watson Arts Program at Earl Haig
Bishop Strachan School (BSS)	University of Toronto School (UTS)	Forest Hill Collegiate Institute	MAST Program at Danforth Tech
Country Day School (CDS)	CHAT (Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto)	Harbord Collegiate Institute	Etobicoke School of the Arts (ESA)
Crescent School	De La Salle College	Lawrence Park Collegiate Institute	IB Program at Monarch Park Collegiate
Greenwood College School	Dragon Academy	Leaside High School	Gifted Program at Northern Secondary School
Havergal College	St. Michael's College School	Malvern Collegiate Institute	Leadership Pathway at R.H. King Academy
Lakefield College School (LCS)	The Gow School	Monarch Park Collegiate Institute	Rosedale Heights School of the Arts
Ridley College	The Linden School	North Toronto Collegiate Institute	Ursula Franklin Academy (UFA)
Royal St. George's College (RSGC)	The Study Academy	Northern Secondary School	Gifted Program at Western Technical-Commercial School
St. Clement's School	Toronto Prep School	Riverdale Collegiate Institute	Wexford Collegiate School for the Arts
St. John's-Kilmarnock School	YMCA Academy		Neil McNeil High School
Upper Canada College (UCC)			Loretto Abbey Catholic Secondary School
The York School (TYS)			

Montcrest Graduates' Destination by Type of School:



Unique High School Programs

1. What is The IB Diploma Programme?

- a. The International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum requires that students complete a course of study in six core subject areas (language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts), write an essay of up to 4000 words, and sit standard, externally assessed exams. Students are also required to complete two formal projects and a minimum of 50 hours of community service.

2. Advanced Placement (AP) vs. International Baccalaureate (IB) Programs: what's the difference?

- a. If you've heard of International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement enrichment programs before, you may be wondering what the difference is between them. Find out in this brief overview and how they might be right for your child!

3. A step ahead with IB & AP

- a. Some examples of parents' and students' experiences with both programs.

Questions for Parents to Ask Private Schools:

School Philosophy	Types of Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key elements of your school philosophy and vision? • How do these fit with your school's mission statement? • How are they applied in the classroom and school community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your model student look like? • What kind of academic focus do they typically have? • What kinds of interests and goals might they have outside of academics? • How does your idea of a model student align with your school vision or philosophy? • How does your school support students with an IEP?

Curriculum	Class Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What curriculum do you use? • Do you meet or surpass the curriculum standards of Ontario? • Do you have a specific curricular approach, and if so, what is it? For instance, is it an IB or AP approach? • How is your curricular approach integrated into the classroom at different levels of education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the class size and student-to-teacher ratio for my child's class and for classes he or she may move on to? • Do you offer individualized learning and differentiated instruction and what do these things look like? • Do you have teaching assistants and what role do they play?

Tuition	Extracurricular Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much is annual tuition? • What exactly does tuition include and not include? • Are there any essentials not included in tuition (e.g., textbooks, uniforms, etc.)? • What can I expect my overall yearly expenses, including tuition and extra costs, to be at your school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of extracurricular activities do you offer? • When and how often do these activities take place? • Are these activities included in tuition or do I have to pay extra for them? If they cost extra, how much?

Teacher Qualifications	Use of Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What educational qualifications and training do your teachers have? • What other credentials and qualities do your teachers have (e.g., teaching experience, dedication, passion, etc.)? • What kinds of opportunities do you give teachers to develop themselves professionally (e.g., workshops, seminars, conferences, advanced studies, etc.)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of technological resources do you have and in what, if any, ways do students have access to these? • How is technology integrated in the classroom at each level of education? • What kinds of technological skills, if any, do you teach? • Do you offer any tech-based courses, and if so, which ones?

Measurement of Progress	Student Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you measure individual achievement and progress? • What benchmarks do you use? • Do you have any forms of self-assessment, such as student rubrics? • How, and how often, are parents updated on their children's progress? • How often are report cards handed out? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies do you use to promote a vibrant and cohesive community at your school? • Do you have regular community-building events and activities? • How do you cultivate strong peer relationships? • How do you deal with social and behaviour problems, such as bullying, teasing, and ostracism?

Parent Involvement	School Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities are there for parents to get involved in school? • Is there a parents' association? If so, what does it do? • What events take place during the school year to involve parents? • How do educators communicate with parents? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is your school operated and governed? • Are you a for-profit, not-for-profit, or nonprofit school? • Do school staff answer to an owner-operator, board of directors, or any other persons or organizations? • Who do I go to with questions about my child?

Source: <https://www.ourkids.net/pdfs/school/QuestionsAsk.pdf>

Sample Interview Questions

* Article below contains tips for answering each question.

<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about yourself</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about non-school interests</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe yourself or tell me more about yourself. ● Tell me a bit about your family. ● What are three of your strengths and three areas of growth or challenges? ● What three adjectives that best describe your personality? ● What personal achievement are you most proud of? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do you read outside of school? ● Tell us more about what you do outside of school. ● What extracurricular activities are you interested in? ● If you could meet anyone in the world, dead or alive, who would you meet and why? ● What has happened recently in current events that interests you?
<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about school interests and attitudes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about your suitability for a school</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is your favourite subject, and why do you like it? ● What is your least favourite subject, and why do you dislike it? ● Have you ever had trouble communicating with a teacher or coach, and if so, what did you do? ● Have you had any other conflicts at school, and if so, how did you deal with them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why are you interested in our school? Why do you want to enroll here? ● Why should we select you? ● How will you benefit from attending this school? ● In what ways have your experiences prepared you to attend this school? ● What gifts and talents can you bring to this school?
<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about your beliefs/values</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions about the school</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What does it mean to be a good member of a community? ● If your best friend asked you if they could copy your homework, what would you do? ● What would you do if you did not make a team you really wanted to play for? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do you have any questions about our school? ● Do you have any concerns about our school?

*Source: <https://www.ourkids.net/school/private-school-interview-questions>