



Choosing the right school

FOR YOUR CHILD

Choosing the right school for your child can be a challenging task. A clear sense of the kind of school and education you are seeking will make the process easier. Schools will have information they can send to you about curriculum, fees, ethos, etc. A visit to the school can also help. All schools should welcome this visit.

Association of Independent
Schools of South Australia

128 Greenhill Road
Unley SA 5061
P +618 8179 1400
office@ais.sa.edu.au
www.ais.sa.edu.au



Some initial questions to consider when choosing the school may be:

- Is it important that the school is single sex or coeducational?
- Is the size of the school important?
- Do you want a pre-school, a primary school, a secondary school or a combined school? Does the school have boarding facilities?
- What are the school values? Is it important that the school has a particular religious affiliation or educational philosophy?
- Is it important that the school is close to where you live? Is transport available? Is out of school hour's care and vacation care available?
- What fee levels are you prepared to pay? What are the arrangements for paying fees?
- Are there particular school subjects which are essential such as access to a study of a specific language?

Having made a shortlist of possible schools, here are some other questions to assist you in making a decision. This is not an exclusive list and there are no right or wrong answers. Different schools operate from different philosophical bases and it is important to choose the school that best meets the needs of you and your child.



- How does the school challenge and extend students of all abilities? What does the school offer that makes it unique?
- What structures are in place to ensure a caring and nurturing environment in the school? Is counselling available?
- How available to parents are the teachers? Heads of Schools? The Principal?
- How are parents involved in the school? How often does the school communicate with parents? What form does the communication take?
- What is the staff: student ratio? What is the average class size? What is the access to computer facilities?
- How are student study habits encouraged?
- Does the school have a comprehensive curriculum? How does the curriculum meet the needs of your child?
- How does the school provide support for students with specific learning, language and/or cultural needs?
- What are the schools reporting and assessment procedures?
- How does the school measure its academic performance? What external data is available on the performance of students? How does the school report to parents about the National Assessment data for literacy and numeracy? What were the year 12 results for the last 2–3 years? Are these readily available?
- Does the school have a homework policy? At what year level do examinations start? Why then?
- How is career advice given? Is there a readily accessible career counsellor? What time allocation is this staff member given for this task?



- What secondary school/s do students from the school attend? What are the main post-school destinations of students from the school, such as tertiary study, training and/or employment?
- What co-curricular activities are offered such as sport, music and camps? Are any of these activities compulsory? Is there an additional charge for such activities?
- What national competitions do students participate in? How successful are they? What community events do the school and students participate in?
- Does the school seem to be proud of all its students? Are diverse student achievements celebrated in school publications and events?
- What policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of your child, such as child protection, harassment and bullying?
- Organising a visit to the school may help in assessing some of these aspects. Visiting is best done during school hours as it enables you to obtain a sense of the school tone and the relationships within the school community. Some points to consider include:
 - Is the school welcoming?
 - Do the students seem happy? Are they welcoming to visitors?
 - Is there a sense of pride in the school maintenance? Are the grounds well cared for?
 - What facilities are there? Are they in use?
 - What is the level of supervision during recreation times such as recess and lunch?
 - How do the students relate to each other? How do they relate to staff?
 - Do the staff relate to each other well?

Having considered these questions, you should be well placed to choose the school with belief and practices that are consistent with your own and which will best meet the needs of your child. For more information about South Australian Independent Schools visit www.ais.sa.edu.au.

