HOW TO CHOOSE A SCHOOL · STEP 5

School Visit Checklist

Questions and things to notice when you tour or visit a school. Use one copy per school.

School _____ Visit date _____

Grade(s) we're considering _____ People we met _____

Before you go

- [ ] Read the school's website, handbook, discipline policy, and calendar
- [ ] Look at public data where it exists, such as state test results, graduation rates, and chronic absence
- [ ] Ask whether you can sit in on a class, not just take a tour
- [ ] Ask how admission works and when applications are due
- [ ] Decide whether your child will come along
- [ ] Bring this checklist and your Family Worksheet

Our top three questions for this school

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What to notice during the visit

Check what you saw. Jot a note.

- [ ] Students seem engaged and comfortable
- [ ] Adults speak to students warmly and respectfully
- [ ] Student work on the walls fits the grade level
- [ ] Class sizes look manageable
- [ ] Halls, lunch, and recess feel safe and calm
- [ ] Students who need help get it
- [ ] Students who are ahead have something to stretch them
- [ ] Visitors are welcomed, and staff answer questions openly
- [ ] Spaces my child would use (library, arts, outdoors, labs)
- [ ] Building is accessible for my child's needs

Questions worth asking at any school

From Step 5 of How to Choose a School

- [ ] How do you support a student who is struggling, or one who is ahead?
- [ ] How do you communicate with families, and how often?
- [ ] What does a typical day look like for a student in this grade?

- [ ] How do you handle bullying and conflict?
- [ ] For students with IEPs or 504 plans, what services are provided on site, and by whom?
- [ ] What are the total yearly costs beyond tuition, if any?
- [ ] What happens if this isn't a good fit mid-year?

Enrollment and everyday logistics

- [ ] What are the steps to apply, and what are the dates? (Write them on your Enrollment Deadline Tracker.)
- [ ] Is admission guaranteed, by lottery, or by application? Do any preferences apply, such as siblings or neighborhood?
- [ ] Are there auditions, portfolios, interviews, or testing?
- [ ] What are the school day hours and the length of the school year? Is there before- or after-school care or transportation?
- [ ] Who is the best contact for enrollment questions?

Right after the visit Fill this in while it's fresh

What impressed us

What concerns us

What our child said

Follow-up questions

- [ ] **Talked with at least one current family**, ideally one the school didn't pick for us. What they said:

Overall fit for our child: Not a fit (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Great fit **Next step:** _____ **By (date):** _____

General information only, not legal, tax, or placement advice. Rules, dates, and requirements vary by state, district, school, and program. Always confirm details with each school, district, or official source.