



Questions and Answers about HAIS Schools

What do independent schools in Hawaii offer?

- Diversity in curricula and philosophies
- Quality and richness in academic programs
- Professional, dedicated teachers
- Small classes
- Safe, disciplined, family-oriented environments
- Co-curricular offerings
- Parent involvement
- Character development and moral education
- Excellent facilities

How do I select the schools that interest me?

Finding the right schools for your child requires careful thought and planning. Begin by narrowing the field. Factors you may wish to consider include: size (total school size, class size, and student-teacher ratio), location, curriculum (availability of co-curricular, athletic, art, drama, music, and Advanced Placement programs), religious affiliation, philosophy and mission, type (coeducational/single sex, day/boarding), college acceptance rate, selectivity, affordability, after school programs, entry points, (expected openings at the grade level your child will be entering).

After this, you will need to request information packets and application materials by contacting the Admission Office of the schools that interest you. As a courtesy to them, please carefully read the school's information packet.

Most member schools allow school-in-session visits by prospective students which can be arranged through the school's Admission Office. Some schools will arrange to have a current parent call you if you express interest in talking to families who attend the school.

What do I need to know about financing my child's education?

The cost of an independent education in Hawaii may vary from school to school, and you might be interested to know that in general the costs are considerably below those of comparable independent schools on the mainland.

In determining affordability, parents might begin by determining how much of the family budget they are willing or able to spend for their child's education. Then the family can identify the schools that fall within an affordable range for them.

In addition to schools you can afford, it is still possible to consider schools beyond your budget. Some member schools offer need-based financial aid and use the same form (School and Student Service for Financial Aid) to determine whether a family qualifies for help. A family needs to fill out this form only once since the results can be sent to several different schools, and generally this form is available to families upon request once an application is accepted.

There are other ways of paying for school expenses besides receiving direct financial aid. Some member schools provide alternative payment plans or refer families to commercial lenders who offer special loan packages for educational expenses. Please contact member schools directly for specific information regarding both financial aid programs and alternative payment plans.

When will I hear about the admission decision?

Some member schools are on rolling admissions-as soon as all needed materials have been submitted and the applicant's admission folder is complete, a decision is made and the family is notified. Other member schools have specific deadlines for submission of materials and specific notification dates when admission decisions are mailed to families. Please make sure you are aware of and meet individual school's admissions deadlines.

Do I select a school or does the school select me?

Both. An independent school defines whom best it can serve given the school's mission, but you must make informed choices about which schools best meet your child's educational needs.

Some schools have demanding academic standards enrolling only those students whose previous school record shows a high level of success. Other schools may offer special programs for their outstanding students, while also providing a challenging curriculum for students who show but have not yet demonstrated academic promise. Still others offer programs for students who have encountered a difficulty in previous learning situations. There are also schools that offer programs for students with learning disabilities or other specialized needs.

You will most likely want to apply to several different schools, since many schools have limited openings and are unable to accept all the qualified applicants who apply.

When and how do I apply?

Generally, inquiries should be made and applications submitted in the fall for the next school year. This will give you time to meet application deadlines which begin as early as November and December.

Member schools look for the best match between the student, the family, and the school in determining whether a student will be capable of successfully completing required academic work. Some or all of the following are required:

- The student's previous school records (report cards and transcripts)
- Teacher reference reports
- Standardized testing or observation
- Interview

In considering an applicant for admission, each school's admission staff invests a great deal of time in trying to "see" the whole child. Kindergarten and elementary school applicants are asked to the school for special testing of participation in an activity session. For older students, interviews are scheduled and most 6-12th grade schools use a common admission test (SSAT- Secondary School Admissions Test). Candidates need to take the test only once because test results can be sent to several different schools. Information about SSAT test dates and sites will be included in the application packets you request. Please note that some member schools give first consideration to candidates who test in December or January, so early test registration is advisable.

Schools also consider how the student's special interests and educational goals will be met and encouraged by a particular school program, and if the family's philosophy on child development, education, and discipline is compatible with the school's. Our schools are looking for families who are committed to their child's education and will become partners with the school in helping their child achieve the best in both personal growth and academic accomplishment.

When must I reply to a school about whether my child will attend?

Many member schools require parents, once their child has been accepted, to make a deposit in order to reserve a place in the fall. In order to help parents whose children have applied to more than one school, most H AIS member schools will not require a non-refundable deposit until the following dates (referred to as Common Reply Dates):

- April 15 for those entering grades 6-12
- May 10 for those entering grades K-5

However, parents are advised to inquire about the deposit refund policies of individual schools.