

Choosing an International School

Moving overseas can be exciting yet filled with many decisions. One of those key decisions is finding a school to meet your child's needs. Take the time to make an informed decision - the quality of your child's education WILL impact his/her future. You will never regret the time you invested in making the appropriate decision and providing the very best education for your child while living overseas.

The following information is designed to help you make an informed decision about the appropriate school for your child. It is important to ask questions and to ask for documentation to back up any claims made by a school. You should consider the following:

YOUR CHILD

- Does the school have planned activities to assist your child with a positive start to school? (orientation, assigned buddies)
- What are the class sizes (not the same as student-teacher ratio)?
- Does the school allow parents to volunteer in the classrooms or eat lunch with their children?
- How does the school deal with bullying?
- What student support services are available for individual counseling or post-secondary preparation?
- Do the students look actively engaged in the different learning environments?
- How often will you receive information concerning your child's progress?
- Do the students seem happy at school?
- What is the average time spent on homework?

CURRICULUM

- Is there a particular type of curriculum used? (IB, British, AP, Common Core)
- Are the course offerings extensive enough to meet your child's needs?
- At what age are students offered an opportunity to learn foreign languages?

- What types of school-wide tests are offered/required, and how do the students typically perform?
- Are there any restrictions placed on students from trying advanced courses in high school?
- If a student is struggling while on the school's typical curriculum track, are there alternate options?
- How is extra academic support addressed at the school?
- Are there courses not offered at the school (high school level) that will need to be addressed in other ways? (US-specific courses such as U.S. History)

STAFF

- Are all of the teachers certified?
- How is the school staffed to address the needs of students of high ability, special needs, English Language Learner, etc.?
- On average, how long does a teacher remain on staff at the school?
- What does the school have in place to support continual learning through professional development for the teaching staff?
- How does the school address collaborative time in the schedule to allow for teachers to meet as teams to address curriculum and student needs?
- What is the overall sense of satisfaction of the staff in working at the school?

FACILITIES

- How long will it take for your child to get to school? Is transportation provided by the school? If not, how will your child be transported to school?
- Does the school provide lunch? Breakfast? What is the cost? Is it included in the tuition? *****See FINANCIAL POINTS*****
- Are the facilities modern and well-maintained? Is the campus clean?
- How is technology taught and supported in the school?
- Will your child be required to purchase a personal computing device? If so, what is the cost? *****See FINANCIAL POINTS*****
- Does the school provide different facilities, such as media center, cafeteria, auditorium, and sport areas for different grade levels?

THE SCHOOL

- How many years has the school existed?
- What is the annual tuition and what does that include? Are the total costs within your Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) educational allowance?
Check your DSSR rate here:
http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp?menu_id=95
- What calendar does the school follow (northern, southern)? Consider the impact on your child's transition if you are transferring to a school on a southern hemisphere calendar schedule from a northern hemisphere calendar schedule. In this case, what is the procedure for placing a child into a particular grade?
- How does the school place children? Do they place them according to age, previous grade? Do they administer placement testing? Do they require incoming transcripts?
- Are orientations provided to new parents and students?
- Is the school accredited?
- How would you assess the sense of safety on the campus?
- What types of extra-curricular activities are offered? (arts, sports, clubs, community service)

FINANCIAL POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. The NDSP cannot pay for school lunches. If the cost of lunch is included in the tuition, NDSP will subtract that amount out of the tuition and that portion is the responsibility of the sponsor. Typically, students are also allowed to bring their lunch to school.
2. The NDSP cannot pay for school uniforms. This is the sponsor's responsibility. Almost all schools require uniforms. Some schools have school stores that sell uniforms or a mechanism in place to purchase gently-used second-hand uniforms. This cost can be surprisingly high, so do your research before obligating funds to a school.

3. Field trips of any kind (educational, sports, cultural, curriculum-based, required or not required) cannot be paid by NDSP. If this cost is built into the school tuition, NDSP will subtract that amount out, and that portion becomes the responsibility of the sponsor.
4. Although the NDSP can pay for technology fees charged by the school, it cannot purchase personal devices for the student including a laptop, iPad or internet services.
5. NDSP cannot pay for fees associated with the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT); American College Testing (ACT); and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT).
6. NDSP cannot pay for before/after-school activities
7. NDSP cannot pay for fees for graduation, yearbooks, or parent-school organizations.

For additional information on allowable and non-allowable expenses At Post, please visit this page on our website:

<http://www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/generalInformation/expenses/index.cfm>