

# When your child has lofty university ambitions

## Tips for your school visit

- **Check out its resources:** Make sure the school has the resources and facilities your child needs to succeed. Your child may require a computer lab, an arts studio, an expansive library, a physics club, or an after school robotics class. And, all students can benefit from robust university placement assistance as well as academic advisors.
- **Observe a class in action:** Inquire whether your child can sit in on a class and even have a shadow day (where they go through a full day at the school). Here are some things your child should look for: How do teachers interact with students? Do they offer high-level instruction and how do they challenge students? Do they differentiate instruction, tailoring it to each student's unique learning needs? Do they offer enrichment or acceleration opportunities? Is independent learning encouraged? Do they offer any other customized in-class adaptations? Is there a lively and dynamic "vibe" in class?
- **Talk to students:** Ask them what classes are like and if they find them challenging and engrossing. Inquire about independent learning and enrichment opportunities. Try to learn about the academic culture at the school: For instance, are most students more competitive or collaborative? Ask about school resources and support. What kind of academic guidance and support is available? Does the school help with university placement, and if so, how extensively and in what ways?

## Questions to ask schools

- **Academic standards:** What are your academic standards? How do they compare with those of your [province's curriculum](#)? How do they compare with those of IB, AP, and other highly academic programs?
- **University placement record:** What is your university placement record like? What percentage of your students go on to university? What universities do they get into? How many get into their first choices? Do you have any stats?
- **University placement assistance:** Do you offer university placement assistance or have a dedicated university placement centre? If so, exactly what kinds of assistance are provided?
- **Curriculum:** What curriculum do you use? Is it mainstream or alternative? What subjects do you teach and how do you teach them? How much, if any, independent and collaborative learning do you offer?
- **Teaching approach:** What is your teaching philosophy? How do your teachers engage students? How do they motivate and challenge them?
- **In-class adaptations:** Do you offer custom in-class adaptations, and if so, which ones? For instance, do you offer differentiated instruction, subject-specific enrichment or acceleration, independent studies, subject-streaming, cyber learning, or career exploration?
- **Academic focus:** Do you have a particular academic focus such as STEM or the arts?
- **Guidance:** Do you have academic advisors or guidance counsellors?
- **Extracurriculars:** Which after-school classes, programs, and clubs do you have?
- **Gifted support:** Do you offer full-time dedicated gifted classes or part-time withdrawal gifted classes?
- **Special needs support:** Do you have [special needs classes](#), programs, or support staff?

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