

## BY THE NUMBERS

From tuition costs to class sizes, see how the GTA's top institutions measure up

### 7%

The lowest acceptance rate among private schools in the Greater Toronto Area — attributed to Head Start Montessori School.

### 1829

The year the oldest private school in Ontario and third-oldest in Canada, Upper Canada College, was founded.

### 2 to 7

The lowest average class size among Greater Toronto JK to 12 private schools — attributed to Mississauga's Oakwood Academy

### 31%

The increase in enrolment at elementary and secondary private/independent schools in Ontario from 2011/2012 to 2021/2022.

### 150,861

The number of students enrolled in private and independent schools in Ontario in the 2021-2022 school year.

Data courtesy of *OurKids.net* (1-3) and *Statistics Canada* (4-5).



Check open house dates to tour the school with your child

## Private school pursuit: The journey begins

So you've decided to place your child in a private school. But now what? Here's everything you need to know about before, during and after the application process in Toronto.

### Determine your child's needs and your own expectations

Figure out the reason you want your child to go to private school. What do you hope your child will gain? Do you want a more personalized educational setting, future opportunities or to boost their confidence?

You'll want to consider your child's unique needs. Whether your child is gifted, requires extra help, or is seeking a more focused educational path, it's important to find out if the school(s) you're considering can support this.

### Do your own research and ask lots of questions

Try attending a private school expo with your child. Doing so will help you navigate what's available and provide an opportunity to meet staff and learn about each institution.

Do you know anyone who has kids attending the school you're considering? Talk to them to get valuable insights. What are some things they're impressed by? What are some pain points? A former private school parent told Post City that she wishes she had asked about where the school she chose for her kids allocated their funds within programs such as sports and the arts.

"I learned later that while the sports program was well-funded, the athletic director devoted many of their resources to volleyball

and very little to soccer, the sport my kids all played."

### Visit the school in person to familiarize yourself

Once you've shortlisted a few schools, you'll want to visit them in person (if possible). After all, nothing beats going to a place to see it for yourself.

Contact the school or visit their website to learn about upcoming open house dates. Typically scheduled for October, these events allow you and your child to explore the facilities, ask questions, meet the community and make an excellent first impression. From there, don't hesitate to ask for a personal follow-up tour — this will give you some one-on-one time to gain further insights into everyday life there.

### Application packages, fees and financial aid

So you've found a school or two you and your child love — congratulations! Now, you'll want to hurry up and start the application process.

Along with a registration fee, typical documents include school transcripts, recent report cards and work samples. For older kids, you might get asked to share test scores or even a letter of recommendation. For help obtaining these documents, call your child's current school or school board.

When it comes to tuition, many schools offer financial aid and bursaries to families who need it. Check with the school to confirm details and financial support application dates.

### The interview or entrance exam

After submitting your child's application, you might get asked to come in for an interview with a school admissions representative.

With so many potential students waiting to fill a limited number of seats, the school wants to ensure they're filling those seats with kids they believe will flourish under their care.

Naturally, you'll want to make a great impression, but at the same time, don't forget to let your child be their wonderful selves.

Depending on the school, your child might also have to take an entrance exam. Sure, this might feel big and scary, but for the most part, it's simply to see your child's educational strengths and weaknesses and to determine if the school's curriculum fits.

### Wait lists, acceptance offers and rejections

After you've completed the application process and your child's undergone accompanying interviews and tests, the waiting game begins. Depending on the school, a decision is typically made within a month or so, at which point you'll be notified if you've gotten accepted, rejected, or waitlisted.

If your child got accepted, congratulations! Keep an eye out for an invite to the school's orientation day, plus other key dates to remember, like tuition schedules.

For rejections, take heart and try again next year. For insights, contact the school to discuss their decision further.

—Rebecca Hesse