

# HOW TO APPLY TO A K-12 SCHOOL

Apply for  
the 2021-22  
school year!



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[GREATPHILLYSCHOOLS.ORG](https://greatphillyschools.org)

**great**  
**PHILLY**  
**SCHOOLS**  
*find your great school*



# Before You Get Started

The “Before You Apply to a K-12 School” Workbook takes you through the steps of choosing and applying to elementary, middle and high schools in Philly.

Use this workbook to identify what you want in a school, which schools fit your needs, and how to apply. Bring this with you on school visits and take notes.

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### TIP

This toolkit is best used with the GreatPhillySchools K-12 School Guide or with [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org).

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Visit [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org) for more information about schools.

# District Schools

District schools are free public schools operated by the School District of Philadelphia. To apply to a school outside of your assigned neighborhood school, you must submit an application through the School Selection Process on [schoolselect.philasd.org](http://schoolselect.philasd.org). You can select up to five options, so choose carefully where to apply.

See pages xi-xii for instructions to apply.

## Citywide-Admission Schools

Sometimes have GPA or attendance requirements, but are generally easier to get into than special-admission schools. Students must apply and are selected through a lottery system.

**High schools only:** All Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are citywide-admissions and do not have entrance requirements for incoming students.

## Special-Admission (Magnet) Schools

Have academic, behavioral and attendance requirements. Students must apply and generally must have high scores on PSSAs, especially in 7th grade for high school admission. They may require additional application materials, such as essays or interviews. Schools review student applications and issue acceptances or rejections.

## Neighborhood Schools

Are automatically open to students living in the school's "catchment" or neighborhood zone. If you live within the catchment, your student is given preference to attend. To attend your designated neighborhood school, register directly with the school with proof of residency to enroll. To attend a different neighborhood school, students must apply.

**Kindergarten only:** District schools have limited space for Kindergarten and open for registration on a specific timeline. To ensure a space at your neighborhood school, register as early as possible. See pages 21-22 for the Kindergarten timeline and instructions to register.

Filter schools by type on the Find a School feature on [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org).



### TIP

Pay attention to a school's grade levels — you often have a higher chance of admission at the lowest grade level. For example, if a school serving grades 6–12 already has an 8th-grade class, it may have limited spaces for new 9th graders to enroll; however, there may be more open spaces in the 6th grade.

# Charter Schools

Charter schools are free, independently operated public schools. They cannot have academic or behavioral requirements for admission, and there is no application fee. You can apply to as many charter schools as you like.

All charter schools require an application and many hold a lottery to fill their available spaces. If you are offered a spot, the school will contact you with steps to enroll. If you are not selected, you will be placed on the waitlist and must reapply the following year if you are not offered a seat from the waitlist. Many accept applications through Apply Philly Charter ([applyphillycharter.org](https://applyphillycharter.org)), due by January 25, 2021. Other charter schools have their own applications and deadlines. Visit [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) to find all charter school application deadlines.

## Public Charter Citywide Schools

Enroll students from any part of the city, with a lottery to offer admission.

## Public Charter Neighborhood (“Renaissance”) Schools

Enroll students in their neighborhood “catchment” boundaries. If they have additional open seats, students from outside of their neighborhood are selected through a lottery system.

Filter schools by type on the Find a School feature on [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org).



### TIP

Need help using [applyphillycharter.org](https://applyphillycharter.org)? Call the Apply Philly Charter helpline at 1-800-891-3999.

Visit [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) for more information about schools.

# Private Schools

Most private schools require students to apply for admission and generally charge an application fee. A large majority charge annual tuition, but financial aid and scholarships are often available. Schools will issue acceptance, waitlist, or rejection notices to families. Schools may be coed or single-sex, day school or boarding school, religious or non-sectarian.

## Catholic Schools

Are open to students of all religions, though they promote Catholic values. The majority are operated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia though some are organized by Independence Mission Schools or independently. The admissions requirements and deadlines vary by school, but some may require school records, entrance exams or interviews. See pages xiii-xiv for instructions to apply to Catholic Archdiocese schools.

## Independent Schools

Are operated independently according to a wide range of instructional types. The admissions requirements and deadlines vary by school, but some may require entrance exams, interviews or religious affiliation.

Filter schools by type on the Find a School feature on [greatphillyschools.org](https://www.greatphillyschools.org).



### TIP

Don't let a school's "sticker price" scare you off. Many of schools with the highest tuition also offer the most generous financial aid. If you're interested in a school, set up a time to discuss your options with the admissions director. Schools usually award financial aid on a rolling basis, so apply for aid early.



# Step 1: Understand Your Timeline

It's never too soon to start looking for the right school! Knowing your timeline will help you stay on top of application deadlines the multi-step processes. For example, some schools require students to apply nearly a full year before the start of the school year. For other schools, such as private schools, applying early improves your chances of receiving financial aid.

## Two to Three Years Before Enrolling in...

### Kindergarten

Children Ages 2-4

- Explore this guide and [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) for all Kindergarten options in Philadelphia. On our website, you can also find high-quality preschool and childcare options.
- Attend school fairs, open houses or arrange a visit to speak with administrators, teachers, and parents to evaluate the school.
- To learn more about the timeline and process to apply to Kindergarten, read the "How to Apply to Kindergarten" workbook on [greatphillyschools.org/resources](https://greatphillyschools.org/resources).

### High School

6th and 7th Grade Students

- Explore this guide and [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) for all school options in Philadelphia.
- Attend open houses or arrange a visit to speak with administrators, teachers, and parents to evaluate the school.
- Visit the Philly High School Fair! For more information, including event details, see [phillyhighschoolfair.com](https://phillyhighschoolfair.com).

## The Year Before Enrolling in a New School

### September - November

#### ALL SCHOOLS

- Visit the virtual Philly High School Fair! No registration or passwords are required for this free virtual fair. For more information, including when the event will go live, see [phillyhighschoolfair.com](https://phillyhighschoolfair.com).
- Attend the Philly K-8 School Fair! For more information, including event details, visit [phillyk8fair.com](https://phillyk8fair.com).
- Attend open houses or arrange for a visit during school hours.

#### DISTRICT

- Apply to District elementary, middle and high schools through the School Selection Process. You can apply to no more than five schools outside of your designated neighborhood school. Visit [schoolselect.philasd.org](https://schoolselect.philasd.org) to apply.

## The Year Before Enrolling in a New School (Cont.)

### September - November (Cont.)

#### CHARTERS

- Apply to charter schools participating in Apply Philly Charter ([applyphillycharter.org](http://applyphillycharter.org)) for fall 2021 between September 25, 2020 - January 25, 2021. Non-participating charter schools may also be accepting applications at this time.

#### PRIVATE

- Apply to private schools. Some may hold entrance and scholarship exams.
- Apply for private K-8 school scholarships through Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia ([csfphiladelphia.org](http://csfphiladelphia.org)). The priority deadline is November 15, 2020 for the first lottery.

### December - February

#### DISTRICT

- District schools with admissions criteria review applications and conduct interviews and auditions.
- Special-admission schools make admissions and waitlist decisions, while citywide schools run admissions lotteries for eligible students.
- The District notifies students about initial admissions decisions. Students must confirm their preferred school. For more information, including the timeline, visit [philasd.org/studentplacement](http://philasd.org/studentplacement).
- District schools fill available seats with students from their waitlist. The final notifications are usually available in February. For more information, including the timeline, visit [philasd.org/studentplacement](http://philasd.org/studentplacement).
- Kindergarten registration usually opens in late January for District neighborhood schools. Register early to ensure a placement, as seats are limited. See page 22 for more information.

#### CHARTERS

- Submit your [applyphillycharter.org](http://applyphillycharter.org) application by January 25, 2021. In February, outcomes will be available on Apply Philly Charter and also communicated directly by schools.
- Charters not participating in APC may also have deadlines during this time. For more information, visit [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org).

#### PRIVATE

- For financial aid to private schools, submit your financial aid application by December 31, 2020.
- Most private schools release acceptance, rejection or waitlist decisions.

### March - May

#### ALL SCHOOLS

- Some schools (mostly charter and private) may still be accepting applications. Visit [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org) for a list of schools with available seats.

#### DISTRICT

- Kindergarten registration usually closes in May for District neighborhood schools.
- To enroll at your designated neighborhood school, visit the school to register prior to the start of the school year. Call the school for more information.

#### CHARTERS

- Some charter schools may continue to accept applications and issue initial admissions decisions.

#### PRIVATE

- Apply for private K-8 school scholarships through Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia ([csfphiladelphia.org](http://csfphiladelphia.org)). The final deadline is March 1, 2021 for the second lottery.



## Step 2: Understand Your Needs

Use the following questions to help identify your student's strengths, weaknesses and needs.

<b>Questions for Your Student</b>	<b>Questions for Caregivers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are your strongest subjects? What do you like to learn?</li><li>• What are your weakest subjects? What would you need to succeed?</li><li>• What are three things you want in a school (ex. music, art, special classes)?</li><li>• Are sports important to you? Which ones?</li><li>• Do you have any other talents or special interests?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does your student read well or struggle with reading?</li><li>• Does your student have any learning difficulties? Do they have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?</li><li>• What are three things you want in your student's school (ex. after-school programs)?</li><li>• Does your student have any behavior issues? If so, what kind of environment would they need to thrive in?</li><li>• Does your student need one-on-one support? What kinds of teachers does your student have the most success with?</li><li>• Does your student do better in a large group setting or prefer smaller learning environments?</li></ul>



## Step 3: Decide What's Important

From location, school values, special services or classes, and more, create a list of what you want in a school. Use the answers from step 2 to help you decide.



## Step 4: Find and Compare Your Options

To find and compare hundreds of schools, use the GreatPhillySchools K-12 School Guide or visit [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) for even more information using your phone or computer. Write down your top school choices based on your search. Make notes of important information as you find schools so you can easily plan to visit when the time comes.



## Step 5: Get to Know Schools

Once you have narrowed down your top choices, it's time to get to know schools. Try to speak with students and teachers to understand what it is like to attend and get a better sense of its environment. Ask the principal, admissions staff or school counselors about the school's academic expectations, their student to teacher ratio, how they know that teachers care about their students, and more. If you're not able to visit and see the school in person, call or email the school you are interested in. Some schools host many events virtually such as open houses, shadow days and info sessions so you can see what they have to offer without leaving your home.



### TIP

Visit [greatphillyschools.org](https://greatphillyschools.org) to find school addresses, phone numbers, and emails.



## Step 6: Apply to Schools

Once you have completed your visits and reviewed your notes, it's time to decide which school(s) to apply to. In the next pages, we have listed the basic procedures for applying to schools associated with the School District of Philadelphia, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Apply Philly Charter.

If you haven't heard anything back from a school after two weeks or so, follow up to make sure they have your application and any other required materials or information. Ask when you will receive an answer about whether your student will be accepted or enrolled.



### TIP

Find a school's profile on [greatphillyschools.org](https://www.greatphillyschools.org) to learn about the school's admission requirements. Click the "Apply Now" button to apply.



### TIP

Don't limit yourself! You can apply to more than one type of school, and applying does not necessarily mean your child must attend that school if they are admitted. You have the option of applying to multiple types of schools, and then making your choice later.

Visit [greatphillyschools.org](https://www.greatphillyschools.org) for more information about schools.



# School District of Philadelphia

## ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

### SELECTION INSTRUCTIONS

For the timeline to apply, visit [philasd.org/studentplacement](http://philasd.org/studentplacement).

#### ONLINE SELECTION APPLICATION FOR 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

**Step 1:** Go to [schoolselect.philasd.org](http://schoolselect.philasd.org)

**Step 2:** Select an option

I am a current School District of Philadelphia Student.  
**APPLY NOW**  
 (Apply through the Student Portal)

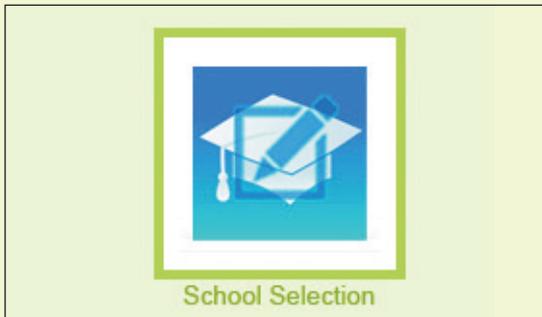
I am a non-School District of Philadelphia Student.  
**APPLY NOW!**

#### For Current School District Students:

1. Log in to the Parent & Family Portal or Student Portal using your username and password.

\*\*See the next page to learn how to set up your Portal account.\*\*

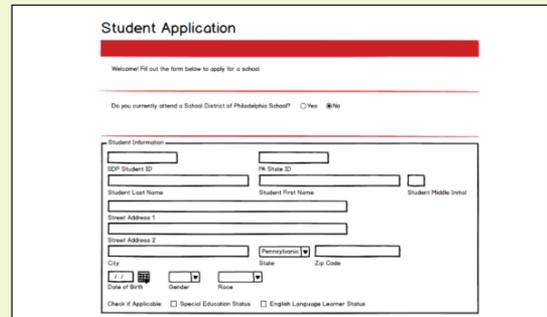
2. Click on "School Selection."



#### For Charter, Catholic and Private School Students:

Families not currently enrolled in a School District of Philadelphia school can apply directly to a District school using this online process.

\*\*It is important to provide a working email address to receive admissions decisions.\*\*



**Note:** Applications from current District students can be submitted until the deadline. Each new application will override all previously submitted applications.

**Note:** This application can not be changed or updated once it is submitted. Only your most recent submission will be considered.

The School District's online selection process is for students and families who wish to apply to any District school other than their designated neighborhood school, including all special-admission (magnet) and citywide-admission schools. Students can apply to up to five (5) different District K-12 schools.

- The School Selection site, [schoolselect.philasd.org](http://schoolselect.philasd.org), contains the following resources:
  1. Information about each high school option
  2. Open house dates
  3. Audition and interview schedules for select schools
  4. Important announcements and tips for applying

For information on the application period for fall 2020, visit [philasd.org/studentplacement](http://philasd.org/studentplacement).

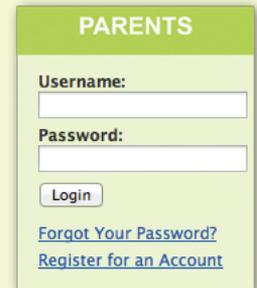
- Questions? Please email [schoolselect@philasd.org](mailto:schoolselect@philasd.org) or call 215-400-4290.

# CREATE A PARENT & FAMILY PORTAL ACCOUNT TO SELECT A SCHOOL AND MORE

(For current School District of Philadelphia parents only)

## STEP 1: CREATE AN ACCOUNT OR LOG IN

- To create an account, all you need is an email address. Go to [signup.philasd.org](http://signup.philasd.org).
- If you already have a Parent & Family Portal account, go to [philasd.org/login](http://philasd.org/login).



## STEP 2: LINK TO YOUR STUDENT

- Once inside the Portal, make sure you have your student's ID number.
- Click on "My Students" to link to your student.



## STEP 3: CLICK ON "SCHOOL SELECTION" TO SELECT SCHOOLS

- Once you have linked to your student, you can apply to schools.
- Click on "School Selection" to enter the application.
- Need help? Contact the FACE office for additional support. Email [ASK@philasd.org](mailto:ASK@philasd.org) or call 215-400-4180.



## WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO WITH A PARENT & FAMILY PORTAL ACCOUNT?

*This account will also grant you access to:*

- your student's academic information, grades and attendance
  - the annual parent survey
- options for receiving email, text and phone communications for your child's school

*The School District of Philadelphia, an equal opportunity employer, will not discriminate in employment, education programs or activities based on race, religion, color, age, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, sex, sexual orientation, union membership or limited English proficiency. This policy on non-discrimination extends to all legally protected classifications. Publication of this policy in this document is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Law of 1973.*

# ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA



## ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION IS  
AVAILABLE ONLINE

(OPTIONAL) SUBMIT YOUR FINAN-  
CIAL AID APPLICATION  
BY DECEMBER 31, 2020

### ONLINE SELECTION APPLICATION FOR THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

#### APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Submit your Admissions Application (required) and Financial Aid Application (optional) by December 31, 2020.

#### Step 1: Go to

[www.aopcatholicschools.org/find-a-school](http://www.aopcatholicschools.org/find-a-school).

#### Step 2: Complete Admissions Application (required).

Once you find a school, visit their website and fill out the appropriate application with each school.

**It's best to complete the admissions application and the financial aid application ([online.factsmgmt.com/aid](http://online.factsmgmt.com/aid)) by December 31, 2020.**

#### Step 3: Select schools.

See list to the right for a full list of Catholic schools in Philadelphia. The details of the admissions process vary, but it generally involves an application, entrance test and interview. **Once the school(s) review student records, they will make an admissions decision.**

Questions? Visit [aopcatholicschools.org](http://aopcatholicschools.org).

There are more options for Catholic K-8 schools that are operated independently from the Archdiocese, including 15 schools operated by Independence Mission Schools. Learn about these options at [independencemissionschools.org/schools](http://independencemissionschools.org/schools) and at [greatphillyschools.org](http://greatphillyschools.org).

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's online application process is for students and families who wish to apply to any of the following schools:

- Blessed Trinity Regional Catholic School
- Christ the King School
- Holy Innocents Area Catholic Elementary School
- Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic School
- Immaculate Heart of Mary School
- Maternity B.V.M School
- Mother of Divine Grace School
- Our Lady of Calvary School
- Our Lady of Hope Regional Catholic School
- Our Lady of Port Richmond Regional Catholic School
- Our Mother of Consolation School
- Resurrection Regional Catholic School
- St. Anselm School
- St. Anthony of Padua Regional Catholic School
- St. Athanasius-Immaculate Conception School
- St. Cecilia School
- St. Christopher School
- St. Dominic School
- St. Francis De Sales School
- St. Francis Xavier School
- St. George School
- St. Jerome School
- St. Katherine of Siena School
- St. Laurentius School
- St. Martha School
- St. Matthew School
- St. Monica (Junior & Senior School)
- St. Peter the Apostle School
- St. Pio Regional Catholic School
- Visitation B.V.M. School

# ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA



## HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION IS  
AVAILABLE ONLINE

(OPTIONAL) SUBMIT YOUR  
FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION  
BY DECEMBER 31, 2020

### ONLINE SELECTION APPLICATION FOR THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR

#### APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Submit your Admissions Application (required) and Financial Aid Application (optional) by December 31, 2020.

**Step 1: Go to**  
[www.aopcatholicschools.org/find-a-school](http://www.aopcatholicschools.org/find-a-school).

**Step 2: Complete Admissions Application (required).**

Once you find a school, visit their website and fill out the appropriate application with each school.

**It's best to complete the admissions application and the financial aid application ([online.factsmgmt.com/aid](http://online.factsmgmt.com/aid)) by December 31, 2020.**

**Step 3: Select schools.**

See list to the right for a full list of schools participating in this online application process. Once you submit the application a checklist of requirements will generate to guide you through the next steps. These steps include providing student records and, if applicable, applying for tuition assistance. **Once the school(s) review student records, they will make an admissions decision.**

Questions? Visit [aopcatholicschools.org](http://aopcatholicschools.org).

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's online application process is for students and families who wish to apply to any of the following schools:

- *Archbishop Carroll High School\**
- Archbishop Ryan High School
- *Archbishop Wood High School\**
- *Bishop McDevitt High School\**
- *Bishop Shanahan High School\**
- *Cardinal O'Hara High School\**
- *Conwell-Egan High School\**
- Father Judge Catholic Boys' High School
- John W. Hallahan Catholic Girls' High School
- *Lansdale Catholic High School\**
- Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls
- *Monsignor Bonner and Archbishop Prendergast High School\**
- SS. John Neumann and Maria Goretti High School
- *Pope John Paul II High School\**
- Roman Catholic High School
- Saint Hubert Catholic High School for Girls
- West Catholic Preparatory High School

**\* located outside the City of Philadelphia**

Within the city of Philadelphia, the Sisters of Mercy sponsor a private, urban career and technical high school. To apply to Mercy Career & Technical School, please visit [mercyccte.org/admissions](http://mercyccte.org/admissions).



# *apply* PHILLY CHARTER

**APPLYPHILLYCHARTER.ORG**

- **Philadelphia Charter Schools**
- **One Application**
- **Easy**

## **2021-22 APPLICATION TIMELINE**

Application available:

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2020**

Deadline to apply:

**JANUARY 25, 2021**



See list of participating schools at [APPLYPHILLYCHARTER.ORG](https://applyphillycharter.org).

For assistance, visit any participating charter school, your local library or call 1-800-891-3999.



# apply PHILLY CHARTER

## ***Philadelphia Charter Schools. One Application. Easy.***

Apply Philly Charter is the easy way to apply to most Philadelphia charter schools for the 2021-22 school year.

### How do I apply?

- ✓ Go to [applyphillycharter.org](https://applyphillycharter.org) on your phone, tablet or computer.
- ✓ Create an account and fill out your family profile.
- ✓ Select the charter school(s) that you want to apply to.
- ✓ Submit the application.

### What information do I need to apply?

- 🍏 Parent/guardian's name, email address and home address.
- 🍏 Student's date of birth, current school and grade, and the grade applying for in 2021-22 school year.
- 🍏 To learn more about a school you want to apply to, check out the school's profile on [Greatphillyschools.org](https://Greatphillyschools.org)

### When can I start applying? Is there a deadline?

**September 25, 2020**  
Application window opens

**January 25, 2021**  
Application deadline

Participating charters schools that hold a lottery will notify you in **February 2021** about the status of your application. You will also be able to view your application results on Apply Philly Charter.

*For assistance, visit any participating charter school,  
your local library or call 1-800-891-3999.*