

# Questions to ask high schools

- **Curriculum:** What curriculum do you use? Is it mainstream or alternative? What subjects do you teach and how do you teach them?
- **Teaching approach:** What is your teaching philosophy? How do your teachers engage students? How do they motivate and challenge them? How much, if any, independent and collaborative learning do you offer?
- **Class sizes:** What are your class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios?
- **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?
- **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 like science or the arts?
- **Extracurriculars:** Which after-school classes, programs, and clubs do you have? Do you offer volunteer or community service opportunities? How about travel and exchange programs?
- **Out-of-class resources:** Do you have academic counselling, learning resource, psychology, or health and wellness centres or departments?
- **Out-of-class staff:** Do you have academic advisors, guidance counsellors, social workers, or psychologists? How about tutors or subject-specific support staff (like reading or math specialists)?
- **Special education:** Do you have full- or part-time dedicated special education classes?
- **Gifted learning:** Do you have full- or part-time dedicated gifted classes?
- **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?
- **Location:** What city is it in? How close to you is it? Is it easily accessible by car and public transportation?
- **Cost:** How much does it cost, and what does this cost include? Is it affordable for your family? Are financial aid, subsidies, or sibling discounts offered?
- **Values:** What are the main values it aims to promote? Does it promote diversity, family, community, social justice, religion, or any other values? How does it aim to promote these values? Do they match your values?
- **Environment:** What type of learning environment is used? What kinds of materials and equipment are in the classroom? Are smartboards, computers, or other technological devices used?
- **Specialized learning:** Does it offer individualized learning? Does it tailor teaching to specific students, where appropriate? Or is teaching more on the "one-size-fits-all" model?
- **Special needs:** Does it offer support for kids with special needs? If so, which special needs (for instance, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, giftedness, behavioural issues, physical disabilities, etc.)? And how does it support children with special needs?