

**AISGW PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID**

While each AISGW school may differ in its size, configuration, and philosophy, all members subscribe to standards and principles grounded in ethical conduct. These standards and principles are designed for the protection both of individuals and institutions and presume that contractual commitments will be honored, that appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, that the rights of students and families will be respected, and that schools will deal with each other in a forthright manner. In short, integrity must guide all member schools in their dealings with applicants, with their current constituencies, and with one another. This statement incorporates good practices for families as well as for schools.

Application Process

1. Schools recognize the right of students and parents to consider other schools and to hold preliminary discussions regarding admission without notifying the present school.
2. Members of AISGW should refrain from contacting another member school's students or families for recruitment purposes, nor is any member allowed to impede those who wish to leave of their own volition. **Schools recognize that general advertising, direct mail campaigns, and communications between other schools and current independent school families guarantee the free market rights of the families and the general public to consider all options and that such practices from competitor schools should not be seen as a violation of the spirit of collaboration, collegiality, and professionalism reflected in these principles.**
3. Schools should make clear to candidates all dates pertaining to application and reenrollment procedures. AISGW recommends the following timeline:
 - a. application deadlines – schools set a date independently;
 - b. notification date – notification of admission decisions shall be the *first Friday in March; electronic notification, which includes email, telephone, on-line portal or any other form of instant notification, shall occur no earlier than 5 pm; letters may be placed in the U.S. mail any time on the first Friday in March;*
 - c. registration/reply date – enrollment contracts for newly admitted students are due back to school *no earlier than the third Friday in March, or two weeks from the date of notification;*
 - d. tuition binding date – enrollment contracts for newly admitted and re-enrolling students are final and binding *as of 5 pm on June 1st. This means that schools may not release the tuition obligation of a family that has already enrolled unless the family notifies the school of its decision to enroll elsewhere by 5 pm on June 1st.*

Although a widely diverse group of schools, AISGW members are strongly encouraged to adhere to these recommended dates. Schools with a legitimate business reason(s) that precludes them from complying with the above timeline, or are subject to the timeline of a different organization or geographic region, must notify AISGW of the reason(s) for non-compliance in a timely manner. In addition, AISGW will issue a reminder to schools on or around July 1st of each year that sets forth the dates that are specifically applicable for the upcoming admission cycle.

4. When filing an application for admission to another school, the student's family should advise the student's present school that discussions are in progress. Upon receiving an application, an AISGW school assumes that parents have notified the student's current school of their intent to apply elsewhere.
5. Families bear the responsibility for completing the application process and should consult their child's school's policies regarding release of transcripts and other pertinent data.
6. Upon request, a school will send student records to another school to which a student has applied. However, the sending school may, when permitted by law, reserve the right to refuse to release such records if the family has not met its financial obligations to that school.
7. An AISGW school will not admit a student without first receiving appropriate records directly from the student's present school.
8. An AISGW school will take all reasonable and lawful measures to maintain the confidentiality of recommendations, reports, and other pertinent data that is exchanged between and among schools.
9. Parents should notify a school promptly if they do not want their child to receive further consideration for the coming year.
10. The parents of an accepted applicant should be informed of the complete cost of the forthcoming school year before being required to sign an enrollment agreement.
11. *During the period between notification and reply date, schools shall endeavor to keep the nature and scope of post-acceptance events and enticements to a reasonable amount in order to allow the family to engage in a thoughtful decision-making process.*

Provisions in italics provisionally adopted by the Board of Trustees on Sept. 12, 2016

Enrollment and Waiting Pools

1. When a family receives an enrollment contract, either from one or more than one school, the family will notify all schools promptly regarding its decision to attend or not attend. Upon receipt of a signed contract and deposit, it is understood that the newly accepted student's family has not signed a contract at another school. *Families are strongly discouraged from submitting an enrollment deposit at more than one school. Accordingly, upon receipt of a signed contract and deposit, it is understood by the recipient school that the newly accepted student's family has not signed a contract or submitted an enrollment deposit at another school.*
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2. Waiting pools are established for the academic year for which the family has applied. The waiting pools are considered closed once the school year has begun.
3. If parents of a prospective student accept an offer of admission by returning an enrollment contract and deposit to one school, then receive an offer of admission to a second school which they subsequently choose to accept, they must promptly notify the first school of their change in plans.
4. When a school accepts a student from its waiting pool, the admission office will advise the parents that they may have a financial obligation to another school. Parents should consider all obligations of a previously signed contract before signing a contract with another school.

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Financial Aid

Need-based financial aid is the primary means to support access to independent schools by students of diverse socio-economic levels. For this reason, AISGW strongly endorses financial aid on the basis of demonstrated financial need.

In addition, AISGW recognizes that some member schools offer merit-based (non-need) aid as a means of rewarding special talent or promise to mission-appropriate students. Merit-based aid should be a secondary means of supporting families, and funding for merit-based aid should not take away from a school's ability to fund need-based aid.

1. A school will provide students and families with comprehensive information about the total yearly cost, all aid opportunities, financing options, policies and procedures.
2. A school will recognize that the primary responsibility for financing a student's education rests with the student's family.
1. A school will use a uniform methodology to assess annually, in a consistent and equitable manner, the ability to pay of each family that is applying for need-based financial aid.
2. A school will require adequate documentation of family resources when determining need. *A family's aid shall be provisional until all requested documentation is submitted.*
3. A school will use financial aid only as a means to enroll students who match the school's mission and academic programs.
4. A school will make every effort to meet the demonstrated need of all admitted or enrolled financial aid applicants as resources allow.
5. In granting need-based aid, a school will not exceed in its offer of financial aid the amount needed to meet the difference between the resources determined by the school to be available to the family and the student's total educational expenses. *Schools shall not engage in discussions regarding other school's awards or allow counter offers of financial aid to be used as a tool to bargain for students.*
6. A school will notify accepted aid applicants of all financial aid decisions before expecting a binding reply to the offer of admission.
7. A school will safeguard the confidentiality of all financial information supplied by a family.
8. A school will refrain from and discourage others within the school community from disclosing the names of need-based financial aid recipients and award amounts.
9. A school will have the same standards of behavior and academic performance for financial aid recipients as for all students.
10. A school that offers merit awards will include information about such awards in their admissions materials, specifically listing the criteria for awarding merit-based aid.
11. A school that offers donor-sponsored merit-based aid will maintain administrative control over decision making in the selection of recipients.

Adopted by AISGW Board of Trustees, July 2004

Revised, May 2007

Revised, May 2013

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