topschools 10TH Anniversary Since 2012

Admissions Experts

2023/2024

topschools Admissions

Decision Discussion

90 minutes face-to-face meeting.

Perfect for those who maybe have **2 or more offers** or perhaps one offer and one pending. Not sure which to choose? Let us help. Get in touch.

hello@topschools.com.hk

The Top Schools' Difference

We have a **100% success rate**.

Our services are **entirely personalised** and we adopt a **strategic, realistic and flexible approach** to accommodate each client's unique requirements.

We have **verifiable, in-depth knowledge** of the Hong Kong education system (local and international); we make recommendations based on fact, not hearsay or personal opinion!

We maintain good relationships with schools, parents and other stakeholders and are regarded as **influencers in the industry**.

As seen on/in:

Our consultants speak English, Cantonese and Putonghua.

Consulting with Top Schools was one of our best decisions. All our requirements were considered and we were given the most sensible and practical advice by their knowledgeable consultant. Top Schools helped us find a gem of a preschool, and also built a roadmap for us for the next steps which has proved most beneficial to us. Thanks Top Schools for your help!

- Trina Bandopadhyay

We didn't get any benefit for schooling Or guidance from my spouse's company during Relocation. I had to do a lot of research ,campus visits , comparisons and be on waiting lists without an option. At that point I had a chance to speak to Ms Ruth Benny directly and the way she gave me time on phone and helped me make a choice by guiding me on my shortlisted options, honestly really helped for someone new like me in Hong Kong. I wish I knew about her earlier and may be then we would not have had to go through the earlier hardships.

- Bhavna Mate

How we Guide You

Finding the Fit - How we do it

We focus on 6Ps:

Priorities and Preferences

In completing a personalised and detailed questionnaire, followed by a series of discussions, we identify your priorities and preferences as parents and match these with the realistic and available school options for your family. If your child is older, their own priorities and preferences are also important.

We guide you through these options, providing a detailed, personalised school profile report.

Personality and Proficiency

Through discussion, by reviewing school reports, specialist reports, talking to past and current teachers and scheduling pre-interview assessments (where applicable) we match you / your child's personality and specific proficiencies to 'best-fit' schools. We then shortlist THREE schools to apply to.

Policies and Procedures

We will guide you through each of your shortlisted school's specific policies and procedures to optimise your application's chance of generating an assessment. We will advise on when and how to submit the strongest application possible. We will manage your relationship with the school, starting with a phone call or a visit, through to application and then assessment and offer. If multiple offers are received we assist in helping you choose the 'best-fit.'

We provide school specific application policies and interview procedures in writing.

Types Of Schools

Type of School	Curriculum	Funding	Fee Range* (approx)	Admissions Policy	
Government Aided	Hong Kong	100% Government funded	$0	Primary One Admissions (POA): Discretionary Places Central Allocation Door Knocking	Local schools
Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS)	Hong Kong, with some flexibility to offer A Levels, IBDP to a minority of students	Partial Government funded	$1,000 - $110,000	Selective: Apply directly	Local schools
Private schools	Mostly Hong Kong; also non-local curricula	100% funding by fees/ fundraising	$25,000 - $226,000	Selective: Apply directly	
ESF Schools	Non - local: International Baccalaureate, IGCSEs, BTEC	Partial Government funding for students joining prior to 2016 and those joining in higher grades. Mostly funded by tuition fees	$84,000 - $175,000	Non-Selective: Apply directly	International schools
International Schools	Non - local: International Baccalaureate, IGCSEs, A Levels, International Primary Curriculum, Montessori, Advanced Placement, Own, etc	100% funded by fees/ fundraising	$76,000 - $275,000	Selective: Apply directly. All international schools are required to admit a minimum number of students holding foreign passports. The percentage varies from 50-98%	International schools
Private Independent Schools	Non - local: International Baccalaureate, IGCSEs, Advanced Placement, etc		$126,000 - $250,000	All PIS schools are required to admit at least 70% of local students ie permanent residents	International schools

**Fees quoted are for primary and secondary school not including preschool. Fees are rounded up or down.*

topschools Admissions

Top Schools GUARANTEE Quality Service

First Steps

For parents with children < 12 mos. Guidance for playgroups, through to Pre-Nursery.

- Analysis of parents' preferences and priorities
- Report of good fit playgroups and pre-nurseries including application notes
- Discussions of relative merits, curriculum, culture and application processes of each school
- Referrals to trusted partners for extracurricular activities, leisure activities, clubs, language enhancement opportunities
- Advice on applications to submit; when and how
- Ongoing support until PG or PN offer is received

hello@topschools.com.hk

Grade Calendar

Academic Year 2023/24

Child Born	Age	Hong Kong		Australia	England		USA/ Canada		IB
2021	2-3	PN	Kindergarten	-	-	-	-	-	IB PYP
2020	3-4	K1		Reception/ Transition	Nursery	Foundation Stage	-	-	
2019	4-5	K2			Reception		Pre-K	Elementary	
2018	5-6	K3		Preparatory	Year1	Key Stage 1	Kindergarten		
2017	6-7	P1	Primary	Year1	Year2	Primary	Grade1		
2016	7-8	P2		Year2	Year3	Key Stage 2	Grade2		
2015	8-9	P3		Year3	Year4		Grade3		
2014	9-10	P4		Year4	Year5		Grade4		
2013	10-11	P5		Year5	Year6		Grade5		
2012	11-12	P6		Year6	Year7	Secondary	Key Stage 3	Grade6	Middle School
2011	12-13	S1	Secondary	Year7	Year8			Grade7	IB MYP
2010	13-14	S2		Year8	Year9			Grade8	
2009	14-15	S3		Year9	Year10		Key Stage 4/GCSE/ IGCSE	Grade9	High School
2008	15-16	S4	Senior Secondary (HKDSE)	Year10	Year11			Grade10	
2007	16-17	S5		Year11	Year12		A Level/ BTEC	Grade11	IB DP
2006	17-18	S6		Year12	Year13			Grade12	

Number of schools in HK:1,152 (As per EDB Figures)

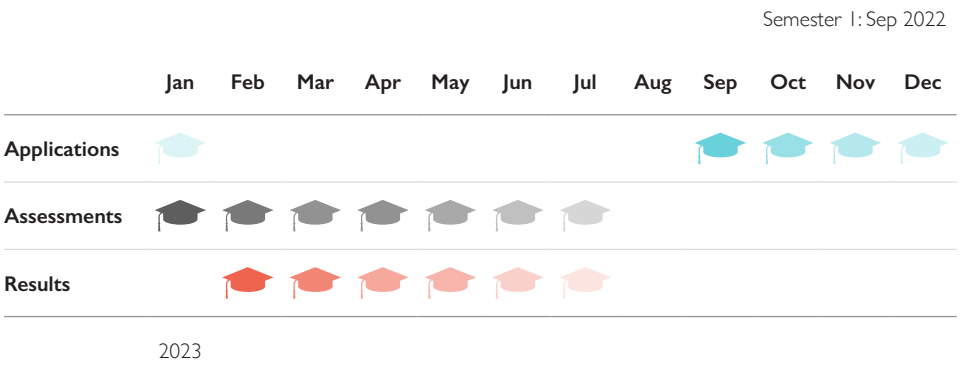
All children aged 6 - 15 are required to go to school.
All children legally resident in Hong Kong are entitled to free education.

Call us today on +852 9445 8028 for an initial, no-obligation conversation or email hello@topschools.com.hk

**If your child is born 1 Sept - 31 Dec, you'll need to adjust back one year for most schools. However, some schools, notably ESF, do not follow the 31 August cut-off date. ESF cut-off date is 31 December. Other schools may be flexible.*

Admissions Timeline

Our admissions timeline consists of key application, assessment and results dates which will differ from school to school. Missing a deadline could result in a placement lost.



Classes Available

Hong Kong schools have various entry and exit points. Understanding which classes are available and the terminology of year groups is essential in knowing when to apply and transition from one system or school to another.

topschools
Admissions

Top Schools GUARANTEE Quality Service

Strategy Review

A sanity check of where you are and where you need to be.

- Analysis of parents' preferences questionnaire
- Review of child's school reports
- Age appropriate assessment (CAT4 test for 7 years +)
- Review of application history (all applications previously submitted; status checked with the school)
- Recommended next steps/actions

Need an expert to review your strategy? E-mail us at:
hello@topschools.com.hk

Switching From Local to International School

One of the most common quandaries parents find themselves in is choosing between a local school and an international one. We often advise families to start in the local stream and apply to international school later. But how does this work? What are the risks? And can they really make it into international school?

Common reasons for children – or their parents – wanting to move to international schools include:

- Concerns about the standard of English language teaching and learning
- Struggles with the style of teaching, homework and testing
- Getting ready for school or university overseas

More often than not, the children are doing well academically and are happy at school. Only occasionally do we find an unhappy child, or one who is "failing" – at least, according to their school.

So, when is the right time to apply to an international school? Years 1 and 7 are obvious entry points. For a child finishing K3 in a local kindergarten, it's tough to find a spot in Year 2. In that scenario, it's common for a child to spend one or two years in a local primary school and apply to international school at the time of starting P4.

In local schools, the TSA is administered in June at P3, P6 and S3 in local government subsidised schools and is much dreaded for the additional intensity it involves in preparing for it. Applying to Year 7 in an international school is a good idea. This means the application is submitted soon after the child begins P5. Many parents get confused about when primary ends and secondary starts in both systems. They may prefer to finish primary in local school, which isn't a good idea since it means they will usually miss the Year 7 application. Many schools have a new intake in Year 7, making it a good entry point.

After Year 7, Years 8 and 9 are also good times to enter an international school. If it's a school that does the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), entering in Year 9 is advisable, since the IGCSE course starts in Year 10. Students in Year 9 choose their subjects and will be able to use the year to adjust before school gets more serious. Entering a school running IGCSEs is usually not possible at Years 10 and 11. Likewise, entering

a school running A-levels or the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) is usually not possible at Years 12 and 13 since these are both two-year courses. In some schools, however, this doesn't apply.

Which international schools accept children from local schools or children with Hong Kong passports? The answer is, they all do! International schools do not mind where children have been studying previously as long as they meet the entry requirements. Whilst it's true that foreign nationals do receive priority at certain schools, children with Hong Kong passports should not be dissuaded from applying to international schools and they are not discriminated against.

By far the most common challenge for local school students applying to international schools is that of meeting the required English-language proficiency. Children who have been used to lessons in Cantonese may struggle to express themselves in English. In writing, they are often great at grammar but less able to analyse and generate different genres of text. They often find creative writing a challenge. We've found this to be the case even amongst native-English speaking children, since local schools generally teach English as a second language, with lots of grammar and prescribed tasks that don't encourage creativity in using language. Maths is also tested, but rarely causes any problems.

In fact, the required level varies from school to school. It's important to assess the school's requirements and realistically assess a child's chances of gaining acceptance. Some schools, for example, will have support for children needing additional academic assistance, while others won't. In some cases, we do recommend a tutor or preparation centre to help the student understand the requirements of the entrance test, and be best prepared to do well in it.

Children usually transition well into international schools. They find the style of teaching more engaging, the homework load less and the culture more creative, relaxed and fun. Of course, the ease of the transition very much depends on the timing of the switch and the student's personality. Some older students suffer something akin to culture shock.

Having spent many years in a local school, some may find it overwhelming being put in a situation where model answers don't exist. They may feel less secure and find it hard to adjust to the different learning methods, especially when it requires a great deal of self-initiative, abstract thinking and synthesising of information.

But children whose parents have examined the situation thoroughly, and ensure they have taken all the right steps, should be able to make a seamless transition to a new learning environment, equipped with the necessary skills to succeed academically.

Our Top Blogs

- All About Debentures
- School Budgeting Guide
- Local Schools for Non-Chinese-speaking children : Do EMI schools really exist?
- Fifteen schools strong in Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua)

Our Top Videos

- HeadTalk Mr. Paul Friend, Principal, NLCS Singapore
- HeadTalk with Bloom KKCA Academy
- From Hong Kong to UK
- Teaching children a second & third language

Our Top Podcasts

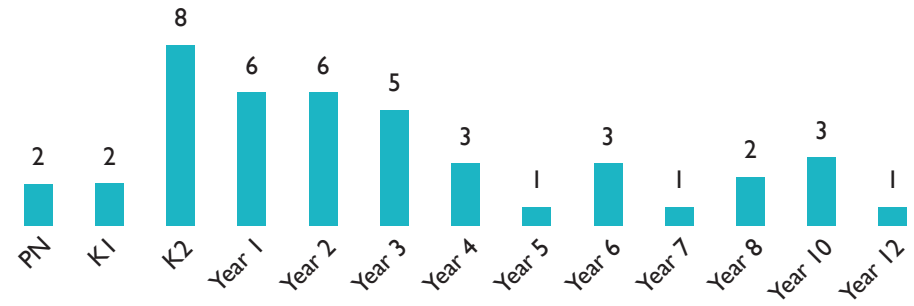
- Readiness, Applications and Parent Anxiety
- Bilingualism: Struggles and Solutions
- Conversation with Bloom KKCA Academy
- Classrooms Without Walls

ACADEMIC YEAR

2022-2023

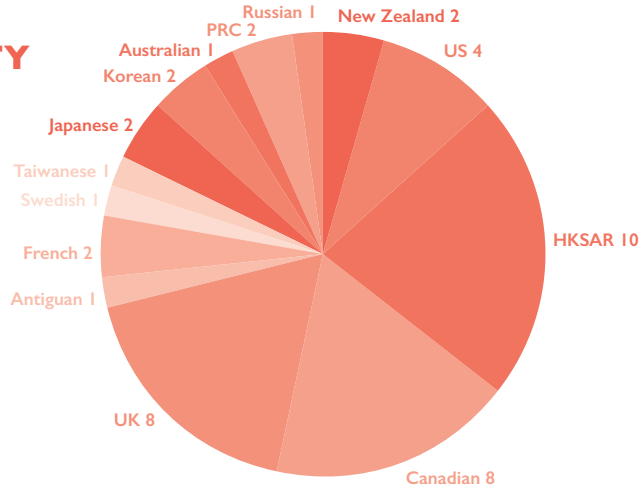
43 STUDENTS

PLACED IN TOP SCHOOLS IN HK



PUPILS ACCEPTED INTO TOP SCHOOLS: BY NATIONALITY

*Figures represent pupils placed by Top Schools



* As at 1 Sep 2022

UK School Admissions

If you are considering a school in the UK, we can help. Whether applying for the usual entry points of 11+, 13+ or 16+ or not.

The UK has a confusing variety of schools to choose from. We consider ALL 2,500+ private schools - full boarding, flexi boarding, day and homestay, plus state schools covering children aged 3 to 18.

Our Expert Advice | Consultations HK$2,800 up

- Overview of state, grammar and independent sectors
- Advice specific to independent sctor: location, gender, boarding, pastoral care, assessments
- ACognitive Ability Test (similar to CAT4 ot UKiset)
- Report on potential good fit schools

Why work with us?

Our consultants are British expats and parents of children in UK boarding schools.

We understand the school your child is leaving as well as the destination school.

We can save you money on application and assessment fees.

Unlike an agent, we work for YOU not the school paying commisions.

Our Plans

GOLD

For families already in HK and willing to manage own admin

- Analysis of needs: questionnaire; review of current schooling & reports and application history
- Detailed report on good-fit schools
- Application guide including strategy, key dates and deadlines
- Age-appropriate assessment (3 years +)
- Advice on debentures
- Schedule school visits (unaccompanied)
- Audit of actual availability of places (in-year)
- Active management of applications submitted, liaise with school directly
- Advice on choosing between multiple offers

GOLD+

Most Popular

For families not in HK/employers requiring more support

All that's included in the Gold Plan plus:

- An additional placement (if required) ie an immediate placement + one more
- Accompanied visits
- Revision and editing of paragraph answers in applications
- Applications completed and submitted on your behalf

PLATINUM

For families/employers requiring the highest level of support

All that's included in the Gold + Plan plus:

- Tuition/test preparation
- Additional assessment/ mock test Documents (school reports) translated into English
- Preparation and support for the start of term ie booking school bus, ordering uniforms, etc

Top Schools GUARANTEE Quality Service

hello@topschools.com.hk

Special Education Needs (SEN)

Navigating the Hong Kong School system can be confusing enough but with the addition of a Specific Learning or Neurodevelopment Disorder (SpLD) parents often feel frustrated and underwhelmed by the support provided in Hong Kong.

Without adequate resourcing of qualified staff and specialist transition programmes in schools, the experience for many SEN students can be far from ideal.

The supposed lack of provision in Hong Kong for students requiring additional support actually comes down to a lack of awareness of the options. Whilst there is a definite need for more specialist schools and service providers, there are now many more options than just a few years ago - it is discovering these options which remains difficult for parents.

While the cost associated with such support services is generally high, the best therapies and specialist support will, in many cases, serve as a bridge to mainstream school.

For children requiring SEN (special education needs) support Top Schools works closely with each family - from reviewing past specialist and school records to working closely with 'on the ground' therapists, psychologists and individual schools to find the 'right fit' environment for the social, emotional and academic needs of the child.

We work with children requiring minimal support to those requiring intensive therapies and academic assistance.

Please enquire.

Advocacy Service

Most schools claim to offer a level of support for children with SEN/ILN

However, this is often offered at extra cost or, even when paid for, is less than satisfactory. As parents, we - at Top Schools - understand the frustrations and we can advocate for you to get the support your child needs or, if absolutely necessary, find a better fit school.

"My consultant was an invaluable resource to help navigate the international school system in Hong Kong particularly as we were looking for a placement for my daughter who is on the spectrum. She accompanied me on almost all the school visits and was supportive and positive throughout the entire journey. I would certainly recommend Top Schools to anyone looking to make sense of the myriad school options in Hong Kong."

- SF, Hong Kong

Schools Strong In Chinese

If you'd like your child to be bilingual (Chinese/English) AND biliterate, the obvious choice is a 'local' school. However, local schools use "Cantonese". It's used as the medium of instruction, as the playground language and forms the basis of the culture. Also, the Putonghua and English is often taught mainly by non-native speakers.

Many parents are more keen on Putonghua (Mandarin). Perhaps they are not Chinese, they are from the Mainland, or they feel that Cantonese is easy to pick up anyway.

They also prefer a more international style of teaching, perhaps according to an international curriculum too. The bad news is that very few schools are offering this!

We list here FIFTEEN of the most popular:

K = Kindergarten | **P** = Primary | **S** = Secondary

1. **Bloom KKCA Academy**
   P | Shek Kip Mei
2. **Chinese Academy**
   P | Causeway Bay
3. **Christian Alliance PC Lau Memorial School**
   P | Kowloon City
4. **Chinese International School**
   PS | Braemar Hill
5. **Dalton School Hong Kong**
   KP | Kowloon
   K | Southern, HK
6. **Han Academy**
   PS | Aberdeen
7. **Independent Schools Foundation Academy**
   K | Kennedy Town
   PS | Pok Fu Lam
8. **International Montessori School**
   KP | Stanley
   K | South Horizons, Aldrich Bay & Mid-Levels
9. **Invictus School**
   KP | Tseung Kwan O
   S | Chai Wan
10. **Kiangsu Chekiang Primary School**
    KP | North Point
11. **Kingston International School**
    KP | Kowloon
12. **Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau**
    PS | Kowloon
13. **Singapore International School**
    PS | Aberdeen
14. **Victoria Shanghai Academy**
    K | Various Locations
    PS | Aberdeen
15. **Yew Chung International School**
    K | Tseung Kwan O
    KPS | Kowloon

Placements into the following primary/ secondary schools:

- **American School HK**
- **Canadian Int'l School**
- **Chinese Int'l School**
- **Christian Alliance Int'l School of HK**
- **Delia School of Canada**
- **Discovery Bay Int'l School**
- **DSC Int'l School**
- **French Int'l School of HK**
- **German Swiss Int'l School**
- **Harrow Int'l School**
- **Hong Kong Int'l School**
- **IMS**
- **Kellett School**
- **Korean Int'l School**
- **Malvern College Hong Kong**
- **Malvern College Hong Kong Pre School**
- **Nord Anglia Int'l School and Preschool HK**
- **Oxbridge School Hong Kong**
- **Wycombe Abbey School HK**

= 1 Student

School Budgeting Guide

School Name	Annual Tuition 2019/20 Primary	Annual Tuition 2019/20 Secondary	Additional Annual Fees *	Total Max Primary 2019-2020	Total Max Secondary 2019-2020	Total Max Primary 2018-2019	Total Max Secondary 2018-2019	% Increase for Total Max Primary
American School Hong Kong	179,500	196,500	26,500	206,000	223,000	199,500	207,500	3.16
Australian International School	147,580	214,500	21,000	168,500	236,500	160,800	224,800	4.57
Canadian International School of Hong Kong	158,900	205,460	36,000	194,900	241,400	188,500	233,800	3.28
Chinese International School	217,900	260,800	28,000	245,900	288,800	233,500	274,000	5.04
Christian Alliance International School	142,560	180,100	28,000	170,560	208,100	159,500	194,200	6.48
Dalton School Hong Kong	181,500	-	30,000	211,500	-	211,500	-	0
Delia School of Canada	122,480	133,130	-	122,480	133,130	115,000	125,000	6.12
[illegible]ools Foundation (ESF)	115,800	140,700	-	115,800	140,700	111,200	135,000	3.97
[illegible] School of Hong Kong	125,794	201,085	-	125,794	201,085	123,327	197,142	1.96
[illegible] school	161,450	203,420	-	161,450	203,420	154,060	194,100	4.58
	198,000	218,000	60,000	198,000	218,000	190,000	218,000	0
	196,091	203,868	-	256,091	263,868	250380	257,930	2.23
	102,000	-	18,000	96,900	-	96,900	-	0
	231,700	231,700	20,000	216,200	259,700	213,700	250,000	3.74
	225,950	225,950	30,000	227,920	245,950	207,700	236,400	3.93
			17,500 **	144,200	279,970	218,940	268,630	3.94
				169,500	182,000	140,500	175500	2.57
				134,950	-	163,000	-	3.83
					147,350	129,150	140,950	4.3
					-	123,050	-	2.5
					220,800	164,400	210,300	4
						79,500	104,000	7
						00,900	112,300	
						0	220,000	
						000	234,998	
						7,099	175,231	
						214,000	-	
						142,000	205,000	
						200,700	217,400	
						211,000	231,500	
						147,400	186,800	
						-	-	
						214,960	215,110	

Find the most recent school budgeting guide here!

topcamps

Top Camps

the same company (Top Schools) that brings you quality education events and consulting is now bringing you holiday camps!

We are so excited to be offering great options to keep your children engaged, learning and happy over the holidays.

We have partnered with some of the best activity providers and facilities to bring you unique holiday camps that address the interests of your children.

www.topschools.asia/topcamps

FAQs

Working with Top Schools

What does Top Schools do?

We find "best-fit" places in private schools for children.

We offer a full support service providing expert guidance to parents (and their employers) searching for a pre, primary or secondary school in Hong Kong., Singapore, Malaysia and the UK. We know what private/international schools are looking for and what it takes to get admitted. We can provide you with a personalised, strategic plan which includes:

- List of schools (reach, target and safe)
- Admissions guide for which schools to apply to and when
- Support to submit applications and supporting documents
- Guidance to help you make the most of campus visits, open houses and other school events
- Tips for assessments and interviews (students and parents)
- Advise when deciding between multiple offers

With parents and schools as partners, we use our expertise to find the best fit school for a child.

We also consult with schools directly on admissions and marketing, as well as recruitment.

Who are your clients?

Our clients are parents - local, expat and everything in between - concerned about their children's education. They are sometimes confused and concerned about finding the best-fit school for their child. They all share a common desire for their children to attend a school in which s/he is happy and thriving.

Why choose Top Schools?

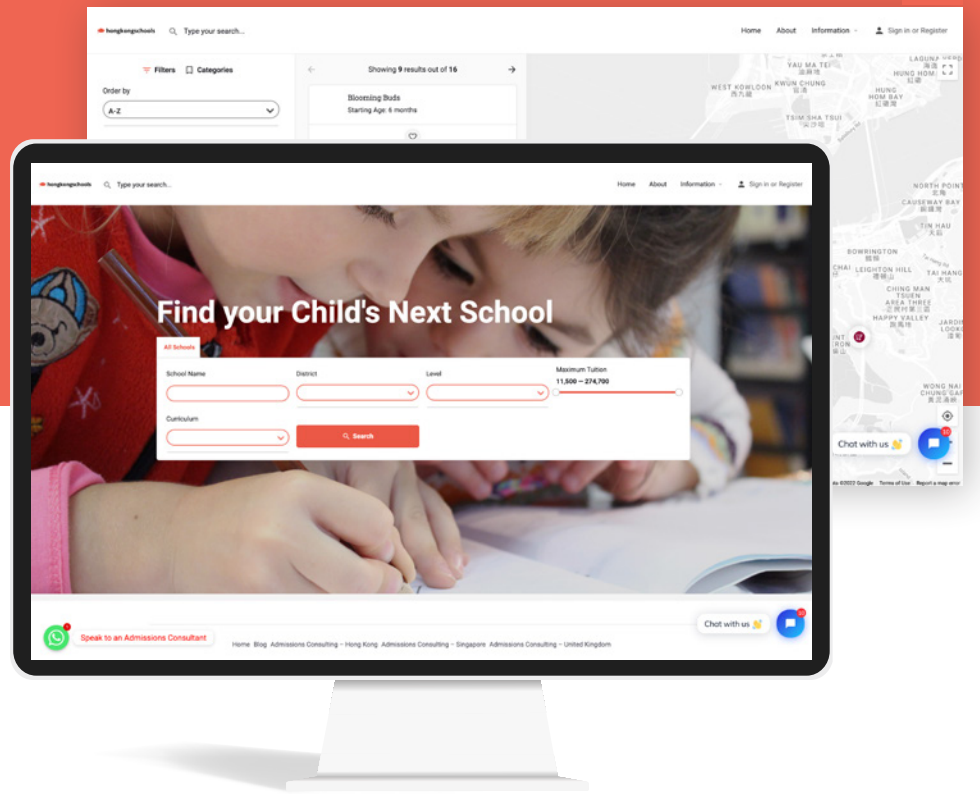
We are international and independent school experts.

You will work with a dedicated consultant throughout the process.

We do more than you might expect. For example, we analyse school reports, talk to teachers, provide checklists for school visits and even assist with figuring out bus routes and ordering school uniform, if required.

We've done more than 2,000 placements since 2012.

Please visit our website for more FAQs:



Our New Website is Online!

Search, Share and Compare.

Our newest website brings users **free** (for a limited time) access to school search tools and great content that we've collected over the last 10 years. We aim to bring you the best online tool for finding the best-fit school. You can search for schools based on your preferences, compare them side by side and print off a report. Our blogs, webinars and podcasts will also be featured on the schools' listing page.

www.hongkongschools.com.hk

topschools
Admissions

www.topschools.asia

Top Schools GUARANTEE Quality Service

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