

Celebrating 50 Years



CHARLES
ARMSTRONG
SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT GUIDE

2018-2019

Charles Armstrong School
1405 Solana Drive, Belmont, CA 94002
Phone: 650-592-7570 Fax: 650-591-3114
www.charlesarmstrong.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARMSTRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES	3
OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS	4
WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW	5
ATTRIBUTES TO CONSIDER BEFORE VISITING SCHOOLS	6
PREPARING FOR A SCHOOL VISIT	7
SAMPLE QUESTIONS AT AN INTERVIEW	8
APPLICATION PROCESS	9
HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS	10
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	11-12

ARMSTRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

OUR GOAL:

The Next School Placement Team is committed to partnering with Armstrong families to assist you and your child in finding a High School where your child will continue to learn and thrive just as they have at Armstrong. We are continually inspired by our students and are looking forward to being included in the process of supporting our 8th graders and you as they mature and grow into High School freshmen.

OUR TEAM:

Doug Killin, Director of Middle School

Charlene Mercadante, Director of Admission and Next School Placement

Regina Lewis, Admissions and Next School Placement Coordinator

Margie Curran, Scheduler

Your Child's Classroom Faculty

Jessica Miller, Head of School

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

- Families visit High School Open Houses
- Parent signs student up for shadow visits
- Parent signs student up for ISEE/SSAT or HSPT if required
- Parent requests testing accommodations
- Parent and student fill out application **before deadline**
 - On Ravenna (OR)
 - On High School website
- Parent signs transcript release form and forwards to the Next School Placement Team (the Team)
- Parent tells the Team **WHO** they assigned the online recommendation link to (i.e., principal, teacher name, etc.)—please email Regina Lewis, the Admissions and Transitions Coordinator at rlewis@charlesarmstrong.org with information
- Students take ISEE/SSAT or HSPT if required
- Team follows up with teachers to assure the recommendation links are completed by deadline
- Team conducts mock interviews with students on campus
- Team sends transcripts and confidential letters of recommendation
- Families receive application results and shares information with the Team

Parents, the high school placement process works best when our Team is kept updated of your progress.

UPDATE THE TEAM:

Short List of 3-4 Schools - Scheduled Visits - Application Deadlines

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

- Attend High School Fair on Tuesday, March 28 from 9:00-10:00 am
- Attend Rising 7th Graders meeting on Tuesday, March 28 at 10:00 am
- Join the Armstrong Parent Alumni Yahoo Group. Send email to:
Armstrongalumni-subscribe@yahoo.groups.com
- Assure Psychological Education Evaluation (Psych Ed) is current – **within the last three years**. If your child's Psych Ed is not within the past three years, decide who will do testing and contact them ASAP:
 - A) **Private Evaluator**
 - B) **IEP through Public School District**: At Armstrong the IEP process is coordinated by Margie Curran, mcurran@charlesarmstrong.org Start the process by going to the Armstrong website → Parents → Transitioning → Download IEP Guide

Summer

- **Set up a High School placement meeting** – contact Regina Lewis, the Admissions and Next School Placement Coordinator at rlewis@charlesarmstrong.org
- Complete **High School Questionnaire** – you and your child will complete this TOGETHER. (Attached) – PLEASE SEND THIS BEFORE YOUR MEETING
- **Meet with Next School Placement Team** in June, July, August or September. Parents and student attend initial meeting. The following will be discussed:
 - Team will review the high school placement process
 - Discuss your child's preferred learning styles
 - Discuss you and your child's goal for High School
 - Identify schools of potential interest
- **Explore High School websites to learn about:**
 - Open Houses & Tours
 - Shadow Date Information
 - Mission of the School
 - Available Learning Support
 - Testing Requirements

ATTRIBUTES TO CONSIDER BEFORE VISITING SCHOOLS

Public or Private

Co-ed or Single gender

Faith-based or Secular

Number of Students in Class

Student to Teacher Ratio

Number of Students in School, Size of Campus (i.e., one building, several buildings, etc.)

Location: Commute time, Proximity to public transportation, Carpools

Program philosophy and methodology

Independent vs. Teacher-directed instruction

Technology Resources

Reporting System (letter grades, un-graded evaluations)

Ethnic, Cultural, Gender Diversity

Tuition, Financial Aid

Do they have a **LEARNING SUPPORT SPECIALIST**?

- Do they work directly with the student?
- Are they involved in the admission process?
- Are they full time?
- Are they able to instruct teachers to provide accommodations for students?

Questions to Ask When Visiting Schools

- Does the school have a **philosophy** or educational approach?
- Does the school have and/or allow **on-site learning support resources**?
- How is **technology used to support teaching and learning** at school?
- What is your **homework policy**?
- What **extra-curricular opportunities** are available? (i.e., sports, clubs, community service, etc.)
- Is there an A-B block schedule or a different model? Are there **flexible options** for course selections?
- What foreign language classes are offered? Can American Sign Language be substituted for credit?
- Can students use a calculator in math class?

PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR A SCHOOL VISIT OR INTERVIEW

We recommend that your child learn about the schools they are interested in before visiting them.

We will do practice sessions here at Armstrong.

At home it is helpful to talk informally with your child about their interests and accomplishments so that they can be ready to talk about those things with an interviewer.

BEFORE INTERVIEW:

- Look at the school's website for basic information
- Be ready to talk about who you are as a learner, your strengths and areas that you have been working on
- Be ready to talk about why you are interested in the school
- Dress appropriately
- Practice giving a firm handshake
- Participate in Armstrong student practice interviews

DURING INTERVIEW

- When you are introduced say "nice to meet you" and extend arm for a firm handshake
- Be polite - Say "please" and "thank you"
- Look at the interviewer in the eyes
- Listen carefully
- SMILE!! :-)

AFTER INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you note

QUESTIONS ARMSTRONG STUDENTS MAY BE ASKED WHEN VISITING OR INTEVIEWING AT SCHOOLS

1) What type of learner are you?

Describe your learning style and give examples of how this works for you.

2) What are your strengths?

Give examples of how you use your strengths at school.

3) What are your challenges at school?

How are you working on them?

4) What subjects interest you the most?

Explain why.

5) What does it mean to advocate for yourself at school?

Describe a situation when you advocated for yourself.

6) Are there accommodations that help you be most successful in school?

Describe them.

7) What interests you about attending (*Name*) School?

Can you see yourself here and what might you be able to add to the school as a community member?

APPLICATION PROCESS

INDEPENDENT High Schools:

There are two ways to fill out applications:

- 1) On the High School website
- 2) On Ravenna

If a High School's application is online, their paperwork requirements will vary and may only require one teacher to fill out a recommendation form. This is typically an automated link, but it may be a paper form.

If there are any forms that the school requires be completed by teachers or school personnel, please send them to Regina Lewis at rlewis@charlesarmstrong.org. ***Do NOT send to teachers directly.**

What is Ravenna?

Ravenna is an online application system that many schools are using. If the High School you are applying to uses this system, you must register on Ravenna first.

All schools on the Ravenna system share documents however you designate a Math teacher, English teacher and a Principal. Before starting any applications write down the email address for each of the Armstrong faculty you choose.

Important to note: As Armstrong administrators on the Ravenna system we CANNOT see any applications in process. We can only see that you are registered and that application has been submitted. We cannot see which teachers you have designated recommendation form links to.

It is ESSENTIAL you tell us the names of the teachers you have chosen so we know who to follow up with to assure they are completing the necessary forms.

For Public High Schools:

General Public High Schools: Sign up with your local school district and participate in the IEP process for appropriate accommodations (see IEP Guide).

Charter Public High Schools: Charter High Schools are public and usually have a lottery system. Every public charter school is different and may have different application steps for enrollment.

HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

INDEPENDENT High Schools (Non-Catholic)

Most private schools require the ISEE or SSAT. Contact Charlene Mercadante cmercadante@charlesarmstrong.org at Armstrong to help with coordinating your efforts to receive appropriate accommodations and sign up for the ISEE.

What is the ISEE?

The Independent School Entrance Examination (ISEE) is a test that many independent schools require as part of their admission process. Families are responsible for completing their own registration for the ISEE and for applying for any necessary testing accommodations. All documentation for accommodations must be within the last three years and must be uploaded directly to the ISEE website (www.erblearn.org).

What is the SSAT?

The Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) is a test that can be taken **INSTEAD** of the ISEE as part of the admission process by **Independent Non-Catholic High Schools**. You can apply online at <https://ssat.org/about-ssat/about-the-ssat> or mail in your application.

*Note: Students only pick **ONE TEST (ISEE or SSAT)**. **Armstrong recommends the ISEE.**

CATHOLIC High Schools

The HSPT is ***REQUIRED*** for anyone applying to Catholic Schools. It is offered on various dates in January and hosted at several schools in the Bay area. Catholic schools including but not limited to: Serra, Riordan, Mercy, Notre Dame, Sacred Heart, etc.

What is the HSPT?

The High School Placement Test (HSPT) is a test that is required for 8th grade students as part of the admission process by **Catholic High Schools**. The test dates vary, but all are completed by the end of January. Please check tests dates and locations with the school you are applying to. Follow instructions to request testing accommodations (hspt.com).

Test Prep Options:

- **Get a Book:** Barons, Princeton Review
- **Group Classes:** Kaplan or Ivy West (we do not typically recommend group classes since they tend to focus on accelerated information delivery, which can be stressful for Armstrong students)
- **Private Tutoring:** Tutors recommended by your student's teacher

6. When should we fill out the school applications?

Please take your time with the applications to High Schools. Allow the school year to get underway and allow your children time to participate in the process of exploring schools before completing the applications. Know the deadlines of the application process for each individual school. We suggest organizing your thoughts and project timelines for completing application questionnaires and essays in October and November. Begin answering questionnaires or essay questions in November and December. **Using helpful tools such as graphic organizers, outlines, and timelines can help students structure meaningful answers to questions** that include specific examples and/or anecdotes that back up your statements in a compelling way.

7. What do I need to do about Psychological Education Evaluations (Psych Ed) and/or IEPs when transitioning to high schools?

If your child's Psych Ed or IEP is three years old or more, you must renew the evaluation

to be considered for support at future schools to receive accommodations on placement exams. If your child's Psych Ed is not within the past three years, decide who will do testing and contact them ASAP:

A) **Private Evaluator**

B) **IEP** through the Public School District: The IEP process is coordinated by Regina Lewis, Admissions and Transitions Coordinator at Armstrong. Start the process by going to the Armstrong website → Parents → Transitioning → Download IEP Guide

8. Does Armstrong send confidential letters of recommendation?

YES. Every 8th grade student is assigned an Advisor. Their advisor writes a personal, confidential, letter of recommendation for each school that the student is applying. However, letters are not sent to schools that we cannot recommend.

9. Are there forms I need to give the Team so they can share my child's academic information?

YES. Before sharing any recommendation forms or letters we must have a signed release on file. Each school has their own form.

Please send a signed copy of the transcript release form for each school you are applying to the Admissions and Next School Placement Coordinator, Regina Lewis.

Once we receive this form we will know you are applying and can legally share your child's academic information; no action can be taken until we receive this form.