

Reader Question: Great School, Inconvenient Location



What do you do if you have great personal contacts at a school,

but the school is too far from your house? A great question! Not always an easy answer.

In this situation you may have a difficult decision. Let's say your best friend's child attends this school. Assume you've seen the school and really like it. But, it's an hour drive each way to and from your house.

If you go ahead and apply to this school, a letter of recommendation from your friend would probably help your application. If your friend offers to speak to the admissions director about your family, all the better.

In this situation you really need to determine if the location of the school is going to make it too difficult to get your child there every day. Will the drive be too hard on you? Will the drive be too long for your child? If the drive is more than an hour each way, you really need to consider the feasibility of this commute over the years your child will be at the school. Don't forget about evening events like Back To School Night and other parent events at the school.

If you ask your friend to write you a letter of recommendation, she will probably ask you to *promise her you'll accept the school's offer of admission if your child is accepted*. If you don't, you'll be putting your friend in a very awkward position with the admissions director. Parents get asked to write letters for friends all the time. But, it's very uncomfortable if a friend makes a promise to accept the school's offer, but then changes their mind. It puts the parent at the school in an embarrassing situation.

So, if you're asking a friend or contact to recommend your family to an admissions director, don't double-cross your friend!

This isn't always easy. You'll need to walk a fine line between asking a friend for a favor and committing to her school and your desire to keep your options open once you get your admissions letters.

If you're unsure about what to do, discuss it with your friend.

Private schools want to know that if they offer a family admission, they will accept the offer! One way to potentially avoid this problem is to wait until February to ask your friend to write the letter of recommendation. That way, it's late in the admission process, but not yet March. By then you should have a better idea of what other schools you like and a sense of how the parent interviews and child visiting days have transpired.

I think every parent at a private school has probably been asked to write a letter for a family only to have that family select another school. It happened to me. Now, I always ask the friend if they will accept an offer of admission before I write the letter.

Category

1. Beyond The Brochure

Tags

1. driving distance
2. School location and geography

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