



Questions to Ask When Discerning the Right School for Your Child

Choosing a school is one of the most meaningful decisions a family makes. Beyond test scores, location, or reputation, a school quietly shapes a child's loves, habits, imagination, and sense of belonging day after day.

This guide offers a set of clear, essential questions to help parents discern whether a school may be a good fit for their child and family. You do not need perfect answers to every question. Often, what matters most is a school's clarity, consistency, and care in how it responds.

We hope you find this guide helpful in your decision process!

1. Mission and Purpose

Every school is guided—explicitly or implicitly—by a vision of who children are becoming.

Questions to Ask

- What is the school's mission, and how does it shape everyday decisions?
- What qualities or virtues does the school hope students will develop over time?
- How does the school define success for its students?

Reflect

- Does this vision align with our hopes for our child?

2. Faith, Values, and Formation

Schools inevitably form children's beliefs, character, and moral imagination.

Questions to Ask

- How are faith or shared values incorporated into daily school life?
- Is formation integrated across subjects and relationships, or limited to specific times?
- How does the school partner with families in this area?

Reflect

- Does this approach feel authentic, thoughtful, and life-giving?

3. Curriculum and Learning Approach

Curriculum reflects what a school believes matters most for children to know and practice.

Questions to Ask

- What does the curriculum emphasize most?
- How are strong foundations in reading, writing, and math developed?
- How does the school encourage curiosity, creativity, and meaningful learning?

Reflect

- Does this approach seem rich, coherent, and appropriate for our child?

4. Teachers and Classroom Life

Teachers shape a child's daily experience of learning and care.

Questions to Ask

- What qualities do you seek in teachers?
- How are teachers supported and developed?
- What does a typical day feel like for students?

Reflect

- Would we trust these adults to know and care for our child well?



5. Emotional Support and School Culture

Children thrive when they feel known, supported, and respected.

Questions to Ask

- How are students known beyond academics?
- How does the school respond when a child is struggling emotionally or socially?
- How is discipline approached?

Reflect

- Does the culture feel calm and attentive, while fostering empathy and effective communication?

6. Safety and Care

Physical safety provides the foundation for learning and trust.

Questions to Ask

- What measures are in place to ensure student safety?
- How are visitors, health needs, and emergencies handled?

Reflect

- Do these practices feel thoughtful, clear, and reassuring?

7. Community and Relationships

A school is also a community of families and relationships.

Questions to Ask

- How does the school cultivate trust among families, staff, and students?
- How are parents kept informed and invited into the life of the school?

Reflect

- Can we imagine our family feeling welcomed and known here?

8. Partnership with Families

Healthy schools view parents as partners in a child's formation.

Questions to Ask

- What role do parents / guardians play in supporting the school's mission?
- What expectations does the school have of families?

Reflect

- Does this partnership feel mutual and realistic for our family?

9. Growth and Long-Term Formation

Education takes the long view.

Questions to Ask

- How does the school think about growth beyond grades or test scores?
- How does it prepare students for what comes next?

Reflect

- Do these hopes align with our hopes for our child?

Final Reflection

As you consider a school, listen not only to what is said, but how it is said.

- Are answers clear and consistent?
- Do leaders speak with care and humility?
- Is there integrity between vision and daily practice?

The right school does not need to be perfect. It should be a place where your child can be known, formed, and encouraged to grow in confidence, character, curiosity, and joy.

Why The Willows Academy?

If you're wondering whether The Willows Academy might be a place where your child could truly thrive, we invite you to start your enrollment path and continue the conversation with us.

Choosing a school is an important and deeply personal decision. We hope these questions help bring clarity as you consider what kind of learning environment will best support your child's growth and flourishing.

At The Willows Academy, we are forming a Christ-centered school that partners with families to cultivate lifelong learning and communion with Christ, shaping each child's habits, character, and heart within a caring community where life-giving growth can flourish.