

NAIS PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

The NAIS Principles of Good Practice for member schools define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be. Accordingly, membership in NAIS is contingent upon agreement to abide by “the spirit” of the PGPs. Principles are precepts grounded in an ethic and ethos of “doing the right thing.” Practices are common activities.

NAIS member schools can download individual Principles of Good Practice from this section of the NAIS website for distribution within the school community. It is our hope that the increased visibility of and easy access to the principles will go a long way in helping schools fulfill their missions.

The PGPs are regularly updated. To read the most current version, go to www.nais.org/go/pgp.

ADMISSIONS

PREAMBLE: The following principles provide common ground for interaction between independent school professionals and their many constituents (parents, students, colleagues at other schools, and the public). The NAIS Principles of Good Practice for member schools define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be, to embed the expectation of professionalism, and to further our sector’s core values of transparency, excellence, and inclusivity. Accordingly, membership in NAIS is contingent upon agreement to abide by “the spirit” of the PGPs. (See “[General Considerations Regarding NAIS Principles of Good Practice](#)” on the NAIS Website.)

OVERVIEW: *Through the recruitment, selection, and enrollment of students, admission and enrollment management professionals play a critical role in their schools’ vitality and educational culture. All admission and enrollment management professionals, as well as the head of school, bear ultimate responsibility for communicating and upholding these principles of good practice to all professional staff and volunteers (including parents, alumni/ae, tour guides, coaches, faculty, and board members) who represent the institution in promotion, recruitment, admission, re-enrollment, and retention activities.*

1. The school seeks to ensure an appropriate match between a prospective student/family and the mission and philosophy of the school.
2. The school maintains an admission process that affirms the dignity and worth of each individual and respects the needs of students and families to learn about school programs and activities.
3. In establishing policies, procedures, and goals for student recruitment and enrollment, the school makes inclusivity a central tenet, while also complying with local, state, and federal laws.
4. The school operates under a clear and consistent set of practices for gathering, disseminating, and maintaining prospective student information, and respects the confidentiality of students, families, and documents in the admission process. Schools will ensure that the admission process and/or official transcript have provided sufficient formal documentation of an appropriate match before offering admission to a student.
5. The school provides clear information, dates, and timeframes for all aspects of the admission process, including expectations around notification dates, financial aid applications, acceptance of an enrollment offer, wait list policies, and financial obligations. All school communication about the admission process should be consistent, transparent, and in user-friendly and inclusive formats.
6. The school shares complete information about the total costs of attending the school and other financial expectations with families before an enrollment commitment is required. The school ensures that its admission process and commitment deadlines do not restrict unnecessarily the rights of families to make well-informed decisions about enrollment.
7. The school clearly communicates those policies and procedures of the school, member associations, and/or athletic leagues that may affect a family’s decision to enroll.

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ADMISSIONS (CONTINUED)

8. The school recognizes that general advertising, direct mail campaigns, social media and internet outreach, and communication between competitor schools and currently enrolled independent school families should not be seen as a violation of the spirit of collaboration, collegiality, and professionalism reflected in these principles, but rather as guaranteeing the free market rights of families and the general public to consider all educational options.
9. The school recognizes the right of currently enrolled students and families to consider other educational options, and if a transfer is initiated by the family, the current school provides appropriate documentation and support in a timely manner, including reminding the family of any policies related to contractual obligations to the current school.
10. The school actively participates in local, regional, and national organizations of independent schools to establish and further collegial relations with neighboring independent schools, to collaborate on marketing arrangements to tell the independent school story, and to encourage more families to consider independent education.
11. School representatives apply the same high standards of integrity whether talking about their own school or other institutions. As they navigate the challenges and opportunities inherent in a competitive recruitment environment, school admission professionals adhere to the highest standards of mutual support and respect among schools.
12. The school ensures that all representatives, internal processes, and external recruitment arrangements support the best interests of the student and do not result in a conflict of interest on the part of the school, individual, or firms representing the school.
13. The school ensures that the primary admissions professional is a member of one of the leadership teams, and all admission and enrollment management professionals, as primary representatives of the school in many arenas, have strong support for professional development and unwavering direction from the head of school to fulfill the letter and the spirit of all of these principles of good practice, especially in the context of challenges to meeting enrollment goals. .

Approved by the NAIS board in November 2012.