

Sidwell Friends

Grade 6 & 7 Admissions Process: A Detailed Guide for Families

This guide walks through each step of the Grades 6 and 7 application checklist in more detail. None of these steps is designed to trip a family up — each one exists to give our admissions committee a fuller, fairer picture of your child. Where a step feels unfamiliar, or the reasoning isn't obvious, that's exactly what this document is for.

Steps are grouped by the same three deadlines as the checklist: December 1, December 15, and December 31, 2026. Within each deadline, items are covered in the order they appear on the checklist.

FAMILY INFORMATION FORM

→ **Deadline: December 1, 2026**

What it is

A form completed by parents/guardians that opens your child's application file. Expect to spend no more than 20 - 30 minutes. It captures household and contact information, sibling and alumni connections (if any), the schools your child has attended, and any context you want the committee to have from the outset.

Why we ask for it this way

We open every file with the family's own words before any test score, transcript, or teacher comment enters the picture. Starting here — rather than with an assessment or a transcript — is intentional: it means the first thing in your child's folder is context you controlled, not a number.

Tips for families

- This is the easiest step on the checklist and the one many families delay — submitting it early takes it off your plate and makes the remaining steps accessible.
- If there's a learning difference, family circumstance, or other information the committee should know about, this form is the place to say so.

REGISTER FOR YOUR CHILD'S SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

→ **Deadline: December 15, 2026**

What it is

Registration for this assessment session your child will attend as part of the application. This is a scheduling step — you're reserving a date and time, not submitting scores.

Why we ask for it this way

We run our own assessment sessions (rather than relying solely on outside testing) so every applicant is evaluated in math, reading, and writing under the same conditions, on our campus, administered the same way. At this age, the session is scaled to a middle-schooler's stamina and attention span — it is not a scaled-down version of an upper school entrance exam. Registering early gives your family first choice of dates and avoids the crunch of late-December scheduling.

Tips for families

- Register as soon as you're able if timing matters for your family. The admissions team will be less able to accommodate scheduling requests the longer you wait.
- If your child has documented testing accommodations, we will be happy to discuss these well in advance of the assessment.
- Have your child prepare for the assessment simply by being ready to show what they know and who they are. A normal routine including a good breakfast and plenty of rest the night before is plenty!

CONFIDENTIAL TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORMS (MATH & ENGLISH)

→ **Deadline: Request after November 1, 2026; due December 15, 2026**

What it is

A confidential form completed by your child's current math and English teachers, describing your child as a student — how they engage with material, work with peers, and handle challenges in the classroom.

Why we ask for it this way

The November 1 date isn't arbitrary: it's chosen so teachers are commenting on a child they've now taught for a real stretch of the school year, not the first few weeks. Forms submitted before November 1 are declined for the same reason — we want teachers writing from enough classroom time to say something true, not just first impressions.

Tips for families

- At this age it's completely appropriate for a parent/guardian to make the request on the student's behalf, either directly to the teacher or through the school's front office — a fifth or sixth grader doesn't need to manage this alone.

- Give teachers real lead time; a form requested in early November and completed by early December is far less stressful for everyone than one requested on December 10.
- If your child has one homeroom teacher, that person is perfectly suited to complete both recommendations.
- While your student may have great connections with many teachers, please know that we cannot accept letters or recommendation forms from additional people. Additional forms will be declined.

PROVIDE PREVIOUS YEAR'S REPORT CARDS

→ **Deadline: December 15, 2026**

What it is

A copy of your child's full report card(s) from the prior academic year, showing a complete year of grades and (if available) teacher comments.

Why we ask for it this way

A full prior year gives the committee a stable baseline before layering on the current year's first-quarter snapshot. Seeing the whole year — not just a single term — helps us read grades as a pattern rather than a single data point, which matters even more at this age, when a single rocky quarter is rarely the whole picture of a student.

Tips for families

The best way to provide report cards is by completing the records release form in Ravenna and sending it to your child's school so that they can send or upload the official reports. If this is not possible, we will help you share report cards with us for the file on time.

SCHEDULE THE PARENT/GUARDIAN MEETING (Virtual or In-Person)

→ **Deadline: December 15, 2026**

What it is

A conversation lasting up to 30 minutes between parents/guardians and a member of the admissions team, offered either on campus or virtually — whichever works better for your family. This is a two-way conversation, not an evaluation of your child.

Why we ask for it this way

This meeting exists for us to learn about you and answer your questions about the program, culture, and fit for your specific child. Because families are often visiting a middle school

program for the first time, we offer an in-person option alongside virtual for those who'd value seeing the campus in person.

Tips for families

- Come with your real questions, including ones that might feel too basic to ask — there aren't any.
- Any parent or guardian involved in the decision is welcome to attend; it doesn't need to be both if only one is available.
- If you choose the in-person option, please review the event list if you also need to tour.
- Please do **not** reserve multiple appointments in our system. We'd like to meet all of our candidates' families!

PROVIDE FIRST QUARTER / FIRST TRIMESTER REPORT CARD

→ **Deadline: December 31, 2026**

What it is

A report card reflecting your child's current school year, from whichever term (quarter or trimester) has concluded by the deadline.

Why we ask for it this way

This is the most current academic snapshot the committee sees, and it's read alongside — not instead of — the full prior year. A single term is never treated as the whole story of a student.

SUBMIT THE APPLICANT VIDEO

→ **Deadline: December 31, 2026**

What it is

A short video, recorded at home, that lets the committee see and hear the applicant directly — their own words, in their own space, at their own pace.

Why we ask for it this way

For many 5th and 6th graders, this is the first time they've been asked to talk about themselves to an audience they can't see. A home recording, rather than a live interview, lets a student's natural personality come through without the pressure of a live exchange, and it allows for a comfortable, familiar setting and as many takes as needed to feel right.

Tips for families

- It's fine — expected, even — for a parent/guardian to help with the logistics of recording; the content should be the student's own words and work.
- There's no need to script every word or aim for a polished, retake-until-perfect result — natural is more useful to us than rehearsed. Trust us, we can tell the difference!
- Specific prompts and length guidelines are provided separately with the video instructions in early December.

STANDARDIZED IN-SCHOOL TESTING AND ADMISSIONS TESTING

→ **Deadline: December 31, 2026**

What it is

In-school testing refers to the standardized assessments your child already takes as part of their current school's regular testing calendar (for example, annual norm-referenced testing) — this is required and simply needs to reach us by the deadline. Your child's school may administer any of the following, to name only a few: MAP, iReady, Stanford, Iowa, CTP, ERB, DC CAPE). Admissions testing refers to a separate, optional independent-school admissions test like the SSAT or the ISEE.

Why we ask for it this way

In-school testing is required because it's something your child has already taken in the normal course of school — it costs your family no extra time or money and gives us one more longitudinal data point. Admissions testing is optional because it measures something narrower, and we don't want a family who skips it to be at a disadvantage relative to one who takes it. It's offered as an additional data point for families who feel it will help tell their child's story, not as a hidden expectation.

Tips for families

- If you're unsure whether your child's current school's testing counts as "in-school testing" for this purpose, ask the admissions team — it's a quick check, not a judgment call you need to make alone.
- If you choose the optional admissions test, plan for it early; testing windows can be more limited than the December 31 deadline suggests.

Questions about any step above are always welcome — reach out to admissions.PK6@sidwell.edu or admissions.711@sidwell.edu at any point in the process.