

Sidwell Friends

Grade 3 & 4 Admissions Process: A Detailed Guide for Families

This guide walks through each step of the Grades 3 and 4 application checklist in more detail. We know many of you are considering an independent school for the first time, on top of everything else you're already juggling — so we've kept this checklist as short as it can be. Where a step feels unclear, or you're wondering why we ask for something a particular way, that's exactly what this document is for.

A quick note on flexibility: we've built this process to be as simple as possible, but a few pieces are firm regardless of circumstance, because they exist to keep the process fair to every family applying alongside you.

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 (plan for 20 – 30 minutes to complete) that opens your child's application file. It captures household and contact information, 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 report card or teacher comment enters the picture. Starting here — rather than with a visit or a transcript — is intentional: it means the first thing in your child's folder is the context you controlled, not a number. This is also where many families first tell us what they've learned about how their child learns best and what interests they see developing — that context is genuinely useful to us, not just a formality.

Tips for families

- This is the easiest step on the checklist and the one most families delay — submitting it early takes it off your plate and makes the additional steps accessible!

- You don't need to have every aspect of your child or your family figured out before you write — share what you know so far, and we'll ask if we need more.

REGISTER FOR YOUR CHILD'S GROUP VISIT

→ **Deadline: December 15, 2026**

What it is

Registration for a group visit - we only host two visits for these applicants so clear the date early. This is an activity where your child joins other applicants in a classroom setting. Students do classroom work that lets our teachers see their math, reading, and writing skills in action, take part in group work with the other children, and have a short recess together. This is a scheduling step; you're reserving a spot, not submitting a score.

Why we ask for it this way

At this age, we learn far more by seeing a child do real classroom work alongside peers, in a setting that looks like an actual school day, than we would from a formal, one-on-one assessment — so that's the format we use for every applicant.

Tips for families

- There's nothing to prepare your child for beyond a good night's sleep and their normal routine — the group visit works best when kids show up as themselves.
- If you have questions about the format of the day — including how we support individual needs during the visit — reach out to our team; we're glad to walk you through it.

CONFIDENTIAL TEACHER RECOMMENDATION FORMS

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

What it is

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

Why we ask for it this way

The November 1 date is firm, and this is one of the places we can't make exceptions: it exists so the teacher is describing a child they've now had a real stretch of the school year to observe, not just the first few weeks. Forms submitted before November 1 are declined for

that same reason — not to be inflexible for its own sake, but because an early form would tell us less, not more.

Tips for families

- Give the teacher real lead time; a request made in early November and completed by early December is far less stressful for everyone than one made on December 10. Make sure they know the request will come electronically through Ravenna once you share their email address.
- If your child has more than one core classroom teacher (common in some schools' 3rd and 4th grade structures), be sure to ask the teacher responsible for literacy and math curriculum instruction.

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 progress 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. At this age especially, growth can look uneven term to term — seeing the whole year helps us read it as a pattern of development rather than a single data point.

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 in a timely manner.

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

→ **Deadline: December 15, 2026**

What it is

A conversation between parents/guardians and a member of the admissions team, offered either on campus or virtually — whichever fits your family's schedule better. This is a two-way conversation, not an evaluation of your child.

Why we ask for it this way

This meeting is a chance for us to answer your questions about the program, culture, and fit for your specific child — and for us to get to know your family beyond what's on paper. For many families at this stage, this is the very first real conversation about what Sidwell Friends School could look like for your child, so no question is too basic.

Tips for families

- Come with your real questions, especially about things you're still sorting out — learning style, schedule, transition from your child's current school.
- 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 your schedule is tight, the virtual option is just as complete a conversation as the in-person one — pick whichever you can actually make work.
- 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 snapshot the committee sees, and it's read alongside — not instead of — the full prior year. This is the last item on the checklist; once it's in, your child's file is complete.

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 in a timely manner.

STANDARDIZED IN-SCHOOL 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 – ERB, CTP, MAP, iReady, Stanford...) — this is required and simply needs to reach us by the deadline.

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.

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.
- Some families also have access to reports from recent Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-V) testing. We will accept this test only if your child's school does not administer any testing themselves.

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