

A GUIDE FOR YOUR MOVE TO INDIA

Schools & *Admissions*

Which curriculum, how admissions actually work, what schools cost, and why the search starts the day your assignment is confirmed. At the best schools, seats decide neighbourhoods; your IKAN consultant runs the search with you.

6-18 mo waitlists at top schools

Day 1 start the search

Where expertise meets empathy.

Prepared for assignees relocating to India.

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If you're moving with children, one task outranks everything, even the home: **the school search starts first**. The most sought-after international schools run waitlists of **6 to 18 months**, and where a seat opens often decides which neighbourhood you should live in. The good news is that the options are genuinely excellent, IB, Cambridge, American and strong Indian curricula in every major city, and your IKAN consultant runs the whole search with you.

6-18_{mo} WAITLISTS AT THE TOP SCHOOLS	3-5 SCHOOLS TO APPLY TO	Jun-Aug WHEN MOST SCHOOL YEARS START	₹75K-3L TYPICAL ONE-TIME ADMISSION COSTS
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DO THIS FIRST

Start the school search **the day the assignment is confirmed**, before the visa, before the house-hunt. Waitlists at the most in-demand schools run **6 to 18 months**, and school-bus routes are tight, so the seat you win decides where you should live. **Shortlist and apply first; pick the neighbourhood second**. Tell your IKAN consultant schooling is in scope and we start the same day.

FIRST, THE SYSTEM

How schooling works for incoming families

India's big cities carry every major curriculum, so your first decision isn't a school, it's a **system**, chosen by where your child is coming from and where they're likely to study next. Everything else (shortlist, neighbourhood, budget) follows from this one choice.



IB (International Baccalaureate)

The most portable choice: PYP, MYP and the Diploma transfer cleanly between IB schools worldwide. The default for families who move often.



Cambridge · IGCSE & A-Levels

The British pathway, available in every major city; maps neatly onto UK and Commonwealth systems back home.



American curriculum

US-style credits with AP or the IB Diploma on top, at schools like ASB in Mumbai and AES in Delhi; the natural continuation for North American students.



CBSE / ICSE & national-plus

India's national boards at 'national-plus' schools with international-standard teaching; strong academics at a fraction of the fees, and a favourite of returning Indian-origin families.

- ① **Timing matters.** Most international schools run **August to June**, mirroring the northern-hemisphere year; Indian-curriculum schools start in **April or June** depending on the region. Mid-year entry is possible where a seat exists, but assessments for the main intake often run the previous **October to February**, so a June or August start is planned almost a year out. Arriving mid-year? Say so early; some schools handle it well (Oakridge in Hyderabad has a good mid-year track record).

GETTING IN

The admission process

Every school has its own portal and quirks, but the shape is the same everywhere. Where a seat exists, expect **two to six weeks** from application to offer; where there's a waitlist, the application simply holds your place until one opens.

1

Shortlist 3 to 5 schools

By curriculum, commute and character. Your IKAN consultant builds this with you before you fly, so tours are booked for your look-see visit.

2

Apply, with documents ready

Applications are online; the document set below covers 90% of every school's ask. Application fees run roughly

₹10,000 to 25,000

per school.

3

Assessment & interview

Age-appropriate: a play-based session for the youngest, English and maths assessments plus an interview for older children. Many schools run these over video before you arrive.

4

The offer, and the deposit

Offers can lapse in days. Paying the one-time admission or enrolment fee is what actually secures the seat, so have funds ready to move.

5

Confirm the start, plan around it

Lock the start date, register for the school bus, order uniforms and books, then finish the home search inside the bus radius.

HAVE THESE READY (PER CHILD)	WHY SCHOOLS ASK
Passport & visa copies, child and both parents	Identity and legal stay
Birth certificate	Age and grade placement
Transcripts / report cards, last 2-3 years	Grade placement and credit transfer
Recommendation or transfer letter from the current school	Conduct and readiness
Immunisation records	Health compliance
Passport photos; any learning-support reports	File completeness, and the right support from day one

Keep everything as clean PDF scans in one folder, the same kit serves every school. (Your [Document Kit](#) guide sets this up once, for every task of the move.)

THE REAL GAME

Waitlists & strategy



Waitlists at the most sought-after schools run 6 to 18 months at popular entry grades: think ASB and DAIS in Mumbai, AES and The British School in Delhi, TISB in Bengaluru, Pathways in Gurugram. Apply the day the assignment is confirmed, not the day you land.



Apply to several

3 to 5 schools: one anchor choice plus realistic alternatives. The application fees are the cheapest insurance of the whole move.



Sibling & alumni priority

Most schools give priority to siblings of current students, and some to alumni families; mention every connection you have.



Corporate & embassy seats

Some employers sponsor or hold seats at partner schools, and schools like AES give priority to corporate and diplomatic families. Ask HR before you assume the queue.



Keep positions warm

Waitlists move constantly as expat families rotate out. Respond the same day when a seat opens; offers lapse fast, and the deposit is what holds it.

And this is a service, not a solo mission. IKAN runs a dedicated **school search**: we take your family's brief, shortlist to curriculum and commute, book and accompany the tours, and steer the applications and waitlist follow-ups, from a focused **half-day** consultation to a **two to three day** accompanied programme, depending on how many schools you want to see.

THE MONEY

Fees, and what they cover

Fees vary by a factor of ten between an excellent national-plus school and the top American-curriculum campuses. Typical 2026 ranges, per child per year:

TIER	TYPICAL 2026 FEES
Premium international (ASB, AES, DAIS)	₹12-24L+ /yr; top US-curriculum schools bill in USD
Mid international (TISB, Oberoi, Oakridge, Mahindra)	₹7-14L /yr
National-plus (Shri Ram, The Bishop's, Sishya)	₹2.5-7L /yr
One-time admission / enrolment fee	₹75K-3L typical; higher at the very top tier

i The headline fee is usually tuition only. Budget separately for the **school bus, uniforms, books and devices, meals, external exam fees and trips**. Fees are typically payable **termly or quarterly in advance**; the top international schools invoice annually or per semester, often in USD. Check exactly what's refundable, and when, before you pay.

⚠ A word on 'capitation'. Charging a capitation fee (an unreceipted 'donation' for a seat) is **illegal**. Reputable schools charge only published application, admission and development fees, always with receipts. If anyone hints at an off-book payment, walk away and tell your consultant.

CITY NOTES

Where families actually go

A starting shortlist from IKAN's casework, the schools our assignee families most often tour and join. It's a compass, not a ranking; your **city guide** and your consultant carry the full picture for your family.

Mumbai

American School of Bombay (BKC · US/IB) is the North American anchor, small classes, fees billed in USD. **Dhirubhai Ambani International** (BKC · IB/ICSE) is the flagship, apply 6 to 12 months out. **Oberoi International** (Goregaon · IB/IGCSE) is the western-suburbs favourite; **Ecole Mondiale** (Juhu) runs the full IB from age 3.

Delhi NCR & Gurugram

The American Embassy School (Chanakyapuri · US/IB) is India's flagship international school and prioritises diplomatic and corporate families. **The British School** (Chanakyapuri · UK/IB) carries a long waitlist. In Gurugram, **Pathways World School** (India's first full-IB school, 8 to 12 month waitlist) leads; **The Shri Ram School** is the national-plus benchmark.

Bengaluru

TISB (Whitefield-Sarjapur · IB/IGCSE) is the flagship, apply 6 to 12 months ahead. **Indus International** (Sarjapur Road · full IB) assesses October to February for June starts. **Canadian International School** (Yelahanka) runs an Ontario curriculum plus IB Diploma; **Harrow Bengaluru** (opened 2024, British, day and boarding) anchors the airport corridor.

Chennai

American International School Chennai (Taramani · US/IB) is the city's most important international school, with 6 to 9 month waitlists. **British International School** (Perumbakkam · Cambridge) suits UK-system families; **KC High** (Navalur, OMR · Cambridge/IB) is the OMR corridor's strongest pick; **Sishya** (Adyar · ICSE) is the returning families' favourite.

Hyderabad

International School of Hyderabad (Patancheru · full IB) is the school most international families join. **Oakridge** (IB/Cambridge/CBSE) is flexible, with a good mid-year record; **CHIREC** (Kondapur/Gachibowli · Cambridge/CBSE) anchors the west; **The Aga Khan Academy** offers the full IB continuum on a world-class campus.

Pune

Mahindra International (Hinjewadi · full IB) is the flagship, founded for expat children and oversubscribed. **Indus Pune** (Bhukum · IB/IGCSE) suits the Hinjewadi corridor; **Symbiosis International** (Viman Nagar · IB/IGCSE) has a strong academic record; **The Bishop's** (ICSE/IGCSE, est. 1864) is the heritage national-plus.

CHOOSING WELL

Tour well, choose well



Ask the sharp questions

Teacher turnover and where staff are hired from, real class sizes, how they handle a mid-assignment departure, university counselling, and exactly when fees are refundable.



The commute decides a lot

School buses run tight radii and city traffic is real; a few kilometres can be 45 minutes. Ride the actual route at school-run time before you commit to a home.



Special needs · ask early

Learning-support capacity varies widely between schools. Share any ed-psych or support reports up front, so a school can tell you honestly what it can provide.



Let the school choose the suburb

The doctrine that makes moves work: secure the seat first, then search for homes inside the bus radius. (The [Renting Your Home](#) guide takes it from there.)

YOUR SUPPORT

How IKAN helps

- ✓ We run a dedicated **school search**, from a half-day consult to a 2 to 3 day accompanied tour programme
- ✓ We **shortlist to your brief**, book and accompany the tours, and keep applications & waitlists moving
- ✓ We **align your home search to the school-bus radius**, so the seat and the home land together
- ✓ We support **mid-year entries** and the paperwork: transcripts, letters, immunisation records, deposits

Schools · quick checklist

- ☐ School search **started the day the assignment was confirmed**
- ☐ **Curriculum** chosen; **3 to 5 schools** shortlisted and applications in
- ☐ **Documents ready**: passports, transcripts, recommendation letter, immunisations
- ☐ **Seat secured**, deposit paid, start date and bus route confirmed
- ☐ Home search **aligned to the school-bus radius**

Win the seat early and the rest of the move arranges itself around it. We'll run the search with you, from first shortlist to first school run. Questions any time.

Your IKAN Relocations team

ikan.com · enquiry@ikan.com · [+91 11 4049 0000](tel:+911140490000)