

The College Process

Student Responsibilities

Applying to college is an important rite of passage for Habersham students. The most important aspects of the process are those that ask you to know yourself and to find a voice through which you can express your opinions and your preferences and, ultimately, represent yourself to others in a clear and confident way. Each student approaches the process in a slightly different way. Some of you will move through the steps quickly, others more slowly. It is crucial to take each of the steps yourself. Do not try to rush them or allow someone else to take them for you. Appreciate the time it takes to become more self-aware and to evaluate yourself honestly as a college candidate.

It's important for you to learn more about the college process and keep on top of the paperwork (electronic or otherwise) that applying to college requires. The College Advising Office at Habersham assumes you are at the center of your own application process; here is a list of items for which we will hold you responsible.

- Develop an efficient organizational system for managing your college process. Be aware of and responsible for your deadlines.
- Schedule regular, in-person meetings with your college advisor: at least every trimester junior year and every 2-3 weeks senior fall. By your senior year, correspond with your advisor by email at least once a month. Check in as needed to share news and updates over the winter and spring of senior year.
- In consultation with your college advisor, make a standardized testing plan for your junior and senior years. Register yourself for these tests in keeping with the ACT/SAT deadlines. We do not recommend you send scores to colleges until senior fall, once your testing is complete.
- Develop a list of colleges that interest you; visit some, if you are able. Register for and attend the Junior College Road Trip. This will give you great insight into the college campus- even if you do not plan to attend the colleges on the tour.
- While juniors may read about and research dozens of schools, eventually (by senior fall) you will narrow your list to a few carefully chosen colleges. A balanced college list usually includes 6-12 schools with widely varying levels of selectivity. Be sure you would be happy to attend any college to which you choose to apply.
- Visit colleges if you can, with particular attention to those where you are more likely to be admitted (your 50-50 and 70+% chance of admission categories). Wherever possible, schedule an interview.
- Discuss with your parents the plan for financing your college education and how that might affect your college list.

- Read all of the information you receive from the College Advising Office (usually via email); it will remind you of deadlines and inform you of college representatives coming to campus and opportunities for discussion and interviews. Return all forms we ask you to complete.
- Request recommendations from two academic teachers, usually from the junior year. Discuss your choices with your college advisor during spring term junior year. While it is ideal to ask in person for a recommendation, our teachers are understanding about an email request as long as your message is thoughtful. Try to make these requests by the end of junior year.
- Over the summer before senior year, complete a draft of your Common Application. Solicit feedback from your college advisor about essay topics. Send your advisor a few drafts. Your advisor will provide you with feedback. Revise and return to school with an essay you've worked hard on (but one about which you are still willing to think further).
- Review the supplemental essay questions for the colleges you are considering seriously. Keep a spreadsheet with essay topics and deadlines. Draft some in the summer, if there are a few colleges to which you think you are likely to apply.
- In the senior fall/winter, make sure that your college list is accurate and reflects your most current application plans. Check with your college advisor to be sure your list is likely to yield a number of offers of admission.
- Research the admission and application requirements of the colleges you are considering. Each college's requirements vary. Are there required high school courses? Required tests? Required recommendations? What are the deadlines? What is their preferred method of turning in materials? Note that this is your responsibility; our office will send general reminders, but it's up to each student to know what his colleges require.
- Your standardized test scores do not appear on your transcript, so it's up to you to direct the College Board or ACT to send them to the colleges to which you've applied. Discuss which to send and when to send them with your college advisor.
- When asked, as on the Common Application, about disciplinary infractions and their consequences, answer honestly. School policy requires you to report this information. Work with your college advisor on developing your statement.
- Complete all of your applications in a timely manner and honestly and accurately. Your signature on the application is your pledge that the work you're submitting is truthful and that it is your own. Submit your application yourself. In every aspect of the process, from your interactions with your peers to your conduct with college representatives, uphold standards of respect and integrity according to Habersham's Code of Citizenship.
- Keep your college advisor completely up to date with your plans and with the outcomes of your applications.

Parent Responsibilities

The College Admissions process can be a challenging one for parents because it may represent the first time that the student is expected, by college admissions offices and by the College Advising Office at Habersham, to be the driving force behind his or her next steps. Parents must take a supportive, not central, role. Sometimes it's difficult, but know that navigating the process is a crucial step on your child's path to adulthood. Applying to college is a rite of passage that offers challenges but leads to personal growth. Just like taking a driver's license test, it's something that can only be undertaken by the child; parents should offer encouragement and some logistical support, but they may not be in the driver's seat. Here are some guidelines that may help:

- Be open to new directions in your child's life.
- Encourage growth, independence, and authenticity.
- Listen carefully.
- Understand that your child's application must be entirely his/her own and that students are responsible for submitting their own applications. Expect your child to uphold standards of honesty and integrity in all of his/her interactions with both college representatives, including coaches, and the College Advising Office.
- Be honest with your child about your financial concerns. Develop a strategy together.
- In the face of disappointment, model resilience and adaptability.
- There are several specific ways in which you can be helpful:
 - Plan college visits and be a willing chauffeur. Make sure your visits include schools in all selectivity ranges. Use the list provided by your child's college advisor as a guide. Encourage him to visit colleges to which he is likely to be admitted and find positive things to say about those schools.
 - Research financial aid application requirements at each college and fill out all financial aid forms in a timely manner.
 - Communicate with your child's college advisor to be sure everyone is on the same page.
 - Help your child reflect on his strengths and weaknesses as he develops a balanced college list and considers his essays.
 - Keep an open mind. Colleges have changed dramatically in the last two decades; avoid sharing dated perceptions you have of schools.
 - Support your child's decisions.

College Advising Office Responsibilities

The Habersham College Advising Office is here to guide and support you as you navigate the college admissions process. We believe that each student has his/her own journey through this process so almost all of our work with you will be individual. We expect students to initiate contact and to seek us out for advice and counsel. Our promise is to be responsive to both students and parents, as well as, professional, realistic, and well-informed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Developing a balanced list of prospective colleges based on a student's performance and stated preferences
- Estimating chances for admission based on past experience
- Writing an honest profile for each student to help navigate the college process
- Providing appropriate support to students as they write essays and prepare their applications
- Sending transcripts and recommendations to colleges in a timely fashion based on the list students provide.
- Maintaining strong, authentic relationships with college admissions officers
- Advocating for all Habersham students in the college process
- Serving as a resource for parents and students throughout the process