

College Admissions Timeline

While college may seem a long time away, the decisions that students make now will determine their options at the end of high school. At **Bright Horizons®**, we encourage families and students to be thoughtful in their planning throughout high school to ensure the broadest range of best and appropriate options for college later on. While the high-school-to-college transition can seem daunting, the following recommendations provide students with a helpful “to do” list to make the whole experience a little more manageable, and put them in the best position possible.

Tentative Application Timeline

Before 9th Grade / High School	
Spring / Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the high school website to learn about the academic offerings• Meet with school counselor to discuss 9th grade course selection• Set academic, extracurricular, and personal goals for 9th grade
9th Grade / First Year	
First half	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start off strong for academic success. You have a blank slate, but everything you do in high school counts – put your best foot forward• Get involved in extracurricular and community activities• Revisit the goals you set for 9th grade and adjust if needed
Second half	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect with Bright Horizons College Coach to discuss academic and extracurricular opportunities during high school, and think ahead to college finance• Meet with school counselor to discuss sophomore year course selection• Plan for summer – explore interests or hobbies you don’t have time for during the school year• Read! Reading for pleasure is important in developing your vocabulary and writing skills

10th Grade / Sophomore Year

First half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update your academic, extracurricular and personal goals • Continue to explore extracurricular and community activities • Optional test opportunities: Register for and take PSAT/PreACT if offered at your school, no prep necessary • Register for AP/IB exams, if applicable
Second half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with Bright Horizons College Coach to discuss courses, activities, and the beginning stages of college selection • Meet with school counselor about junior year course selection • Plan for summer – include exciting summer opportunities that expand your learning, support your interests, and allow you to rejuvenate • Take AP/IB exams (if applicable)
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read! In particular, autobiographies and memoirs provide examples of the personal reflection students will demonstrate in application essays

11th Grade / Junior Year

Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update your academic, extracurricular and personal goals • Strengthen your extracurricular and community involvement • Register for and take PSAT, and AP/IB exams if applicable
Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start researching/applying for exciting summer activities • Start researching colleges, attending college fairs, and visiting college campuses • Begin to search for scholarships based on your intended major, background, or interests • Meet with Bright Horizons College Coach to discuss courses and activities for next year, as well as putting together a plan to pay for college
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Bright Horizons College Coach benefit to obtain a customized college list • Discuss your senior schedule and college plans with your school counselor • Dedicate time for college research • Begin planning campus visits • Utilize the Net Price Calculator on college websites to anticipate aid eligibility • Take ACT or SAT and AP/IB exams (if applicable) • Beat the rush – ask teachers/counselor for letters of recommendation!
Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a summer opportunity that deepens your interests • Request a copy of your high school transcript and check it for accuracy • Connect with Bright Horizons College Coach to learn more about college essays • Begin writing essays and utilize the essay review benefit • Sign up for and complete college visits • Schedule interviews (if available) • Create application accounts and begin to fill out applications • Read! Many colleges ask applicants about their favorite books

12th Grade / Senior Year

Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update your academic, extracurricular and personal goals • Register for and take ACT or SAT (if applicable) • Check in with Bright Horizons College Coach to discuss your applications • Note deadlines, including high school counseling office deadlines • Invite/follow up with teachers and counselors on letters of recommendation • Attend information sessions held by admission representatives visiting your high school (if available) • Continue to research colleges and build a balanced college list • Continue college visits (including virtual!) • Schedule interviews (if available) • Revise college essays, leaving time for multiple drafts • Complete and submit applications for early admission (if applicable) • Continue to search for (and apply for) scholarships • File financial aid applications. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (www.fafsa.gov) and the PROFILE (www.bigfuture.org) are available October 1st
Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit any remaining applications • Confirm that your applications are complete • Check your email regularly for communication from colleges
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit colleges to which you have been accepted • Make your final decision and pay deposit by May 1. • Notify all other colleges that you are declining their offer of admission and/or waitlist • Thank and notify your teachers and school counselor of your decision • Send final transcript to your college • Enjoy graduation and prepare for the transition to college!