



## Considerations When Choosing an Elementary School

We often receive questions from parents who are planning ahead when their child will age out of Montessori School of Phuket. In considering which elementary school will be the best fit for your child, there are many different factors to consider. Most importantly, no two families have the same beliefs, priorities, needs, or ideals, so there is no one-size-fits-all answer to the question "which school will be best for my child?"

To help you navigate these decisions, we have put together some discussion points to assist your family in choosing the best fit for your own unique child and family.

### Initial Considerations

In the initial stage of narrowing down prospective schools, families must decide on which type of school they are seeking out:

- Public vs. Private
- Traditional vs. Alternative Method of Education (e.g. Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, Open School, etc.)

### Academic Considerations

Some questions you might ask a prospective school:

- How do you meet the needs of those children who are ahead or behind academically?
- What supports are available for children with IEPs, identified as highly gifted and talented, etc.?
- How do you support different learning styles?
- When children leave one grade and go to the next, how does the teacher know what their knowledge level is so that the new teacher does not repeat lessons from previous years? Do you have a standard set curriculum that the whole school follows?
- What is your homework policy (average daily amount)?
- Be sure to check inside the classroom that your child will be placed in (not the most likely classroom, the actual classroom). If there are toys, the children are most likely using those toys on a daily basis. If you see writing materials and other educational tools, they are most likely using those each day.
- What qualification does my child's teachers have? – not the owner of the school or principal or head of department – Your child will not be spending all day with these members of staff.

Important: a teacher with a TEFL certificate may indicate that this school hires backpackers as classroom teachers and under paying their Thai assistant staff – Your child deserves to have better consistency & professionalism.

### Social/Emotional Learning

Some questions you might ask a prospective school:

- How do you handle discipline and behavioral issues?
- Is there a social/emotional learning element to the curriculum?

## Daily Schedule and Extracurriculars

Some questions you might ask a prospective school:

- What is a typical daily schedule?
- How much outside time do children get daily?
- What type of extracurricular activities are provided both during school and outside of school hours?
- Do children go on field trips or have other experiences?

## Technology Usage

Some questions you might ask a prospective school:

- How much tech time do children have on average each day?
- How are devices used in the classroom (e.g. research, online lessons, homework, games, free play)?
- What types of technology does this school have (SMART boards, 3D printers, tech labs, etc.)?

## Other Considerations

- Which grades does the prospective school serve?
- Which middle/high school does the school feed into?
- Location: Do you prefer to stay close to home so that your child has neighborhood friends, or would you rather drive farther to a school to ensure a good fit?

### **Important! When transitioning to a new school:**

Please wait until your child's final day to share news about changing schools. At pickup time, you can gently say: "Today is your last day here. Starting next week, you'll go to a new school. Let's say thank you to your teachers."

When children learn they're leaving in advance, they often experience anxiety that can overshadow their remaining time with friends and teachers. By informing them on the last day, you preserve the joy and connection of their final experiences at school.