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How Parents Search for International Schools in Singapore

Insights from 250,000+ parent searches

2026 Edition



Introduction



Singapore is one of the most competitive international school markets in Asia. There are dozens of schools delivering international education on the island, and parents face a huge amount of choice. Schools, in turn, face a crowded landscape where standing out gets harder every year.

Despite the stakes involved in choosing a school, there's surprisingly little data on how parents actually go about it. Most schools rely on a mix of assumptions, anecdotal feedback and small-sample surveys to understand how families research their options. The real picture has been largely invisible.

This report is our attempt to change that. It draws on behavioral data from more than 250,000 users who have searched for schools on doris from July 2025 to March 2026.

Unlike survey data, this report is based on what parents actually do rather than what they remember doing after the school is chosen (or turned down), months or years after their search started. That makes it a much more reliable window into how the discovery process works in practice — and, we think, a uniquely large dataset of its kind in the international schools sector.

We've pulled it together because we believe these insights can directly inform how schools approach marketing, admissions and the families they're trying to reach.



About this data



doris is a free, impartial school discovery platform. It helps parents research, compare and find schools delivering international education that fit their family's unique needs.

Between July 2025 and March 2026, more than 250,000 users came to doris to discover schools across Southeast Asia and beyond. Singapore, where doris originally launched, is one of the most active markets.

A quick note on terminology. When we say “international schools” in this report, we mean the 141 schools listed on doris that deliver international education in Singapore at the time of writing. Some wouldn’t formally qualify as international schools under local regulation, but they offer international curricula, serve internationally mobile families, or operate in English alongside local languages. It’s a wider lens than the regulatory one, and it reflects how parents actually search: for a fit for their family, not a category.

“**more than 250,000 users have used doris to discover schools**”

The platform captures how users search, including the criteria they set (fees, ages, curriculum, language, location and more), the school profiles they view, the sections of those profiles they spend time on, and what they do next. We can also infer where they’re browsing from based on their IP address, which gives us a picture of the source countries driving demand.

All the data in this report covers searches made on the Singapore marketplace during that period, across all source countries. It reflects real user journeys rather than recalled experiences or self-reported preferences.

One more note on “users.” These are people actively searching for schools on the platform. We treat them as a proxy for parents because that’s who doris is built for, and that’s who, overwhelmingly, ends up using it. But we can’t formally verify every individual, so some may be grandparents, relocation consultants, or family members helping with the search. “Users” is the more accurate term.

We’ve put these insights together because they have the potential to be incredibly useful to international schools. The dataset is, as far as we know, one of the largest of its kind in the sector. Rather than keep it to ourselves, we wanted to share what it reveals about how families discover schools today, so Marketing and Admissions leaders in Singapore can use it to refine where they invest their marketing budget, understand which source markets are driving real demand and benchmark their own positioning against what families are searching for.



Who is searching for schools in Singapore?

“The USA is the largest single source of users searching for Singapore schools on doris”

At the time of writing, doris has approximately 50,000 active users a month.

As the platform operates in English, a significant proportion of its users are expats from Anglophone countries or otherwise fluent English speakers, closely aligning with the demographic many international schools in Singapore typically attract.

The source country breakdown for Singapore searches looks like this:

USA	34.8%
China	14.5%
Other	8.6%
United Kingdom	8.1%
Australia	4.0%
Malaysia	3.3%
Thailand	2.5%
Indonesia	2.5%
Germany	2.4%
New Zealand	2.4%
France	2.4%
Japan	2.3%
Canada	2.2%
Netherlands	2.2%
South Korea	2.0%
Switzerland	2.0%
Hong Kong	1.9%
Philippines	1.8%*

The American share is striking: more than a third of users viewing Singapore school profiles are browsing from US-based IP addresses. China is the second largest source at 14.5%, followed by the UK at 8.1%. After that, the spread is notably broad. Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Germany, New Zealand, France, Japan, Canada and the Netherlands all account for between 2% and 4% each.

This breadth matters. It tells us that demand for international schools in Singapore is genuinely global, not concentrated in one or two nationalities.

Schools that assume their prospective families are mainly British or mainly from one specific country may be missing a significant share of their actual audience. It also means that how you communicate matters: families from different backgrounds will have different expectations, different reference points for what a good school looks like, and different priorities.

*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding or source country coming up as 'unknown'.

Source country attribution is based on user IP address at the time of search. This is a strong indicator of where demand originates but isn't a perfect proxy for nationality. VPN use, business travel, and corporate proxies can introduce minor variance.

How they search



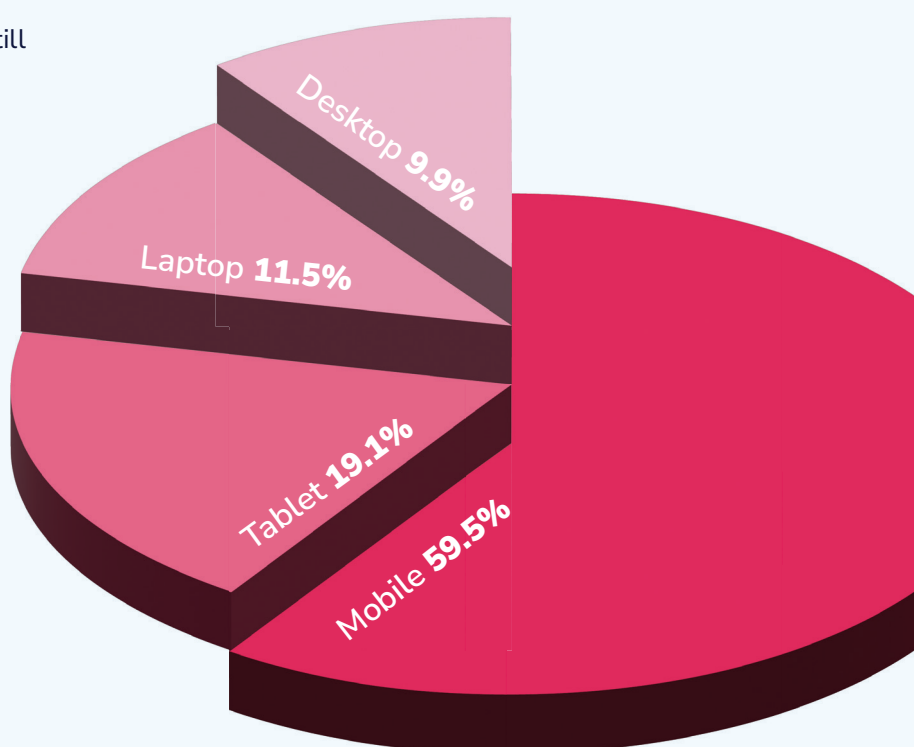
The majority of users are researching schools on their phones. Almost 60% of searches happen on mobile devices, with tablets accounting for another 19%.

This has real implications for how schools present themselves online: if your website or virtual tour experience does not work well on a small screen, you are losing prospective families before they even get to you.

Some interesting data has surfaced around peak search times. In most South East Asian countries, the statistics point to two key periods: 8pm-10pm, with a smaller, but still noticeable spike from 7am-9am.

Users in the USA – whom we have already determined account for more than a third of search traffic – follow a similar pattern, with 8am-9am and 7pm-10pm accounting for the majority of research activity on doris.

Families are also taking meaningful actions during these timeframes, for example booking tours, visiting school websites, or downloading prospectuses.



The Singapore market: what schools offer vs what parents want



This section puts supply and demand side by side. For each dimension, we show what the Singapore market currently offers and what parents are actually searching for on doris. The gaps between the two are where the most useful insights lie.

Fees

School fees in Singapore rise steadily as children move through the system, with both typical prices and the overall range increasing with age.

In the early years (ages 1 to 3) median fees sit at around SGD 13,000 to 15,000, with most schools ranging from roughly SGD 9,000 to 25,000. As children move into primary (ages 4 to 6), the median increases to about SGD 19,000 to 21,000, with a wider spread extending up to around SGD 50,000.

Through ages 7 to 10 fees continue to edge up, with median prices around SGD 24,000 to 25,000 and a typical range of roughly SGD 14,000 to 38,000. The biggest step change comes at secondary level. By ages 11 to 14, median fees reach just over SGD 30,000, with many schools falling between around SGD 16,000 and 44,000.

In the final years (ages 15 to 17) median fees rise further to around SGD 32,000 to 35,000, while the highest-priced schools approach SGD 70,000.

At every stage, the range of fees is wide. While the overall direction is upwards, parents are consistently choosing from a broad spread of price points rather than a single 'standard' fee.

When this is viewed alongside search behaviour, the same pattern appears on the demand side. Parents are not clustering around one price - they are searching across the same broad bands seen in the market.

There is a clear group of families focusing on the lower end, with strong interest around SGD 10,000 to 15,000. A second, larger group is centred around SGD 25,000 to 30,000, which aligns closely with the typical price point for many primary and early secondary schools.

Beyond this, demand spreads steadily across the SGD 30,000 to 45,000 range, reflecting the wide choice available in the mid-to-premium market. There is also a smaller but consistent level of interest above SGD 45,000, matching the top end of the fee range.

Taken together, supply and demand are closely aligned. Parents are not simply looking for the cheapest option - they are operating within a price range and then making decisions based on fit, value and what each school offers.



The Singapore market: what schools offer vs what parents want



Ages

The number of schools serving each age group peaks at **age 6, where 131 schools are available**.

Supply is strong across the primary and lower secondary years (**ages 3 to 12, with between 66 and 131 schools at each age**), but thins out noticeably at both ends. Only **15 schools cater for 1-year-olds**, and by **ages 17 and 18, the number drops to 52**.

Parent demand follows a similar shape but with some telling differences. The strongest search demand is for children aged 5 to 8 (primary entry), with a secondary spike at age 16. That age 16 spike is worth paying attention to: it coincides with the point where the number of schools offering places starts to thin out.

Parents looking for sixth form or pre-university options have significantly fewer choices and are likely searching more actively as a result. If your school serves this age group, you are operating in a less crowded space with high demand.

Pupil populations

International schools in Singapore lean towards smaller and mid-sized populations, with the market spread across a wide range rather than centred on one standard school size.

The largest single group sits in the 250 to 500 pupil range, accounting for 20% of schools sampled. Smaller schools are also a major part of the landscape, with 19% having fewer than 100 pupils and a further 16% falling between 100 and 250. Taken together, 35% of schools have fewer than 250 pupils.

Beyond this, the market stretches steadily into larger school sizes. 12% of schools have between 500 and 1,000 pupils, 8% fall between 1,000 and 1,500, and 10% sit in the 1,500 to 2,000 range. At the upper end, 12% of schools have between 2,000 and 3,000 pupils, while just over 2% have more than 3,000.*

Overall, the picture is one of balance rather than concentration. There is a strong base of smaller schools, a clear core of mid-sized campuses, and a smaller number of very large institutions at the top end.

*Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

The Singapore market: what schools offer vs what parents want



IB PYP is the single most searched-for curriculum in Singapore, at 13.2% of all searches, yet only 24 schools offer it. Schools with bespoke or specialist curricula face the opposite challenge: strong supply, but parents don't search for them by name.

Curriculum

The curriculum picture in Singapore is strikingly fragmented. There are more than 35 different curricula or frameworks offered across the market.

The most common are:

Bespoke Curriculum	34 schools
Cambridge IGCSE	33 schools
IB Diploma Programme	27 schools
Cambridge Secondary	26 schools
IB PYP	24 schools
Reggio Emilia	24 schools
Cambridge Primary	22 schools

After that, the numbers drop quickly into a long tail including:

Christian Curriculum	19 schools
Cambridge A Levels	15 schools
IPC	15 schools
Montessori	14 schools

and many others.

The mismatch between what schools offer and what parents search for is one of the most striking findings in the data.

IB PYP leads parent demand at 13.2% of all curriculum searches, followed by IB DP and IB MYP (both 7.0%), IBCP (6.5%) and IB generically (6.2%). Together, IB-related searches account for roughly 40% of all curriculum demand on doris. Cambridge IGCSE follows at 5.9%, with Cambridge Secondary (5.5%), Cambridge A Levels (5.4%) and Cambridge Primary (5.3%) also showing strong interest.

On the supply side, Bespoke Curriculum is the most offered framework (34 schools), but it accounts for just 0.2% of searches. This isn't necessarily a weakness, but a discoverability challenge as parents search by named framework first. Schools offering bespoke or specialist programmes need to invest more in explaining what they offer and why it matters. Schools offering IB programmes are in a strong demand position relative to their numbers. Schools using less recognisable frameworks may need to invest more in explaining what they offer and why it matters, because parents are not searching for them by name.

British Curriculum searches sit at 4.7%, and American Curriculum at 2.1%. Montessori accounts for 1.3% of searches despite 14 schools offering it, and Reggio Emilia just 1.0% despite being available at 24 schools. These are frameworks that are well represented in the market but not heavily searched for by name, which may mean parents use other terms to find them, or are simply less familiar with them as labels.



The Singapore market: what schools offer vs what parents want



Language

On the supply side, language provision across the 141 schools in our database shows:

English	130 schools
Mandarin	120 schools
French	45 schools
Spanish	29 schools
Hindi	25 schools
Japanese	21 schools
Tamil	20 schools

Smaller numbers offer Korean, German, Malay, Dutch, Bengali and others.

When parents filter by language of instruction, the picture narrows considerably. English dominates at 75% of searches. French, German and Chinese each account for between 5% and 7%, followed by Spanish at 3.4%. Smaller but notable demand exists for Japanese (1.6%) and Korean (1.0%).

Cross-referencing this with the source country data is interesting: American families make up the largest share of parent searches, and most will be looking for English-medium instruction. But the presence of meaningful demand for French, German and Chinese instruction tells us there are distinct parent segments with specific language needs. For schools that offer bilingual or immersion programmes, this is useful validation.

“American families make up the largest share of parent searches, and most will be looking for English-medium instruction.”

How parents behave during their search



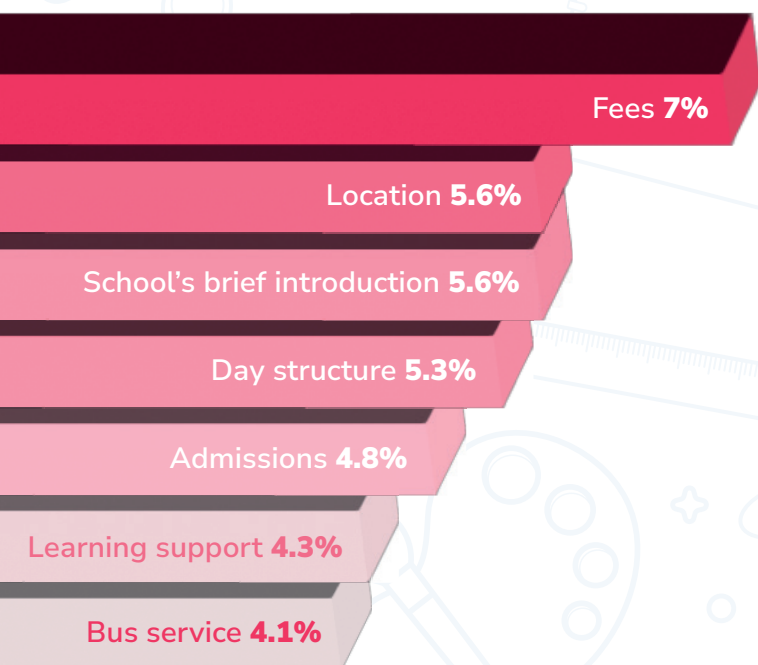
Beyond what parents search for, doris also captures what they do once they start looking at individual schools. This behavioural data offers a window into what information parents prioritise, and what actions they take at different stages of their journey.

What parents look at on a school profile

When parents view a school profile on doris, the sections they spend the most time on tell you what matters most to them in practice. Fees is the most viewed section at 7.0%, followed by location (5.6%), the school's brief introduction (5.6%), and day structure (5.3%). Admissions comes in at 4.8%, additional learning support at 4.3%, and bus service at 4.1%. That last cluster is telling.

Parents are not just looking at the academic fundamentals. They care about the practical, day-to-day reality of school life: how the day is structured, whether there is a bus route that works for them, what support is available for children who need it, and how the admissions process works. Schools that make this kind of information easy to find are giving parents what they want. Schools that bury it or leave it out are making the process harder.

Further down the list, parents also view sections on stages, country and religious affiliation, waitlist information, school type, curriculum detail, SEN provision, scholarships, social and emotional learning, and academics. The breadth of sections viewed is a strong signal that choosing a school is a multi-dimensional decision. Parents are weighing up a lot of factors, not just one or two headline features.



How parents behave during their search



What parents do next

A few things stand out here. First, the dominance of website visits confirms that parents are still in research mode at this stage, gathering more information before committing to anything.

Your website is the natural next stop after doris, which means the experience needs to be good. Second, virtual tours and tour bookings combined account for over 20% of next steps, which tells you that giving parents the option to see the school (virtually or in person) matters more than most other actions.

“53.8% of parents’ next step after viewing a school profile is to visit the school’s website.”

Third, prospectus downloads (8.6%) are still a meaningful part of the journey, so having a solid, up-to-date prospectus available is worth the effort.

Lower down, parents share profiles on WhatsApp (0.9%), which suggests that school research is often a shared activity between partners or family members. A small but notable number also visit school social media profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.



What this means for your school



There are no one-size-fits-all answers here, because every school's situation is different. But the data does point to some questions worth asking.

Is your mobile experience good enough?

With nearly 60% of parents searching on their phones, a school website that is clunky or slow on mobile is a real barrier. This applies to everything from your main site to your virtual tour, prospectus download and tour booking flow.

Are you making the information parents want easy to find?

The profile sections data shows that parents care about far more than curriculum and fees. Day structure, bus service, learning support, admissions process and school type all feature prominently. If a parent has to dig through your website to find out whether you have a bus route near their home or what a typical school day looks like, you are creating unnecessary friction.

Do parents understand your curriculum?

If your school uses a framework that parents are less likely to search for by name, like a bespoke or specialist curriculum, think about how you are helping families understand what it means in practice. The data shows that search demand is heavily concentrated around well-known frameworks like IB and Cambridge. Schools that do not offer these need to work harder to be discoverable and to explain why their approach is a strong alternative.

Do you know which families are actually looking for a school like yours?

The source country data shows that demand is genuinely global, with American, Chinese, British and Australian families all well represented alongside a broad spread of other nationalities. Understanding where your prospective families are coming from, and what they prioritise, can help you tailor your marketing, your admissions communications and even your tour programme. If you have been assuming a narrower demographic than the data suggests, it may be worth revisiting.

Are you making a strong first impression?

Our data suggests parents on doris typically compare somewhere between 7 and 15 schools during their research. That means you are always being evaluated alongside alternatives. If your school profile, your website and your initial communications do not do a good job of showing what makes you different, you can be filtered out before you ever hear from the family.

Is your website ready for the traffic?

Over half of parents' next step after viewing a school profile is to visit the school website. If that experience is not clear, informative and easy to navigate on mobile, you are losing families at the point where they are most interested in learning more.

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doris is a free, impartial school discovery platform that helps parents find the right international school for their children. doris is parent-first and completely unbiased, matching parents only with schools that fit their criteria, like location, curriculum, language and SEN support. There are no sponsored listings.

Partner schools get significantly more visibility, richer profiles that help them stand out, and data insights into how parents discover and evaluate their school and their wider market.

Since launching in July 2025, more than 460,000 parents have used doris to connect with over 5,500 schools worldwide. The platform was built by a team of education experts, including international school alumni with first-hand experience of navigating school choice across key markets in Asia and beyond.

If you would like to see how your school appears in parent searches, access competitor insights for your market, or learn more about partnering with doris, we would love to hear from you.

doris.school
hello@doris.school

Data in this report covers the Singapore marketplace from August 2025 to March 2026. All insights are derived from real parent behaviour on doris. No individual families are identified in this report.

