

Requesting a Letter of Recommendation or Reference Letter at ICS

Students and Parents,

Throughout your student's time at ICS, he or she may and often will run into situations where they will need to request a letter of recommendation or reference letter. Whether this is for an internship, job, college, scholarship, or volunteer position, students quite frequently are required to request and submit letters to recommend them for such opportunities. Below I have included some information to consider before asking for a letter.

I have also sent this to each of your student's school emails so please encourage them to check their LWSD email for information as well.

Whom should I ask to write a letter of recommendation?

Start with school faculty (teachers, coaches, counselors, etc.) that you have taken multiple classes from where you have gotten good grades, been involved with via sports, or just have built a good relationship with. The best letters of recommendation; the ones that will really bolster your case for being accepted to the program you are applying for come from school staff who know a lot about you and your abilities. For example, a letter from a teacher who writes about your unique skills, research abilities, and motivation is more influential than a letter that says that you received an "A" in his/her class and is pleasant to be around.

Keep in mind that you will likely need to waive your rights to view letters written on your behalf. It is quite standard to do this, but it means that you won't have a chance to review the letter after it has been written. If you approach someone about writing a letter for you and they seem reluctant to do so, they are likely trying to politely tell you that they can't write a strong letter for you. Accept this and consider others you might ask. Having a poor or lukewarm letter of recommendation as part of an application can be potentially damaging to your chances of being accepted.

When do I start asking for letters?

As far in advance of your application deadline as possible. At ICS we request that students ask at least 4 weeks in advance so that teachers and other school staff have enough time to write meaningful letters on your behalf. **Do not wait until the last minute.** Thinking about developing relationships with faculty who will be able to write about your strengths will help you when it comes time to ask for letters!

How do I go about asking?

See the recommender in person. We prefer that you only send an e-mail message if you are writing from out of town—never just send them your materials before getting confirmation that they will write you a letter or request letters on short notice. When asking, be formal, well-spoken, polite, respectful of their time, and genuinely appreciative. You are making a request, not a demand. Students need to make their own formal requests for letters of recommendation. Parents should NOT be requesting them for their students.

What do I give the professor when I ask for a reference?

As much information as you can and/or whatever they may request. The best way to know what to bring is to talk with the recommender directly about what they may need or want so they can write the best letter for you.

After the letter has been written, what should I do?

Let the teacher/counselor/employer, etc. who wrote your letter know when you hear about your application. They will appreciate knowing the outcome, and knowing how it all turned out will help them with future letters that they may write for you or other students. Also, write them a thank you card for all of the hard work they have done to help support you.