

HIGHGATE

13+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2018

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 13+ (Year 9) are handled, and sets out the arrangements for written tests and interviews and the criteria by which places and financial assistance are offered. Details of the School's ethos, curriculum, pastoral care, co-curricular provision, together with contact details for the Admissions Office are published on the School's website.

Highgate admits academically able pupils who have a love of learning and are willing to rise to the challenges of a fast-paced, exciting curriculum, who also seek to contribute to the extra-curricular life of the school and who enjoy learning and working in a community to the benefit of all its members. Tests are used to assess candidates' strengths in these areas. Applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

It is anticipated that most applicants for 13+ entry will be attending preparatory schools where year 8 is the final year group open to them. However, applications from candidates in any kind of school, independent or state are welcome.

It should be noted that currently very few places (2 or 3) are available at 13+.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate

Entry is by means of written tests and interviews. Candidates should be in the equivalent of a Year 6 class at the time of the test.

An application form is available to download from the School [website](#) and should be submitted, with a passport photo and cheque (payable to Highgate School) for the registration fee, to the Admissions Office by the date specified on the School website. Parents or carers unable to pay the registration fee by cheque are asked to contact the Admissions Office.

The written tests for entry in September 2021 consist of papers in English, Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning. These should usually be taken in the Michaelmas term 2018 when the child is in Year 6. This is the first stage of the selection procedure. The tests allow the School to identify candidates who should cope with the scholarly nature of the academic education offered by Highgate. Subject to the numbers of candidates applying, only a proportion of them may be invited for interviews. The criteria by which candidates are chosen for interview are:

- a) Results gained in the written tests. It is anticipated that successful candidates will fare well in all aspects of the written tests but a candidate who fares poorly in one paper but strongly in another may be considered.

- b) The confidential report from the candidate's current school, where received.

Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

2 Interviews

The expectation is to interview selected candidates after the written tests have been assessed and within a short window of time to ensure parity for all candidates. The interview is not a second academic test, but is an important factor in the selection process. The aim is to make the procedure fair and consistent for all candidates: candidates are interviewed in groups which will test their listening skills, their ability to collaborate with other children and their problem-solving ability. We aim to gauge candidates' intellectual curiosity, their instincts and attitudes to the co-curricular life, their teachability and their behaviour generally, both towards other candidates and towards teachers in particular, as well as their interpersonal skills, in order to choose those who will most benefit from what we have to offer at Highgate, in and out of the classroom. A team of teaching staff will interview the children.

Once interviews have taken place, the 13+ Admissions Panel, chaired by the Head of Admissions, meets to recommend candidates to whom offers should be made.

3 Places, bursaries and scholarships available each year

For entry in 2021, places will be available for a handful of pupils.

Bursaries are means-tested places that allow children whose parents/carers would not otherwise have been able to meet the cost of fees to come to Highgate. The Admissions Officer (Widening Access) (BursaryOffice@highgateschool.org.uk) can provide information about the process for bursary applications. Preference will be given to bursary candidates who currently attend state schools. There would need to be particular and unusual circumstances for us to award a bursary to a child attending an independent school (see [policy](#) on financial assistance/ bursaries).

We do not award academic scholarships on the strength of the entrance tests alone. We believe that we gain a much more accurate picture of a child's academic ability after we have had an opportunity to see the quality of their work within the School. Therefore we award two academic scholarships towards the end of Year 9 on the basis of examination results, the pupil's class work and homework, and teachers' assessment of a pupil's effort and performance. Two further scholarships are awarded at the end of Year 10 on the basis of examination results, the pupil's class work and homework, and teachers' assessment of a pupil's effort and performance. There are also a small number of lesser awards, academic exhibitions, awarded at the end of each year. Academic scholarships and exhibitions are honorary and do not bring with them any remission of the school fees.

4 Final Selection Procedure

The Admissions Panel (consisting of the Head, the Principal of the Junior School (Director of Admissions), the Head of Admissions, the 13+ Admissions Officer and the Bursar) convenes to decide collectively to whom offers, including bursaries will be made. The Bursar will be asked to advise on the financial circumstances of candidates whose parents or carers have applied for bursarial assistance. The decisions of the Admissions Panel are final and are not subject to appeal.

Letters setting out the result of a child's application make clear the arrangements for any reserve list or for the acceptance of places and the payment of a deposit; details may be requested from the Admissions Office.

5 Siblings policy

Parents and carers should be aware that there is no guarantee or expectation that a sibling is offered a place. In addition, siblings are only invited to the interview stage should their performance in the written tests justify it.

Parents or carers of twins or other multiples applying for places together should be aware that the outcome of each child's application may differ from the other(s). Likewise, siblings applying at the same time for different entry points may receive different outcomes. If you would like to discuss managing this in advance, please contact the Head of Admissions.

Because of the competitive entry procedure to the School, each child is assessed on his or her individual merits. If we have to decide between two or more candidates who meet our entrance criteria, we may give preference to siblings or children with a particular skill, talent or aptitude. Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

The Head of Admissions writes to the parents and carers of siblings applying for places prior to the entrance tests to explain the admissions policy above with particular regard to siblings.

6 Acceptance of Places

Offers are made in the February of Year 6 and parents and carers accepting a place are asked to pay a refundable deposit of £3000. In the September of Year 8 parents are asked to confirm the acceptance of a place and the deposit becomes no longer refundable.

Given the lapse of time between the tests (Autumn term of Year 6) and joining the School in Year 9, it is considered imperative that a candidate who has accepted a place at the school maintains and builds on the standards demonstrated in their entry tests. The School will request a further report from the candidate's current school during Year 8 and will request the candidate's Common Entrance examination papers (where the candidate's current school follows a CE syllabus). The School may, in exceptional circumstances, request that the candidate takes further tests. Further to the receipt of the current school report and, where applicable, CE results and the results of any further tests, the School reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place from a candidate where academic standing appears to have significantly declined. However, it is anticipated that this step would rarely be necessary.

7 Feedback

Although some general guidance and advice may be provided on request, it is not practicable to give detailed feedback on a child's individual performance. The School does not return test papers to candidates nor divulge specific scores or those of other candidates.

8 Reserve list

We operate a reserve list and in most years are able to make firm offers to one or two children from that list. Once the academic year preceding entry is completed then the reserve list is closed. Any occasional places that become available after this date are dealt with entirely separately.

If a child is unsuccessful in an application to Highgate, it is highly unlikely that the School will accept another application for an entry point any sooner than two years after the original anticipated entry point. This allows time for the child to develop and progress and ensures they are not subject to excessive testing.

9 Occasional places

The Head of Admissions will seek to fill occasional places created by the departure of pupils prior to Year 10 unless the year group in question is above or at the optimal size for the good running of the School. Please see the Occasional Places Admissions Policy, available on the School website, for full details.

10 Specific learning difficulties (SLD) and special or particular circumstances

Highgate welcomes applications from all who have the ability and aptitude to access Highgate's academic curriculum, providing those with any SLD or special/particular circumstances (for example physical or mental health conditions) can be offered the support they require from the School and can be accommodated within the constraints imposed by the School's historic and listed buildings and dual-site.

Early and open communication with the School about all matters which may be relevant to a prospective pupil's education is essential. If parents or carers are in any doubt about what might be relevant they should contact Head of Admissions directly prior to making an application for a place. Parents or carers are expected to indicate any SLD or special/particular circumstances which a child may have when the application for a place is made. This allows appropriate consideration to be given to any reasonable provision that may need to be made for the child before any entry test/interview. Parents and carers should be aware that insufficient notice of any relevant matter is likely to mean consideration cannot be given to any provision that ordinarily would have been considered in such circumstances. Parents and carers will be asked to provide a copy of a medical report or educational psychologist's report and/or any other pertinent information to assist with such consideration which may include, for example, large print material, extra time, use of laptops or other special arrangements.

Early and open communication also allows the School to discuss thoroughly with parents and carers and, if necessary, their medical advisers the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child if they become a pupil and whether these will be sufficient to enable the School to provide for the prospective pupil's needs. The School feels it is more helpful to parents or carers and prospective pupils to undertake this assessment prior to the entry test/interview where feasible but, at the very least, it needs to be undertaken before any offer is made. The School will not offer a place if, after all reasonable adjustments have been made, it will not be able to provide adequately for the prospective pupil's physical, educational and other relevant needs. In these circumstances parents or carers shall be informed of the reasons why a place is not offered.

Failure to disclose information about SLD or special/particular circumstances before a place is offered may trigger a review of any offer of a place and may lead to its withdrawal if the School will not be able to provide adequately for the prospective pupil's physical, educational and other relevant needs once all reasonable adjustments have been made. In addition, subject to the circumstances, the School reserves the right to refuse an applicant from attending any entry test/interview if relevant matters were not disclosed in a timely manner meaning that the School cannot now make adjustments which would ordinarily have been considered in such circumstances for the entry test/interview. This is particularly likely if, without adjustments, it is considered the applicant may have a significant adverse impact on other children attending the entry test/interview.

Candidates with English as an additional language will need to demonstrate that they have a sufficient command of English to cope with a curriculum which is delivered in English. Allowances will, of course, be made and parents and carers are invited to seek guidance from the Head of Admissions.

11 Educational agencies

We deal exclusively with parents or guardians or carers of prospective candidates, and not with educational or third party agencies throughout the admissions process.

12 Complaints

In the event that a parent or carer wishes to make a complaint about the way in which their child's application has been handled (in other words, the admissions process), they should write to the Head setting out the reasons for the complaint before the end of the term in which the entrance test was sat. The Head will examine the grounds for the complaint and will respond in writing, guided by the deadlines specified in the Complaints Procedure, setting out his decision and the timetable for any further steps which may include a recommendation to the Secretary to the Governing Body that an Appeals Panel be convened involving one or more Governors. Appeals against admissions decisions are not accepted.

13 Future policy changes

This policy may be amended at any meeting of the governing body, in which case the revised policy would operate from the start of the following academic year.

L Eaden, Head of Admissions
September 2018