

HIGHGATE

13+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2017

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 Coordinator, who arranges Open Mornings, 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.

Applications from candidates in preparatory schools are welcome. Applications from candidates from other types of school are also welcome: their parents / carers should seek guidance from the Admissions Office.

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 must be in the equivalent of a Year 7 class at the time of the test sat in September. Applications should be submitted by the dates published on the School website, and are welcomed from candidates in independent or state schools.

The written entry tests for entry in September 2019 (hereafter 'pre-tests') consist of papers in English, Mathematics and Reasoning which are taken in October 2017 when the child is in Year 7. 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. A proportion of the candidates are 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 will be considered.
- b: The confidential report from the candidate's current school.

c: Siblings of pupils already at Highgate and children of staff and Governors (see paragraph 7).

Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year. Places offered will be conditional on candidates passing Common Entrance in Year 8 where the candidate is following a CE syllabus; parents/carers will be asked to confirm provisional acceptance by paying a refundable deposit in the autumn of Year 7. In September of a candidate's Year 8, the place must be accepted or declined for good; a deposit of the first term's fees will be required at this juncture.

2 Interviews

The expectation is to interview after the written tests have been assessed and during a two-week period to ensure parity for all candidates. The interview is not a second academic test, but is a major 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. An experienced team of teaching staff will interview the children.

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

3 Places, bursaries and scholarships available each year

For entry in 2019, places will be available for 2 or 3 pupils. It is unlikely any academic or Music award will be made.

The Admissions Officer (Widening Access) (BursaryOffice@highgateschool.org.uk) can provide information about the process for bursary applications and on the number of bursaries held by pupils in the school at any one time. 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.

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 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.

4 Final Selection Procedure

The Selection Committee (consisting of the Head, the Director of Admissions, and the Bursar) convenes to decide collectively to whom offers, including prizes and scholarships, 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 Selection Panel are final and are not subject to appeal.

5 Reserve list

We operate a reserve list and in most years take one or two children from that list to make firm offers. 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.

6 Siblings policy and children of Highgate School staff and governors

Parents and carers should be aware that there is no guarantee or expectation that a sibling or a child of Highgate School staff or governors is offered a place.

Although we give particularly careful consideration to them, we do not give them places on the basis of their being a sibling or a child of Highgate School staff or governors. 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 of staff or governors or former pupils or children with a particular skill, talent or aptitude. Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

The Director 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.

7 Occasional places

The Director of Admissions will usually 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. Candidates for such places will be assessed in January (i.e. of Year 9, where this is feasible) and parents / carers should apply for occasional places in line with this schedule. If we have to decide between two or more candidates who meet our entrance criteria, we may give preference to children whose personal circumstances are beyond their family's control (e.g. relocation to the area) or to children with a particular skill, talent or aptitude. While the Director of Admissions will speak to parents / carers informally in confidence, he will expect the pupil's current school to be informed of the application to Highgate before any offer will be made.

8 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/carers are in any doubt about what might be relevant they should contact the Director 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, and 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/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, 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/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/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 but come to light without adequate notice and this means that the School cannot now make adjustments which would ordinarily have been considered in such circumstances for the entry test/interview, particularly 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/carers are invited to seek guidance from the Director of Admissions.

9 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.

10 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.

11 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.

S M James

Director of Admissions September 2016