

HIGHGATE

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

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 16+ (Year 12) 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 the two annual Open Evenings, 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. Applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate

Entry is by means of academic interviews. Candidates must be in the equivalent of a Year 11 class at the time of the test. Applications should be submitted by the dates published on the School website, and are welcomed from candidates in independent or state schools.

The academic interviews, in the four subject areas most likely to be the A levels which the candidate wishes to pursue, take place in November; the exact date will be published on the website. The criteria by which candidates are considered for a place are:

- a: Results gained in the academic interviews. It is anticipated that successful candidates will fare well in all aspects of the academic interviews but a candidate who fares poorly in one but strongly in others will be considered.
- b: The confidential report from the candidate's current school.
- c: Predicted GCSE (or equivalent) grades.
- d: The candidate's ability to demonstrate proven and future commitment to the co-curricular life of a school.
- e: Siblings of pupils already at Highgate and children of staff and Governors (see paragraph 6).

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

2 Places, bursaries and scholarships available each year

For entry in 2018, places will be available for between 25 and 40 pupils (girls and boys) who will join about 160 pupils from our Year 11. Up to six academic scholarships are awarded, based on academic achievement (see below). The successful candidates follow a programme of enrichment and extension.

These awards are honorary and do not carry any remission of tuition. They are awarded for both years of the Sixth Form, provided the award-holder continues to meet the criteria of excellent achievement, scholarly endeavour and exemplary behaviour.

Fee remission, other than for bursaries, music scholarships (see 'Information on Scholarships') and awards made prior to September 2013, has been phased out in favour of means-tested bursaries which 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 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.

While the vast majority of offers are made in December following the 16+ assessments in November of Year 11, the School recognises that pupils may either change their minds or take time to make up their minds to move school, and that parents/carers may relocate to the area at short notice. Late applications will be processed, but pupils applying after offers have been made and accepted need to understand that the School's ability either to make further offers or to accommodate subject choices may be constrained. Only exceptionally will applications for a place in Year 13 be accepted.

3 Test interviews

We aim to gauge candidates' academic ability, their intellectual curiosity, their instincts and attitudes to the co-curricular life, their teachability and 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. Candidates will have four short subject-based interviews in the subjects most likely to be studied at A-level as well as a 'general' interview. Staff interviewing will include the Deputy Head (Academic), the Assistant Head (Sixth Form), the Director of Admissions and other members of the Senior School staff.

4 Offers

Once interviews have taken place, the 16+ Admissions Panel, chaired by the Director of Admissions, meets to recommend candidates to whom offers (places and scholarships) should be made. Offers for places are conditional on achieving at least three A* and five A grades in mainstream, academic subjects, including English and Mathematics, at GCSE (guidance will be offered where necessary with regard to subjects which will be accepted as qualifying or facilitating subjects); occasionally, these offer conditions will be altered to take account of a candidate's individual circumstances.

Offers are made at the end of November prior to entry, and places must be accepted by mid- December – precise dates for each year will be published online. A deposit of £5,000 is required at this point, £4,500 of which will be deducted from the first term's fees payable in August 2018. For pupils not meeting the conditional entry requirement, the deposit will be refunded.

5 Final Selection Procedure

The Selection Committee (consisting of the Head the Director of Admissions, the Deputy Head (Academic), the 16+ Admissions Officer 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.

6 Siblings policy, Children of Staff and Governors of the school

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 Applications from candidates not following GCSE

Adjustments will be made in assessing interview performance of candidates not following GCSE. Parents or carers should contact the Admissions Coordinator to give details of their child's Year 11 curriculum.

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 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

10 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 assessment took place. 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.

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 2017