

HIGHGATE

Pre-Preparatory Admissions Policy from September 2018

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at the Pre-Preparatory School are handled, and sets out the arrangements for assessments and the criteria by which places are offered. Details of the School's ethos, curriculum, pastoral care, co-curricular provision, together with contact details for the School Secretary, who arranges parent tours, are published on the School's website.

Highgate School admits academically able pupils who have a love of learning and are willing to rise to the challenges of a fast-paced, exciting curriculum. The assessment process is designed to consider a child's academic potential and their ability to cope with the style and pace of Highgate school life.

Highgate's aim is to encourage applications from children with as diverse a range of backgrounds as possible. This enriches our community and is vital in preparing our pupils for today's world. Highgate is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an applicant's gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or social background.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate Pre-Preparatory School

The principal point of entry to the Pre-Preparatory School is at 3+ (Nursery). Entry is by means of a play-based assessment. Applications should be submitted by the dates published on the School website.

We have several applicants for each of the expected 40 places offered in the Nursery each year. We aim to offer in the region of 160 assessments per annum; where we have more than this number applying, and usually we have had, we use a number of criteria to determine to whom assessments can be offered in the event of such over-subscription; these may include having a sibling currently at Highgate, being a child of a former pupil, proximity to the school and age (we aim to ensure that we assess numbers of children in proportion to the number of children applying who are born in each quartile, September-November, December-February, March-May, June-August). The registration fee is only payable where the School can offer an assessment.

If an application is accepted for registration, we will write to the parents or guardians of the child in the Michaelmas Term prior to the child's possible entry to the Nursery to give them an appointment to bring their child to School for a short assessment. This assessment will take place between January and February in the academic year prior to the September entry. Assessments are arranged largely in order of the applicants' birthdays, so that the children are

assessed along with similar aged children; we aim to offer places to reflect the number of applicants applying per age quartile.

The assessment comprises a series of play-based tasks to assess learning readiness. Each child, accompanied by one parent/carer, will spend approximately forty-five minutes in a small group of children where he or she will be asked to carry out a series of play-based tasks. Several members of the Pre-Prep staff will present these tasks in an informal, relaxed way; there will also be an opportunity for free play.

The areas assessed include perceptual, manipulative, social, mathematical and language skills. However, we would like to emphasise that we use play materials for these assessments and aim to make the procedure an enjoyable one for the child.

2 Final Selection Procedure

An admissions panel convenes to decide collectively to whom offers will be made. The decisions of this 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 Pre-Prep School office.

3 Reserve list

Following the 3+ assessment, we operate a short reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry to Nursery. The reserve list includes children whom we have assessed and in whom we have confidence that they could cope well but to whom we were unable to offer a place because of the numbers reaching the required standard. This reserve list is closed on August 31 prior to the beginning of the Nursery Year. In the event of there being more children on the reserve list than we have places, the following factors are taken into consideration in awarding the place;

- A) Performance at assessment
- B) Proportion of children within each age quartile
- C) Whether the applicant is a sibling

4 Feedback

Due to the volume of applicants being assessed, it is not practicable to provide detailed feedback on a child's individual performance.

5 Occasional Places

The Principal of the Pre-Prep may seek to fill occasional places created by the departure of pupils prior to Year 3 unless the year group in question is above or at the optimal size for the good running of the School. Families should register their interest for such places by completing an application form. In the event of such occasional places registrations reaching twenty, families seeking an occasional place registration will be advised accordingly: it is unlikely that

more than this number could be considered for assessment for an occasional place. Candidates for such places will be assessed as and when a place becomes available. All siblings who have been assessed for entry to the Pre-Preparatory School at 3+ will, in the event of there being an occasional place, be offered one further assessment prior to 7+ entry. However, only in very exceptional circumstances will places be offered for Year 2 for reasons other than major and unforeseeable changes in a family's personal circumstances.

6 Transfer of Highgate Pre-Preparatory School pupils

While transfer to the Junior School is not automatic, it is assumed that children will move to the Junior School where a pupil's progress and behavioural track-record indicate that they will, in the School's judgement, continue to flourish in, be best suited to and cope well with the pace of the Junior School curriculum and teaching. For details of expectations of pupils in the Junior School, parents and carers are directed to the 7+ Admissions Policy, published on the School's website.

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

The Principal of the Pre-Prep 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.

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 strongly encouraged. 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 taken for the child before any entry test/interview. 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, which may result in, 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, the School will not be able to provide adequately for the prospective pupil's physical and educational 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 and educational needs once all reasonable adjustments have been made.

Children 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 Principal of the Pre-Prep.

Candidates who are ill on the day of their assessment (and then unable to attend the assessment) must provide a doctor's note stating the nature of the illness and an alternative day for assessment will be provided.

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 Financial assistance

Financial assistance for children at the Pre-Prep is only available in very exceptional circumstances, for example the death of a parent after acceptance of a place. The School's limited funds for bursaries are otherwise committed to enabling older students to commence or complete their education at Highgate. We do not participate in the government's funded places in early years education (nursery grants) scheme.

11 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 or his representative 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.

12 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.

SM James

Director of Admissions March 2018