

## HIGHGATE

### **3+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2017**

*This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 3+ (Nursery) 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. Applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

#### **Policy and Procedures**

##### **1 Entry to Highgate Pre-Preparatory School**

Entry is by means of practical 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. In view of this, not all applications to the Pre-Prep can be accepted.

Some of the criteria we use to select children for assessments may include current siblings to the School. However, we reserve the right to look at other factors including, for example, the need for reasonable gender balance in a coeducational setting or proximity to the school.

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 year prior to entry. Assessments are arranged largely in order of the applicants' birthdays, so that the children are assessed along with similar aged children.

The practical assessment is comprised of a series of play-based tasks to assess learning readiness. Each child, accompanied by one parent/carer, will spend approximately forty five minutes along with 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**

The 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 and in some years take one or two children from this list to make firm offers. Once the academic year is completed, then this reserve list is closed in order to offer opportunities to families who may, through no fault of their own (eg relocation for work purposes) have missed the application window.

Any occasional places that become available after this date are dealt with entirely separately.

## **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 will 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. Candidates for such places will be assessed as and when a place becomes available. 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 (eg relocation to the area). Only in very exceptional circumstances will places be offered for Year 2 for reasons other than major changes in a family's personal circumstances.

## **6 Transfer of Highgate Pre-Preparatory School pupils**

Transfer from the Pre-Prep to the Junior School is not automatic and will depend on the child meeting the entry criteria which include the School's judgement of the suitability of Highgate's curriculum for each child. The Principal of the Junior School confirms passage to the Junior School in the November prior to transfer, subject to good academic and behavioural track-record in the Pre-Prep School. Details of entry criteria for the Junior School are to be found in 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 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 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 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 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 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 September 2017