

HIGHGATE

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

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 7+ (Year 3) are handled, and sets out the arrangements for written tests and interviews 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 Principal's PA, who arranges Open Mornings, are published on the School's website.

Highgate admits academically able children 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 children of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate

Entry is by means of written tests and interviews. Children must be in the equivalent of a Year 2 class at the time of the test. Applications must be submitted by the date published on the School's website.

The written entry tests consist of papers in Non Verbal Reasoning, English and Mathematics. This is the first stage of the selection procedure: *Criteria for entry to Year 3 (7+)* (guidelines for the personal and academic aptitudes which pupils need to demonstrate at tests and interviews) are published on the School's website along with dates for the assessment day. The tests allow the School to identify children who should cope with the scholarly nature of the academic education offered by Highgate. A proportion of the children are invited for interviews. The criteria by which children are chosen for interview are:

- a: Results gained in the written tests. It is anticipated that successful children will fare well in all aspects of the written tests but a child who fares poorly in one paper but strongly in another may be considered.
- b: The confidential report from the child's current school.
- c: Siblings of pupils already at Highgate and children of staff and Governors (see paragraph 5)

Results of written assessments to gauge children's readiness for the Highgate curriculum are analysed to ensure that factors affecting learning maturity (e.g. age, gender) are taken into account. Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

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 an important factor in the selection process. The children are interviewed in groups and are given a task which is designed to be both stimulating and fun. The aim is to see how they work in collaboration with other children and how they co-operate as well as to test their listening skills and to see how they tackle problem solving. We aim to gauge candidates' intellectual curiosity, their

instincts and attitudes to the co-curricular life of the School, their teachability, their inter-personal skills and their behaviour, during the interviews and at other times.

Once interviews have taken place, the 7+ Admissions Panel, chaired by the Principal of the Junior School (also Director of Admissions), meets to recommend children to whom offers of places should be made.

3 Final Selection Procedure

The Selection Committee convenes to decide collectively to whom offers will be made. The decisions of the Selection Panel are final and are not subject to appeal.

Letters setting out the result of a child's application, sent on dates agreed between independent schools, 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 Junior School office.

4 Feedback

Although some general guidance and advice may be provided on request, it is not practicable to provide detailed feedback on a child's individual performance.

5 Siblings policy and children of Highgate School staff and Governors

Given the number of applicants applying to Highgate each year and to ensure fairness to all those who apply, 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.

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. In addition, siblings are only invited to the interview stage should their performance in the written tests justify it.

6 Places available each year and financial assistance

For entry in 2018 places will be available for approximately 70 (girls and boys) at 7+ who will join about 40 children from the Pre-Preparatory School. Financial assistance for children at the Junior School 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 pupils to commence or complete their education at Highgate (see policy on financial assistance). The Admissions Officer (Widening Access) (BursaryOffice@highgateschool.org.uk) can provide information on the number of bursaries held at any one time.

7 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.

8 Occasional Places

The Director of Admissions will usually seek to fill occasional places created by the departure of pupils prior to Year 7 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 and parents / carers should apply for occasional places in line with the dates for 7+ entry. 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. Only in very exceptional circumstances will places be offered for Year 6 for reasons other than major changes in a family's personal circumstances.

10 Transfer of Highgate Junior School pupils

The Principal of the Junior School confirms passage to the Senior School when the child is in Year 6, subject to good academic and behavioural trackrecord in the Junior School. Details of entry criteria for the Senior School are to be found in the 11+ Admissions Policy, published on the School's website.

11 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.

12 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.

13 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.

14 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 August 2017