

HIGHGATE SCHOOL

13+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2010

This policy should be read in conjunction with the advice about admissions and the Frequently Asked Questions section available on the website. It 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, financial assistance and academic awards 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.

Aim of this Admissions Policy

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, 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. All three schools which make up the Foundation use tests in order to assess candidates' strengths in these areas. Applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate School

Entry is by means of written tests and interviews. Candidates must be in the equivalent of a Year 8 class at the time of the test. Applications should be submitted by 30th November in the year before entry and are welcomed from candidates in independent or maintained schools.

The written entry tests consist of papers in English, Mathematics, French (or Spanish or German, by arrangement with the Admissions Coordinator), Science (based on the Common Entrance syllabus) and Reasoning which are taken in the January before admission the following September. 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 favourably.
- b: The confidential report from the candidate's current school.

2 Specific learning difficulties (SLD)

Parents or carers are expected to indicate any SLD which a candidate may have. Reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate the needs of those with a SLD. Extra time or the use of a laptop computer may be allowed in part of the written test, subject to the written recommendation of an educational psychologist and the approval of Highgate's Learning Support

Teacher who will advise the Head Master / Principal whether the educational experience and schooling are likely to be compatible with the candidate's SLD. Any report must have been submitted with the application and by the deadline.

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.

3 Places, bursaries and scholarships available each year

For entry in 2010, places will be available for between 20 and 30 pupils (girls and boys, although the majority of girls tend to transfer at 11+) at 13+ who will join about 110 pupils from Year 8. Means-tested bursaries (see advice on the website concerning the financial circumstances form) are available, according to need, for pupils in Year 9. Up to five scholarships are available for outstanding candidates; the value of scholarships will vary reflecting the ability of the candidates, but the usual upper limit is one third of the annual tuition fee. Bursaries can be held in conjunction with scholarships.

4 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 have two interviews – in the first, candidates, in pairs, are given a problem-solving task and in the second, they have an opportunity to talk about themselves and their interests. We aim to gauge candidates' 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. Staff interviewing will include the Director of Studies, the Assistant Head (Middle School), the Director of Admissions and other members of the Senior School staff.

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

5 Final Selection Procedure

The Selection Committee (consisting of the Head Master, the Director of Admissions, the Director of Studies 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

Although we give particularly careful consideration to siblings, we do not give them priority and are not always able to offer them places. 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 former pupils or children with a particular skill, talent or aptitude.

7 Applications from candidates not following Common Entrance

Adjustments will be made in assessing tests sat by candidates not following Common Entrance. Past papers, which are sent to Preparatory Schools, are available from the Admissions Coordinator in respect of 13+ tests in English, Mathematics, French and Science.

8 Staff children

Sons and daughters of members of staff at Highgate School will be subject to the same selection procedure as external applicants. Staff children may be admitted, provided they do sufficiently well in the written entry tests and at interview and can demonstrate that they will benefit from a place in the school.

9 Clergy bursaries

Means-tested bursaries are available for applicants who are the children of ordained ministers in the Church of England for up to five candidates in total across the Senior School in any one academic year. The Director of the Charity (robert.wilne@highgateschool.org.uk) can provide information on the number of bursaries held at any one time.

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 Master setting out the reasons for the complaint before the end of the term in which the entrance test was sat. The Head Master will examine the grounds for the complaint and will respond in writing within 28 days, setting out his decision and the timetable for any further steps which may include a recommendation to the Secretary of the Foundation 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.

A.S. Pettitt
Head Master
September 2009