

HIGHGATE SCHOOL

7+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2012

This policy should be read in conjunction with the advice about admissions (Admissions at Highgate: a simple fact-sheet) and the policy on financial assistance ('bursaries') available on the website. It 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 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 Open Mornings, are published on the School's website.

Aim of this Admissions Policy

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

Policy and Procedures

I Entry to Highgate School

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 should be submitted by 30th November in the year before entry.

The written entry tests consist of papers in English and Mathematics which are taken in the January before admission the following September. 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. 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 will be considered.
- b: The confidential report from the child's current school.

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

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 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 Principal whether the educational experience and schooling are likely to be compatible with the child's SLD. Any report must have been submitted with the application and by the deadline.

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 Junior School.

3 Places available each year

For entry in 2012, places will be available for between 40 and 50 (girls and boys) at 7+ who will join about 30 children from the Pre-Preparatory School. Financial assistance for children at the Junior School is only available in the 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 Director of the Charity (robert.wilne@highgateschool.org.uk) can provide information on the number of bursaries held at any one time.

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 in January 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 (eg 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.

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 children. The children are interviewed in groups of approximately 4. They are given a collaborative task which is designed to be stimulating and fun. The aim is to see how they work in collaboration with other children, how they cooperate, test their listening skills and how they tackle problem solving.

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

5 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.

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

7 Transfer of Highgate Junior School pupils

The Principal of the Junior School confirms passage to the Senior School in the November prior to transfer, subject to good academic and behavioural track-record in the Junior School.

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 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.

10 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
June 2011