

16+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2024

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 16+ (Year 12) are handled and sets out the arrangements for written tests (if any) 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 Office, are published on the School's website.

Highgate 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 co-curricular life of the school and who enjoy learning and working in a community to the benefit of all its members. Applications from pupils of all social and cultural backgrounds are welcomed.

Policy and Procedures

1 Entry to Highgate

Entry is by means of academic interviews. Candidates must be in the equivalent of a Year 11 class at the time of the assessment. Applications should be submitted by the dates published on the School website and are welcomed from candidates attending independent or state schools.

An application form is available on the School [website](#) and should be submitted, with the appropriate registration fee, to the Admissions Office by the date specified on the School website. Parents or carers unable to pay the registration fee are asked to contact the Admissions Office.

Offers for places are conditional on achieving **at least three 8/9 grades and five 7 grades (or equivalent letter grades of A* and A) in mainstream, academic subjects, including English and Mathematics, at GCSE**. If you are not able to show evidence of this, a candidate may need a supporting statement from their current school to be considered for interview. If evidence is not provided, candidates are not guaranteed a place in the interview process.

Academic interviews take place in November preceding entry; the exact date will be published on the website. We aim to gauge candidates' academic ability, their intellectual curiosity, their instincts and attitudes to the co-curricular life of the School, 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. Candidates will have four short subject-based interviews in the subjects most likely to be studied at A-level as well as a 'general' interview. Staff interviewing will usually include the Deputy Head (Academic), the Assistant Head (Sixth Form), the Head of Admissions and other members of the Senior School staff.

The criteria by which candidates are considered for a place are:

- results gained in the academic and 'general' interviews. It is anticipated that successful candidates will fare well in all aspects of the academic interviews but a candidate who fares poorly in one but strongly in others may be considered
- predicted GCSE (or equivalent) grades.

- the confidential report from the candidate's current school and the school report provided by the candidate
- the candidate's ability to demonstrate proven and future commitment to the co-curricular life of a school

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

Please note that Highgate does not allow candidates to take a foreign language subject at A Level if it is their heritage language.

The School reserves the right to make changes to an assessment process when necessitated by external factors, to ensure that, as far as possible, a process can run and the outcome can be determined in as timely a manner as possible. In the event of alterations to timings or processes, all applicant families will be advised as soon as practically possible.

2 Places and bursaries available each year

For entry in 2024, places will be available for between 20 and 35 pupils (girls and boys) who will join our current Year 11.

Bursaries are means-tested places that allow children whose parents or carers would not otherwise have been able to meet the cost of fees to come to Highgate. An Admissions Officer can provide information about the process for bursary applications. Preference will be given to bursary candidates who currently attend state schools. There would need to be particular and unusual circumstances for us to award a bursary to a child attending an independent school (see [policy](#) on financial assistance/ bursaries).

While the vast majority of offers are made in December following the 16+ assessments in November of Year 11, the School recognises that pupils may either change their minds or take time to make up their minds to change schools, or that parents or carers may relocate to the area at short notice. Late applications will be processed, but pupils applying after offers have been made and accepted must understand that the School's ability either to make further offers or to accommodate subject choices may be constrained. It is also unlikely that any bursaries will be available to late applicants. Only exceptionally will applications for a place in Year 13 be considered.

2a Music Awards

We make music awards (scholarships and exhibitions) for pupils joining the School at 16+ by means of audition at the point of assessment. Awards are also made to pupils already in the School at these points too, where they have met the standard for a scholarship or an exhibition. Music scholarships usually bring 5-10%, but occasionally up to a maximum of 20%, remission of the School fee and free tuition on two instruments, provided tuition is given by instrumental teachers employed at Highgate. Music exhibitions do not carry fee remission but offer tuition in one or two instruments, depending on the level of the award. More detailed guidance may be found on our [website](#) or from the Admissions Office (sixthformadmissions@highgateschool.org.uk).

3 Final Selection Procedure

The Admissions Panel (usually consisting of the Head of Admissions, the Deputy Head (Academic), Assistant Head (Academic Operations and Digital Strategy), the 16+ Admissions Officer, 16+ and 11+ Coordinator, and the Bursar) convenes to decide collectively to whom offers, including bursaries and scholarships, will be made. The Bursar and Admissions Officer will be asked to advise on the financial circumstances of candidates whose parents or carers have applied for bursarial assistance. The decisions of the Admissions Panel are final and are not subject to appeal.

Offers for places **are conditional on achieving at least three 8 or 9 grades and five 7 grades (equivalent to the former letter grades A* and A in mainstream, academic subjects, including English and Mathematics, at GCSE** (guidance will be offered where necessary with regard to subjects which will be accepted as qualifying or facilitating subjects). Occasionally, these offer conditions will be altered to take account of a candidate's individual circumstances. Applications from candidates not following the UK curriculum will be discussed individually and differing entrance criteria applied.

Correspondence 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 Admissions Office.

4 Siblings policy

Parents and carers should be aware that there is no guarantee or expectation that a sibling is offered a place.

Parents or carers of twins or other multiples applying for places together should be aware that the outcome of each child's application may differ from the other(s). Likewise, siblings applying at the same time for different entry points may receive different outcomes. If you would like to discuss managing this in advance, please contact the Head of Admissions.

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 with a particular skill, talent or aptitude. Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

The Head 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.

5. Highgate staff policy

Parents, Carers and Governors who work at Highgate School should refer to the guidance for staff document when making applications for one of their children to the School. Please contact the Admissions Office for further details.

6 Acceptance of places

Offers are usually made at the end of November prior to entry, and places must be accepted in writing by mid- December – precise dates for each year will be published online. Written acceptances, together with a deposit amount stated in the current schedule of fees published on our website, need to be

received by the deadline date and time stated in the offer of place letter. For pupils not meeting the conditional entry requirement when results are released, the deposit will be refunded.

7 Reserve list

Following the 16+ assessment process, we may operate a short reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry to Year 12. 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. Once the academic year preceding entry is completed the reserve list is closed.

8 Applications from candidates not following GCSE

Adjustments will be made in assessing interview performance of candidates not following GCSE. Parents or carers should contact the Admissions Office to give details of their child's Year 11 curriculum.

9 Learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) 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 LDD 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 or carers are in any doubt about what might be relevant they should contact Head of Admissions directly prior to making an application for a place. Parents or carers are expected to indicate any LDD 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. Prior to assessments, all interviewers are made aware of any candidates with LDDs so they can adjust the interviews accordingly. 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 and 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 include, 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 and 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 or carers shall be informed of the reasons why a place is not offered.

Failure to disclose information about LDD 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 meaning that the School cannot now make adjustments which would ordinarily have been considered in such circumstances for the entry test/interview. This is particularly likely 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 and carers are invited to seek guidance from the Head of Admissions.

10 Educational agencies

We deal exclusively with parents, guardians or carers of prospective candidates, and not with educational or third-party agencies throughout the admissions process.

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 assessment took place. 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 their 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.

June 2023