

## 7+ Admissions Policy and Procedures for candidate entry from September 2024

*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 Admissions Office, 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 co-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.

Parents and carers are asked to note that this policy is applicable for entry in 2024. Certain sections will of course retrospectively apply to pupils already at the School (e.g. section 10 and 11).

### 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. The main point of entry to Junior School is at 7+ only.

An application form is available on the School [website](#) and should be submitted, with the relevant registration fee, by the date specified on the School website.

The written entry tests for 7+ consist of papers in Non-Verbal Reasoning, English and Mathematics. This is the first stage of the selection procedure: *Criteria for entry at 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 of 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 then invited for interviews. Candidates are chosen for interview based on 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.

Results of written assessments to gauge children's readiness for the Highgate curriculum are analysed to ensure that factors including age, gender and current school are taken into account. Children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year. Ages are standardised by birth date, not by due date.

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 Interviews

For 7+ entry, the expectation is to interview selected candidates after the written tests have been reviewed and during a short time period in January 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 usually 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.

### **3 Places available each year and financial assistance**

For entry in 2024 at 7+, there will be approximately 50 places available for girls and boys who will join about 60 children progressing from the Pre-Preparatory School.

In September 2022, Highgate Junior School introduced bursaries for 7+ entry. 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. The 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 currently attending an independent school (see policy on financial assistance/ bursaries). Preference may also be given to families where one or two parents/carers meet our definition of 'key worker'. Please consult our Bursary Policy for further information.

### **4 Final Selection Procedure**

Once interviews have taken place, the 7+ Admissions Panel, usually chaired by the Head of Admissions, meets to recommend children to whom offers of places should be made. The Admissions Panel is usually made up of the Head of Admissions, Principal of the Junior School, 7+ Admissions Officer and Deputy Principal of the Junior School. 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.

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 Admissions Office.

### **5 Siblings policy**

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

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.

## **6. 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.

## **7 Acceptance of places**

Written acceptances, together with a deposit amount stated in the current schedule of fees published on our website, need to be received before the deadline date and time stated in the offer of place letter. After that time, we may automatically offer the place to another candidate.

## **8 Feedback**

Although some general guidance may be provided on request, it is not practicable to provide detailed feedback on a child's individual performance. The School does not return test papers to candidates nor divulge specific scores or those of other candidates.

## **9 Reserve list**

Following the 7+ assessment process, we operate a reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry to Year 3. 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. Candidates may be transferred to our occasional place list if parents/carers wish and spaces are available. Occasional places are dealt with entirely separately (see section 9).

If a child is unsuccessful in an application to Highgate, it is highly unlikely that the School will accept another application for an entry point any sooner than two years after the original anticipated entry point. This allows time for the child to develop and progress and ensures they are not subject to excessive testing.

## **10 Occasional Places**

The Head of Admissions may 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. Please see the Occasional Place Admissions Policy, available on the School website, for full details.

Only in very exceptional circumstances will places be offered for Year 6 for reasons other than major changes in a family's personal circumstances.

## **11 Transfer of Highgate Junior School pupils**

Transfer to the Senior School is not automatic. It is assumed that children will move to the Senior School where a pupil's progress, assessments and behavioural track-record indicate that they will, in the School's judgement, continue to flourish in, be best suited to and cope well with the pace of the Senior School curriculum and teaching. The Junior School team will use assessment data and observation during a child's time in Years 3, 4 and 5 to determine whether a child is likely to be suitable to progress. The Principal of the Junior School will speak with families for whom transfer to Senior School may not be the most suitable option as soon as possible and certainly before the end of the Michaelmas term of Year 5. Parents and carers will then be updated on the status of a pupil's expected progression to Junior School by the end of Year 5. Recommendations will be based

on objective evidence from regular assessments as part of the normal routine of school as well as professional teacher observation. If the School judges that Highgate would not be the most suitable educational setting for a child going forward, then guidance on possible alternative schools will be provided.

Details of entry criteria for the Senior School are to be found in the 11+ Admissions Policy, published on the School website. For details of expectations of pupils in the Senior School, parents and carers are directed to the Criteria for entry at 11+, published on the School's website.

## **12 Learning Difficulties and 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. 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.

### **13 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.

### **14 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 final entrance 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.

### **15 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