

16+ Admissions Policy and Procedures (2026 entry)

Policy Owner(s)	Head of Admissions
Approved by	Bursar
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1. Policy statement

This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 16+ (Year 12) are handled, and to set 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.

Parents¹ are asked to note that this policy is applicable for entry in 2026.

2. 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 unable to pay the registration fee are asked to contact the Admissions Office at sixthformadmissions@highgateschool.org.uk.

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 I/GCSE. Applicants should be able to demonstrate the potential to achieve these grades. If they 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.

While the vast majority of offers are made in December, the School recognises that pupils may either change their minds or take time to make up their minds to change schools, or that parents may relocate to the area at short notice. Late applications will be processed, but applicants should understand that the School's ability to run an interview process, make further offers or accommodate subject choices may be constrained. It is also unlikely that any bursaries will be available to late applicants.

3. Interviews

Academic interviews usually take place in November preceding the year of 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.

¹ All references to 'parents' in this policy includes parents/carers/guardians.

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 I/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 the School.

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

If a candidate performs well in interviews for three out of four subjects, they may be offered a place subject to switching their fourth subject. They would then need to be re-interviewed in this replacement subject.

4. Places available

For entry in 2026, places will be available for approximately 30 to 40 pupils (girls and boys) who will join upwards of 150 pupils progressing to the Sixth form from Year 11.

5. Financial assistance

Highgate offers bursaries for 16+ entry.

Bursaries are means-tested awards that allow children whose parents 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. Preference may also be given to families where one or two parents meet our definition of ‘key worker’. Please consult our Bursary Policy for further information.

We do not offer academic scholarships.

6. Music awards

We make music awards (scholarships and exhibitions) for pupils joining the School at 16+ by means of audition at the point of entry. 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.

7. Final selection procedure

Once interviews have taken place, 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 and the 16+ and 11+ Admissions Coordinator) convenes to decide collectively to whom offers, including bursaries and scholarships, will be made. The Bursar will be asked to advise on the financial circumstances of candidates whose parents have applied for bursarial assistance.

The decisions of the Admissions Panel are final and are not subject to appeal. In the event that a parent wishes to raise a concern about the way their child's application has been handled (e.g. they believe the Admissions Policy has not been adhered to), they are advised to reach out directly to the Head of Admissions. We assure you that every concern is treated with the utmost seriousness and addressed promptly, as we strive to ensure a fair and equitable admissions process for all prospective pupils. The School's Complaints Procedure is on the School's website, however it is not available for use by prospective parents.

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 I/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.

Letters will be issued setting out the outcome of a child's application, sent on dates agreed between independent schools. They will make clear the arrangements for any reserve list or for the acceptance of places and the payment of a deposit.

8. Sibling policy

Given the number of applicants applying to Highgate each year and to ensure fairness to all those who apply, parents should be aware that there is no guarantee or expectation that a sibling is offered a place.

Parents 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 their 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 of siblings applying for places prior to the entrance tests to explain the admissions policy above with particular regard to siblings.

9. Highgate staff policy

Parents and Governors who work and/or volunteer 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.

10. 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. For pupils not meeting the conditional entry requirement when results are released, the deposit will be refunded.

11. Financial information

Any applicant for a place at the School, including those who apply for bursary support and overseas applicants, may at the discretion of the School be required to provide additional financial information and/or undergo checks to confirm that they are able to pay the School's fees (or any percentage of the fees still payable if a bursary or scholarship is granted).

12. 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 divulge specific scores for any candidate.

13. Reserve list

Following the 16+ assessment process, we operate a reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry to Year 12. The reserve list includes children whom we have assessed, and are confident 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.

14. Occasional Places

The Head of Admissions may seek to fill occasional places created by the departure of pupils 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 exceptionally will applications for a place in Year 13 be considered.

15. 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 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 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 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 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, 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 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 will 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 be made and parents are invited to seek guidance from the Admissions Officer and Head of Admissions.

16. Educational agencies

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

17. Future policy changes

This policy will be reviewed ahead of entry for September 2027.

Table of substantive changes

Paragraph	Detail of Change	Date	Owner
All	Instances of “2025” updated to “2026”	May 2025	JDF

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