

# Occasional Places 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 occasional places arising across the Pre-Prep, Junior and Senior School 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 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<sup>1</sup> are asked to note that this policy is applicable for entry in 2026.

## 2. Entry to Highgate

An occasional place is a place that becomes available at a non-standard entry point (i.e. not 4+, 7+, 11+ or 16+). The Head of Admissions will usually 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. Therefore, the departure of a pupil does not automatically signal a place has become available.

- Only in very exceptional circumstances will places be offered for Year 2, Year 6, Year 11 and Year 13 for reasons other than major, unforeseeable changes in a family's personal circumstances.
- It is also unusual for occasional places to become available in Year 1, Year 4 or Year 8.
- It is therefore most common for occasional places to be offered in Year 5, Year 9 and Year 10 only.

We maintain a shortlist of applicants interested in an occasional place, which we renew each academic year. Applicants need to re-register each September if they wish to reconfirm their interest in a place. This is to ensure we hold up-to-date information. If and when a place becomes available, we will then contact applicants to advise them of our assessment procedures.

If we have a very small number of places or a very large number of applicants, we may not be able to offer everyone the opportunity of an assessment. The School reserves the right to prioritise families relocating, children of staff, siblings of current pupils, pupils living close to the School, pupils with an exceptional report from their current school or children with an exceptional pastoral need.

If a child has been previously 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.

## 3. Assessment procedures

The assessment process will vary according to the age group of the cohort, and the number of children being assessed. For applicants to the Junior School or Senior School, this will normally comprise of a series of written tests (normally

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

English, Mathematics and Reasoning), plus a second assessment that will comprise of an interview, and may involve some group working. These may both take place on the same date, or on different dates.

The aim of the first round (written tests) is to allow the School to identify candidates who could cope with the scholarly nature of the academic education offered by Highgate.

The aim of the second round (interview-based) is to gauge candidates' intellectual curiosity, their instincts and attitudes to co-curricular life, their teachability, their interpersonal skills and their behaviour, in order to choose those who will most benefit from what we have to offer at Highgate, in and out of the classroom.

For applicants to the Pre-Prep, this will normally comprise an observation. Please see the 4+ admissions policy for more information.

For applicants to Year 13, this will normally comprise subject-based interviews in the subjects to be studied at A-level as well as a 'general' interview. Please see the 16+ admissions policy for more information.

For all applicants, children are assessed relative to all other candidates applying in that particular year.

The School reserves the right to make changes to an assessment process when necessitated by external factors. In the event of alterations to timings or processes, all applicant families will be advised as soon as practically possible.

The Admissions Office will advise all applicants of the full details ahead of any assessment taking place.

## 4. Financial assistance

Any occasional place offered will be a full fee-paying place, as there are no bursary places available outside of the standard entry points.

We do not offer academic scholarships.

## 5. Final selection procedure

Once assessments have taken place, an Admissions Panel (usually consisting of the Head of Admissions plus academic staff involved in the assessment process) meets to recommend children to whom offers of places should be made.

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.

Letters will be issued setting out the outcome of a child's application. They will make clear the arrangements for any reserve list or for the acceptance of places and the payment of a deposit.

## 6. 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. In addition, where we operate a two-stage process, siblings will only be invited to the second stage should their performance in the first stage justify it.

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.

## 7. 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.

## 8. 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.

## 9. 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.

## 10. Reserve list

Following the assessment process, we operate a reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry. 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. Candidates may be transferred to our "occasional places" list for the following year if parents wish and spaces are available. They may also apply for entry at a standard entry point (i.e. 7+, 11+ or 16+) if applicable.

## 11. 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.

## 12. Educational agencies

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

## 13. Future policy changes

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

## Table of substantive changes

Paragraph	Detail of Change	Date	Owner
2	Applicants will need to re-register each September “School report” added to list of factors that may be considered	May 2025	JDF
3	All applicants offered the chance to sit an assessment will also be interviewed	May 2025	JDF
All	Instances of “2025” updated to “2026”	May 2025	JDF

**HIGHGATE**

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