

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

*This policy aims to explain how applications for places at 11+ (Year 7) 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 Office are published on the School 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. Tests are used to assess candidates' strengths in these areas. Applications from pupils 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).

### Policy and Procedures

#### 1 Entry to Highgate

Entry is by means of written tests and interviews. Candidates must be in the equivalent of a Year 6 class at the time of the test. It is expected that children who are 'out of year' for their age will have been out of year since the start of their school career at Reception (for example, a summer born child who started school a year late) or will have had compelling medical or pastoral reasons for repeating a year during primary school. Evidence of this may be sought before the application is accepted.

An online 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.

The written entry tests currently consist of papers in English, Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning which are taken in December before admission the following September. This is the first stage of the selection procedure. The tests allow the School to identify candidates who should cope with the scholarly nature of the academic education offered by Highgate. A proportion of the candidates are invited for interviews which take place in January. Candidates are chosen for interview based on results gained in the written tests. It is anticipated that successful candidates will fare well in all aspects of the written tests but a candidate who fares poorly in one paper but strongly in another may be considered.

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, 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**

The expectation is to interview a good proportion of those who sat the written tests over approximately a week in January. The interview is not a second academic test but is a factor in the selection process. The aim is to make the procedure fair and consistent for all candidates: candidates are interviewed in groups which will test their listening skills, their ability to collaborate with other children and their problem-solving ability. We aim to gauge candidates' intellectual curiosity, their instincts and attitudes to co-curricular life, their teachability, their interpersonal skills and their behaviour, during the interviews and at other times, in order to choose those who will most benefit from what we have to offer at Highgate, in and out of the classroom. A team of staff will interview the children.

Parents and carers should be aware that we interview more children than we have places available and that final decisions on the offer of places will still predominantly be informed by the ranking order in the tests, taking into account interview performance and the confidential reports from a candidate's current school.

Once interviews have taken place, the 11+ Admissions Panel, usually chaired by the Head of Admissions, meets to recommend candidates to whom offers (places, bursaries and music scholarships) should be made.

## **3 Places, bursaries and awards available each year**

For entry in 2024, places will be available for approximately 80 (girls and boys) who will join upwards of 100 pupils progressing to Year 7 from our Junior School.

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).

We do not make academic scholarship awards on the strength of the entrance tests alone.

### **3a Music Awards**

We make music awards (scholarships and exhibitions) for pupils joining the School at 11+ 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.

## **4 Final Selection Procedure**

The Admissions Panel (usually consisting of the Deputy Head (Academic), Assistant Head (Academic Operations and Digital Strategy), the Head of Admissions, the 11+ Admissions Officer and the Bursar) convenes to decide collectively to whom offers 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.

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**

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 by 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 give 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 11+ assessment process, we operate a reserve list to fill up spaces not taken up for entry to Year 7. 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 10).

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 10 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.

## **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 or carers are in any doubt about what might be relevant they should contact the 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.

## **12 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.

## **13 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.

## **14 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