



Selective High Schools and Opportunity Classes: some facts



Information for parents/carers and students

What are selective high schools?

Selective high schools cater for highly achieving academically gifted students who may otherwise be without classmates at their own academic and social level. These schools help gifted and talented students to learn by grouping them with other gifted and talented students, teaching them in specialised ways and providing educational materials at the appropriate level.

Selective high schools are listed at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/types/shs_ahs_details.php

What are opportunity classes?

These classes cater for highly achieving Year 5 and 6 academically gifted students who may otherwise be without classmates at their own academic and social level. These classes help gifted and talented students to learn by grouping them with other gifted and talented students, teaching them in specialised ways and providing educational materials at the appropriate level. The schools with opportunity classes are listed at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/types/primarywithoc.php

How do you qualify for entry?

For Year 7 selective high school entry, students are considered on academic merit. Academic merit is decided mainly by combining the results of the primary school assessments in English and mathematics and the Selective High School Placement Test. The Selective High School Placement Test is conducted in March of the year following the year of application. The test consists of reading, writing, mathematics and general ability components.

For Years 8 to 12 selective high school entry, students are considered on academic merit using criteria determined by the selection committee for each school. These criteria can include internal or external testing, careful evaluation of academic competition results and interviews.

The procedure for Year 5 opportunity class entry closely resembles that applicable to Year 7 selective high school entry. The relevant test is called the Opportunity Class Placement Test and is conducted in late July or early August each year. This test contains test items in reading, mathematics and general ability.

Past test papers for opportunity class entry and selective high school entry are available at:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/shsplacement

Who can apply?

Students from government and non-government primary schools in NSW may apply for selective high school and opportunity class entry. Interstate and overseas students may apply if their family will be living in NSW at the time of enrolment and intends to live in NSW for the time of their schooling.

Students must be citizens of Australia or New Zealand or permanent residents of Australia to enrol in a selective high school or opportunity class.

Applicants who are unable to meet the residency requirements but believe that there are extenuating circumstances applicable to their case may apply, provided that they are already living in Australia. Applicants who qualify for selective high school entry on academic grounds but do not meet the residency requirements, including those who hold diplomatic visas, will have the opportunity to appeal for special consideration through the appeals process.

How do I apply for Year 7 selective high school or Year 5 opportunity class entry?

- All applicants must apply online at the Unit's website.
- Parents or caregivers without internet access will need to go to a public library where internet access is free. Parents with a disability that prevents them from using a computer should contact the Unit for assistance.
- Application information documents are available from the student's government primary school or from primary schools with opportunity classes and school network offices if they attend a non-government school.
- The application must be completed in English.
- Parents of students enrolled in a non-government school must give a downloaded copy of their online application to the principal. Non-government school principals send the completed principal's page to the Unit.
- All principals of government primary schools will complete processing of all applications from their school online.

When do I apply?

Application packages for Year 7 entry to a selective high school are available in October when the students are in Year 5. Application packages for Years 8 to 12 entry in the following year are available in June. Application packages for opportunity classes are available in May when the students are in Year 4.

What schools can I apply for?

For selective high school entry you may apply for up to three schools. For Year 7 entry put your choices in your preferred order on the application form. If you qualify for more than one school you will be offered a place only in the school which is highest on your list of preferences.

For Years 8 to 12 entry you will need to complete up to three application forms and send them separately to the individual schools you have chosen.

For opportunity class placement all applicants may apply for up to two schools with an opportunity class.

What if my child can't sit the Selective High School Placement Test or the Opportunity Class Placement Test?

The tests are held on only one day per year and only in some NSW government high schools. If a child is ill or suffers some other misadventure parents can submit an illness/misadventure claim for consideration. A claim for illness must have a medical certificate and an Independent Evidence of Illness for the day of the test attached. The student may be assessed on school assessment scores if these are available or on other evidence such as an individual IQ (intelligence) test if they are not.

If the child is not in NSW at the time of the test you can use the Interstate or Overseas Report of Academic Merit. Such applicants must provide the results of a standardised test of reading, a standardised test of mathematics, a writing sample (selective high schools only) and an individual IQ test conducted by a qualified practitioner.

Who makes the placement decisions?

All decisions are made by selection committees for each individual school. The selection committees consider the scores obtained by each student and any other evidence available. Each student will be advised if they have been successful, unsuccessful or have been placed on a reserve list.

Can I appeal against the selection committee's decision?

If there is evidence that factors may have prevented students from doing their best in the test or from gaining higher school assessment scores, parents may lodge an appeal. The appeals panel will consider the evidence provided and may endorse or change a selection committee's decision.

Where can I get more information?

- Read the application information.
- Speak to the principal of your child's primary school.
- Find information about selective high schools on the internet at:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/shsplacement
- Find information about opportunity classes on the internet at:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ocplacement
- Contact the High Performing Students Unit

Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au

Telephone: 1300 880 367

Fax: (02) 9266 8435

Post: Locked Bag 53, DARLINGHURST NSW 1300

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/Selectivehighschoolplacement

www.facebook.com/Opportunityclassplacement

TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICE

If you would like further information contact the Principal or the High Performing Students Unit. If you need an interpreter to assist with your enquiry please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. The operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.