

Fact sheet: Selective high schools and Opportunity classes

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 students to learn by grouping them with other gifted students, teaching them in specialised ways and providing educational materials at the appropriate level.

Selective high schools are listed at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-7/what-are-selective-high-schools/list-of-selective-high-schools>

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 <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5/what-are-opportunity-classes>

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 placement includes school assessment scores and a state-wide test. 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:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5/the-test>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-7/the-test>

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 entry?

- All applicants must apply online at the department's website. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-highschools-and-opportunity-classes/year-7>
- Parents or caregivers without internet access will need to go to a public library where internet access is provided. Parents with a disability that prevents them from using a computer should contact the Team for assistance.
- Application information documents are available on the department's website or from the student's government primary school or from selective high schools.
- The application must be completed in English.
- Parents of students enrolled in a non-government school must give a copy of the Principal's page to the primary school principal. Non-government school principals send the completed principal's page to the Team.
- All principals of government primary schools will complete processing of all applications from their school online.

How do I apply for Year 5 opportunity class entry?

- All applicants must apply online at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5>
- Parents or caregivers without internet access will need to go to a public library where internet access is provided. Parents with a disability that prevents them from using a computer should contact the Team for assistance.
- Application information documents are available on the department's website or from the student's government primary school or from primary schools with opportunity classes if the student attends a non-government school.
- The application must be completed in English.
- Parents of students enrolled in a non-government school must give a copy of the Principal's page (sent to non-government school applicants after they apply) to the primary school principal. Non-government school principals send the completed principal's page to the Team.
- All principals of government primary schools will complete processing of all applications from their school online.

When do I apply?

Applications for Year 7 entry to a selective high school open in October and close in November when the students are in Year 5. Applications for Years 8 to 12 entry in the following year open in June and close in July.

Applications for opportunity classes open in May and close in June when the students are in Year 4. See key dates on the department's website.

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 your child qualifies 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. Put your choices in your preferred order on the application form. If your child qualifies for more than one school you will be offered a place only in the school which is higher on your list of preferences.

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

The tests are held on only one day per year and only in designated test centres in NSW government high schools.

If a child is ill or injured or suffers some other misadventure that affects their attendance at or performance in the test or during Year 5 parents can submit an illness/misadventure request for consideration. A claim for illness must have a medical certificate. The medical practitioner should also complete the section of the illness/misadventure form called Independent Evidence of Illness for the day of the test. 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 and was not in a NSW school for Year 5, interstate or overseas applicants may be asked to have their children assessed on an individual IQ test and they may be subject to further testing on their return to NSW.

What if my child can't sit the Opportunity Class Placement Test?

The tests are held on only one day per year and only in designated test centres in NSW government high schools.

If a child is ill or injured or suffers some other misadventure parents can submit an illness/misadventure request for consideration. A claim for illness must have a medical certificate and an Independent Evidence of Illness (completed by the medical practitioner) 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 and was not in a NSW school for Year 4, interstate or overseas applicants may be asked to have their children assessed on an individual IQ test and they may be subject to further testing on their return to NSW.

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. Students 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. Appeals cannot be made on grounds that have been or should have been dealt with through the illness/misadventure process. The grounds on which appeals are not considered valid are listed at

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-7/outcome#Appealing5>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes/year-5/outcome/appeals>

The appeals panel will consider the evidence provided and may endorse or change a selection committee's decision.

Further information

Where can I get more information

- Read the application information available on the website at <https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/selective-high-schools-and-opportunity-classes> or available at NSW primary schools.
- Speak to the principal of your child's primary school.
- Contact the High Performing Students Team

Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au

Telephone: 1300 880 367

Post: GPO Box 33, SYDNEY NSW 2001

SHS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/772251106301086/>

OC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/159342048077050/>

TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICE

If you would like further information contact the Principal or the High Performing Students Team. 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.