



2009

Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit

Year 7 Entry to Selective High Schools Application Package

Important dates

Application packages available in schools	29 October 2007
Parents return application forms to schools	16 November 2007
Principals return completed forms to the Unit	7 December 2007
Test centre advice letters received by parents or caregivers	4 March 2008
Selective High Schools Placement Test	13 March 2008
Outcome letters	July 2008

Please note: An application must be made on the printed application form inside this document. Each form has a unique barcode for use when processing. Applications will not be accepted in any other printed format.

Contact details

Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit
NSW Department of Education and Training

Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au

Postal address: PO Box 6109 Milperra DC 1891

Telephone: 02 9707 6262 Fax: 02 9707 6265

Website: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/k-6assessments/selectiveschools.php>

**Please detach and complete the application form inside.
Retain the outside information section for later reference.**

Note:

“Parent” is defined under the *Education Act 1990* as “a guardian or other person having custody or care of a child”. In this document, “Unit” refers to the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit.

A list of the selective high schools is shown at the end of this document. In this document “selective” includes fully selective high schools, partially selective high schools and selective agricultural high schools.

Selective High Schools

Selective high schools cater for highly achieving, academically gifted students. These schools can provide intellectual stimulation by grouping gifted and talented students together, concentrating school resources and using specialised teaching methods.

There are three different categories of selective high schools: fully selective, partially selective and agricultural high schools.

Partially selective high schools have both selective and community classes. (Note: Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay Campus, although partially selective, has selective classes only in Years 11 and 12 and is therefore not included in this application process.)

Agricultural high schools are selective high schools that emphasise the study of agriculture, with the boarding sections giving some priority to isolated students.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Read this document carefully and keep this information section for later reference.
2. Complete all relevant details on the application form and keep a photocopy.
3. Lodge the form with the principal of the student's current government or non-government primary school. Schools will provide school assessment scores. They will also provide comments where relevant.
4. Ensure that the student attends the Selective High School Placement Test on 13 March 2008.
5. If by 4 March 2008 you have not received advice of the test centre the student has been allocated to, you should telephone either the Unit, on the number shown on the front page of this document, or contact your child's government primary school. Test centre allocations will also be published on the website shown on the cover of this document.
6. In July 2008 you will receive advice of the outcome of the application.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

The application form in this document is processed using electronic scanning techniques. A sample application form is available on the website for your information but **cannot be used for application purposes**.

To ensure your application is valid:

- use only the printed application form which has a unique barcode
- write neatly in black pen within the boxes shown on the form using BLOCK letters
- complete all sections relevant to the application
- do not write 'not applicable', 'n/a', 'nil' or draw a line through any boxes on the form. If a section of the form is not relevant it must be left blank
- if an error is made while completing the form, obtain a fresh copy.

SUBMITTING THE FORM

All applicants, whether from government or non-government primary schools, are required to submit their application forms to their current primary schools for processing and forwarding to the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit.

All applications must be submitted on the printed form included with this document. **Photocopied and printed internet sample versions will not be accepted.**

Processing the form

Parents complete all relevant sections of the form and submit it to the principal of the student's current primary school.

Principals process the form by providing school assessment scores in English and mathematics, based on the student's performance from Year 4 up to the end of Year 5, providing comments if applicable, signing and stamping the form and sending it to the Unit. Comments from principals regarding boarder applicants or unusual circumstances are appreciated by selection committees.

Principals are invited to comment on any issues they consider relevant to the application.

Formal exemption

A small number of NSW non-government schools may not process the application forms. Parents of students from such schools must seek a formal exemption after they have approached the schools. Exemption forms are available from the Unit or they can be downloaded. The Unit's contact details and web page are shown on the cover of this document. The exemption form contains further details about when and where the form must be lodged.

Formal exemption will normally not be granted by the selection committee if the applicant does not have school assessment scores but other students from the school do. Applicants who have NOT lodged their application form with the school principal of a NSW school will be ineligible for placement unless they have sought and been granted exemption. If a formal exemption has been granted, applications will usually be considered on the basis of the Selective High School Placement Test only.

Note: Interstate and overseas applicants are not required to seek formal exemption. School assessment scores provided by interstate and overseas schools cannot be used for score processing, though they can be considered as supporting evidence.

COMMUNICATION

All correspondence and telephone advice is provided to the parents named on page 2 of the application form.

No information can be provided to any person who is not listed on the application form as a parent, other concerned adult or special contact.

Under normal circumstances, as parents make all applications for entry to selective high schools, no correspondence or telephone conversations will be conducted directly with students.

Irrespective of whether or not a parent wishes to keep application information confidential from another parent

or interested person, the Unit will provide the information wherever it has a legal obligation to do so or where the person requesting the information is entitled to access such information.

A parent, not listed on page 2, who wishes to receive correspondence related to the application, must send a request in writing to the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit, so that arrangements can be made for copies of correspondence to be sent if appropriate in the circumstances.

Email and post

The Unit will be sending correspondence by email wherever possible. Please do not enter your email details if you do not wish to be contacted in this way.

If you do provide your email address you must contact the Unit if you change your email address or email provider or no longer have email access. This is particularly important where parents have provided a work email address and change their place of employment. **It is the parents' responsibility to monitor the receipt of emails at critical times such as the fortnight prior to the test and when outcome letters are due.**

If providing your email address please:

- print clearly and accurately
- use block capitals unless your email address is case sensitive
- provide only one email address.

Special contact

Please show on page 3 of the application form the name and telephone number of another adult the Unit may contact if the parents are unavailable.

Change of application details

Please inform the Unit by mail or email if there is a change in details such as your child's name, postal address, email address or school. You should also inform the Unit by mail or email if you want to withdraw your application. Note: Changes of application details will not be accepted over the telephone.

COURT ORDERS

If there are court orders affecting a parent's entitlement to a child's records, please complete the relevant section on page 3 of the application form and attach documentary evidence.

CRITERIA FOR ENTRY

Students must compete academically with all other candidates for entry to each selective high school. Generally academic merit is determined mainly by the combination of the results of the Selective High School Placement Test in reading, writing, mathematics and general ability, together with the primary school assessments of student performance in English and mathematics.

Additional evidence of academic merit may also be considered at the discretion of the selection committee.

ACADEMIC RECORD

All applicants attending schools in NSW are required to have school assessment scores completed by the school principal.

Attachments

Other supporting information (if relevant):

- most recent school report (required for all students)
- information about disabilities and their effects on the academic performance of students and special test provisions that may be required
- the results of individual IQ tests if appropriate. Note that these must be supported with a full IQ report
- supporting information where students are outside the normal age range.
- supporting information where students are in Year 5 or Year 7 in 2008.

As placement is based on academic merit, generally determined by a combination of the school assessment scores and the Selective High School Placement Test, you are **not required** to include any other attachment at the application stage.

Rather than sending attachments, please summarise your child's outstanding academic achievements on page 6 of the application form.

Do **NOT** send with your application attachments such as:

- school-specific merit or behaviour certificates
- achievements in the performing arts or sports
- copies of the Basic Skills Tests
- certificates from statewide competitions.

Where further information is necessary the selection committee may approach the current primary school or request further information from parents.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Disability and cultural background

The selection committee will give special consideration to certain students to determine whether or not their ability to demonstrate academic merit has been disadvantaged by disability or cultural background. Such students include those with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and students with a language background other than English who have been doing most school work in English for less than four years,

Age

Students entering Year 7 in selective high schools in 2009 will usually have been born between 1 January 1996 and 1 August 1997.

Where students are in Year 6 but were born after 1 August 1997, parents and schools are required to comment on their social and emotional development in item 26 on page 7 of the application form. The selection committee will contact you if further information is required. Principals are also asked to confirm that official acceleration has occurred.

School Year

Students entering Year 7 in selective high schools in 2009 are normally in Year 6 in 2008.

Students not yet in Year 6 in 2008

Where students have not reached Year 6 in 2008 and are seeking to accelerate to Year 7, this acceleration should be strongly supported by the school principal.

In determining a student's suitability for accelerated progression to a selective high school, selection committees will be guided by the *Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students* (Revised 2004). This document is available from the Department of Education and Training website.

Selection committees will also be guided by the *Guidelines for Accelerated Progression*, published by the Board of Studies. This document states on page 21:

"Has the student demonstrated a comprehensive achievement well in advance of the enrolment cohort when performance is assessed against the outcomes for the current curriculum stage?" AND "On a state-wide basis, it is probable that only one in 200 (0.5%) students would be capable of acceleration in all subjects."

Students already in Year 7 in 2008

Applications for students already attending Year 7 at high schools in NSW in 2008 are not normally accepted for Year 7 selective high school entry in 2009. Where there are extenuating circumstances strongly supported by the student's current school, application may be made and full explanations with supporting documentation must be included. Selection committees will determine whether such applications will be accepted. Note that selection committees will not accept applications for repetition of Year 7 where it is clear that such repetition is not academically appropriate.

Parents are reminded that selection committees may also consider whether or not students who took the Selective High School Placement Test in 2007 have gained undue advantage from their previous experience with the test.

Applications for students whose age or school year is outside the limits described above may not be finalised at the same time as the applications of other candidates. These applications may be placed temporarily on 'hold' to allow the selection committee to complete further enquiries.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP AND RESIDENCY STATUS

Candidates must normally be Australian citizens or holders of a visa granting permanent resident status in Australia. Information on Australian citizenship is available on the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs website at: www.citizenship.gov.au. Official evidence of Australian citizenship may be obtained by the issue of a *Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship*.

Citizens of New Zealand living in New South Wales are eligible for selective high school entry. Permanent residents of New Zealand are treated in the same manner as temporary residents of Australia.

School principals are required to check claims of residential status and citizenship against school records.

Applicants who do not meet these residency requirements at the time of applying, but expect to meet them in the near future, are allowed to apply. Such applicants will have to show evidence that they meet all residency requirements before being offered a place. 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 entry on academic grounds but do not meet the residency requirements, including those who hold diplomatic visas, will be advised that their applications are on 'hold' pending clarification of their residency status. These applicants will then have the opportunity to appeal for special consideration through the appeals process (see page 7).

All successful applicants will be required to show original documentation, such as a *Certificate of Evidence of Australian Citizenship*, birth certificates or visas, before enrolment can be finalised by the school.

Offers or enrolments may be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Parents must be living in NSW by the beginning of the 2009 school year. If parents normally live in NSW but are temporarily out of the state, they should expect to return in the near future. Applications from parents who continue to live outside NSW after the 2009 school year begins will be considered only if there are vacancies after all suitable applicants from NSW have been placed.

ENROLMENT POLICY

The NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) has a responsibility to assess and manage any risk of harm to its staff or students. This includes assessing and managing risks posed to students or staff at a school by a student with a history of violence. Where relevant such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's enrolment policies and procedures.

Information for parents regarding enrolment is available at: <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/schoolfind/enrolment/parentsinfo.php>

Immediate family

You can make a family placement claim if a member of the immediate family (brother, sister or parent/guardian) currently attends or previously attended the school. Where two or more students have equal results, the students with family placement claims will be given priority. For most students this will have little effect on the outcome. For boarding placement, extra consideration may be given to students who have brothers or sisters already attending the school.

Twins and other children

Because there is so much competition for entry to selective high schools you should not expect that, if one of your children has been successful, the other children in your family will be placed. The placement of one twin does not guarantee the placement of another.

Please complete item 12 on the application form if a brother or sister is also applying this year.

TEST INFORMATION

The Selective High School Placement Test will be conducted on the morning of **Thursday 13 March 2008**. It will be administered statewide in designated test

centres, usually established in government high schools. All applicants in NSW at the time are required to sit for the test, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The test is conducted **only** on this day and **only** in designated test centres.

Students who miss the test through illness or other unavoidable mishap may be considered through the illness/misadventure process detailed on page 5. Students unable to take the test because they are interstate or overseas at the time should contact the Unit to determine whether they should apply to be considered under the illness/misadventure or the interstate/overseas procedures. Further details of the interstate/overseas procedures are given on page 7.

The Selective High School Placement Test is written by the Australian Council for Educational Research. It is a secure test and papers are unavailable for scrutiny before or after the test session. The test does not contain any questions used in previous tests. Students' final scores include a school-based assessment component.

School assessment scores

The school assessment scores will be moderated according to the performance of the candidates from your child's primary school in the reading, writing and mathematics tests. Moderating the school assessment scores makes them comparable statewide and gives school assessment scores and test scores in English and mathematics equal weighting.

Sample test and past test papers

These publications assist applicants for Year 7 entry to selective high schools to become more familiar with the Selective High School Placement Test. Items that assess reading may be available after copyright permission to publish them is obtained.

In the actual Selective High School Placement Test there are 45 questions in reading, 40 in mathematics and 60 in general ability.

The Selective High School Placement Test measures ability and is set to discriminate at a very high level. It is very rare for even the highest scoring candidates to score full marks on all components of the Selective High School Placement Test.

Selective high school entry does not depend entirely on a student's performance in the Selective High School Placement Test as school assessment scores in English and mathematics are provided by the primary schools.

It is important to note that selection committees and appeals panels will not accept students' performance in the sample or past papers as evidence of academic merit for the purposes of entry into a selective high school in any future year.

Test centre

All candidates will be advised of their designated test centre. Parents will be required to make appropriate transport arrangements. Note: Parents must not remain on the school premises during the test unless special permission has been granted for student welfare reasons.

If you have not been advised by Tuesday, 4 March 2008 about the test centre your child has been allocated to,

contact the Unit on the number shown on the front page of this document.

A full listing of the test centres will also be available from the website shown on the cover of this document.

All candidates from the same primary school are usually sent to the same test centre.

Test answer sheets will be identified by numbers and not by name to ensure anonymity in the marking process.

If you do not meet the criteria for entry you should not assume that your application has been approved because your child has been assigned to a test centre.

Test components

There are four tests. Three of the tests consist of multiple-choice questions with answers recorded on computer-marked answer sheets. These three tests are reading, mathematics and general ability and each last at least 40 minutes.

The fourth is a writing test. The test is marked by trained markers using pre-determined criteria. A stimulus may be an image, a statement or a question to which students are to respond in writing. Students have 20 minutes to complete this test.

The writing will be judged on the quality of the thinking about a topic, the organisation of ideas and the control of language demonstrated in developing the piece of writing.

It is expected that students will produce writing that is their own original work in response to the stimulus in the test. Marks will not be awarded for writing that does not specifically address the stimulus. Marks will also not be awarded where the writing of students is discovered to have elements in common with writing of other students or published works. Selection committees have the discretion to deduct marks if they believe students have produced work memorised beforehand and adapted to respond to the stimulus.

Students must be careful not to look at the work of others during the test. Students found to be cheating risk disqualification from the test.

Special test provisions

Some applicants request special test provisions for their children because of a sensory or physical disability. If applicable, parents or school principals should request special test provisions on page 6 of the application form.

When a parent or school makes a request for special test provisions the Unit evaluates the feasibility of the request and writes to both the applicant and the student's current government primary school principal explaining whether or not the special test provisions can be granted.

ILLNESS OR MISADVENTURE

If some problem such as sickness or accident stops your child from taking the test or from doing his or her best, you should contact the Unit for an illness/misadventure form or download it from the Unit's web page. The completed form should be returned to the Unit within 14 days of the test. You should include evidence to support a misadventure claim where possible. You **must** include a medical certificate if the child was sick or else

the selection committee will not be able to consider your claim. Generally it is better to take the test where possible and make an illness/misadventure claim than to miss the test. All claims for consideration, based on illness, must be made through the illness/misadventure process.

Although there is an appeals process which occurs later in the year after the outcome is known, appeals based on illness will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Further details of the appeals process are given on page 7. Students who miss out on the test for unavoidable reasons such as illness may be considered on their moderated school assessment scores at the discretion of the selection committee. Where neither test scores nor school assessment scores which can be moderated are available, applicants may be considered on the basis of any alternative evidence presented in requested attachments included with the application such as school reports. In some cases applicants will be invited to use the interstate/overseas application procedure. This procedure is outlined on page 7.

SELECTION COMMITTEES

A selection committee for each selective high school will meet to choose students using the 'Criteria for Entry' on page 3. Each selection committee will consist of at least three people including the school education director, the selective high school principal and a parent or community representative. All placement decisions are made by the selection committee convened for each selective high school.

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION

Outcome letters

The Unit will send you advice in July 2008 telling you, for each school you chose, whether your child:

- is being offered a place and/or
- has been placed on a reserve list and/or
- has been unsuccessful for one or more choices.

Note while offers can be accepted, enrolments will not be finalised until after the official "Application to Enrol" form has been processed.

Hold

In some cases students might not be sent outcome advice at the same time as the rest of the candidates. These students could be placed on hold while the selection committee carries out further investigation and enquiries usually related to residency status, age or any extenuating circumstances.

Response to offers

If you receive an offer you must fill out a response form and return it by the date shown on the response form (generally 14 days after the date of the offer). The printed offer response form must be returned by post as the forms will be processed electronically and faxes may distort the barcodes. You must respond to the Unit not to the individual schools.

Some late offers will be made by telephone and these will usually require responses within 48 hours. The Unit may assume that the offer has been declined if you do

not respond by the due date. If you accept an offer and later change your mind you should let the Unit know immediately, so that the next eligible applicant can be offered the place.

Acknowledgement of response

Whether you accept or decline an offer, you will be sent an acknowledgement confirming your decision. If this confirmation is not received within 21 days you should contact the Unit.

Reminder letter

Correspondence will be sent in December 2008 reminding parents or caregivers who have accepted a place or are on a reserve list that they should notify the Unit if they no longer want the place, so that an offer can be made to the next eligible applicant.

Authority to attend

Once you have accepted an offer you might be asked to fill in enrolment forms for your child during the school's orientation program. Even if you have completed enrolment papers at the school, you will be sent a letter from the NSW Department of Education and Training authorising your child to attend the school. This letter will be sent in January 2009. Apart from giving official authorisation for your child to attend a selective high school, this letter serves as a reminder to people who no longer wish to take up their offer that they should notify the Unit, so that the place can be offered to the next eligible applicant.

To finalise enrolment at a selective high school you must have:

1. received authorisation from the Selective High School and Opportunity Class Placement Unit
2. satisfied all NSW Department of Education and Training enrolment requirements.

Withdrawal of offers

Offers will be withdrawn if it is found that students do not satisfy all the requirements, such as residency, or if students do not enrol at the school at the beginning of the school year without providing a satisfactory explanation.

Offers or enrolments may be terminated if placement is made on the basis of false or misleading information.

Any deferment must be negotiated with the Unit before enrolment. You cannot defer enrolment beyond the first day of Term 2, 2009.

Offers will lapse if the Unit, after several attempts, is unable to contact the applicant to make the offer or determine the response.

Holiday arrangements

If you will be away when offers are being made, you should notify the Unit of a contact address, telephone number or email address and the length of time you will be away. In some circumstances the Unit may contact the special contact person listed on the application form. If your child is on a reserve list you may accept in advance any offer that may be made while you are on holidays.

Early advice

Outcome letters are sent as soon as the information is available and checked. However, if you have a good reason

for needing to know the possible outcome early (e.g. having to pay a non-refundable deposit exceeding \$500 to secure a place at an alternative school), you should:

- contact the Unit for an *Early advice request form*
- complete the form, enclosing evidence (e.g. a letter offering a place at a non-government high school with the closing date and the amount of the deposit clearly stated)
- sign the undertaking to keep the information strictly confidential and return the form to the Unit
- telephone the Unit a day or two before the deadline and, if the early release of information has been approved, you will be told the likely outcome as it appears at the time.

This information is given only once. It is important to understand that the accuracy of this early information cannot be guaranteed as the selection process will not be complete at that stage. Generally the only information the Unit can be reasonably certain about at that stage is whether a particular student is unsuccessful for all choices. No information will be available before mid-June.

Late offers

Parents whose children are on reserve lists will be offered a place if their position on a reserve list is reached. These offers can be made at any time from July 2008 until the end of Term 2, 2009. Students who have been offered a place and are also on reserve lists for higher choices will be sent a subsequent offer if their reserve list position is reached. Such offers will be made whether or not previous offers have been accepted or declined.

Note that after the end of the 2008 school year, no further offers will be made to students who already have a place at a selective high school unless there are extenuating circumstances. In addition to the extenuating circumstances, there will need to be a vacancy, the student must qualify academically for the other selective high school and both selective high school principals must approve.

Reports for schools

The Unit will send reports to government primary schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates. The Unit may, upon request, send reports to non-government schools listing the outcome for each of their candidates whose application forms provide school assessment scores.

Assessment scores and other results

Candidates will receive in their outcome letter advice of the mark out of 300 they achieved in the selective high school placement process, provided that they sat the Selective High School Placement Test and/or had moderated school assessment scores. For students who scored less than 100 out of 300, this advice will be suppressed.

Further details of the marks achieved by your child will be available on written request. Processing of these requests may be subject to the payment of a fee. The Unit's website will be used to clarify this procedure when full details have been finalised.

APPEALS

You may appeal against the decision of the selection committee if you feel there were special factors which might have prevented the student from gaining higher school assessment scores or test scores or if there were

other factors which might not have been considered by the selection committee. An example of grounds for appeal may be where a student has been prevented from obtaining higher test scores by the death or serious illness of a close family member. All such claims must be supported by documentary evidence.

All appeals must be made on an appeal form which is available from the Unit or from the Unit's website. You should complete your section of the appeal form and pass it on to your child's primary school principal, no later than 14 days after the date of the outcome letter. The principal should complete the principal's section and return the form to the Unit, no later than 21 days after the date on the outcome letter.

If the student's school or test performance was likely to have been affected by illness, the Unit should have been notified within 14 days of the test as part of the illness/misadventure process (see page 5). Appeals based on illness will therefore be considered only in exceptional circumstances and all such appeals must include a medical certificate.

If you are appealing on other grounds, you should include evidence to support your appeal.

If your appeal is based on the student's school performance, the panel will consider only evidence concerning performance up to the end of 2007.

The appeals panel may consult with the primary school principal.

You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal in October 2008.

INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Interstate or overseas students (Australian citizens or permanent residents temporarily living interstate or overseas) who are unable to take the Selective High School Placement Test will be considered by the selection committee through either the interstate/overseas procedures or the illness/misadventure procedures.

To use the illness/misadventure procedure students must have attended a NSW primary school during Year 5 and must have school assessment scores which can be moderated.

To use the interstate/overseas procedure you should contact the Unit or download from the Unit's website an interstate/overseas *Report of academic merit* form and arrange, at your own expense, for individual and standardised testing of your child by a registered psychologist or other qualified practitioner. You need to complete both the interstate/overseas *Report of academic merit* form and the standard application form.

LATE APPLICATION

If you have a good reason for making an application after the closing date, you must include a written explanation and a supporting statement from the school principal or other appropriate person. If no explanation is provided the late application cannot be considered.

The selection committee will decide whether or not the late application will be considered. If the selection committee accepts the reason for the late application, the student might be considered on moderated school assessment scores. Where neither test assessment scores nor school assessment scores which can be moderated

are available, applicants might be able to use the interstate/overseas application procedure or may be considered on the basis of any alternative evidence presented.

If you apply after 25 February 2008 your child will generally not be tested and your application will be considered **only** if there is a shortage of suitable applicants. While there is normally no such shortage, country schools which take boarders may have some places available for late applicants.

ENQUIRIES

Enquiries can be directed to the principal of the government school that your child is currently attending or to the Unit at the address or numbers shown on the cover of this document.

Enquiries about courses and programs offered by specific selective high schools should be addressed to the schools concerned. The web page address of each selective high school is shown on pages 11 to 12 where the schools are listed.

After receiving the test centre advice which gives the student number, parents will need to quote the student number or give other identifying information before officers of the Unit will discuss confidential student details on the telephone. Parents who cannot provide adequate identifying information on request will need to make written enquiries.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Travelling times

The selection committee does not consider distances, travelling times and transport arrangements from the student's home to the selective high school. Before listing any school, you should consider available transport and the time your child will take to reach the school.

Transfers

Once students have begun attending a selective high school they cannot automatically transfer to another. If a student is already enrolled at one selective high school and wants to go to another, the parents must fill out a different application form for entry to Years 8 to 11 and lodge it directly with the selective high school they want their child to attend. These forms are normally available from selective high schools in late June.

Order of choice

Ensure that you consider your choices and the order in which you put them carefully before completing the application form (see *Change of choice* below).

You may make up to four choices. The order in which you list those choices matters only if the child qualifies for more than one choice. If your child qualifies for more than one choice, you will be offered only the highest choice for which the child qualifies.

Suppose you made the following choices:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. James Ruse Agricultural | 3. Hornsby Girls |
| 2. North Sydney Girls | 4. Fort Street |

a) If your child qualified for Hornsby Girls **and** Fort Street, you would receive an offer only for Hornsby Girls, the higher choice for which the student qualified.

b) If your child qualified **only** for Fort Street, you would be offered a place at that school regardless of whether you placed that school first, second, third or fourth on your list.

The entry score required for each school varies from year to year depending upon the demand for the school and the scores achieved by those students who have listed the school as a choice.

Change of choice

Before 2 May 2008

If you wish to change your choice of schools before 2 May 2008 you should notify the Unit in writing of your request. This is the date by which all information starts to be prepared for selection committees.

After 2 May 2008

Changes of choice cannot be accepted after this date as they cannot be processed in time for selection committees to be presented with the relevant information.

If you have clearly demonstrable extenuating circumstances such as the purchase of a new residence in a suburb or town very far from the previous residence, you may request a change of choice accompanied by a full explanation and supporting documents. The request for a change of choice will be subject to approval by the delegate of the selection committees.

Approval will not be given for a change of choice on the grounds that the student did not qualify for the original choices.

GENERAL SCHOOL AND SUBJECT MATERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

As with all government schools, tuition at selective high schools is free, but schools may ask for a voluntary contribution to cover services such as library, textbooks and curriculum-related resources. Schools may also ask for contributions to cover the purchase of materials in certain subjects and to cover costs associated with sport or excursions. Boarding fees for boarding agricultural high schools are outlined below.

BOARDING AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOLS

There are three boarding agricultural high schools. Students who are successful in gaining a boarding place at these schools are required to board (live) at the school.

Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School, Tamworth (boarding and day students; boys only)

Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Glenfield (boarding and day students; co-educational)

Yanco Agricultural High School, Yanco (boarding only; co-educational)

Agriculture is a compulsory subject from Years 7 to 10 and for students entering the school in Year 11 in each of the schools.

Where an application is made for any of the boarding agricultural high schools, applicants should ensure that the details of the geographically-isolated claim and the reason for choosing to study agriculture are shown on the application form.

Boarding fees

For 2007 the boarding fee was approximately \$6800 to \$6900, payable in instalments of around \$1700 at the beginning of each term. The boarding fee for 2009 is yet to be determined. Boarding agricultural high schools can levy an application fee of up to \$300, payable on acceptance of a boarding place. This amount is deducted from the boarding fees when the student enrolls or is forfeited if the student is withdrawn after a place has been accepted. In addition to satisfying residency requirements and other conditions for entry, enrolment as a boarding student is subject to the completion of the Residential student agreement, a Student medical history and the payment of the boarding fee.

Priority for boarder placement

Priority for boarding placement in agricultural high schools will be given to geographically-isolated students and then to other country students. Some priority will also be given to students who would have to travel extensively to study agriculture. The academic ability of boarding students admitted to a boarding agricultural high school on the basis of isolation must be comparable to that of other boarder and day students at that school.

Priority for boarder placement is decided in the following categories:

- A. Those students considered “geographically-isolated” according to the Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme. (For further details see the Assistance for Isolated Children brochure). These include students who:
 - have to travel 56 km or more (by the shortest practicable route) between the principal family home and the nearest appropriate government school
 - have to travel (by the shortest practicable route) 16 km or more between the principal family home and the nearest appropriate government school AND 4.5 km or more between the principal family home and transport service to the nearest appropriate government school
 - do not have reasonable access to an appropriate government school for at least 20 days of the school year because of adverse travel conditions (e.g. impassable roads) or other circumstances beyond the family's control.
- B. Country students (those living outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong) with a demonstrated commitment to agriculture and science who would have to travel at least two hours a day (return) to attend a government school offering agriculture in Years 8 to 10.
- C. Other country students with a demonstrated commitment to agriculture and science. These will be considered on the same basis as applicants for day places based on academic merit.
- D. City students (those living in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong) with a demonstrated commitment to agriculture and science who would have to travel at least two hours a day (return) to attend a government school offering agriculture in Years 8 to 10.
- E. Other city students will be considered on the same basis as applicants for day places based on academic merit.

Note: The student's ability to cope in a boarder situation will be taken into consideration.

Within categories A, B and C, students will be prioritised according to the length of travel time (excluding time spent waiting for transport) and academic merit.

If applying for a boarding place you should complete all of the residential agricultural school section on the application form including:

- isolation factors
- interest in agriculture
- ability to cope in a boarding situation.

Note: For Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School and Hurlstone Agricultural High School, a student successful in gaining a boarder placement cannot later be automatically transferred to a day student place, as the placement process is different for boarder and day places.

Schemes providing financial assistance for boarding students

There are three schemes which provide financial assistance to students living away from home.

1. Secondary students living away from home allowance (LAFHA)

This scheme is administered by the NSW Department of Education and Training. The allowance is reviewed every year. For 2008 it is \$1197 per annum with an additional \$281 for Years 11–12 students, if they are geographically isolated.

This allowance is subject to a means test. The Adjusted Family Taxable Income for the year ending 30 June 2007 could not exceed \$50 478. It will be indexed for 2009.

Application forms are available from boarding agricultural high schools and from the Allowances Officer, Secondary Students' Living Away From Home Allowance, Rural and Distance Education, PO Box 717, Bathurst NSW 2795. Telephone 02 6334 8075.

2. Assistance for isolated children scheme (AIC)

The Assistance for isolated children scheme is a Commonwealth Government scheme that targets students who do not have reasonable daily access to an appropriate government school because the family home is geographically isolated. Information about this scheme is contained in a brochure published by Centrelink. The brochure and application forms are available from all Centrelink offices or you may wish to telephone 132 318. The brochure is also reproduced on the Internet at: <http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/publications/st008.htm>

Intending applicants are also reminded that, in addition to geographic isolation, the brochure lists special circumstances which might contribute to the student's isolation.

In addition, students may be able to obtain assistance from Youth Allowance (phone 132 490) or ABSTUDY (phone 132 317), both of which are administered by the Commonwealth.

3. Agricultural high school boarder scholarship (AHSBS)

The NSW Government provides a number of scholarships for boarding students at the three boarding agricultural high schools. The scholarships are available to assist needy and isolated rural students wishing to undertake full-time studies as residential students at a government agricultural high school.

Families of students who are seriously disadvantaged by a combination of low family income and geographic isolation may apply.

Scholarships may be made available at each of the three boarding agricultural high schools in 2009. The scholarship program is currently under review.

Successful applicants should contact the boarding agricultural high school of their choice for further details once the outcome of their application is known.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Must I list four schools?

You should list only those schools you are prepared to accept. You may list from one to four choices. Consider your choices carefully.

2. Does the order in which I list my choices matter?

Yes. If your child qualifies for more than one of your choices, you will be offered a place only at the school of highest choice for which your child qualifies.

3. What provision is made for students from non-government schools?

The selection procedures are exactly the same for all students. Principals of non-government primary schools have been asked to accept your application, add school assessment scores and comments and send it to the Unit. In circumstances where this is not possible you should seek formal exemption.

4. What can I do to prepare my child for the Selective High School Placement Test?

Children should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the kinds of questions they will be asked. Students can practise answering the questions in the sample test or past test papers available on the Unit's website. Students will also be given practice questions before the test begins.

5. What happens if my child gets sick on the day of the test?

You should immediately obtain an *Illness/misadventure form*. You should complete the form, whether or not the student attempted the test, enclose a medical certificate and return the completed form to the Unit within 14 days of the test. The selection committee will then consider the student's illness/misadventure claim as part of the selection process. Remember, it is generally better to attempt the test than to miss it.

6. If my outcome advice indicates that my child is unsuccessful, can his or her name be placed on a reserve list?

No. Three key expressions are used in outcome letters: 'offer', 'reserve list' and 'unsuccessful'. Selection committees decide the students who will receive offers and those who will be placed on the reserve list. These students have higher scores than those who are unsuccessful. Students placed on the reserve list will be given a number indicating their position on the reserve list. Progress on the reserve list varies from year to year.

When offers begin to be made from the reserve list, the progress of each school's list is available on the website shown on the front of this document.

7. What does the Selective High School Placement Test tell me about my child's performance?

The Selective High School Placement Test is designed to help identify students for entry into selective high schools on the basis of academic merit. It is not meant to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses in English or mathematics performance. The student's primary school is in a far better position to advise you on your child's performance in these areas.

8. If my child was unsuccessful for opportunity class placement, does it mean he or she will be unsuccessful for selective high school entry?

Not necessarily. The entry requirements for opportunity classes and selective high school placement can vary quite significantly. Moreover, there is scope for improvement in the ability and performance of students over the time since they applied for opportunity class placement. Conversely, not all students from opportunity classes are successful for selective high school entry.

9. If I receive an offer to one of my lower choices as well as being on the reserve list for one of my higher choices, do I have to give up the offer to stay on the reserve list?

You can accept an offer to one school while remaining on the reserve list for one or more of your higher choices. However, after the end of the school year in 2008 no further offers will be made to students who have already accepted placement in a selective high school.

10. If my child is one of the last to be made an offer, does that mean he or she will struggle at a selective high school?

There are many things which can affect student performance, including your child's willingness to learn, his or her response to teachers and interaction with other students. While some students who receive late offers might have problems, the majority should have no difficulties. The selection committee offers places or reserve list positions only to those students considered capable of doing well at a selective high school.

11. What should I do if my child does not get into a selective high school?

As there is one place for approximately every four or five people applying, many capable students cannot be placed. Be supportive and explain to your child that he or she can be very successful at a comprehensive high school. Students from comprehensive high schools can achieve results which are as good as, or even better than, results gained by selective high school students.

Partially selective – co-educational

School Code	School details	Website
ALX	Alexandria Park Community School[^] Park Road, Alexandria 2015	http://www.alexparkcs-c.schools.nsw.edu.au
CHA	Chatswood High School Centennial Avenue, Chatswood 2067	http://www.chatswood-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
MFH	Macquarie Fields High School Harold Street, Macquarie Fields 2564	http://www.macfields-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
ROS	Rose Bay Secondary College[^] Hardy Street, Dover Heights 2030	http://www.rosebay-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
RYD	Ryde Secondary College Malvina Street, Ryde 2112	http://www.rydesc-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
SEF	Sefton High School Hector Street, Sefton 2162	http://www.sefton-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
BAL	Balmain Campus Sydney Secondary College[#] Years 7–10 only Terry Street, Rozelle 2039	http://www.balmain-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
LEI	Leichhardt Campus Sydney Secondary College[#] Years 7–10 only Balmain Road, Leichhardt 2040	http://www.leichhardt-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
TEM	Tempe High School[^] Unwins Bridge Road, Tempe 2044	http://www.tempe-h.schools.nsw.edu.au

[^] A feature of these schools is that targeted places are available for Aboriginal students.

[#] Students attending Sydney Secondary College Leichhardt and Balmain campuses in Years 7 to 10 will generally proceed to Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay Campus for Years 11 and 12.

Selective agricultural

School Code	School details	Website
Day places only – co-educational		
JRA	James Ruse Agricultural High School 17-31 Felton Road, Carlingford 2118	http://www.jamesruse.nsw.edu.au
Boarder places only – co-educational		
YAF YAM	Yanco Agricultural High School <u>Yanco female boarder</u> <u>Yanco male boarder</u> Euroley Road, Yanco 2703	http://www.yancoag-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
Boarder and day places – male only		
FAM FAD	Farrer Memorial Agricultural High School <u>Farrer male boarder</u> <u>Farrer male day</u> 585 Calala Lane, Tamworth 2340	http://www.farreragri-h.schools.nsw.edu.au
Boarder and day places – co-educational		
HAF HAM HAD	Hurlstone Agricultural High School <u>Hurlstone female boarder</u> <u>Hurlstone male boarder</u> <u>Hurlstone day</u> Roy Watts Road, Glenfield 2167	http://www.hurlstone.com.au

Use the three-letter school code and underlined section of the school name to indicate school choices on the application form.