



NORMAN HENSILWOOD HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY

PREAMBLE

In terms of section 5 (5) of the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Governing Body of a public school must determine the admission policy of that school.

- 1.1 The Governing Body of **NORMAN HENSILWOOD HIGH SCHOOL** has accordingly constituted the following as the admissions policy of the school, in the belief that its provisions are consistent with:
 - 1.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/ 1996.)
 - 1.1.2 The National Education Policy Act (Act 27/1996) and any applicable policies determined in terms of this Act, including the Regulations for Admissions to Schools.
 - 1.1.3 The South African Schools' Act (Act 84/1996) and subsequent amendments.
 - 1.1.4 The Western Cape Provincial School Education Act (Act 12/1997.)
 - 1.1.5 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3/2000.)
 - 1.1.6 The Health and Safety Act.
 - 1.1.7 Judgments of the Constitutional Court on the rights, powers and obligations of school governing bodies.
- 1.2 Whereas NORMAN HENSILWOOD SCHOOL is a public school, the governing body:
 - 1.2.1 acknowledges that it has been entrusted with a public resource which must be managed not only in the interests of those who are learners and parents at the time, but also in the interests of the broader community in which the school is located, and in the light of the values of our Constitution;
 - 1.2.2 defers to the relevant legal provisions and enactments to the extent that they are valid and binding upon them and take precedence over the right of the governing body to determine the admissions policy of the School;
 - 1.2.3 commits to working in partnership with the Head of Department to find workable solutions to matters of disagreement, and to engage meaningfully and in good faith on any disputes, including disputes over this policy and any decision taken on the basis thereof; and
 - 1.2.4 Agrees thereto that any such engagement will be directed towards furthering the interests of learners, taking account of the best interests of the child insofar as this does not impinge upon the rights or best interests of other children.
- 1.3 At the same time it requires of the Principal, the Head of Department and their delegates that they will at all times during any admissions process take the provisions of this policy into account (including the calculated capacity of the school which has been set at **1070** learners, distributed **210** per grade and **35** per class), and apply it demonstrably fairly and in accordance with the law.

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2.1 It is the aim of the school to:

- 2.1.1 Provide an environment where the race, culture, religion and economic standing of the individual are in no instances an impediment to his/her access to, or progress in, any aspect of school life.
- 2.1.2 Make provision during the enrolment process for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 2.1.3 Promote transformation in line with the country's constitution and eradicate such policies or practices which are unfairly discriminatory.

2.2 It is the policy of the school that:

- 2.2.1 No pupil will be refused admission on grounds of race, gender, culture, language, religious belief or financial circumstance. This aspect of the admissions policy will be applied with due cognizance of the following:
- 2.2.2 Whereas it is determined that the medium of instruction is English, learners applying to be admitted to the school in preference to a school where the learner should be sufficiently proficient in English so as not to prejudice their ability to progress academically.
- 2.2.3 It is also the policy of the school that applicants will not benefit from an 'inherited advantage' during the admissions process. This aspect of the policy will, however, be applied with due cognizance of the following:
- 2.2.4 It is regarded as unreasonable to disrupt family relationships by arbitrarily splitting the schooling of siblings. In the absence of telling and objective reasons related to the applicant why this should not happen, an applicant who, at the time of making application, has a sibling enrolled in the school will receive preferential consideration when it comes to placement.
 - 2.2.4.1 It is regarded as similarly unreasonable that a learner should arbitrarily be forced by the school's admission policy to travel to an institution which is not the closest suitable school to where he/she lives with his/her parents. Consequently, in the absence of telling and objective reasons why this should not be so, primary preference will be given to those applicants who live with their parent(s) in closer proximity to this school than any other suitable school. At the same time, this preference will be tempered by a conscious attempt to make provision during the enrolment process for applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - 2.2.4.2 Similarly, in the absence of reasons why this should not be so, secondary preference will be given to those applicants whose parent(s') or legal guardian's places of employment are closer to this school than any other suitable school.
- 2.2.5 Any pupil admitted to the school is admitted to the total school programme, and will not be suspended from classes, denied access to cultural, sporting or social activities of the formal school programme on the grounds of an **inability** by a parent to pay the laid down school fees.
- 2.2.6 The admission of pupils will be so managed that the school's intake aims to include representation of the major demographic segments (i.e. cultural, religious, ethnic and economic) broadly reflective of the composition of the community it serves, without prescribing or accepting any predetermined quotas, numbers or proportions in respect of such representivity.
- 2.2.7 It is specifically noted that enrolment at the Catchment area [or ABCDE Pre-primary/Grade R] does not provide automatic progression to this school.
- 2.2.8 Similarly, enrolment of a sibling at and/or family connections to designated schools in a 'family' of schools (e.g. brother and sister schools) does not provide automatic enrolment at this school.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE ADMISSIONS POLICY

In order to achieve the foregoing, but also to ensure a just and equitable selection process *should the school be oversubscribed*, the measures listed below will be implemented in managing the admissions process.

- 3.1 In February each year the closing date for applications will be set and advertised:
- 3.2 Applications received by the closing date will be given consideration over late applications.
- 3.3 It is specifically noted that the parent/legal guardian of a minor learner has the exclusive right to take an initial decision concerning which school they wish to apply to for their child/ward to be enrolled. Consequently, no application will be accepted or regarded as being valid unless it is made by the parent, legal guardian, person entrusted with the care of the minor learner by order of a competent court, or by a person authorised thereto, in writing, by one of the foregoing.
- 3.4 Where the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places in the **school, grade, class or subject** for which application is made, applicants will be placed on the following basis, bearing in mind the school's policy on non-discrimination:
 - 3.4.1 Whether placement in the School is considered by the school to be in the best interests of the learner concerned.
 - 3.4.2 In accordance with the criteria listed in 4 below.
- 3.5 While no admissions test will be administered to applicants, all applicants and their parents will be expected to attend a meeting/interview with the Principal and/or his/her representative. In the case of applicants from designated feeder schools, where the parents are already aware of the nature and ethos of the school to which application for admission is made, this meeting may either be waived or held with learners only, and not parents. [For a list of designated feeder schools, see the Appendix, s2.1 and s2.2]
- 3.6 Applications received by the cut-off date will be processed before those received after the cut-off date.
- 3.7 Only after all applications received by closing date have been dealt with, will the school consider late applications, and then only if there are still places available in the school.
- 3.8 A written response to every application received will be forwarded to parents by 30 June.

4. ADMISSION DECISIONS

4.1 General expectations

In considering applications, a potential learner will, in the first instance, be expected to:

- 4.1.1 Convince the school in personal discussion and/or a written deposition that s/he will be able to cope academically with the specific pressures and unique demands of the school.
 - 4.1.2 Be supportive of the ethos of the School to the extent that it is evident that there is a clear desire to be educated in a school environment such as the one provided by the school.
 - 4.1.3 Be willing to contribute in the four critical areas of school life: i.e. **academically** as well as **sport, culture, media and service**, and to participate in activities offered by the school.
 - 4.1.4 Be amenable to school discipline as applied in this school, and display levels of behaviour and self-discipline, such that s/he is likely help create, maintain and enhance rather than to disrupt an orderly and disciplined school environment, the teaching process of the school, or the learning of the other learners.
- 4.2 Factors and circumstances to be borne in mind during the admissions decision processes.** The precise application of the admissions criteria and the weighting afforded to each of the criteria shall remain within the discretion of the School Governing Body. The criteria are as follows:
- #### **4.3 General criteria binding on all applicants**
- 4.3.1 The successful completion of or promotion out of the grade immediately below the grade to which admission is sought.
 - 4.3.2 The age of the applicant (i.e. learner to be admitted.) Please note that an applicant whose age varies by two years or more relative to the statistical age norm of the grade cohort will not **normally** be accepted into the school. (Statistical age norm = grade to which admission is sought + 6: e.g. statistical age norm for grade 8 = 8 + 6 = 14: an applicant aged 16 may therefore not be admitted to Grade 8.)

4.4 Further criteria for the admission of those for whom this is not the closest school

- 4.4.1 Other than upon first entry to schooling, a sound record by the applicant in fields such as behaviour/discipline, leadership, academics, sport, arts, culture and community service. This will be balanced by also enrolling learners who, according to the professional judgement of the principal, demonstrate the **potential to benefit** from the educational opportunities on offer and/or to **contribute meaningfully** to the school in any aspect, including in extra-curricular participation.
- 4.4.2 The applicant's understanding of and ability to converse in the medium of instruction at the school at such level that language will not be an unreasonable impediment to his/her academic progress, with the proviso that, in the case of a learner excluded on these grounds, a school offering a more appropriate medium of instruction is available in reasonable proximity to the learner's normal abode, or his/her parents place of work.
- 4.4.3 The applicant's unique ability and/or potential to benefit from and contribute to the school in all forms of school life and in extra-curricular participation.
- 4.4.4 Unique personal circumstances, interests or capabilities pertaining to the applicant which suggest that his/her admission would be in the particular interests of the child or the school.

5. READMISSION AFTER REMOVAL FROM THE ROLL

It may happen that a learner's record has been cancelled in the class register (i.e. the learner has been removed from the roll) on the grounds of "continued absence" (see paragraph 55(e) of the national department's policy on learner attendance). This may occur following poor attendance and must be carried out in accordance with the procedures enumerated in the national or provincial attendance policies.

Should such a learner then apply for re-admission to the school, the application should be considered and the admissions policy and its various criteria applied, but only after:

- 5.1 It has been ascertained that there is a vacant place in the school;
- 5.2 A serious discussion has been held with both learner and parent(s) in which the problems which led to the absence are clarified and addressed, and in which the expectations on all parties, should the learner be readmitted, are clarified; (paragraph 18, especially (d) of the national Learner Attendance policy);
- 5.3 The learner and his/her parents have convinced the school that his/her re-enrolment will be in the best interests of the learner;
- 5.4 The learner and parents have provided the school with a genuine and credible undertaking that the learner's future attendance is likely to accord with expectations;
- 5.5 The parents have accepted that they and the learner have a responsibility in assisting with and ensuring that all work missed during the period of absence is made up; (See paragraph 18(e) of the policy.)
- 5.6 The school has spelt out clearly what role it will play in the behavioural and academic rehabilitation of the learner. (See paragraph 25(e) of the policy.)
- 5.7 If the learner is re-admitted, the admission is treated as a new one, and the class teacher must make a new entry for the learner in the class register. (See paragraph 59 of the policy.)

6. FINAL TOTAL NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS

It is accepted that *the school governing body's powers in respect of admissions are not unfettered, that this policy is not immune to intervention, and that the policy does not inflexibly bind other decision-makers in all circumstances.* Thus, the final number of learners accepted into the school at any one time may vary from the above on the basis of specific enrolments and the subject choices of individual learners in a particular year, or upon the intervention of the Head of Department, with the understanding that any *decision to overturn an admission decision of the principal, or depart from this admissions policy, must be exercised reasonably and in a procedurally fair manner.* The class, grade and school enrolment shall in any event not exceed the calculated capacity by more than 2% in any one grade or two learners in any one class, without the ratification by the School Governing Body of a motivated explanation from the School Management Team or Head of Education for moving to such significant extent beyond the limits laid down in this policy.

7. APPEALS

Decisions taken in terms of this policy are taken by the Principal acting on behalf of the Head of Department in this province. Anyone aggrieved by such decision have the right to appeal to the MEC (Minister of Education) in the province against the decision.

8. ACCEPTANCE AND REVIEW

This policy initially accepted by the Governing Body of Norman Henshilwood High School on 31 July 2019. It was most recently reviewed, amended and/or ratified by the Governing Body on November 2019.