

THE HIGHCREST ACADEMY BANDING TEST

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Intake 2021-2022

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE BANDING TEST DATES COULD BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE,
DEPENDING ON THE GOVERNMENT'S CORONAVIRUS GUIDANCE

Does my child HAVE to take the test to be considered for a place at Highcrest?

YES – your child cannot be considered for a place at Highcrest unless they have taken the banding test. Only in very exceptional circumstances will other arrangements be made – please see the information below.

If my child takes the test, do they HAVE to come to Highcrest?

NO.

Does taking the banding test mean my child is GUARANTEED a place at Highcrest?

NO – you must also apply to Bucks County Council on their preference form which you will receive from your child's primary school. The form must be completed and return to Bucks County Council by their deadline.

So, if my child takes the banding test and I apply to Bucks County Council, then I'll get a place at Highcrest?

NOT NECESSARILY – however, you will have done everything you can to ensure that your child is considered for a place. Bucks County Council will allocate the places based on Highcrest's admissions criteria, as follows:

- 1) A "looked after child"
- 2) A child with an EHCP/statement
- 3) A child with a sibling attending the school in Years 7 to 13 and expected to be on roll at the time of admission
- 4) Other children by distance from the school, with priority for admission given to children who live nearest to the school, as measured by using the distance measurement method operated by the Local Authority

So, what happens if I do nothing? I live just round the corner and I don't want my child to sit another test. Surely you have to give my child a place?

Unfortunately if your child does not sit the banding test, then we will be unable to offer a place at Highcrest.

But that means children from further away who sit the banding test will get a place and my child, who isn't going to sit the test but lives locally, won't get a place?

Unfortunately yes, that is the case. If your child does not take the banding test, then we will be unable to offer them a place at Highcrest. However, should your child take the test then the admissions criteria will be applied and, if they are not a "looked after child", a child with an EHCP/statement, or have a sibling at Highcrest, then distance from the academy will be applied. Therefore your local child will get a place before a child from further away, as long as your child takes the banding test.

I've already got a child at the academy, so surely my younger child doesn't need to take the banding test to get a place?

YES THEY DO – every child who wishes to be considered for a place at Highcrest will need to take the banding test, even if they have a sibling already at the school. If your child does not sit the banding test, we are unable to consider them for a place.

My child has an EHCP/statement, so why do they need to sit the banding test?

Your child's special educational needs may not impact on their ability to take the test. They do need to be allocated to a band and, whilst they will be at the top of the list for admission (based on their EHCP/statement), we still need to put them into the correct band. In very exceptional circumstances we will discuss alternatives with parents.

During the banding test, will there be any special considerations made for those students with special needs?

All students should be able to access the banding test and, as the pass is not a "pass" or "fail", a low score will not disadvantage any student. However, if you have any concerns please contact us.

Where does the banding come in and why do you need to band the children anyway?

To be a truly "all ability" academy, we need to ensure that the intake is balanced and reflective of our society. As Bucks uses a selective system (ie: some children go to grammar school and we therefore don't have the most able children attending the academy), we need to show that we are taking an equal number of children of all abilities. By equally dividing all those who apply into four bands and then applying the admission criteria, we can ensure that we have an equal split of students.

Does it matter where on the preference form I place Highcrest?

All choices for which you would like your child to be considered should be listed in preference order. Bucks County Council will aim to allocate places in order of preference (where eligible), although there is no guarantee of this. Please refer to Bucks County Council's website (<https://www.buckscouncil.gov.uk/services/education/school-admissions/moving-up-to-secondary-school/>) for further details of the preference procedure.

If my child takes the banding test, do they still need to take the 11+?

If you wish your child to be considered for a grammar school place, then you do need them to take the 11+. It is purely your decision if you wish to withdraw your child from the 11+ test.

If my child takes the banding test but passes the 11+, do they still have to come to Highcrest?

NO – not if you have put a grammar school as your first choice. However, your child will be very well catered for educationally and socially if they choose to attend Highcrest.

If my child takes the banding test and does not pass the 11+, will they definitely get a place at Highcrest?

NOT NECESSARILY – however, you will have done everything you can to ensure that your child is considered for a place. Bucks County Council will allocate the places on Highcrest's admissions criteria, as mentioned earlier.

Why can't you use the 11+ to band the children?

Because not all primary students take the 11+. Responses from consultation say that the 11+ discriminates against children from less affluent backgrounds, children for whom English is not their first language, for some children with special education needs, such as dyslexia, and for some children who may not have completed the familiarization tests.

Does the test you use discriminate?

NO – the test requires minimal language skills and is culturally neutral. Please see their website for further information: <http://gl-assessment.co.uk>.

Is there any advantage to tutoring my child for the test?

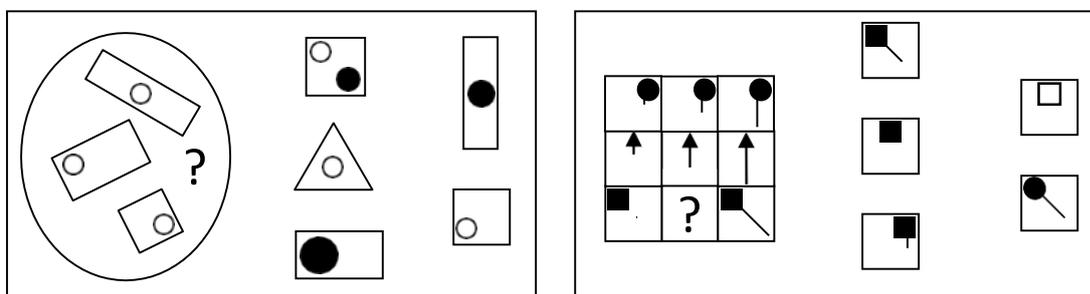
NO – there is no way to tutor for this test; that is one of the reasons we have chosen to use a non-verbal reasoning test. If your child is worried about going into a test without knowing what to expect, please show them the examples below.

Will my child be at a disadvantage if they get a low score?

NO – a low score does not necessarily mean that a student will not be allocated a place at the academy. Whilst a child scoring 100% and a child scoring 1% will be placed in different bands, they will still be considered for a place using the admissions criteria, as mentioned earlier. Children in bands A, B, C and D all have an equal chance of getting a place.

Can you tell me a bit more about the banding test?

Please see the example questions below. Children solve problems using shapes and patterns. No equipment is needed. There is no “pass” or “fail”. The results of the banding test are used purely to divide applicants into four equal bands. Once children have been allocated to a band, the scores are no longer used, and the admissions criteria are then applied, as mentioned earlier.



Can't I just wait?

Tests are planned for:

Monday 4 October 2021	4.15pm
Wednesday 13 October 2021	4.15pm
Tuesday 19 October 2021	4.15pm

How do I apply?

Please complete the Academy Banding Test Booking Form included in this pack. Additional copies can be downloaded from our website: <http://highcrestacademy.org.uk/Entry-for-Y7-in-2022> and returned to the Academy by email to bandingtests@highcrestacademy.org.uk, for the attention of the NVR Co-ordinator. All forms must be received at least one week before the test you wish your child to sit.

What happens before the banding test?

We will email you with the date and time of the session you have been allocated, together with important information on what will happen on the day.

What happens on the day of the banding test?

A parent or responsible adult must bring the child to the test, no more than 15 minutes before the start time. The adult **MUST** wait on site while the test is taken (approximately 45 minutes) and then collect the child.

Will there be anyone at the test to answer my questions about the school?

NO – whilst we want to be helpful, answering your questions on the actual test day could be considered bad practice, as it could be seen as putting pressure on parents. We would, however, be more than happy to answer your questions at any other time.

What happens after the banding test?

We will provide test results, but this will not indicate if a place has been allocated. Please remember, after your child has taken the banding test you must still make an application to Bucks County Council using their preferences form. Offers will be made via the Buckinghamshire County Council co-ordinated process.

We hope you find this information useful but, if you have further questions, please contact the NVR Co-ordinator by email to bandingtests@highcrestacademy.org.uk or telephone on 01494 529866.