



A Parents' Guide

Entrance Exam Process for 11+



Laidlaw

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

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Introduction

This is an extract from a guide that we have written to introduce parents to the process of applying for places at selective independent senior schools. In our area of South West London we are very fortunate to have a very large number of schools to choose from. Whilst it is great to have such a choice, this can also make the process seem particularly daunting. The information provided here has been gathered from our many years of professional experience in preparing children for these exams, as well as our personal experiences when applying for our own children.

The process

Choosing schools

The first step in the process will be to begin visiting schools to help you to produce a shortlist. Given the large number of good independent schools in our area it is advisable to begin looking in plenty of time so that by the autumn term of year 6 as the registration deadlines loom you have a good idea of which schools you will want to apply to. Some schools do not allow you to visit until year 6, but many others are more flexible and allow you to visit before this. Often they will have dedicated open days/mornings or visitor afternoons, either at weekends or during the school working day. Some schools will require you to book a place on an open day, others are open to anyone without a booking. It is often a good idea to look round schools yourself from the autumn term of year 5, and then take your child to visit your preferred schools in year 6.

Our website contains links to the websites of all the local independent senior schools, and we also collate details of open days and exam dates at the beginning of the autumn term and list those on the website. As some school visits require advance booking, and some dates will inevitably clash, we recommend that you plan your visits in good time to avoid disappointment.

When considering which schools to visit, you need to think about a number of factors:

- Will it be a good academic fit for my child?
- What are the facilities like for sport/music/drama
- What extra-curricular activities are on offer?
- What is the pastoral care like?
- How much are the termly fees?
- Will my child be able to travel there easily?

Academic fit is one of the most important factors. Some schools are highly academic and pressured and not for the faint-hearted. Others are at the opposite end of the academic spectrum. We recommend that your child applies to a maximum of 4 or 5 schools, and that the selection contains a range of schools in terms of academic standards to give your child the best chance of success. We advise you to select some realistic options, with an aspirational choice and a fallback school.

Other aspects of the school will be more a matter of personal preference – whether you like the “feel” of the school. We often find ourselves comparing choosing a school with finding a new house – whilst some schools may seem very similar on paper, when you visit you will find that you like some more than others!

All our local independent schools are over-subscribed, and for many, entry is extremely competitive. This can make the whole process seem very stressful. Remember that virtually everyone is applying to multiple schools, and many fortunate children will receive multiple offers. They can only attend one school, however!

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this extract from our booklet. If you would like any more assistance, then please do contact us – our details are on the first and last page.



Assessment and Tuition

Susan Laidlaw Education Consultancy

- Weekly classes in Maths and English individually or in small groups
- Reasoning Classes for 11+ preparation
- Handwriting
- Specialist help for dyslexia and other special needs
- Language Clubs / Lessons – French, Spanish and Mandarin
- Specific Maths Courses for Times Tables and Problem Solving
- Assessments
- School Search Advisory Service
- Provision from KS1 to A level

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