

Opportunity classes and selective high schools

Information for parents and carers

What are opportunity classes?

Opportunity classes cater for intellectually gifted and high potential Year 5 and 6 students. There are 87 schools with opportunity classes (including virtual opportunity classes) across NSW which form part of the public education system.

What are selective high schools?

Selective high schools cater for intellectually gifted and high potential high school students from Year 7 to Year 12. There are 17 fully selective schools, 26 partially selective high schools, 4 agricultural selective high schools (some with boarding facilities) and one virtual selective high school.

What are the benefits of attending an opportunity class or selective high school?

Research shows that high potential and gifted students have specific learning and wellbeing needs. In opportunity classes and selective high schools learning is designed to provide an appropriate level of challenge with children of similar ability. Many high potential and gifted students report feeling a sense of belonging and understanding when they are grouped with similar-ability peers.

How do I know if my child has high potential or is gifted?

Children who have high potential or are gifted tend to:

- be intensely curious
- learn new ideas or skills quickly and easily
- display a good memory
- ask complex questions
- be creative
- enjoy thinking in complex ways
- require fewer repetitions when learning new things
- be highly focused in their area of interest or passion.

If you observe your child demonstrating many of these characteristics it is recommended that you consider applying.

How do students qualify for entry?

Students sit a free placement test.

The opportunity class placement test has three consecutive components:

- reading
- mathematical reasoning
- thinking skills.

The selective high school placement test has four consecutive components:

- reading
- mathematical reasoning
- thinking skills
- writing.

Equity Placement

The department has implemented an Equity Placement Model to increase representation of high potential and gifted students from under-represented groups. Under this model a percentage of places are held for:

- students from communities of low socio educational advantage
- Aboriginal students
- students in rural and remote regions
- students with disability.

There is no separate application process for equity placement. Students from each of the equity groups will be identified using data from the application form and other data held by the department. For more information go to: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/fair-access>

Do students need to practise for the test?

The placement test identifies students with exceptional critical thinking ability, rather than skills that can be coached through rote learning. Students should look at placement tests on the Department of Education website to ensure they are familiar with the test format. Parents should be aware that there is no credible evidence that extensive coaching for the test makes any difference.

You can see past opportunity class placement tests at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/placement-test/opportunity-class-practice-tests>

You can see past selective high school placement tests at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/placement-test/selective-high-school-practice-tests>

Who can apply?

- Students from government and non-government primary schools in NSW may apply for entry.
- Students must be citizens of Australia or New Zealand or permanent residents of Australia to enrol in an opportunity class.
- Interstate and overseas students may apply if their family will be living in NSW at the time of enrolment and intend to live in NSW for the time of their schooling.
- Families who have already applied for permanent residency and have documents from the Department of Home Affairs which give them a reasonable expectation that permanent residency will be granted before placement outcomes are notified, are also eligible to apply.

When do applications open?

Applications open when students are in Year 4 for opportunity classes and in Year 5 for selective high schools. Key application dates and other information is available on the department's website at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/application-process>

How do I apply for entry for my child?

- All applications must be completed online at: <https://shsoc.education.nsw.gov.au/>
- The application must be completed in English.
- Parents can nominate up to two schools with opportunity classes and up to three selective high schools. They should list their choices in their preferred order on the application. Where students qualify for more than one school, they will be offered only their first choice of school.
- Parents with disability that prevents them from completing the application online should contact the Selective Education Unit for assistance on 1300 880 367.
- There is no cost to submit an application or for the placement test.

Where are opportunity classes and selective high schools?

Opportunity classes are located in NSW government schools across the state – search the map and school list at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/choosing-a-school/opportunity-classes#findoc>

Selective high schools are NSW government schools – search the map and school list at: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/schooling/parents-and-carers/choosing-a-school-setting/selective-high-schools/choosing-a-school/selective-high-schools#findshs>



Virtual opportunity classes and the virtual selective high school

If you are located in a rural or remote area, your child may be eligible to apply for a place at Aurora College. This government school has virtual opportunity classes and a virtual selective high school.

Students attend their local public school and join the opportunity class or selective high school classes using an online conferencing system.

Students at schools with opportunity classes, or at schools within the drawing areas of existing opportunity classes and selective high schools are not be eligible to apply for entry to Aurora College.

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>
- Contact the Selective Education Unit
Email: ssu@det.nsw.edu.au
Telephone: 1300 880 367
- SHS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/772251106301086/>
- OC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/159342048077050/>

Telephone interpreter service

If you need an interpreter to assist with your enquiry please call the telephone interpreter service on 131 450, tell the operator the language you need and the phone number you want to call. The operator will call the number and get an interpreter on the line to assist you with your conversation. You will not be charged for this service.