



## Admissions Policy

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## 1. Aims

This policy statement aims to set out our school's arrangements for admission into the school by ensuring:

- Robust and transparent systems in place to support a fair and consistent but flexible multi-disciplinary approach to admissions.
- Procedure that sets out the processes that will be followed in managing and responding to referrals in a timely manner

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

The policy recognises the government legislation Children & Families Act (2014) Section 28 (CFA)

28 Co-operating generally: local authority functions

(1) A local authority in England must co-operate with each of its local partners, and each local partner must co-operate with the authority, in the exercise of the authority's functions under this

Part. (2) Each of the following is a local partner of a local authority in England for this purpose— (g) the proprietor of an institution approved by the Secretary of State under section 41 (independent special schools and special post 16 institutions: approval) that is in the authority's area, or is attended, or likely to be attended, by children or young people for whom the authority is responsible;  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/28>

and CFA 39(4) in order to assess the suitability of the school for the individual.

39 Finalising EHC plans: request for particular school or other institution

(1) This section applies where, before the end of the period specified in a notice under section 38(2)(b), a request is made to a local authority to secure that a particular school or other institution is named in an EHC plan.

(2) The local authority must consult—

(a) the governing body, proprietor, or principal of the school or other institution,

(b) the governing body, proprietor or principal of any other school or other institution the authority is considering having named in the plan, and

(c) if a school or other institution is within paragraph (a) or (b) and is maintained by another local authority, that authority.

(3) The local authority must secure that the EHC plan names the school or other institution specified in the request unless subsection (4) applies.

(4) This subsection applies where—

(a) the school or other institution requested is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the child or young person concerned, or

(b) the attendance of the child or young person at the requested school or other institution would be incompatible with—

(i) the provision of efficient education for others, or

(ii) the efficient use of resources.

(5) Where subsection (4) applies, the local authority must secure that the plan—

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(a) names a school or other institution which the local authority thinks would be appropriate for the child or young person, or

(b) specifies the type of school or other institution which the local authority thinks would be appropriate for the child or young person.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/39>

We also adhere to the Equalities Act 2010 to promote equally the rights of pupils regardless of race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment. Hope House School has a multi-faith ethos as its foundation and recognises the value and importance of other people's faiths and beliefs.

### 3. Admissions Criteria

For a child or young person to be considered for a place at Hope House School, pupils must meet the following criteria:

- I. All pupils must have an EHCP either finalised or in draft and agreed and be referred by the local authority.
- II. Pupils will have a primary diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Condition, demonstrating a range of needs resulting in inflexible thinking patterns, social communication and interaction difficulties, emotional dysregulation, and sensory difficulties. Different diagnosticians use different methods to diagnose but the guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Clinical guideline 128, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg128> should be followed.

A definition of Autism from NICE 2013

a. Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that has a significant impact on the person and their family or carers. Autism is a spectrum disorder, with people on a spectrum of severity. People with autism can be at different points on the spectrum for each aspect of the disorder.

b. The term "autism" describes qualitative differences and impairments in three areas: • difficulties with social interaction

- difficulties with social communication
- difficulties with social imagination

Autism spectrum disorders are diagnosed in children, young people, and adults if these behaviours meet the criteria defined in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD10) and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV Fourth Edition (Text Revision) (DSM IV-TR) and have a significant impact on function.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs51/documents/autism-in-childrenyoung-people-and-adults-briefing-paper2>

- III. It is acknowledged that pupils may have co-morbid conditions, such as, but not limited to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia), Dyspraxia or other health needs. Pupils may also have mental health needs, which will be supported primarily by their local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), for those under 18.
- IV. Hope House School may or may not be able to provide the specialist support or specific environments required for those conditions and needs; however, the pupil's primary need must be identified as Autism Spectrum Condition.
- V. Hope House School can meet the needs identified, of the statutory requirements as described in Part F Educational Needs, of the pupil's EHCP.
- VI. Hope House School can meet the dietary requirements of the pupil, as explained in medical evidence.
- VII. Hope House School can meet the medical requirements of the pupil, as explained in medical evidence.
- VIII. All placements are for 38 weeks and are full time. We are mindful a part time transition may be needed, , subject to the needs of the child and their previous educational experiences.
- IX. Pupils, families, and local authorities must agree to be full participants in the admissions consultation procedure (below) and agree to take part in an age appropriate peer group, academic, social, emotional and impact risk compatibility assessment. This consultation must be funded by the local authority at the school's published fee structure rates based on the cost to educate a pupil at Hope House School. This is agreed as part of any admissions consultation process in line with an assessment of the pupils accessing the core offer and any additional costs, if appropriate, to meet their individual needs.
- X. Families may approach the school directly with questions about possible admission. However, when this happens, the Pupil Manager will redirect them back to the LA who would be responsible for

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funding a placement to ensure collaborative partnership, transparency, and consistency in approach.

- XI. Families may wish to visit the school prior to this process being started, to ascertain if they intend to request the LA who funds their child to follow the consultation process. In order to arrange a visit contact can be made by phone or by the email address published on the school website.

## 4. The Consultation for Placement Process

We receive consultation papers, usually via secure email or by post, from Local Authorities SEND Teams, who are looking to place pupils in line with the Child and Families Act 2014 section 28. In most cases this is following an enquiry from a family or the LA team to the school. The LA sends a copy of the most recent Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) along with supporting documents which could include but is not limited to:

- Latest annual review report;
- Teacher assessment of cognitive functioning levels;
- Educational Psychology report;
- Autism Diagnosis report;
- And any other relevant information that provides a profile of the pupil's needs.

Once received by the school, the documentation is collated into a consultation folder, which is then reviewed by Hope House School Senior Leadership. In some circumstances they may request further information to help them to decide in line with the Children and Families Act Section 28 whether it is possible to meet the needs of the child and if there is a place available to be able to admit the child.

The panel may request further information from or consultation with the child's family, current school (if in school) or previous school (if out of school) and the local authority maintaining the EHCP. School visits to the present setting may take place to observe the young person in a familiar environment. Home visits may be made if the young person has been out of school for a significant length of time or there are specific reasons identified during the consultation process.

If Hope House School decide they cannot meet the needs of the child it will be following Children and Families Act, with a response be sent to the consulting LA, based on the following:

- (a) the school (or other institution) requested is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs of the child or young person concerned, or
- (b) the attendance of the child or young person at the requested school or other institution would be incompatible with—
- (i) the provision of efficient education for others, or
- (ii) the efficient use of resources.

As part of this process, the school will also carry out a review of the existing age/stage appropriate peer group and carry out an impact risk compatibility assessment based on the academic, social, and emotional capacity of the proposed appropriate identified class group. Furthermore, the school will consider the current pupil number in the class and the skills set of the staff. Hope House class sizes are operated at:

Primary – Foundation, KS 1 & KS 2 consisting of up to 6 pupils maximum per class with minimum of one teacher/subject coordinator and 3 teaching assistants.

Secondary – KS3 & KS4, Post 16 consisting of up to 5 pupils maximum per class with minimum of one teacher/subject coordinator and 2 teaching assistants.

Pupils are expected to sustain being taught for most of the time in a class of up to 6 pupils in the primary phase and in a class of up to 6 pupils in the secondary phase. We are unable to support pupils who find it too difficult to be taught in such classes on a full-time basis. We are able to support pupils who find it too difficult to be taught in such classes by gradually increasing their tolerance to join group teaching. With the intention they receive some 1:1 as well as some teaching with their peers. We need to ensure that there is compatibility between pupils.

The school will carefully consider the vulnerability that is likely to be felt by any pupil within the school. If a pupil admission is deemed to have a potentially negative impact, for reasons of health and safety or compatibility around behavioural responses, a placement may not be suitable, and the assessment would be terminated. Once the panel have met and agreed suitability, the designated Senior Leader will contact the local authority to confirm suitability. Once the local authority confirms the placement, the school will liaise with the family to arrange visits to the school. This will include further assessments of the child, a meeting with the family and child, and gathering of additional information, with a view to agreeing the most suitable transition process including any "taster sessions".

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The LA would be expected to cover the full cost of the pupil fees which will be made available as part of the consultation process. Once this is agreed the LA would finalise the EHCP where Hope House School is named on the plan. A contract between the school and the local authority will be drawn up outlining the contractual agreement for the child to be admitted to the school and for the placement to continue.

## **5. Assessment and transition process**

Depending on the needs of the child, the taster sessions may, at the school's discretion, take the form of half days or a mixture of half and full days and this will be discussed in advance with the family and the LA. Prior to taster sessions, the school will meet with the family to construct a risk assessment, including any medical needs. The school also creates a profile of the child which is circulated to all staff prior together to ensure that the whole school has a robust awareness of each child's individual needs. The school also create a bespoke timetable. This transition and assessment period is very flexible to meet the individual needs of the child and may take the form of full days and half days. During this time, the child continues to be placed in an ability and, where possible, age-appropriate class, although this may alter during the assessment if an alternative option needs to be sought. They will have a full speech and language and occupational therapy assessment, which also includes assessment for sensory integration dependent on their needs. Other assessments also take place such as a reading age assessment and input from the wider therapy team, which may include education psychology. Formal and informal observations of the child are also carried out during this time. We need to ensure that there is compatibility between pupils. The school will carefully consider the vulnerability that is likely to be felt by any pupil within the school. If a pupil admission is deemed to have a potentially negative impact, for reasons of health and safety, a placement may not be suitable, and an early review maybe discussed with the LA SEND Caseworker and parents/carers informed. This will be because the information the school had had over the transition process indicates that the school cannot meet the needs of the pupil, as stated on the EHCP.

## **6. Assessment Process Capacity**

We always endeavour to arrange the composition of classes to provide the best possible educational experience for all pupils and are mindful of the impact of new additions who are being assessed on our existing cohort. We recognise and plan for the known disruption which transitioning pupils have upon the school population and any particular class group by setting levels in terms of numbers that ensure the minimum disruption to all parties concerned. We therefore provide the following capacity levels, which are also subject to the school's discretion to vary to meet particular circumstances:

- When pupil numbers are at our agreed limit with the Department of Education(DfE), the tolerance level for admitted pupils will match the number of pupils who are leaving, i.e., if there are 3 potential leavers for July, then a maximum of 3 new pupils will be admitted in the following September, depending on which key stage has vacancies and the pupil number capacity in each class.
- Pupils are expected to sustain being taught for most of the time in a small class of up to 6 pupils in the primary phase and up to 6 pupils in the secondary phase.
- We are unable to support pupils who find it too difficult to be taught in class or in a small group on a full-time basis for a prolonged period of time. This would require "bespoke provision". We would require additional funding for staffing in the short term, until the pupil can return to the most appropriate teaching group.

When the school is at capacity of pupil numbers, we are not able to provide additional appropriate spaces to be able to meet this need.