



Outcomes
First Group

Admissions Policy

Hemlock Stone School

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Hemlock Stone School is an independent specialist day school. We provide specialist education for young people aged 5 to 16, who have a range of complex behavioural, communication and social difficulties associated with a diagnosis of autism.

Hemlock Stone School is committed to raising achievement and enabling learners to recognise their potential through an adapted, engaging curriculum. Our priority is to develop the knowledge and skills required to make a manageable and smooth transition to the next life stage. We offer a high-quality therapeutic, supportive learning environment where our young people are supported academically and holistically. We aim to help each young person to become confident individuals and responsible citizens with a fundamental understanding of British Values including democracy,

the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Starting school, or moving from one school to another, can be a worrying time for both parents/carers and children. We aim to make the school admissions process as painless and trouble-free as we can. The guiding principles of Hemlock Stone School's admissions policy are, the school admits learners irrespective of their gender, race, disability, learning difficulty, or special educational needs, provided that there are good prospects of meeting each learner's individual needs without unduly prejudicing the education and the welfare of other learners. In a situation where Hemlock Stone School felt unable to provide or make available any specialist help required, either due to lack of resources or local availability, then a learner's special needs might inform the decision of whether or not to offer a place to a learner.

Our focus is on creating an environment that enables the children and young people in our care to achieve their personal best. During referrals, we will explain to each prospective learner, family, and carer everything they need to know about our school and what to expect. For the authorities and families we work with, our commitment to a high quality of learning and care is guaranteed. We pride ourselves on providing transparency to all parties, including a clear plan for progression so that the value and outcomes of our service are measurable at every stage of the journey.

2.0 OUR CONTEXT, AIMS & ETHOS

All learners attending Hemlock Stone school have an autism diagnosis and are working significantly below their age-related expectations. Educational, Health and Care plans are in place to inform the provision planning to ensure that learners are able to progress towards and meet their highly individualised educational goals. In addition to their autism diagnosis, many learners may also have additional associated diagnosis', or medical considerations, such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) or Epilepsy.

Learners attending Hemlock Stone School are grouped into one of three different pathways, based on their needs, EHCP targets and levels of attainment. These are called the Discover, Explore and Navigate Pathways. Discover and Explore are our informal/semi-formal pathways and allow our learners to explore their sense of self. These programmes are designed to allow learners to gain a better understanding of their individualised communication / sensory profiles, through a sensory play/ intensive interaction approach. Learners on these pathways, will be supported in meeting targets against their ECHP, but also develop a greater sense of self through an EYFS style curriculum based on Development matters and in line with the Equals schemes of learning.

Our formal pathway – Navigate, is designed for learners working at a higher cognitive level, this pathway contains links to the National Curriculum. Learners studying on this route will eventually advance to Entry Level or other qualifications in Key Stage 4.

In addition to pathways Discover, Explore and Navigate, all learners will access an enhanced Enrichment program, where they will have access to the local community which form an integral part of their education and preparedness for adulthood. The enrichment program allows learners to build on their own independence through travel training, shopping and food preparation.

A scheme of learning around Careers has also been established to support learners in understanding the different roles in society and build job aspirations in those learners that may go on to find employment. PSHE, RSE and RE will be delivered to learners at an appropriate level to their educational needs and levels of understanding.

At Hemlock Stone School we recognise and value learners for their unique strengths and their contribution to our school community. We ensure that by following rigorous assessment we provide each child with an autism friendly environment, an appropriate curriculum and autism specific interventions to meet their needs and equip them for the

next stage of their lives.

Our aims and ethos

We are one team, with one purpose: ensuring our learners are **happy, supported and successful**. Our purpose is to achieve our ambitious vision: ensuring every individual feels loved, valued, and appreciated for who they are, while being nurtured to become the best they can be. Everyday matters, and through meaningful experiences we build strong foundations for purposeful and fulfilling lives. This is enacted through our core principles:

- Happiness and wellbeing as a golden thread
- Inclusive by design; diversity is celebrated and valued
- An adapted approach to cater to individual needs and interests
- A safe and secure environment with a strong safeguarding culture
- We foster curiosity and discovery
- A commitment to developing core knowledge and skills
- Outstanding progress is possible for all

3.0 OBJECTIVES & RATIONALE OF THE POLICY

- All concerned will have a clear understanding of the criteria used in assessing the appropriateness of a placement for individual learners at Hemlock Stone school.
- The admission process accurately identifies the needs of learners and whether it is possible for the school to meet these needs both effectively and efficiently.
- All concerned will have a clear understanding of the processes of judging the appropriateness of that placement.
- Parents/carers, each learner, and representatives of Local Authorities, Social Service departments and other interested professionals have a clear understanding of the opportunities on offer at the school.

At Hemlock Stone we support young people who present with a wide range of complex needs associated with Autism. A young person may be considered for a place at Hemlock Stone School if they have an Education, Health and Care plan, a diagnosis of autism or demonstrate behaviour and difficulties commensurate with a diagnosis of autism and where a typical mainstream environment has not appropriately met the needs of the young person.

Learners may arrive out of difficult life experiences or the result of some medical condition. Hemlock School acknowledges that our pupils may, from time to time, exhibit behaviours that present challenges that vary both in intensity and duration and our aim is to work with young people to reduce the frequency and intensity of these incidents.

4.0 PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSIONS:

1. Applications for admission to Hemlock Stone School are normally made by a SEN Officer of the Local Authority (LA) in whose area the learner currently resides. The officer will contact the school directly or via their Admissions manager and send over the relevant documents relating to the learner. A range of detailed information concerning that pupil should accompany these referrals including an Education, Health and Care plan. Where

this is not the case, Hemlock Stone will seek access to as much information as possible including information regarding the individual's education, health and social background. Senior staff will analyse all available information about the pupil to assess whether the pupil meets the admission criteria for Hemlock Stone School. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/SENCO/therapy professionals will assess whether or not Hemlock Stone can meet the pupil's needs and if so, arrange for a visit to Hemlock Stone School. It may be necessary for Senior Staff to organise a visit to meet or observe the young person in their current setting or at home, prior to any visits being organised at Hemlock Stone.

2. Regulations under the Education Act 2011 and all subsequent legislation state that parents have the right to express a preference for a school which is not a LA school, but which is an Independent special school approved by the DFE. If the LA agrees, it will fund the placement at that school.
3. All of the learners referred to Hemlock Stone School will have a diagnosis of Autism and or associated learning difficulties. Learners will be aged between 5 and 16.
4. An initial visit will take place at a convenient time agreed by parents/carers and the school. This allows all learners, parents, carers, social workers, etc., or anybody else who has accompanied the learners to:
 - have a tour of the school, an introduction to key staff, a discussion with senior staff concerning such issues as: the school curriculum, including the school's approach to teaching relationships, health and sex education.
 - share information about the prospective learner such as their likes and dislikes.
 - be informed about the content of key school policies, including the school expectations for good behaviour and discipline, and the physical management of learners.
 - have an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.
5. Assessment taster days. The learner may be invited to attend a number of assessment taster session(s) at Hemlock Stone School to assess how well suited Hemlock Stone School is to meeting the needs of the young person. A typical day would involve joining an appropriate class group and completing work and activities alongside their peers. In some circumstances the therapy team may complete assessments.
6. Following the visits and taster days, if all concerned are agreed that the learner's needs as outlined in the EHCP or other documentation can be met at the school, and that the young person can be adequately managed with the planned resources available, and that the learner and parents/carers are committed to the placement, the school will formally offer a place in writing through our admissions manager.

5.0 REFERRALS PROCEDURE

Learners are referred to Hemlock Stone School from a number of local authorities. The referral will be sent to the school's admission manager at Outcomes First Group. The referral will be logged on to our management system, and the Head Teacher and SENCo will review papers and decide whether the need can be met. The learner and parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting during this process.

The Local Authority will:

- Provide Hemlock Stone School with all current advice and information relating to the pupil
- Nominate Hemlock Stone School in the appropriate section of their EHCP
- Agree contractual arrangements for transporting the pupil to and from school
- Make any arrangements for transporting the pupil to and from school
- Fulfil the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice for 0-25 years 2014 and attend planned annual review of placement meetings

6.0 ADMISSION CRITERIA

- The learner will be aged between 5-16 years.
- The learner will have an Education, Health and Care Plan, or be in the process of having one written
- The plan will specify that the learner has autism as a primary need
- The learner will normally have been assessed as significantly below the age-related ability range of educational functioning. In some cases, learners' levels of ability as measured using psychometric tests may prove difficult. In these cases, the school will base its judgments on its ability to meet needs. The learner may have learning difficulties and/or low attainment that are associated with their emotional and behavioural difficulties, but these can be supported within the normal education offer.
- The learner may have one or more specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia
- The learner will express a commitment to the placement
- The learner's parents/carers will express a commitment to the placement.
- For all "Looked After Children", there must be permanently named carers and a permanent home base for the learner, available at any time throughout the year. This placement should be stable and secure.
- The admittance of the learner will not be detrimental to other learners already on the school role - There is a space available in the learner's academic year group, so their curriculum needs can be met

Learners are admitted at any time in the school year, although it is easier for learners to start at the beginning of a term or half term. We endeavour to start all learners on a Monday.

Once a decision has been reached and funding has been agreed by the Local Authority, a start date will be agreed, and transport will also be arranged through the local authority, where appropriate.

7.0 TRANSITIONAL START

- Unless it is not convenient with a parent or carer who may be working or have other commitments, all learners will start Hemlock Stone School on a transition basis.
- In the first week, the learner will remain in school until 12.30,
- In the second week, the learner will remain in school until 1.30 pm so that the learner can stay in school for lunch
- In the third week, the learner will have transitioned into full days at school, remaining in school until 2:45 pm.
- All cases are considered on an individual basis, and it may require a longer transition period for learners who have been out of school for long periods or who are suffering from high anxiety; this will be arranged.
- A risk assessment and educational assessment will be completed first half term.

If learners are admitted from other educational establishments within the school year, careful individual transition arrangements will be made with the young person's previous school. Similarly, if a young person transfers from Hemlock Stone School to elsewhere.

All parents will be given an Admissions pack, which contains the following information to be read or completed by parents prior to their child's start date.

- General consent form
- Child-friendly GDPR privacy notice
- 1 Page learner profile
- Child friendly anti bullying policy
- Photograph consent form
- Privacy notice

- Learner Information form
- School uniform list
- Medical form
- Relevant persons contact details
- Code of Conduct
- Worried or Complaints process
- School information

8.0 DISCHARGE PROCESS

In the unfortunate situation that the school is unable to continue to meet need for a learner, and all avenues have been explored including Alternative Provision and Acorn Digital Learning the school will work with the Local Authority and serve a 6 week notice letter for that learner.



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