



Outcomes
First Group



Hambrook
School

SEND Policy

SEND POLICY

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE

Hambrook School is an independent special school for autistic children and young people aged 5–18, providing highly personalised programmes within a specialist environment designed to meet complex communication, sensory and developmental needs. Our aim is to offer an educational experience that is structured, emotionally safe, relationship-based, and aspirational, allowing every pupil to build the skills and confidence needed to thrive. As part of Outcomes First Group’s Options Autism division, the school embraces a philosophy that values holistic development, individual strengths and carefully planned learning environments that empower pupils to make meaningful progress and develop their independent living and self-advocacy skills.

2.0 LEAGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

The school’s SEND systems and practices are governed by a clear statutory framework. We implement the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2014/5 (0–25), which outline expectations and best practice for early identification, the graduated approach, and partnership with families. We embrace the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ensuring reasonable adjustments, accessibility planning and equitable treatment for to ensure every member of Hambrook can thrive and fulfil their potential.

3.0 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Hambrook School is registered as an Other Independent Special School, is Section 41 approved, and serves neurodivergent young people from 5 to 18 years of age. Every pupil has an Education Health Care Plan. The school has capacity for 60 learners and provides specialist provision for young people whose needs require structured, personalised learning and high levels of support. Located in Burgess Hill, the school offers an intentionally designed environment with therapeutic and educational staff working collaboratively. As part of Options Autism, the school benefits from expertise, training and operational systems developed across a national network of specialist provisions.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

The school adopts the definitions of SEND and Disability from the SEND Code of Practice 2014/5 and the Equality Act 2010. SEND is characterised by the requirement for provision that is additional to or different from what is typically offered in mainstream settings. Disability is defined as a long-term, substantial impairment affecting activities of daily living. The four recognised areas of need—Communication & Interaction, Cognition & Learning, Social, Emotional & Mental Health, and Sensory & Physical—support our understanding of each pupil’s profile and help inform planning to support progress.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Headteacher, Emile Etheridge, holds strategic responsibility for SEND, including leadership oversight, resourcing, safeguarding and ensuring the curriculum meets pupil needs. The SENDCo, Florence Robinson, oversees day-to-day SEND operations, including assessments, multi-agency coordination, staff training and statutory compliance. Teachers and support staff adapt instruction, implement personalised plans, closely monitor individual progress and regularly collaborate with clinical colleagues. Governance from Outcomes First Group provides

external quality assurance, operational guidance and safeguarding oversight, ensuring the school maintains high standards of specialist practice.

6.0 ADMISSIONS AND PLACEMENT

Hambrook School accepts admissions via Local Authority referral, typically for pupils with autism and associated complex needs outlined in an EHCP. The school follows a multi-stage admissions process: review of documentation, an offer to assess, an observation and assessment visit, and a school tour and/or taster session tailored to the individual child's needs. Following acceptance, a post-admission review within 12 weeks ensures the placement and provision reflects the child's needs, as set out in the EHCP. Where appropriate and practicable, this includes information gathering from all key stakeholders including the family and previous setting(s) prior to the young person coming on roll, to ensure consistency of approach during their transition. Every new starter begins their time at Hambrook on a bespoke, part-time timetable designed in close coproduction with the family to foster the building of trust and relationships, and to engineer for longer term success.

7.0 IDENTIFICATION OF NEED

Identification of need begins with a detailed pre-admission review of the child's EHCP, external reports and any supporting professional documentation. On starting at Hambrook, pupils complete a baseline assessment within the first six weeks, evaluating communication, sensory profile, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, independence and academic readiness. Staff continually observe engagement, social communication, sensory regulation and learning patterns to identify additional needs over time.

8.0 THE GRADUATED APPROACH (ASSESS-PLAN-DO-REVIEW)

Hambrook implements the statutory graduated approach. After initial assessment, staff collaborate with families and clinicians to create plans that set measurable and meaningful outcomes. Interventions and adaptations are implemented consistently, with regular reflections, involving the young person themselves in a way that is accessible to them, on what is working and any areas requiring further consideration. Reviews take place termly but may occur sooner if needs change. This cyclical process ensures support remains responsive and is evidence-based. A deeper dive into this process occurs at the point of the Annual Review, which is typically chaired by the SENDCo and attended by all key stakeholders working with the young person. It is a priority to seek ways for the young person to guide this process and, where they feel comfortable, to partake in a way that works for them.

9.0 INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT & OUTCOMES PLANNING

Each pupil has a personalised Communication Profile and My Sensory World Overview which may be supplemented by further individualised planning tools such as a My Coping Plan, where appropriate, to ensure the right support is in place. These are designed in co-production with the young person and their family, to nurture emotional wellbeing and to promote holistic progress including the development of communication and independent skills alongside academic growth. These documents integrate strategies recommended by teachers, clinicians and families, ensuring a holistic and unified approach. Goals are ambitious yet achievable, with clear success criteria. They are reviewed termly and updated as needed.

10.0 CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND ADAPTATION

The curriculum at Hambrook is broad, balanced and highly adapted, offering both academic and functional learning pathways tailored to our young people. Teaching incorporates structure, predictability, visual supports, adapted use of language, personalised scaffolding and opportunities for experiential learning. The school's approach aligns with OFG's emphasis on high aspiration, adaptive teaching and child-centred planning.

11.0 REASONAL ADJUSTMENTS AND ACCESSIBILITY

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school implements reasonable adjustments that remove or reduce barriers to learning and participation. This includes sensory-friendly environments, modified expectations, adapted communication methods, assistive technologies, tailored groupings and flexibility around transitions or routine changes.

12.0 THERAPUTIC AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORKING

Hambrook School benefits from a robust multi-disciplinary team, comprising a Lead Clinician/Speech & Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, Assistant Psychologist and a Therapy Assistant. These professionals work in close partnership with education staff to provide therapeutic thinking within the school context and environment, to help support with communication, sensory processing, coregulation, emotional wellbeing and functional skill development. In addition, our clinicians deliver training across the school and support the embedding of the OFG AAD (Ask, Accept, Develop) strategy.

The Clinical Team support with the delivery of Section F provision as set out in our pupils' EHCPs. This occurs at three levels dependent on the specified individual level of need: at the 'all', 'group' and 'individual' levels, in accordance to OFG's provision pyramid.

13.0 MONITORING PROGRESS AND ELEVATING IMPACT

Our school continuously monitors each pupil's progress and development across academic, communication, sensory, independence and social emotional domains. Class teams gather rich qualitative information every day through informal observations and ongoing formative assessment, ensuring that staff build a detailed understanding of how each young person is learning and engaging. This is complemented by regular summative assessment data to track academic progress over time.

Termly progress reports are collated by class teachers, enabling a holistic review of each pupil's development. Alongside this, progress towards Evidence for Learning SMART targets is routinely reflected upon, with the support of the Clinical Team, and targets are adapted when outcomes have been consistently met, or when a shift in focus is needed.

In addition, other formal reporting points include:

Annual Reviews, where in-depth multidisciplinary evidence is collated by the SENDCo to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, to inform next steps and to determine whether updates to a pupil's EHCP are required.

Internal MDT review meetings bring together professionals working with the young person.

Where relevant, regular Child in Need reviews are led by social care, ensuring school and external agencies have a shared, up-to-date picture of progress.

14.0 PUPIL AND PARENT VOICE

Hambrook staff value the central role of pupils and parents in SEND planning, and we are committed to ongoing coproduction. We believe that effective communication and providing regular opportunities and support for pupils to self-advocate and to develop self-advocacy skills, are the bedrock of ensuring the right support is in place.

Pupil voice is captured through structured discussions, communication tools and reflective sessions suited to each learner's profile. We encourage our pupils to engage with our internal student voice system of the 'Hambox' which allows for the anonymous submission of feedback to the leadership team, who then consider and respond to requests. Students also have the opportunity and are encouraged to contribute their views via a differentiated survey around safety in school, as part of our wider safeguarding strategy.

All pupils have a named advocate, typically their class teacher, who will lead on communication with families. Parents are able to contact the school, including specific members of staff, via the main office, as per our Home School Communication Policy.

15.0 BEHAVIOUR, WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING

Hambrook uses a relationship-based, autism-informed approach, prioritising safety, the building of positive relationships, trust and supporting emotional regulation. Staff focus on understanding the underlying causes of behaviour and proactively supporting pupils. Safeguarding practice is robust and follows organisational policy.

16.0 INCLUSION IN SCHOOL LIFE

Pupils with SEND participate in all aspects of school life. Staff conduct personalised risk assessments and plan adjustments to support pupils in tolerating unfamiliar environments or routines.

17.0 ATTENDANCE AND ENGAEMENT

Attendance is approached with each pupil's context in mind, recognising that neurodivergent individuals may experience a range of anxiety, sensory or transition difficulties. Staff work closely with families from the point of admission, to implement supportive strategies from the start of a young person's journey with Hambrook, such as short-term, phased timetables and structured routines.

Attendance is monitored carefully and rigorously by the safe-guarding team. Should a young person in our care be absent from school for a prolonged period, safe-guarding visits will be carried out and, where possible, by a trusted/familiar member of the team. Where there are persistent concerns surrounding levels of attendance, an interim annual review may be organised to expedite a change in support and provide a forum for co-production. As part of this, the onward suitability of the placement may be discussed. The relevant local authority will be kept updated regarding placements at risk, and their external support sought if deemed necessary.

18.0 TRANSITIONS

Transitions into, within and beyond the school are carefully planned to ensure pupils feel safe, confident and well-supported at every stage of change. Staff use a range of individualised strategies tailored to each young person's needs, including social stories that explain upcoming changes in a reassuring and accessible way, pre-visits to new classrooms or settings to build

familiarity, and visual supports that help pupils understand routines and expectations. Environmental familiarisation—such as gradual exposure to new spaces, people or sensory experiences—enables pupils to adjust at a pace that suits them. Transition planning is also underpinned by close multi-agency collaboration, bringing together teachers, therapists, families and external professionals to share information, agree approaches and ensure consistency. This coordinated, child-centred process helps to create smooth, positive transitions that promote emotional security and continued progress.

19.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff receive comprehensive and continuous professional development to ensure they are highly skilled in meeting the diverse needs of our pupils. Training covers key areas such as autism pedagogy, sensory integration and regulation, communication approaches, safeguarding, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), and adaptive teaching. Professional learning is delivered through a blend of whole-school training, specialist workshops, coaching, and reflective practice, enabling staff to deepen their expertise and confidently apply evidence-informed strategies in the classroom. This ongoing commitment to professional development ensures that staff remain knowledgeable, responsive and equipped to provide high-quality, individualised support for every learner.

20.0 RECORD KEEPING AND DATA PROTECTION

The school maintains secure, accurate and up-to-date SEND records for every pupil, ensuring that information such as assessments, reviews, intervention plans, professional reports and communication logs is systematically captured and regularly updated. Records are stored using robust systems that protect confidentiality and allow authorised staff to access the information they need to support pupils effectively. All data is handled with great care, and information is shared sensitively, proportionately and in full compliance with GDPR and statutory safeguarding requirements. This diligent approach ensures that everyone involved in a pupil's education has access to reliable, current information, enabling consistent, informed and high-quality support.

21.0 COMPLAINTS

Concerns regarding SEND should first be raised with the class teacher or tutor, followed by the SENDCo or Headteacher. The formal Complaints Policy outlines further steps.

22.0 PUBLICATION AND REVIEW

This SEND Policy is reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory changes and published on the school's website.



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