



# REFERRALS, STARTERS & LEAVERS POLICY

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This Referrals, Starters & Leavers Policy outlines a structured approach in Hartmore School in respect of the management of placement inquires, referrals and assessments, along with provision for new pupils starting and pupils leaving.

1.2. The objectives of this Policy are two-fold. Firstly, it is essential in business terms that appropriate placement inquiries are managed in such a way as to maximise the opportunity to progress them to a successful admission to the school, followed by a successful and stable placement. Secondly, the welfare of existing pupils, the ongoing stability of the school, and the success of any new pupil are significantly dependent on ensuring they are admitted in a way in which they feel welcome and positive about their new school.

1.3. The principles outlined in this Policy should be followed in all cases, as should the lines of responsibility and authority detailed here.

1.4. Hartmore School is an independent special school for children with SEMH and complex needs.

## 2. The Admission Process

2.1. Hartmore School provides only 'Spot Purchase' provision. That is, a Local Authority (LA) contacts the school directly with a specific child they wish to place and asks for an 'Expression of Interest'. Contractual arrangements with Placing Authorities are limited to individual pupils.

2.1.1. Although Hartmore School is an independent school wholly owned by a private limited company, it does not accept referral inquires or fees other than from a Local Authority (or other governmental organisation). Parents cannot directly refer their child, nor directly pay their fees. Parent may make initial inquires and even lobby their Local Education Authority. However, only pupils who have the full financial backing of a Local Authority (or other) can be accepted.

2.2. In most cases, known Placing Authorities contact Hartmore School based on previous experience of good outcomes for other children they have placed, and/or the recommendation of other authorities/stakeholders.

2.3. For Initial inquiries to be progressed, the referring LA is expected to provide adequate background information upon which the Headteacher make a preliminary decision:

- If the potential pupil meets Hartmore School's Registration Criteria
- If the school feel they can meet the potential pupil's needs
- There is a suitable vacancy at the correct Key Stage

2.3.1. If the answer to these basic questions is positive, the Headteacher (or designated deputy) will usually provide the LA with an 'Expression of Interest, using the LA's referral management system.

2.3.2. All 'Expressions of Interest' are accompanied by our Fees Brochure, which details of the different levels of provision available to meet the individual pupil's needs, along with the appropriate cost. At this stage, no decision is made on the level of provision which might be required to meet the pupil's needs.

2.4. At this juncture (if the referring LA is interested and accepts in principle the fee structure and other contractual obligations), they would be expected to provide detailed background information and history in terms of education, as



well as socially and psychologically. In addition, we may contact previous schools or social care providers to seek further written details. At this point we are able to complete a Risk Assessment for the pupil, and decide whether or not to make a formal offer of a placement. For formal confirmation, the Headteacher must be convinced that Hartmore School can fully meet their needs, and that they are a good match for the pupils already placed (within the school generally, and within the specific class). All being equal, a provisional offer of a place can be made.

2.5. Nevertheless, the Headteacher typically invites the parents or carers to visit Hartmore School (initially without the potential pupil's knowledge, if practicable). Whenever possible, this is followed up by a visit to the potential pupil themselves in their current educational provision (usually by the Headteacher or likely class teacher). Again ideally, this is also done initially without the child's knowledge. In ideal circumstances, these visits are completed prior to formally offering a placement.

2.5.1. We do not believe it beneficial to involve a pupil directly in the process until the offer of a placement is near certain. We are very conscious of the fact that many of our pupils have experience previous rejections (personally and educationally). Given this process may not result in the formal offer or taking up of a place, we do not wish the potential pupil to experience an unsuccessful process as yet another rejection. Ideally, only when the Local Authority confirms their request formally, should the potential pupil be directly involved.

2.6. The structure and details regarding the payment of fees are detailed in a comprehensive brochure that includes costs, payment terms, notice periods etc. It is on this basis, and only on this basis that new pupils are accepted. Hartmore School will make an offer based honestly on the minimum level of funding we think will be necessary to meet their individual pupil's needs. Local Authority must decide on this basis if they want to take up our offer or not.

### **3. Preparing for a New Pupil**

3.1. Once a placement is formally requested and we have received written agreement for the level of funding requested, we can begin discussing the start date and transition into school.

3.1.1. There are no set timescales for this. In some cases, specific staffing or changes to the provision may need to be in place before the new pupil can start. In all cases, we try to do our level best to provide a start date as soon as possible after the formal request for a placement has been made.

3.2. Hartmore School typically manages transitions every carefully, especially in the first few weeks. There is a Transition Policy, that explains specific processes in detail. A copy of this policy is provided, along with a draft transition timetable for the initial weeks to the LA, the parents/carers and other key stakeholders as required. This must be confirmed by all involved agreed prior to commencing the plan.

3.3. All transition timetables begin with a visit to Hartmore School by the potential pupil themselves. It is expected they will be accompanied by their parents or carers. The purpose of this visit is to introduce them to school, to give a brief overview of how it operates. They will be shown around the school and get the opportunity to meet staff, and other pupils. They are encouraged to ask questions. Further, they are given the opportunity to contact the school after the visit so as to ask any additional questions they think of later. They can do this by telephone or email. Parent/carers are also encouraged to look at Hartmore School's website, and download any policy of interest to them. They too can contact us again for more details or to answer questions. One of the prime objectives of the visit is to help the potential pupil feel that Hartmore School want them, and want them to be happy here. This is absolutely essential for pupils who have had histories of disrupted school placements and exclusion.

3.3.1. Specifically, if it has not already been done on an earlier visit, Hartmore School shares with the parents/carers our Working Together Policy, which acts as an agreement between home and school, to support working closely together for the success of the placement.

3.4. If circumstances dictate an unavoidable long time gap between the agreeing a placement and the new starter arriving, Hartmore School makes every effort to maintain regular contact with pupil, their parents/carers and LA. Regular

telephone calls, emails and even subsequent informal visits help to ensure everyone's expectations are carefully managed leading up to the start of the placement.

## 4. Managing New Starters

4.1. Well prior to the first day, all staff and other pupils are made aware a new pupil is starting at Hartmore School. All pupils are reminded of their responsibility to make give them a warm welcome and make them feel as comfortable as possible.

4.2. The new pupils themselves should be fully prepared. They should already know the most significant of expectations, both in terms of what is provided and what they are expected to do.

4.2.1. In particular, all pupils and their parents/carers should have provided to them prior to their first day:

- School Uniform Policy (and all items of school uniform they need)
- A List of Required Equipment (including PE)
- What Happens in case they are ill or injured
- School Policy regarding mobile/smart phones
- Behavioural Expectations
- What happens if the child is temporarily excluded from school
- What Happens in case the pupil is ill or injured

4.2.2. Further, Hartmore School requires all pupils or their parents/carers to provide to them prior to their first day:

- List of Medication, dosage, times & side effects (including medication they may keep on their person such as Asthma Inhalers)
- List of Known Allergies/Intolerance (including epi-pen use)
- Emergency Contact Details

4.2.3. Further, Hartmore School requires all pupils or their parents/carers to provide the following completed Consent Forms prior to their first day:

- Medical Consent
- Consent to Travel in School Transport

4.2.2. Further, Hartmore School requires all pupils and their parents/carers should have provided to them prior to their first day:

- Known triggers or fears a pupil may have.
- Known restrictions on movements in local area.
- List of Medication, dosage, times & side effects (including medication they may keep on their person such as Asthma Inhalers)
- List of Known Allergies/Intolerance (including epi-pen use)
- Emergency Contact Details
- Details of the taxi company (or other) transporting the pupil to and from school

4.1. The new pupil should be greeted by the Headteacher or a senior member of staff as they arrive for their first day.

4.2. Moving to a new school is an extremely significant day in the pupil's life and can often be a very difficult or challenging experience for them. Every effort will be made to keep their anxiety to a minimum on first visits. It should be remembered that first impressions count.

4.3. Some pupils may be anxious and ambivalent attending their new school. No matter how much work has gone in to preparing them, it is still likely they will experience some feelings of disorientation, confusion and fear. Staff must take this account, even if the pupil themselves superficially appears full of bravado.



4.4. All pupils should also be shown their classroom, where they will be sitting, books with their name on etc. as early as possible on their first morning. Everything that can be done to make them feel welcome and that their arrival has been prepared for, should be done.

4.5. Sensible precautions may need to be taken to ensure that pupils are kept safe. There may be an urge to run away. A period of close supervision and individual attention is often required for the first weeks.

4.6. Pupils need to understand why it has been agreed that Hartmore School is regarded as their current, best educational option. Many pupils can be confused and/or feel they are being punished as a result in being placed in a special needs school. This can be especially true if the pupil has recently had a school placement breakdown. They may still feel hurt, rejected, angry and fearful the same thing will happen again. Carefully, slowly and sensitively the pupil's needs to have a full and honest picture of the decisions that have been made for them.

4.7. Pupils need to understand about the various expectations of the school. This should be explained in a sensitive and positive way. It should also include what they can expect to do in a school day and the sort of activities we do offsite.

4.8. The new pupil should be introduced to the other pupils as naturalistically as possible. It is unhelpful to try to force friendships. However, it can help a pupil settle if another pupil acts as a sort of 'buddy' during their first few weeks at Hartmore School.

## 5. Leaving

5.1. Hartmore School are committed to ensuring that all pupils leave in the most positive way possible, ideally believing their time at Hartmore School has secured them a brighter future. For the most part, this will mean pupils leaving on their formal school leaving date at the end of KS4, or leaving as part of a planned return to a mainstream school environment.

5.1.1. Ideally, this should be agreed by all stakeholders, allowing time for a clear plan to meet the pupil's future educational needs to be developed, agreed and clearly understood by the pupil themselves and their parents and carers. Further, leaving plans (especially the timing) must take into consideration the risk of disrupting ongoing educational priorities (in particular examinations).

5.1.2. A minimum period of 4-weeks contract notice is agreed prior to starting. In most circumstances, for the benefit of the pupil, we would expect the Placing LEA to provide significantly more notice than the minimum required.

5.1.3. Other than 'natural transition points at the end of KS2 and KS4), the decision to end a child's placement should involve all key stakeholders, professional and other. The pupil themselves, along with their parents/carers should be central to the decision-making and future planning.

5.2. On many occasions, the pupil leaving Hartmore School will do so in order to transition back to a mainstream environment. This maybe a mainstream primary or comprehensive school, or a tertiary college. Experience indicates this is most often successfully achieved by planning a transition over an extended period, with the pupil gradually integrated into their new environment. Hartmore School will work closely with the pupil's new school/college, as well as the pupil themselves, to maximise the possibility of success on every occasion. One of Hartmore School's key strategic performance indicator is the number of pupils who can be successfully returned to mainstream educational environments.

5.3. Where a pupil moves for reasons other than a planned integration into a mainstream school or college (e.g. they have moved house), every bit as much as if they are directly involved in the transition process (see 5.2.). Therefore, whenever possible, a new school will have been identified well in advance, and Hartmore School placed in contact with them.

5.4. Hartmore School prides itself in a history in which almost no pupil has ever been permanently excluded. However, although a very rare occurrence, the possibility that a pupil's needs cannot be met (and are unlikely to be met in future) by Hartmore School has to be considered.



5.4.1. The final decision on permanent exclusion is solely that of the Headteacher. However, he would be expected to consult the Director in such circumstances, to ensure all other possible alternatives have been explored.

5.4.2. If a pupil is excluded, Hartmore School will continue to work with the LEA and any new educational provision to maximise the chance of future success, as required and deemed appropriate.

5.4.3. For further details there is a Policy – Temporary & Permanent Exclusions.

## **6. Policy Review**

6.1. This Policy was reviewed April 2019 and will be reviewed again by May 2020.

## Appendix 1

### Leaver's Programme for KS4

#### a. Great Expectations Programme - Tier Three

A 7-week programme facilitated by the police, YST and current and past serving prisoners and addresses criminal behaviour, weapons, substance misuse, peer pressure, consequential thinking, decision making and the realities of crime and prison.

#### b. SchoolsBeat

Gloucestershire Constabulary (P.C. Steer) delivers 3 Sessions per year group covering subjects such as:

- Internet and Social Media Safety
- Sexting,
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Peer Pressure

c. **Cheltenham Town External PSHE/Sex Education Provider** provides once-a-week termly sessions that address:

- Decision-making
- Positive Mental Attitude
- Sex Education
- Dealing with Stress
- Developing a Healthy Mind and Body Through Promoting Exercise

d. **MENTalk Topics** (for KS4 boys):

- Mental Health Awareness
- Positive Mental Attitude
- Stress, Anxiety & Self-Harm
- Body Image & Appearance
- Online Safety & Bullying
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Testicular Self-Examination
- Safe Sex, STI's & Porn

e. **Girls Talk** (for KS4 Girls)

Covering the issues that are also in the Men-talk but from a female perspective.

f. **Chelsea's Choice**

An interactive production which highlights and educates pupils about Child Sexual Exploitation.

g. **County Lines**

An interactive production which highlights and educates pupils about the exploitation of children by using them in drugs networks around the country.

h. **Timetabled PSHE lessons**



Following the National Curriculum - to include personal hygiene, healthy relationships, sex education and issues such as consent, bullying and tolerance (Planning guidance from the Pink Curriculum). Also including Citizenship (see also Character Curriculum).

**i. ASDAN**

A qualification which helps pupils to develop a wide range of skills which include skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life, helping learners to develop their personal and social attributes.

**j. Food Technology/Cooking Skills**

Pupils are given weekly lessons in developing the skills needed to understand the importance of a balanced diet and how to create nutritionally balance meals in accordance with their own needs.

**k. Opportunities to visit Post-16 Course Providers, Colleges etc.**

To include arranged taster days, supported visits and supported transitions when starting a course.

**l. Work Experience Placements**

Individual work experience placements are arranged by carefully checked providers. These are based on the interests identified by individual pupils and is supported by staff until pupils are able to successfully work independently for the whole day.

**m. Basic First Aid Course**

- In school CPR Training
- COR Video and equipment supplied by the British Heart Foundation.

**n. Internet Safety**

In School as part of focused teaching over the school year.

**o. CV Writing**

Pupils are guided in creating an up-to date CV.