

Harmony Alternative Education

Schools Due Diligence.

FAQs

Harmony Alternative Education understand that schools are responsible for ensuring that Harmony is a suitable placement for their students. We have produced this information to support schools in following their due diligence.

In order to produce this document, we have considered the following guidance:

[Arranging Alternative Provision- A guide for Local Authorities and Schools- February 2025](#)

[Education Act 1996](#)

[Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[Education, Schools and Families Act 2010](#)

[The Education \(Information About Children in Alternative Provision\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

[The Education \(Independent Schools\) Regulations 2014](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Children Act 1989](#)

[Local Government Act 2000](#)

Is Harmony Alternative Education approved by my Local Authority?

Harmony Alternative Education has been approved by the following Local Authorities SEND departments after completing their due diligence procedures: *Buckinghamshire, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham and Bracknell Forest.*

Additionally, Harmony supports students from schools in the following Local Authorities: *Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Slough, West Reading, Wokingham.* Schools in these Local Authorities have completed their own due diligence procedures.

Where can I find Harmony Alternative Education's Safeguarding Policy?

Harmony policies can be found [here](#)

Are all the staff trained in safeguarding?

All Harmony staff complete level 2 training in Keeping Children Safe in Education at least every year and upon commencing employment at Harmony.

Harmony Alternative Education has 4 members of staff who are trained at Level 4, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

When was the last safeguarding audit at Harmony?

Harmony has frequent due diligence visits from the schools we support. We undergo safeguarding audits as part of Ofsted inspections when they are visiting the schools we support. We also complete Local Authority due diligence every year.

Have all the staff had appropriate safeguarding checks carried out?

All staff have undergone enhanced DBS checks as part of our safer recruitment procedure. All DSL and DDSL staff have also completed safer recruitment training.

How do teachers plan their lessons?

Harmony employs fully qualified, experienced teachers to lead lessons. Lessons are always responsive to the engagement, prior experiences, learning needs and sensory needs of the students in the class. We follow learning sequences in order to ensure students are prepared for the academic assessments they will be completing. Teachers plan their lessons according to their own style and requirements.

It is not appropriate to ask teachers to share formal lesson plans, however most of our teachers will happily explain how they are meeting the needs of the students, just ask when you visit, whilst Harmony is closed and not during teaching sessions. This may be through differentiation of tasks, but it is equally likely that lessons have been specifically planned and pitched for the specific needs of the students, with awareness of learning preferences, use of resources, prior learning, physical, social, emotional and sensory needs and special interests.

What extra-curricular opportunities does the AP offer?

By the nature of the setting and the vulnerabilities of our students, extra-curricular in the literal sense of 'outside normal routine' or 'in addition to normal course of study' is not always appropriate.

We offer several opportunities for students to learn in non-traditional ways, this includes out and about primary group, Nurture group, animal-based support, martial arts, travel-training, local visits and excursions.

Our primary focus remains to support students in accessing their academic potential.

Do pupils enjoy learning?

The best way to gauge this is by asking the students themselves. Their attendance is testament to their successful engagement.

We have many, many testimonials from happy students and their parents and schools. It is not practical or successful to gauge pupil's enjoyment or engagement through observation due to their differing learning and engagement styles. Pupils may increase their alertness and therefore their engagement by moving around, by listening to music and wearing headphones, by doodling or drawing, writing or even sometimes scrolling.

How does Harmony's behaviour policy support pupils' personal development?

Our behaviour policy can be found [here](#).

What are Harmony's induction arrangements?

Following referral from a local authority, school, or parent, a place may be agreed in principle. We will invite the student and their supporting adult to visit the setting at a mutually agreed suitable time. This visit will be conducted by the Primary or Secondary lead as is appropriate. Attendance pattern, curriculum and any needs not already considered through referral and consultation can be discussed at this time.

Induction arrangements will be bespoke to the needs of the learner and Harmony's capacity at the time, and may include, but not limited to: home visit, school visit, gradual increase in attendance, attending for only limited lessons at first, dual registration, mentoring and key worker approach.

Do we offer taster sessions?

Yes- up to two weeks of taster sessions to check that Harmony is a suitable placement. Extended funding will need to be approved prior to this so that there is not a break in support after the taster sessions

How did Ofsted judge the quality of education in its last report?

We are an unregistered AP, which means we do not have a DFE number and are not subject to Ofsted inspections.

When Ofsted visit the 'base' or 'named' schools of students on our role, we are happy to speak to them about our provision over the phone or in person.

This means we are part of Ofsted inspections several times each year.

What pastoral support do you offer?

Our staff have had an enormous variety of prior experiences which have brought them to Harmony. Our staff number former students, parents of former students, teachers from mainstream experience, teachers from SEND experience, teachers who are subject specialists at GCSE level and above, staff who are neurodivergent themselves and staff who are neurotypical

What links the staff is a passion and commitment to supporting vulnerable young people through forming relationships and understanding their sensory, emotional and learning needs.

We know that our students differ at least as much as our staff do, so we are careful to manage relationships so that learners are comfortable with the staff offering them support.

How is the curriculum organised?

Primary students follow a topic-based approach which is adapted to learning levels of pupils. Pupils are taught in groups according to social mix, academic ability and age.

Secondary pupils follow different pathways according to their needs. The pathways are:

- Academic pathway KS3 and KS4. Following sequences which lead to GCSEs in English language, Maths, science.

- Life skills pathway KS3 and KS4. Cooking, self-defence, mentoring. Following short sequences which lead to AQA Unit Awards.

- Post-16 pathway. Preparation for adulthood objectives: employment, independent living, good health, community and relationships. Students can study towards GCSEs and AQA Unit awards.

How do we share any specific learning concerns we may have about our pupil with the AP?

We have a joint duty of care towards all our students and share information regarding concerns and safeguarding following local protocols.

We maintain contact with 'base' schools, local authority, and parents and hope to have free exchange of information as is appropriate and necessary through email and telephone.

How will Harmony tell us about our pupil progress?

A termly report will be compiled by teachers and sent to local authority, base school and parents at the end of each term.

How does Harmony communicate with parents/carers?

We strive to form positive relationships with parents/carers via an open communication channel with whats app, text, phone calls and emails.

How does Harmony assess learning and progress?

We follow pathways which are complimentary to those pupils would be studying at school, although we do have greater flexibility to work at the student's own level if this is different to their age-related expectations. Through meeting students 'where they are' and reducing emotional strain, often students can make accelerated progress during their time with us. We may also be able to identify hitherto undiscovered learning needs.

We can show their progress against objectives agreed at initial placement and against EHCP objectives.

Through Cognition and Learning assessments, we can undertake standardised, useful and informative assessments which help us identify specific learning needs through a formal report upon request. Our SENDCo can also assess access arrangements according to JCQ guidelines.

What outside agencies does Harmony work with?

We are happy to work with professionals from NHS and local authority teams.

We follow safeguarding protocols with each individual local authority's safeguarding partnership/board.

We have links with local professionals who we can recommend due to their professionalism and aligned values.

If our pupil has concerns about safeguarding or wellbeing, who do they speak to?

All members of staff have completed safeguarding training at level 2 and are updated regularly by DSL as is appropriate, so students can feel safe in approaching the member of staff with whom they feel most comfortable with any issues.

What are Harmony's complaints procedures?

The complaints policy can be viewed [here](#).

What happens at the end of the Harmony placement?

Harmony leaders will have maintained contact throughout the placement, so next steps will have been discussed throughout.

This could be progression to or via EHCP and the assessment and review process, which we would support as required.

Once the next placement is agreed, be that a return to the original, or a new placement, we will support transition according to the learner's individual needs. This can be a combination of visits to the setting and visits of setting staff to Harmony, to enable staff to work together at each placement to provide familiarity and continuity as is needed.

Transitions can be over a half term or a few weeks and always finish with Harmony staff visiting the learner in their new setting.

We would not recommend any transfer of placement take place without a planned transition.

What are Harmony's arrangements for recording attendance?

A register is taken each day and attendance figures are available on request.

Will Harmony let us know when our pupil is absent?

Yes, we will contact the referrer as soon as we know the pupil is absent.

Can I see Harmony's policies on data protection, educational visits, whistle blowing, visitors, equality and diversity, e-safety, and supporting pupils with medical needs?

All our policies are available to view [here](#).

Our single central record and insurance certificates are available on request.

If you cannot see the document you need, please ask Victoria or Sarah.