

The Divergent School Harborough

Written by Amy Creatura, Chief Education Officer & Daniel Wellings, Director
Implementation by Charlie Smith Headteacher

All policies are underpinned by the critical thread of SAFEGUARDING
All policies stem from The Divergent School Group's VALUES and MISSION

THE DIVERGENT SCHOOL GROUP  **MISSION**

Our mission is to provide a model of education which is just the right fit for children in the missing middle.

We inspire personal development and curriculum progress so that pupils can be safe, feel safe, be well, learn and thrive.

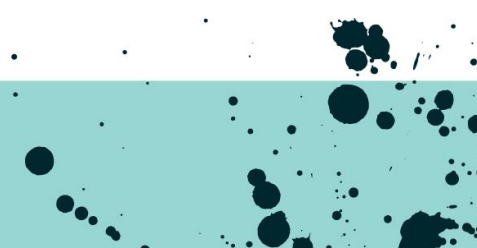
THE DIVERGENT SCHOOL GROUP  **VALUES**

All children deserve an education which is just the right fit for them
For children to thrive both their talents and needs must be catered to
The curriculum is most effective when it's delivery is individualised
In order to learn we must first be safe and feel safe
To make school accessible, quality emotional, sensory & communication support are needed
Effective practice is based on innovation and contemporary evidence
Crucial understanding comes from the bio-psycho-social and psycho-neurological models
Everyone benefits when mainstream and special school communities are integrated

CONTENTS

1. Front Cover
2. Contents
3. Foreword
4. Purpose of Policy
5. Underpinning
6. Admissions Procedure and Policy

FOREWORD



Review

We have designed this policy with a **commitment to ongoing improvement and collaboration** at its core. It is our belief that by continuously refining our approach, we can ensure that our school provides the best possible experience for our students.

To achieve this, we follow a structured process:

1. Regular review and refinement under the guidance of the Headteacher.
2. Immediate full review in case of urgent matters.
3. Annual formal review by the Advisory Board, in consultation with pupils, parents, teaching staff, and the Headteacher.

Ensuring all staff are well-informed through effective communication, which includes the following steps:

- a. Holding meetings to discuss changes.
- b. Providing training on any changes.
- c. Sharing written copies of changes electronically.
- d. Assessing staff's understanding informally, with the Headteacher ensuring clarity.
- e. Ongoing monitoring by the Headteacher to ensure changes are implemented, and adjustments are made promptly if necessary.

We recognize that clear and timely communication is essential in maintaining a successful educational environment. Through this policy, we aim to foster a culture of continuous improvement and transparent communication among all stakeholders.

Contact

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas related to the Admissions Policy please contact the Chief Education Officer to discuss on:

Amy Creatura
07808 773 941
Amy.Creatura@thedivergentschoolgroup.com

PURPOSE OF POLICY

School Mission

The Divergent School Harborough is dedicated to ensuring that pupils **are safe** and **feel safe** at school.

We then help pupils to develop skills for **sensory regulation, emotional regulation, and communication**.

This work is critical in making school accessible so that pupils are able to **develop personally** and **progress through the curriculum**. As a result of this they can be **well, learn** and **thrive**.

Policy Mission

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- **Pupils are safe and feel safe**
- To ensure compliance with the school's purposes
- To set selection criteria and procedures that are consistent with these purposes and fair to all applicants
- To identify applicants whose needs and talents can be catered to in the provision of the school

The Divergent School Harborough caters for young people, most of whom have an EHCP, who have either, or any combination of:

- Cognitive Difficulties
- Speech and Language Difficulties
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- Autism Spectrum Condition

These needs are expressed in different ways by each individual child.

No applicant will be treated less favourably during the application process on the grounds of their skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin, gender, religious faith, disability, orientation, or socioeconomic group.



UNDERPINNING

Contemporary evidence and research underpinning this policy:

- SEN/D Review 2023
- Smart but Scattered Teens
- The Compassionate Mind
- The Six Principles of Nurture

Theoretical models of understanding underpinning this policy:

- The Bio-Psycho-Social model of understanding
- The Neuro-Psychological model of understanding
- Bowlby's Attachment Theory
- Mallow's Hierarchy of Needs

Government guidance and legislation underpins this policy:

- The Independent School Standards, 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

The Divergent School Harborough taxonomy of policy and procedure both inform and are informed by this policy:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Beyond Behaviour Policy
- Risk Assessments
- Medical Needs Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- PSHCRE Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

Provision

The Divergent School Harborough believes that **special needs must be catered to** and recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent pupils with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage.

This means that whole **school approaches are differentiated**, and **Individual Learning Plans are individual** to meeting each pupils needs.

Most pupils attending a Divergent School have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) issued by their local authority. We meet the requirements set out in each child's EHCP, but do not consider this an exhaustive description of the provision a child needs to meet their needs.

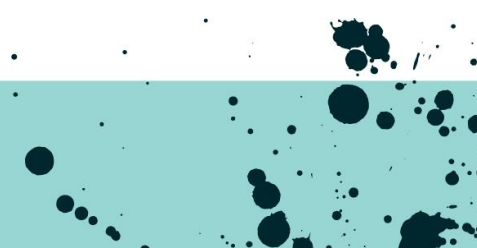
The following work is considered **vital in meeting each pupil's needs**:

- Ensuring they are safe and feel safe
- Understanding each pupil's family story, school journey and local context
- Catering to the talents and needs of pupils
- Individualised curriculum delivery
- Quality sensory support
- Quality communication support
- Quality emotional support
- Specialist environment which is sensory friendly and communication friendly
- Multi-disciplinary therapeutic approaches
- Integration between mainstream and special school communities
- Recognising any changes to a pupil's needs or circumstances and adapting practice accordingly

We recognise that we exist in a period of history where a rapid increase in understanding of special needs is underway. We pro-actively engage with **contemporary evidence and research** to create an innovative and highly effective provision.

In order to meet the special educational needs of pupils, and meet needs associated with any disability, The Divergent School Harborough will develop an **understanding of the individual** is captured in the pupil's Individual Learning Plan, the following categories are used to consider the child:

- Catering to talents
- Meeting special needs
- Their family story
- Their school journey
- Their local context



Which Children to Admit

The school adopts a strict admission procedure to ensure we are the right school for potential pupils.

We welcome applications on behalf of girls and boys from any educational background, to join when they are in years 7, 8 and 9.

Admission is based on review of submitted specialist reports relating to the child's educational needs and developmental progress and these must include an EHCP which outlines the need of a provision which is akin to what The Divergent School Harborough Offers.

Admission is also based on a home visit conducted by the Headteacher.

We carefully assess the needs and suitability of each pupil before making a decision as to whether we can offer a place. Our criteria is that we must believe that we can meet the child's needs with the resources and expertise we have available without diminishing the provision to our existing cohort of pupils.

The school is not able to consider applications on behalf of children who have other special needs which require specialist expertise or facilities which The Divergent School Harborough is not equipped to provide. The school will not offer any child a place unless the staff involved in the admissions process feel confident that they can help him or her within that context.

We also need to be satisfied that the child's parents are in agreement with us as to the child's needs and how best to meet them and are supportive of their child being placed at The Divergent School Harborough.

We believe strongly that the partnership between parents and school are essential in ensuring the best outcomes for a child. If at any point of the admissions process, it would appear that parental expectations are not aligned with the school's educational offer, then the offer of a place may be removed at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Procedure

The following are required to be submitted by the Local Authority:

- Recent EHCP document
- Complete copies of any specialist reports relating to the child's educational needs or developmental progress including:
 - Educational Psychologists and other specialist reports which must include a diagnosis of dyslexia as his or her primary special educational need, it must identify any secondary needs and their relationship to dyslexia, and it must contain a full cognitive profile
 - Speech and Language Therapist's Report and/or Occupational Therapist's report if applicable o CAMHS or any other professional reports o Latest school report including National Curriculum 'levels'
 - Any other reports applicable to the admissions criteria described above.
- Agreement to pay termly fees prior to the start of each half term
- When the school has reached its maximum capacity, then a waiting list will commence.
- Places will be offered to those on the waiting list, when a space becomes available • Waiting list offers will not necessarily be offered on a "first come first served" basis but instead suitability of that pupil with the specific cohort.
 - Ultimately the offer to a waiting list pupil will be decided by the Headteacher after taking all things into account home visit.
 - If on the basis of the information available to us we determine that the child's needs are ones which the school has the expertise and facilities to meet, and that the child's profile indicates a fit with the existing cohort of pupils at the school without disruption to their education, we will invite him or her to attend.

The following are required to be submitted by the parents:

- Any supplementary reports relating to the child's educational needs or developmental progress, if not already provided by Local Authority including:
 - School Reports
 - Educational Psychologists and other specialist reports which must include a diagnosis of dyslexia as his or her primary special educational need, it must identify any secondary needs and their relationship to dyslexia, and it must contain a full cognitive profile
 - Speech and Language Therapist's Report and/or Occupational Therapist's report if applicable o CAMHS or any other professional reports o Latest school report including National Curriculum 'levels'
 - Any other reports applicable to the admissions criteria described above.

A home visit is conducted to build rapport, to observe the child within their home context and obtain the views of parents and child on; whether the child's needs and talents can be catered to.

An important consideration is the opportunity given to pupils to utilise mainstream facilities and join some mainstream classes from their second year of placement. The school will only admit pupils who we believe are likely, with quality support, to be able to access this aspect of The Divergent School Harbourough's provision.

Following documentation review and home visit an evaluation of needs and talents, against provision will be made to determine if the child's needs can be met at The Divergent School Harbourough.

Placement Offer

The Head Teacher will inform you by letter, call or email if the school can meet or is unable to meet your child's educational needs. Acceptance of an offer of a place includes acceptance of the school's standard terms and conditions.

Termly payment of the school fees is required in advance of pupils joining the school.

Priority will be given to year 7, then year 8, pupils, over year 9 pupils. We have found from experience that time is a critical factor for children with SEN/D, the sooner they join us the more successful we can be in helping them develop strategies for wellbeing, personal development and curriculum progress.

Consent and Information required after Offer of a Place Prior to admission the following consents and information will be required:

- Consent in respect of the child's freedom to play in the school grounds, to travel with school groups on outings and to be included in photographs of the school and its pupils for the purposes of the school.
- Name, home address and date of birth of each child
- Starting date
- Name, address and telephone numbers (including mobile numbers and email addresses if in use) of parents or guardians
- Emergency telephone numbers of parents or guardians
- Contact details of the previous school and any school reports
- Name and address of the child's doctor
- Details of any allergies and other relevant medical conditions.
- Parental consent on emergency procedures
- In addition, parents/guardians are to provide the school with any further information which they feel will enable us to take the best possible care of their children and are expected to provide full information about the child's needs on an on-going basis.
- Please note that, if it comes to light at a later date that any information regarding the child has been withheld, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Fees

A flat fee of £39,000 is charged per year to Local Authorities, this is inclusive of all therapies and all other provision. There are no 'bolt-on' charges.

This is to be paid in thirds prior to the start of each long term.

If a place is offered and accepted the first full term's fee becomes payable as a contractual obligation and the full term's notice provisions apply.

Please also make reference to our School's terms and conditions for further details.

Once a child starts at The Divergent School Harborough we will not support a new EHCP application or take over processing the EHCP application until the child has been at the school for a minimum of 6 months and perhaps longer. This time is necessary to collate and gather information and advise the parents and Local Authority accordingly.

In line with the school's mission the majority of, if not all, pupils placements will be made through the Local Authority and EHCP process.

However, the school may accept, in a small minority of instances placements which are self-funded by parents, if requested and if the school can meet the child's needs. In this case, they must ensure that they declare at the point of application how they intend to meet the school fee requirements. Should legislative changes require VAT to be charged to parent-paid school fees, this will be added to the fee and paid by parents.



ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Advisory Board are responsible for providing governance in the effective implementation of the Admissions Policy and Procedure. This includes:

- Monitoring records related to behaviour, and the emotional experience beyond behaviour, at least on a half termly basis (as part of a holistic view), or contemporaneously if needed
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Admissions Policy and Procedure in relation to its purpose, at least annually, or contemporaneously if needed
- Keeping safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken

The Chief Education Officer is responsible for overseeing and supporting effective implementation of the Admissions Policy and Procedure. This includes:

- Monitoring records related to behaviour, and the emotional experience beyond behaviour, at least on a half termly basis (as part of a holistic view), or contemporaneously if needed
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Admissions Policy and Procedure in relation to its purpose, at least annually, or contemporaneously if needed
- Keeping safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing the Admissions Policy and Procedure consistently throughout the school. It is also the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children and adults in the school. This includes:

- Safeguarding pupils as their number one priority
- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken
- Ensure, and continually monitor,
 - effectiveness of the policy with regards to its purpose
 - staff understanding of the policy, providing support as needed
 - staff ability to implement this policy, providing support as needed
 - conduciveness of the environment for implementation of the policy
- Ask for further support if they do not understand anything relating to this policy
- Ask for further support if they need support to put into practice this policy

School staff are responsible for implementing the Admissions Policy and Procedure consistently throughout their work in the school. It is also the responsibility of school staff to ensure health, safety and welfare of all children and adults in the school with whom they have contact in their work. This includes:

- Upholding the values of the school in all work undertaken
- Implement the policy consistently within the parameters of their role.
- Ensure that they are aware of current legislation



- Ask for further support if they do not understand anything relating to this policy
- Ask for further support if needed to put into practice this policy

Parents are vital partners in the school's work, including support of the Admissions Policy and Procedure. We inspire parents to:

- Have an active role in the school community
- Support their child towards their personal development and curriculum progress
- Communicate openly about their child's home life

Pupils are at the heart of this policy. We inspire pupils to work towards:

- Being safe
- Feeling safe
- Being well
- Learning
- Personal Development
- Curriculum Progress
- Showing themselves and others:
 - Respect
 - Consideration
 - Compassion
 - Tolerance
- Treating the school environment with:
 - Care
 - Consideration