



Admissions policy

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1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 Rationale

Hawthorn Learning embraces diversity and welcomes applications on behalf of students from any educational background. As a small learning environment with a limited number of places, we have to carefully assess the suitability of each student before making a decision as to whether we can offer a place. We will offer a place when the team feels confident that they can facilitate the individual student's learning and growth.

1.2 Aims and objectives

This policy details the ways in which Hawthorn Learning ensures:

- Prospective parents and the organisation understand the procedure for admitting a child to the learning pod.
- All students and families are treated fairly in consideration of admissions to the learning pod.
- Students join the learning pod in a way that meets their needs and helps them to thrive.
- Admissions to the learning pod never harm the wellbeing, or the learning of the students and the team in place.

1.3 Terms

Parent Any person with current parental responsibility of a student at the pod.

EHCP Education and Health Care Plan

2. Admissions procedure

2.1 Referral and funding

Children who attend the Hawthorn Learning pod are either self-referred by a parent, referred by their current school or setting, or referred by their Local Authority.

Parent direct referral

Parents who contact us directly, whose child does not have an EHCP are usually home educating or considering removing their child from mainstream education. In these cases, places will be funded directly by the parents.

If your child does have an EHCP, you can still get in contact with us to discuss your situation but there will be additional steps to use EHCP funding for our provision, and this may take some time.

School referral

It is possible that we can be commissioned by a school to provide part-time education alongside their provision.

Local authority referral

It is possible that we can be selected as an alternative provision as part of a student's EHCP, but as mentioned previously, this may take some time to arrange.

2.2 Discovery process

Initial contact

Initial contact will likely occur by phone or email and we will endeavour to answer all enquiries by arranging an initial chat with parents either on the phone, or by zoom if preferred. This chat will cover essential discovery to establish whether the Hawthorn Learning pod is a viable setting for the specific student in their current situation.

Visits

Following this, should we mutually agree that it is desirable to move forward, we will likely arrange to meet with you at least once, but maybe a few times to

discuss viability further. We can meet you at your home, at the pod, or at a neutral location. It is ideal to meet the student at one of these visits.

Information gathering

During initial contact, visits and trial sessions, we will gather as much information as we can, both to ensure we make the best possible decisions in regard to admissions, and to ensure we welcome your family into the Hawthorn Learning community successfully and holistically. During this process you will have the opportunity to meet our Educational Director and “headteacher”, Maz, and our Needs Director and “deputy headteacher”, Tomlin. You will also have the opportunity to see the setting, and meet other students.

Trial sessions

Before offering a place, it is important that the student and family take advantage of a trial period (up to six days) to see if they feel this is the right place for them to be. This also gives us an opportunity to ensure that new students are a good fit with existing students in their likely grouping.

During the first trial session, we encourage parents to stick around and chat to Tomlin in the office as part of our discovery process, unless this has already been done in meetings previous to the first trial day, or it does not suit the student in question.

2.3 Induction

Registration

Following a successful trial, registration will take place, involving completing registration forms, signing agreements, and the paying of fees (see section 3). After registration, the student will be able to start attending as soon as they are ready.

Relationship building

Although we will always communicate with our families in depth, you can expect this to be even more regular during the early weeks after joining the pod. In addition we will monitor our new student closely and will likely spend some time one to one with them, getting to know their quirks.

3. Fees

3.1 Trial fees

Trial weeks, of which we usually advise a minimum of one week and likely two (total 6 days), are charged at £150 per week per student. More trial weeks may be beneficial for your family depending on circumstances.

3.2 Administration fee

A non-refundable administration fee of £150 will be charged at the point of registration for each child. This covers costs of setting up our records and registering your child with external subscriptions to support their learning. Trial fees already paid can be used to cover this.

3.3 Deposit

On registration there is a refundable deposit of one term's fees for parent funded spaces and a half term's fees for EHCP funded space to be paid. If it is not financially possible for you to provide this in one lump sum, we can arrange for the deposit to be built up over several months. Please discuss this with us during the registration process.

3.4 Regular educational fees

Attendance fees are listed on our website here: <https://hawthornlearning.org/fees>. Children attend three days each week for thirty-five weeks of the year. Fees are paid by standing order, either annually, termly or monthly. We always charge for a whole space at Hawthorn Learning other than in outreach situation.

Annual schedule

Full annual fee paid on registration (pro-rated when starting after 30th September) and then on 1st September of each year thereafter.

Termly schedule

The first term's fees will be calculated and discussed with you on registration as a pro-rated amount, depending on the start date. From then on the following schedule will be maintained.

September 1st	One third annual fees
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January 1st	One third annual fees
May 1st	One third annual fees

Monthly schedule

The first month's fees will be calculated and discussed with you on registration as a pro-rated amount, depending on the start date. From then payment of one 12th of annual fees per month will be payable every month, including August. Fees will ideally be paid on the first of the month but must be paid by the 7th of each month at the latest.

3.5 VAT

VAT must be paid on all fees.

3.6 Fee amounts

Please refer to the fee page of the website for our current fee amounts here:
<https://hawthornlearning.org/fees>

3.7 Notice

Parents must give one whole term's notice of their child leaving the setting. At the end of this notice period, your deposit will be returned to you.

4. Places available and ratios

4.1 Spaces and places

Hawthorn Learning Pod has space for a maximum of 12 students in one learning group.

4.2 Ratios

Team to student ratios will always remain under 1 adult to 6 students (1:6) regardless of individual needs. We ideally aim to maintain ratios at 1 adult to 3 students when we can. In individual cases, where students individual needs require it, a one to one ratio may be possible, though this will be at additional cost, either paid through the student's EHCP, or funded by parents.

4.3 Team

Learning sessions are run and overseen by adults who are qualified and experienced to support students in many aspects of curriculum and wellbeing. Team members have all been recruited with safety at the forefront and are suitably qualified. There will always be a paediatric first aider on site, and sessions are overseen by both the Education Lead and the Pastoral Lead. All members of the team are trained in our whole-human approach, which includes understanding of attachment and being trauma informed.

5. Student specific needs

Due to the complex nature of supporting neurodivergent children we must be confident that any behaviour related needs do not compromise the learning of others (or their own learning). The Hawthorn Learning pod is an ideal place for children who are neurodivergent, whether diagnosed or not, and for children who experience anxiety or emotional discomfort in mainstream education.

5.1 *Who are we for*

Hawthorn Learning is a progressive education organisation designed to provide the ideal learning environment for neurodivergent students, and students with school-related anxiety and other social, emotional and mental health needs.

Specifically, we know we are a good fit for students who are diagnosed, or are suspected of falling into these categories:

- Autism, including PDA
- ADHD
- Some learning differences
- Sensory processing differences
- Anxiety or depression
- School avoidance
- Tourettes
- Some attachment disorders
- Victims of bullying at previous settings.

The learning pod is specifically designed to cater for students who currently need an alternative learning experience outside of full-time mainstream education. We provide a therapeutic educational environment where children can feel safe, heard, and valued, while accessing a full curriculum, with equal emphasis on social, cognitive, emotional, psychological and physical development. Our aim is to broaden every individual student's prospects and resilience and give them the opportunity to show the world what they have to offer. We celebrate children's progress and offer them a pathway into full-time education and vocational training, enabling children to lead fulfilling adult lives and contribute positively to our global society.

5.2 Who are we not able to support

Disruptive behaviour

Unfortunately we are not able to take students with difficult behavioural needs at Hawthorn Learning. As this provision is specifically designed to cater for neurodivergent students and students with school-related anxiety and other sensitive mental health needs, admitting students who can sometimes be highly disruptive would be in direct contradiction to the needs of those students.

If a student has had situational behaviour issues in the past, that are non-violent and non-aggressive, please contact us to discuss whether our environment might be suitable for them. It is possible that those behaviours would not occur in our setting.

In the same way, if violent or aggressive behaviours that were not previously present begin once a student is in attendance at the pod, it may be necessary for them to be removed from the setting. There is more information about this in the Behaviour Policy. Please understand that this will only be considered where every other opportunity to improve the situation has been exhausted.

Specific significant needs

There will be times when we will have to decline a student due to the specific needs of the child. We are a small setting and so have limited resources to cater for some educational and physical needs. We will always discuss in detail what the student needs, consider making adjustments and make those where feasible.

5.3 Meeting student's needs

Meeting all of our student's needs is of the highest priority to us at Hawthorn Learning. We will ensure, during our discovery process, that we gain a thorough understanding of the student and their family's needs in a holistic way. This information gathering will be continuous.

5.4 Equality and diversity

At Hawthorn Learning we are fiercely committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity and as such we will never discriminate against any child or family in regard to protected characteristics.

6. Policy administration

6.1 Monitoring and Review

The directors of Hawthorn Learning monitor the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis, considering if it is achieving its purpose, compliant with all relevant legislation and regulation, and ensures the wellbeing of the whole community.

6.2 Record keeping

Hawthorn Learning keeps a variety of records concerning admissions to ensure a fair and compliant process. Contact details of all enquiries, as well as information provided about students and their families are recorded and stored securely, both electronically and on paper. Where parents have agreed, Hawthorn Learning may share this information with other organisations such as the Local Authority, a school or other education setting. We will never share information about anyone without their permission, where it is not relevant to do so.

6.3 Related policies, procedures and documents

- Accessibility policy
- Complaints procedure
- Equality and diversity policy
- Health and safety policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEND policy
- Behaviour policy