



Jesus meeting children where they're at!

Lighthouse Safe Harbour Admissions Policy

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Introduction

Lighthouse is a Christian Holiday Club for children aged 4-11 run by Christians from local churches; it is a charity and run entirely by volunteers. There are a number of different Lighthouses, most of which operate under the oversight of Lighthouse Central. Lighthouse Safe Harbour (LHSH) is held at St Paul's Church of England Combined School and accepts approximately 30 children each year. The club runs from 10am - 3pm for one week each summer, during the school holidays. At the start and end of the day everyone is together for worship, teaching and drama. In between, the children have a programme of sports, craft and other activities, plus sessions to explore the day's theme.

Lighthouse Safe Harbour is designed specifically, but not exclusively, for children with certain types of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or additional needs. The purpose of this policy is to outline which needs Lighthouse Safe Harbour has been designed to support. This is to ensure that parents/carers can be fully informed prior to applying to LHSH and to ensure fairness in how we determine which children are allocated places.

Lighthouse Safe Harbour Admissions Details

LHSH's registration period will open in May each year and will close four weeks later. All applications submitted within this time period will be considered equally. Places will be allocated based on the resources that we have available and the appropriateness of LHSH for each child.

Our admissions team will make one of four determinations based on the information given in your child's application:

- Your child is eligible for LHSH and has been granted a place.
- Your child is eligible for LHSH, but due to the number of applications we have received, we are unable to accept your child this year – please apply again next year.
- Your child is currently not eligible for LHSH, but we recognise that children's needs can change over time and we would therefore welcome an application for this child in the future.
- Your child is not eligible for LHSH, and therefore we are unable to offer them a place.

We will endeavour to let you know whether your child has received a place as soon as possible. If you have been informed that your child has not been granted a place at LHSH but wish to apply for another Lighthouse, you can visit www.lighthousecentral.org to see if your chosen Lighthouse still has space for that age group. If they do, email admin@lighthousecentral.org and they will be able to help you. You can also be moved onto a waiting list if your chosen Lighthouse is full.

Please note: If you apply to more than one Lighthouse, only the first application is valid. For any subsequent applications (at the same or other Lighthouse sites) you will receive an email informing you that your duplicate application has been automatically deleted from the database - this is a Lighthouse Central policy.

Children eligible to attend Lighthouse Safe Harbour fall into three groups:

Group A

This group describes children who **haven't** been able to attend another Lighthouse, because doing so is either too distressing, too overwhelming, and/or leads to significant behavioural challenges.

- You may have previously applied and been told that Lighthouse (or other holiday clubs) cannot meet your child's needs.
- Your child may have attended another Lighthouse (or other holiday club) but have been sent home during the week because the holiday club was unable to meet their needs.
- You may have never applied to Lighthouse (or other holiday clubs) because you know that Lighthouse in its typical format (or other holidays clubs) would not meet the needs of your child.

Group B

This group describes children who **have** been able to attend another Lighthouse before.

Your child may have:

- Received support from the SEN provision at that Lighthouse but have still found the week difficult.
- Not received support from the SEN provision, but have displayed some challenging behaviour.
- Shared that they do not want to attend anymore because it is too overwhelming (too loud, too confusing etc.)
- Attended another Lighthouse (or other holiday clubs) and appeared to cope well, but then displayed significant behavioural differences in the evening due to feeling overwhelmed or having to suppress their needs during the Lighthouse day.

Group C

This final group consists of children of volunteers at LSH and siblings of children in Group A and Group B who do not have additional needs themselves.

Siblings

The changes made at LSH absolutely do not preclude children without SEN or additional needs from coming. However, we recognise that some siblings or volunteers' children may not want to attend LSH due to its smaller size and different nature.

We are happy for parents/carers to make their own judgement as to whether they would like siblings to attend LSH or one of the other local Lighthouses (E.g. Loudwater, Beaconsfield, Marlow, Cressex, High Wycombe). We will liaise with parents/carers who will have children attending LSH and an alternative Lighthouse, in order to support with drop-offs and pick-ups.

Special Educational Needs

LSH will have many environmental differences that will enable children with certain types of special educational and additional needs to be able to access Lighthouse.

The types of SEN and additional needs that LSH aims to support include:

- Anxiety
- Attachment Needs
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Challenging Behaviour
- Language Needs
- Pathological Demand Avoidance
- Sensory Processing/Integration Difficulties
- Trauma Needs
- Working Memory Difficulties

(For further information on the above areas of need see Appendix A.)

However, at LSH, we don't just look at diagnosed needs. We recognise not only that the assessment process can be long, but also that it is not always possible or appropriate to obtain a diagnosis for a particular need your child has. Therefore, at LSH a decision will be made about whether LSH is right for your child based on the information given in the application form, as opposed to looking simply for diagnoses.

When thinking about whether Lighthouse Safe Harbour is right for your child, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

Does your child...

- Have difficulties regulating their emotions?
- Find it difficult to follow or remember instructions?
- Have difficulties with social skills and building relationships?

- Experience sensory overloads?
- Display challenging behaviour?
- Ever show physical aggression towards themselves or others?
- Ever destroy property?
- Use verbal aggression?
- Attempt to abscond?

Do they benefit from...

- An increased level of routine and structure?
- Adults explaining the social information in their environment?
- Receiving short and repeated instructions?
- Receiving information in a visual format?
- Reduced sensory information in the environment?
- Smaller group sizes/Higher adult ratios?

If you answered yes to some or all of these questions, then LSH may be appropriate for your child.

Appendix A

Anxiety

Anxiety is something that we all experience, but for some children the anxiety they are experiencing can impact on their day-to-day life. A child experiencing anxiety may become irritable, tearful or clingy, lack confidence, find it difficult to concentrate, be prone to angry outbursts, or have negative thoughts going around in their head¹.

Attachment Needs

Children who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect in their early lives may not have had the opportunity to experience a relationship with their parents that provided sufficient nurturing for social, emotional and intellectual development. This is likely to have resulted in them feeling negative about themselves (though they may cover this with a mask of bravado), wary of others and pessimistic about the future. Certain skills such as social and friendship skills, impulse control, emotional regulation, and cause and effect thinking may be affected.²

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

ADHD is characterised by behaviours such as inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Children with ADHD might typically find it harder to maintain their attention. They may also be more hyperactive and find it harder to keep still.³

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD/ Autism)

Autism affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them⁴.

Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviours are “culturally abnormal behaviours of such an intensity, frequency and duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities.”⁵

Challenging behaviour can be:

- Self-injurious: Head-banging, scratching, pulling, eye poking, picking, grinding teeth, eating things that aren't food.
- Aggressive: Biting and scratching, hitting, pinching, grabbing, hair pulling, throwing objects, verbal abuse, screaming, spitting.

¹ Retrieved from: NHS Moodzone, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/anxiety-in-children/>, January 2019.

² Retrieved from: Healthy Young Minds, Pennine Care NHS, <http://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/media/1052/attachment-difficulties.pdf>, January 2019.

³ Retrieved from: ADHD Foundation, <https://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ADHD-Fact-Sheet-2018.pdf>, January 2019.

⁴ Retrieved from: National Autistic Society, <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is.aspx>, December 2018.

⁵ Retrieved from: Emerson E (2001) Challenging Behaviour. Analysis and Intervention in People with Severe Intellectual Disabilities. 2nd ed. Cambridge: University Press

- Stereotyped: Repetitive movements, rocking, repetitive speech and repetitive manipulation of objects.
- Non-person directed: Damage to property, hyperactivity, stealing, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, destruction of clothing, incontinence, lack of awareness of danger, withdrawal.⁶

Language Needs

Children experiencing difficulties with various aspects of language can have difficulty understanding what people say to them, and struggle to articulate their ideas and feelings⁷. Some children may receive a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder (previously Specific Language Impairment).

Pathological Demand Avoidance

People with a demand-avoidant profile share difficulties with others on the autism spectrum in social communication, social interaction and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviours, activities or interests. However, those who present with this particular diagnostic profile are driven to avoid everyday demands and expectations to an extreme extent. This demand avoidant behaviour is rooted in an anxiety-based need to be in control⁸.

Sensory Processing/Integration Difficulties

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) exists when sensory signals are either not detected or don't get organised into appropriate responses. A person with SPD finds it difficult to process and act upon information received through the senses, which creates challenges in performing countless everyday tasks and can contribute to motor clumsiness, behavioural problems and anxiety⁹.

Trauma Needs

Trauma is a pervasive problem. It results from exposure to an incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being.

Experiences that may be traumatic include:

- Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
- Childhood neglect
- Living with a family member with mental health or substance use disorders
- Sudden, unexplained separation from a loved one
- Poverty
- Racism, discrimination, and oppression

⁶ Retrieved from: Scope, <https://www.scope.org.uk/support/parents/challenging-behaviour/overview>, January 2019.

⁷ Retrieved from: RADLD, <https://radld.org/about/dld/>, January 2019.

⁸ Retrieved from: National Autistic Society, <https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/pda.aspx>, January 2019.

⁹ Retrieved from: STAR Institute, <https://www.spdstar.org/basic/about-spd>, December 2018.

- Violence in the community, war, or terrorism¹⁰

Working Memory Difficulties

Working Memory is a term that is widely used to refer to a memory system that provides a kind of mental jotting pad storing information necessary for everyday activities such as remembering telephone numbers, following directions and instructions, and keeping track of shopping list items while in the supermarket. Information held in working memory is easily lost through distraction or overload¹¹.

¹⁰ Retrieved from: Trauma-informed care, <https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma/>, April 2023

¹¹ Retrieved from: The Psychologist, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-21/edition-5/working-memory-classroom>, January 2019.