Libra School

Parent & Carer Visitor Information

Foreword

I am delighted to welcome you to the Libra School and am privileged to be the principal of this vibrant centre of learning. Our website can only give you a flavour of the values and beliefs that we hold as a community and I hope if you are considering us for your child, that it will inspire you to arrange a visit into school to find out more about us.

I am passionate about education and believe that all children should be inspired to develop their talents and skills; to be challenged to strive to be the best they can be, but above all develop a thirst for learning that will stay with them throughout their lives. I strongly believe that we must continue to focus on offering a curriculum that prepares children for future careers, alongside using their talent and energy to develop fully and contribute positively to the global community.

I believe that in order to support children to be happy, challenged and resilient our curriculum must be underpinned by the strongest foundations of discipline, pride in oneself and community as well as a focus on ensuring the basics such as respect, tolerance, compassion, literacy, numeracy, personal learning outside school hours and knowing the difference between right and wrong.

The Libra School is a unique school where a child centred learning approach is combined with an imaginative therapeutic environment, a rich range of outdoor learning and creative educational experiences.

I am very proud of our standards of behaviour and work, and together with my team of school adults, we are totally committed to the full development of our children.

School Ethos

Our vision is to enable all children to achieve their full potential in a safe, welcoming, happy and creative learning environment. We will strive to create responsible citizens who are independent and confident lifelong learners equipped to meet the challenges of a changing future. This will be achieved within an inclusive school that values every individual and celebrates the diversity of our community.

Contact Information

DfE Number: 933/6202
Proprietor: Blackford Education (Schools) Ltd
Company Registration Number: 4335980

Directors: Alan Wilkes, Joan Wilkes (admin@libraschool.co.uk)
Principal: Kirsty Crosby (kirstycrosby@libraschool.co.uk)
Deputy Principal: Abigail Morgan (abigailmorgan@libraschool.co.uk)
Head Teacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead: Brigitte Dane (brigittedane@libraschool.co.uk)
Assistant Head & SENCO: Alice Dorman (alicedorman@libraschool.co.uk)

Registered Office:
Blackford House
Blackford
Luccombe, Minehead
Somerset, TA24 8SY

School Office:
Edgemoor Court
South Radworthy
South Molton
Devon
EX36 3LN

Telephone: 01598 740044
Email: admin@libraschool.co.uk

Please note that during the school holidays, the office is closed but if your situation is urgent and you need to speak to a member of the senior management team, please email the Principal, Kirsty Crosby, kirstycrosby@libraschool.co.uk, who will check her email regularly.

School sites:

Main school site at Edgemoor Court – address above

Farm school site: Tivington Farm, Tivington, Minehead, Somerset, TA24 8SU

Forest school sites: Venn Woods at Tivington Farm and Ford Woods, Chittlehampton, EX37 9RX.

Staff

Libra has robust safer recruitment policies and procedures in place. We ensure that all Libra staff are suitable and appropriate role models, and they are supported by a senior management team that is experienced and present. We train our staff to work in the 'libra way' to maintain high standards of supervision and behaviour through a relational approach to consistent and fair boundaries for all. School staff promote honesty, consideration for others, courage, commitment, initiative, reliability, helpfulness, integrity and cheerfulness.

Staff work as a team around a group of children, with each group having a senior learning support assistant as the pod leader and a tutor. We do not work where 1 person is assigned to one child. This is not beneficial for the child as it makes them too reliant upon this person. Libra will not offer a place for a child who requires 1:1 **teaching** because this is not in line with our ethos of inclusivity. Children can require high levels of staffing support, possibly 1:1, but this will be provided by a team of staff and the child will remain in a group. If this approach does not meet the needs of your child, we are unfortunately not the right school for them.

Additional Information can be found

- School Website: www.libraschool.co.uk
- Libra school statutory policies & procedures can be found on our website.
- A list of staff can be found on the website
- Academic results of children in previous years are available on the website or upon request from the office.

Key points to consider

Libra works in a very specific way, and although we always differentiate for every child in terms of supporting and managing behaviour and providing bespoke timetable content in line with EHCPs, this cannot extend to our policies and procedures which are consistent for every child. It is not possible to 'pick and choose' specific aspects of Libra that parents and carers want; the placement comes as a complete package and requires full parental co-operation.

School times:

Staff will start to unload the taxis at 8.40am, lessons start at 9.00am with tutor time. Lessons end at 3.20pm and we start loading taxis from 3.25pm with the expectation that all children are loaded by 3.30pm to begin their journey home. Libra does not offer part time places, and we will only consider a part time timetable in very rare circumstances with the expectation that we are moving back to full time.

Travel offsite

We are incredibly fortunate to have the amazing offsite resources of the farm and forest schools. Unfortunately, these locations are up to 45 minutes away and therefore children do have to travel on our school buses. So, it is important to consider if your child can manage a taxi journey into school followed by a journey to an offsite location and then back to school and back home in the taxi. Staff do support the children on these journeys, and we do provide school tablets to use but there is more travel than you might get with other schools to think about.

All children have at least one day of farm school, one day of forest school and 3 days in school. If we feel that a child is not ready for 3 days in the main school environment, we will timetable for a third day offsite until they are ready.

Taxis

The local authority will arrange for transport for your child in a taxi. This will most likely be a shared taxi possibly with an escort unless you have considerable evidence that this is not suitable. Please do not expect a taxi just for your child as you will most likely be disappointed, nor will the taxi transport your child directly to our offsite locations.

Taxis are not managed by Libra. Any difficulties with taxis or children's behaviour must be discussed and resolved with the taxi staff and the local authority transport team.

Electronics

Mobile phones and electronics can be used in the taxi on the way into school and home. These will either remain in the taxi or will be handed to staff to go into the school lockboxes. Children are not allowed access to their phones when on the main school site. Children in years 9 – 11 may use these items whilst travelling to and from our offsite locations but to do so they must sign an agreement and if this is violated these lose the right to use their phone.

Attendance

We expect to see children's attendance at 96% or above. This is the expectation of the school and the DfE. Persistent poor attendance that does not improve after discussions with parents and carers **will** put a child's place with Libra at risk, as ongoing absence suggests to us that we are not the right placement. In this situation, Libra will ask the local authority to source a more suitable placement.

We expect children to attend school with colds, sniffles, tummy aches and fatigue. 96% attendance allows for the average number of days incurred through juvenile illnesses, but it does not allow for holiday during term time and routine health or medical appointments that could be scheduled outside of term time. Holidays in term time will not be authorised without agreement on an individual basis and even if authorised will still impact your child's attendance percentage.

Safe containment

We work with children who have been unsuccessful in terms of finding a placement within mainstream and other specialist schools, who can often present with very distressed behaviours that have the potential to harm others or cause damage. For this reason, Libra uses safe containment as an absolute last resort to manage behaviours presented by any child that is disrupting a lesson and who will not leave on their own, or who poses a threat or causes actual harm to other children, staff, or property. Safe containment is used as a last resort to protect children, staff and property, it is important that all parents and carers are fully aware of this. If you do not agree with our managing a crisis policy (which is on our website) and you do not want this approach used on your child then Libra is not the right placement for your child. If parents and carers withdraw their consent to allow us to use safe containment as a last resort, Libra will give 6 weeks' notice to end the child's placement. This is because staff have the right to protect themselves, other children and property from harm and damage after all efforts at de-escalation have been unsuccessful.

EHCPs

EHCP administration is managed by Alice Dorman. Please be aware that most EHCPs are written within a mainstream setting and will be relevant to that setting. **When a child is placed at Libra, we have consulted to say that we can meet needs within the provision that we provide in the way that we provide it, and the 0-25 team have accepted this**. So, to give an example, while your child may require 1:1 teaching in a mainstream setting because they cannot manage a large class scenario, this will not be provided at Libra because we do not offer this. We will provide what we offer which is very small groups with very high staffing (how much 1:1 staffing is available depends upon the fees agreed with the local authority). This does not make the EHCP inaccurate, just not accurate for our setting. Alice works with parents in reviews to update and modernise the EHCP as best as she can within the local authorities' limitations.

Engagement with the curriculum

It is important for all parents and carers to understand and appreciate that although a child might have been enrolled with us at Libra, this does not entitle them to complete their education with us until the end of Year 11. We are an

independent school, and unlike mainstream schools we manage which children we keep on our roll, and the local authority manages how they re-contract places elsewhere after an EHCP review. This means Libra will pay close and particular attention to any child who is not engaging with our curriculum, specifically Key Stage 3 children, who might have persistently poor attendance, and are displaying consistently disruptive behaviours who are not responding to the staff and curriculum support in place; specifically, where parent / carer support of the school is questionable. In this situation, non-engagement is considered a strong indicator that our curriculum is not meeting the child's needs and if this continues Libra will ask the local authority to source a more suitable placement. The local authority will quite rightly review those children making good progress and who may not need the level of provision that Libra offers (this support may in fact be limiting their potential future success), and this will be raised at EHCP reviews for discussion. There is high demand for places at Libra and it is important that the children we work with are those who are using our provision to the fullest to achieve positive outcomes.

School uniform

School uniform is an essential part of the ethos of the Libra School to:

- Promote a school identity and a sense of belonging
- Promote equality and avoid identification of socio-economic background
- Encourage pride in children's own appearance
- Reinforce the high standards of the Libra School

All children are expected to wear uniform, and we will work with parents to identify under clothing to help with sensory issues.

Reporting

The Libra School believes that the feedback of information to parents/carers on the progression and attainment of their child is of huge importance and relevance. To this end parents/carers receive:

- A daily report card will accompany your child which will be accompanied by an escort form or safe containment form if your child has required a hold and a first aid form if your child has had an accident.
- A detailed set of education reports x3 each academic year
- A summary of your child's progression showing how your child is progressing through the national curriculum from their starting point.

Smoking and Alcohol

Please note, Libra is a non-smoking establishment. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on site including the grounds. We are required to ensure all visitors and contractors are aware of this to support us in raising awareness and will:

- be aware of and comply with this.
- not to smoke or vape at school or anywhere on the grounds.

Alcohol is not to be brought onto or consumed on the premises.

We feel it is essential to be open and honest about these areas to ensure there is shared understanding as this helps children to settle into school more effectively and make good progress.

Policies

The Libra School has an extensive list of Policies and Procedures. We are however mindful of inundating parents/carers with vast quantities of paperwork. If you would like to either have a copy of any of our policies, please look at our website where they are located. If you cannot find a policy you are looking for, please contact the administrative office.