



LEARNING SKILLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

Policy Statement

- The School wishes to support all of its pupils to become effective, independent learners and thereby to achieve their maximum potential.
- The policy takes cognisance of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Equality Act 2010 and the SEN Code of Practice.
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in the School is the Head of Learning Skills.
- This should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities, the Differentiation, the Admissions, Learning Skills & English as an Additional language (EAL) and the Outstandingly Able Policies.

Definition of SEN

A pupil is recognised as having SEN when her learning, emotional, behavioural or physical needs are significantly different from those of the majority of pupils of the same age at a given time.

Downe House in Context

Downe House is an independent boarding school for girls from 11-18 years. Among the school's population there is a proportion of girls with mild/moderate dyslexia, mild/moderate dyspraxia, low level attention deficient (hyperactive) disorder, mild speech and language difficulties and semantic pragmatic language disorders.

The School has a Learning Skills Department consisting of a full time Head of Learning Skills and four part time specialist teachers for children with specific learning difficulties.

Aims

Parents are asked to disclose disabilities/learning difficulties information with the Head of Learning Skills.

- To meet the needs of any pupil in the school who has SEN, as well as those who have EAL needs (see separate policy) by following as close as possible to Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the SEN Code of Practice guidelines.
- Pupils with SEN will be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education and will receive the necessary support to achieve this.
- To ensure that no pupil is discriminated against, in any area of school life, on the basis of her SEN.
- The Learning Skills Department supports and contributes to other whole school initiatives which aim to develop further all pupils' learning skills.

- The Department extends its support to pupil's who may benefit from a programme of individual specialist teaching, regardless of whether they have SEN.

To achieve these aims, the Department seeks to:

- Identify, as soon as possible, any pupil who may have a SEN or specific learning difficulty.
- Ensure all staff (academic, pastoral and medical) are familiar with the SEN Policy and are aware of their role in implementing the policy. *6.2 All teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching such pupils is therefore a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response. SEN Code of Practice (2001)*
- Ensure all School staff have the appropriate SEN information including the nature of a pupil's specific learning difficulties to be able to support her needs as effectively as possible and reinforce the guidance being offered. Staff are encouraged to regularly check electronically the LS database where such information will be held and updated.
- Ensure pupils are offered appropriate specialist teaching based on an agreed programme of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) or Learning Skills targets.
- Ensure pupils' progress is reviewed regularly. Pupils are encouraged to transfer what they are learning into the classroom and beyond.
- Ensure parents are involved in decisions about pupils' progress and, if necessary, any future SEN provisions or assessments, e.g. an updated educational psychologist's report. Communication is in addition to the whole school systems, such as Parents' meetings and the reporting process.
- Provide whole-staff training or advice on supporting pupils with SEN and learning needs.
- Employ specialist teachers of SEN/Specific Learning Difficulties and provide suitable insets and skills training to ensure they are up to date with SEN developments.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of any pupil's IEP or programme with LT, as required.

Admission Arrangements

Parents are urged to discuss with the Registrar any reasonable adjustments that would need to be put in place in advance of application for a place in the school. Once the School's admission procedures are met, parents should pass on relevant assessment reports from external professionals i.e. educational psychologists and ensure completion of *Form S*; history of learning support.

Identification of Pupils with SEN or Learning Difficulties

At the start of each academic year the Head of Learning Skills will liaise with the Headmistress, Registrar, Medical Centre, Exams Officer and other relevant members of staff to ensure all SEN information pertaining to a pupil is disseminated and uploaded onto the LS database. All teachers will be able to print off class lists identifying a pupil with SEN and are expected to refer to the database in order to keep fully informed of her needs and any suggested strategies for support and/or exam arrangements that have been made.

Other identification of Pupils who are suspected of a Learning Difficulty

- Screening tests in spelling and reading for new pupils on entry. *6.1 Secondary schools will need to be aware that any pupil admitted to year 7 may have unidentified special educational needs. They should also recognise that children's special educational needs are on a continuum and may also change over time; and that the period of transfer and adjustment to a new school, which is crucial to all pupils, may hold a particular challenge for a pupil with special educational needs. SEN Code of Practice (2001)*

- Continuous monitoring of a pupil's academic progress through the school's assessment procedures. *6.3 Central to every class and every subject is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching assessment and evaluation that takes into account the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of the pupils. SEN Code of Practice (2001)*
- Analysis of MidYIS results.
- Meetings with Head of Sections after each series of examinations and when deemed necessary.
- Continuous monitoring of a pupil's progress in Learning Skills lessons.
- Referrals from teaching staff when there are concerns about a pupil's work or exam performance.
- Referrals from the Headmistress, House staff or Tutors.
- Meetings with the English Department to discuss literacy concerns.
- Internal assessments by Head of Learning Skills.

Procedures for Referral to an External Professional

- Once enough evidence of a suspected learning difficulty has been gathered by the Head of Learning Skills she will contact the pupil's parents to discuss a referral to an educational psychologist or relevant external professional.
- The Head of Learning Skills may recommend a suitably qualified professional who is able to come into School to conduct an assessment on a pupil. All costs must be agreed and settled by parents directly with the external professional, but the School is able to organize the arrangements.
- Once the assessment has been completed, the written report should be passed to the Head of Learning Skills where, if appropriate, the information and a summary report will be uploaded onto the LS database.
- If relevant, the Head of Learning Skills will pass on Section C; details of any examinations adjustments to the Exams Officer, who will then process the application with the awarding bodies.

Programme of Support

- All pupils who have a SEN or learning difficulty will be offered a programme of support by a specialist Learning Skills teacher.
- Permission is sought from parents prior to the commencement of lessons and any queries relating to the nature of a pupil's programme can be discussed directly with the Head of Learning Skills.
- Lessons are arranged on a one to one basis at a mutually convenient time during a pupil's prep time. Pupils are not removed from lessons.
- Lessons are usually weekly (ongoing) with an agreed set of termly targets or individual educational plans (IEPs). However there is flexibility within lessons to respond to a pupil's immediate need.
- Lessons are tailored to the curriculum and LS teachers and School staff liaise extensively to ensure a girl's specific difficulties are supported as effectively as possible.
- Lessons are multi-sensory, structured and cumulative in order to consolidate skills where pupil's self-belief and confidence is promoted. The aim is to develop transference of skills into the classroom and independent learning.
- Lessons are extended to those pupils who require development of skills in such areas as examination technique, study skills and reading comprehension - often as a result of poor performance in lessons or examinations.
- Pupils and parents may make a referral to the Learning Skills Department, after discussion with a girl's tutor.
- Parents should contact the Head of Learning Skills to review a pupil's programme, including termination of lessons where a term's notice is required.

- After completion of a programme of support, a pupil is welcome to seek additional help and guidance at any time from the Department.

Charging

- The School charges all pupils who receive Learning Skills lessons.

The Learning Skills Register

- Updated regularly by LS teachers as new SEN/learning skills information on a pupil comes to light.
- If parental approval is given, allows relevant teachers access to a pupil's assessment report and summary, including findings of her strengths and weaknesses.
- Details the nature of a pupil's SEN profile, e.g. Moderate dyslexia, and offers guidance and strategies to enable teachers to support her more effectively in the classroom, as outlined in the Differentiation Policy.
- Details access arrangements or exam concessions.
- Details termly targets or IEPs.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head and the Learning Skills Department with recommendations made to the Headmistress for amendment.

Review Leader:	Deputy Headmistress
Reviewed:	January 2012
Next Review:	January 2013