



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 (SENDA) 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 Special Educational Needs

A pupil is recognised as having Special Educational Needs (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.

Aims

- Downe House aims to meet the needs within the mainstream of any pupil in the school who has SEN, including those who have English as an additional language (EAL) needs.
- Pupils with SEN will be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education and will receive the necessary support to achieve this.
- The Learning Skills Department supports and contributes to other whole school initiatives which aim to develop further all pupils' learning skills.
- In addition, the Learning Skills Department extends its support to girls who may benefit from a programme of individual specialist teaching, regardless of whether they have SEN or EAL needs.

Objectives

To ensure that:

- The SENCO works closely with the Headmistress, LT, Medical Centre and teachers in formulating the strategic direction of the SEN policy.
- The School will admit pupils with SEN and EAL needs who fulfill the admission requirements (refer to the Admissions Policy).
- Any relevant information (for example Educational Psychologists' reports or examination adjustments) pertaining to a pupil who is already identified as having SEN or EAL needs, is passed on to the Head of Learning Skills.
- All new pupils are screened effectively on entry so that as many difficulties as possible are identified.
- 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)

- All parties (academic and pastoral) have the appropriate information to be able to support the needs of a pupil as effectively or as possible.
 - There is regular monitoring in the course of a pupil's school life including, if required, detailed assessments by the Learning Skills Department, so that difficulties may be detected as soon as possible.
- 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)*
- In their role as tutor, member of the house staff or classroom teacher, academic staff have an effective system of referral for any girl whom they believe to have a learning difficulty.
 - Pupils are offered appropriate specialist teaching based on a programme of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). For EAL pupils, this includes the appropriate external examinations courses to enable them to attend university.
 - The pupil develops positive self belief through encouragement and guidance.
 - Parents are kept informed about the progress and, if necessary, any future SEN arrangements for their child.

Strategies for Achieving the Aims and Objectives

- Facilitate regular meetings and communication between the SENCO, LT, Medical Centre, and teachers to review the strategic development of the SEN policy and provision.
- Liaise and work closely with the Registrar, Heads of Section, Medical Centre and other relevant members of staff regarding the information available on new girls in order to ensure anything relevant is disseminated.
- Implement spelling tests for all new Remove and Upper Four pupils, for screening and diagnostic purposes. *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.*
- Make use of all available baseline school data (for example MIDYIS, YELLIS, ALIS) and internal examination results, for screening, diagnostic purposes and for shaping pupils' individual programmes.
- Make test results, including the results of any assessment tests carried out by the Learning Skills Department, available to staff to aid their support of pupils with SEN, EAL or other learning difficulties.
- Offer guidance to staff (including via Merlin) on effective in-class differentiation and flexible teaching to help cater for the learning styles, strengths and weaknesses of an individual pupil as outlined in the Differentiation Policy and ensure the judicious use of setting pupils in subject areas where it is applicable.
- Ensure pupils can self refer to Learning Skills Department for further assessment.
- Facilitate face to face meetings between the Head of Section and Head of Learning Skills to discuss any girl suspected of having a learning difficulty or to review and evaluate the progress being made about any girl already identified as having SEN or EAL needs.

- Facilitate face to face meetings between House Mistresses, teachers and the Learning Skills Department when they have a concern about a pupil's academic progress.
- Provide whole-staff training on supporting pupils with SEN and EAL needs, when requested by LT.
- Ensure SEN information (e.g. supporting a girl with dyslexia) is accessible via the school systems including Merlin and SharePoint.
- Ensure that there is an effective system of communication between the Examinations Officer, parents, LT and other staff, as appropriate, on issues concerning Access Arrangements (e.g. 25% extra time) for external and internal examinations.
- Employ specialist teachers to teach those with SEN or EAL needs and to provide suitable in-service training to maintain their up to date knowledge and skills in these areas.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of any girl's IEP or programme with LT as required.
- Allow flexibility in teaching to respond to a pupil's immediate need.
- Enable a Learning Skills teacher to observe the pupil in the classroom.
- Request from academic staff relevant material (e.g. a science text book, English examination papers, etc.) to support the IEP.
- Provide efficient access to outside agencies, such as Educational Psychologists, if necessary and appropriate, and to ensure effective liaison between all relevant parties.
- Seek the parents' approval for any detailed in-house assessment before it is undertaken, whether it will incur a cost or not.
- Communicate with parents either by telephone or email any important matters in relation to their child's SEN provision (e.g. an updated Educational Psychologist's Report). This is in addition to the whole school systems, such as Parents' Meetings and the reporting process.

Charging

- The school will charge all girls who have a programme of individual specialist teaching.

Review

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

Review Leader:	Senior Mistress
Reviewed:	January 2010
Next Review:	January 2011