



Downe House

## LEARNING SKILLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS or DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY

### 1.0 Policy Statement

- The policy takes cognizance of the Equality Act 2010, The Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

*The Equality Act 2010 retains the previous definition of disability: 'A physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long term adverse impact on a person's ability to carry out normal everyday activities'. This has some overlap with the definition of 'special educational needs' in the Children and Families Act 2014 (which includes pupils with significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or a disability which means that a pupil cannot make full use of the general educational facilities provided for pupils of their age in mainstream state schools) but not all pupils are disabled by their SEN and vice versa.*

- This should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities, the Differentiation, the Admissions, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and the Outstandingly Able Policies.

### 2.0 Purpose

Downe House wishes to support all of its pupils to become effective, independent learners and thereby to achieve their maximum potential. The School is committed to providing equal access for all pupils to a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum. As a school we recognise that some pupils may have special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) and we will endeavour to make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

This policy describes the way in which we meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND). SEND may relate to specific learning difficulties, sensory or physical impairment, emotional or social development, or other such factors as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

### 3.0 Definition of SEND

A pupil is recognised as having SEND 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.

### 4.0 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 deficit (hyperactive) disorder, mild speech and language difficulties, semantic pragmatic language disorders and hearing impairment.

The School has a Learning Skills (LS) Department consisting of a full time Director of Pupil Progress, **one full time specialist teacher**, and a number of part time specialist teachers for pupils with specific learning difficulties. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in the School is the Deputy Headmistress.

## 5.0 Aims

The School and specifically the Learning Skills Department aim to:

- Endeavour to identify and meet the needs of any pupil in the School who has SEND, by following guidelines set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 as closely as possible.
- Offer pupils with SEND full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education and provide the necessary support to achieve this.
- Ensure that the views of parents and pupils are considered in any decision making.
- Ensure that no pupil is discriminated against, in any area of school life, on the basis of her SEND.
- Manage SEND assessment and provision with the utmost sensitivity and care.
- Support and contribute to whole school initiatives which aim to develop further all pupils' learning skills.
- Extend support to pupils who may benefit from a programme of individual specialist teaching, regardless of whether or not they have SEND.
- Follow the principle of an 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review procedure', checking that appropriate evidenced-based interventions are in place, followed by a regular review of progress and adaptations to the support provided, as required.

## 6.0 To achieve these aims, the LS Department seeks to:

- Identify, as soon as possible, any pupil who may have a specific learning difficulty or disability.
- Ensure all staff (academic, pastoral and medical) are familiar with the SEND Policy and are aware of their role in implementing it.
- Ensure all School staff have the appropriate SEND 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 education plans (IEPs) or, where appropriate, Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.
- Ensure pupils' progress is reviewed regularly, via a close analysis of whole school assessment data, together with appropriate use of specialist diagnostic tools.
- Ensure parents are involved in decisions about a pupil's progress and, if necessary, any future SEND 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 SEND.
- Employ specialist teachers of SEND/Specific Learning Difficulties and provide suitable Insets and skills training
- Review the effectiveness of any programme, IEP or EHC plan, as required.
- Ensure that appropriate examination concessions are in place, in line with the guidelines and criteria specified by examination boards.

## 7.0 Guidance

### 7.1 Admission Arrangements

As requested on the registration form, parents should disclose the nature of any learning disabilities/difficulties. Parents are urged to discuss with the Registrar any reasonable adjustments that need to be put in place in advance of an application for a place in the School.  
Review Date: September 2020 - DHM

Once the School's admission procedures are met, parents must pass on relevant assessment reports from external professionals, for example educational psychologists, and ensure completion of the electronic Learning Skills and EAL online entry form.

## **7.2 Identification of Pupils with SEND**

In accordance with the SEND Code of Practice 2014, we recognize that the identification of SEND should be built into the overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all pupils.

At the start of each academic year, the Director of Pupil Progress will liaise with the Headmistress, Registrar, Medical Centre, Exams Officer and other relevant members of staff to ensure all SEND information pertaining to a pupil is disseminated and uploaded onto the LS database. All teachers 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.

## **7.3 Other Means of Identifying Pupils with a Possible Specific Learning Difficulty or SEND**

- Lucid Exact digital screening tests for new pupils on entry.
- Screening tests in spelling, reading and writing for new pupils on entry.
- Continuous monitoring of a pupil's academic progress through the School's assessment procedures.
- Analysis of MidYis results.
- Meetings with the appropriate Head of Section 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, the Head of Section, House Staff or Tutor.
- Meetings with the English Department or other Heads of Departments as required, to discuss individual concerns.
- Internal assessments undertaken by Director of Pupil Progress.

## **7.4 Procedures for Referral to an External Professional**

- Once enough evidence of a possible SEND has been gathered by the Director of Pupil Progress, parents will be contacted to discuss a referral to an educational psychologist or other relevant external professionals.
- Assessments will periodically need to be updated. The Director of Pupil Progress will contact parents to discuss this prior to the assessment.
- The Director of Pupil Progress may recommend that a suitably qualified professional conducts an assessment on a pupil. All costs are agreed and settled by parents directly with the external professional.
- Once the assessment has been completed, the written report should be passed to the Director of Pupil Progress where, if appropriate, the information will be uploaded onto the LS database
- If relevant, the Director of Pupil Progress will pass on any examinations adjustments to the Exams Officer, who will then process the application in accordance with exam body regulations.

*The procedure for internal referral can be found in appendix A*

## **8.0 Programme of Support**

- All pupils who have a SEND will be offered a programme of support by a specialist Learning Skills teacher, although support is not necessarily required in all instances, and is determined by individual need via discussion with parents and pupils.

- Any specialist materials required in order to access the curriculum must be provided by the parents and will be chargeable if sourced by the School. Examples of such materials include but are not limited to laptops, tablets, reading pens, electronic or audio textbooks, assistive software or similar.
- 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 Director of Pupil Progress.
- Lessons are arranged on a one to one basis at a mutually convenient time. Pupils are not removed from academic lessons, except in very exceptional circumstances.
- Targets and/or individual educational plans (IEPs) are created by the LS teacher and reviewed each term or when targets are achieved, changed or added to. Notes made by LS staff during lessons are both captured on the lesson plan and used to inform future teaching or to update IEP's.
- Lessons are tailored to the curriculum and LS teachers and School staff meet regularly to ensure a girl's specific difficulties are supported as effectively as possible.
- Lessons are multi-sensory, structured and cumulative. Skills of independent learning are actively promoted in order to develop self-belief and a 'growth mind-set'.
- Typically, as a result of poor performance in lessons or examinations, lessons are extended to those pupils who require development of skills in such areas as examination technique, study skills and reading comprehension.
- Pupils and parents may make a referral to the Learning Skills Department, after discussion with a pupil's Tutor.
- Parents should contact the Director of Pupil Progress to review a pupil's programme, including termination of lessons, in which case a half-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.

## 9.0 The Learning Skills Database on Merlin

The database contains information required to best support pupils with SEND in lessons. It is updated regularly by LS teachers and holds details on the nature of a pupil's SEND profile, for example Moderate Dyslexia. If parental approval is given, the database will allow staff access to a pupil's assessment report, including findings of her strengths and weaknesses, and termly targets or IEP/EHC plans. The database also holds information relating to exam arrangements or concessions (Merlin/List Manager/Exam Arrangements).

## 10.0 Charging

- Assessments by an Educational Psychologist or other professionals are chargeable and will be billed directly by the practitioner.
- Internal assessments to establish eligibility for examination arrangements are chargeable and parents will be consulted and informed of charges that apply.
- The School charges all pupils who receive Learning Skills lessons. These charges are reviewed on an annual basis.
- Charges are made clear to parents before any assessment or support lessons are agreed.
- A half-term's notice is required for the termination of lessons.
- In those instances where a girl will require a separate room for her examinations, this will be charged at a rate of **£20 per hour**. If a reader or scribe is required, this will be charged at a rate of **£25 per hour** (this includes the charge for the separate room). Separate invigilation arrangements are made in line with the findings of the educational psychology assessments and strict criteria apply to this concession. **If use of a word processor is required for external examinations, this will be charged at a rate of £120 for the examination series.**

## 11.0 Evaluation

Downe House adheres to the principle of Quality First Teaching. This means that high quality inclusive teaching, ensures that planning and implementation meets the needs of ALL pupils, and builds in high expectations for all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Teachers carefully consider and adapt their teaching to promote the progress and development of all pupils, in addition to support by specialist staff.

Intervention programmes are adjusted on a termly basis, in the light of the progress the pupils are making, drawing on a rich variety of assessment data available within the school context, and responding appropriately to the 'pupil voice'.

### Revision History:

Revision	Date	Description of changes	Requested By
	September 2014	Reviewed	Areti Bizior
	September 2015	Reviewed	Areti Bizior
	September 2016	Reviewed	Areti Bizior
	October 2016	Addition of Appendix B	Paula Bell
	September 2017	Amendments in red	Paula Bell
	October 2017	Addition of Appendix C	Paula Bell
	January 2018	Addition of point 2 in section 8	Areti Bizior
	September 2018	Change of wording in 7,4 and 8.0. Addition of last point in 10.0	Areti Bizior
	September 2019	Amendments highlighted in red	Areti Bizior

This policy makes reference to the following School policies, copies of which can be located on Merlin in the 'My Policies' section:

Admissions (Reviewer: HM)

Differentiation (Reviewer: AD)

English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Reviewer: DHM)

Equal Opportunities and Valuing Diversity (Reviewer: DHR)

Outstandingly Able (Reviewer: DHM)

**Review Leader:** Deputy Headmistress

**Reviewed:** September 2019

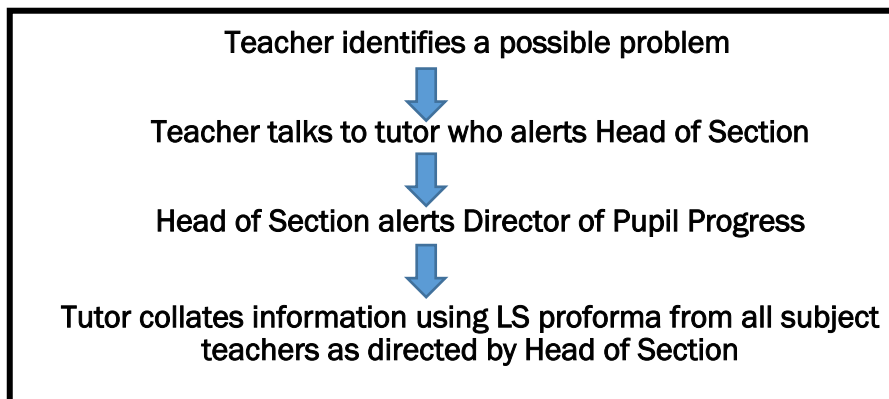
**Next Review:** September 2020

# Appendix A

## Learning Skills Standard Referral Procedure

### Stage 1

Until you have the green light from Director of Pupil Progress /Head of Section please do not discuss with student or parents a possible referral.



### Stage 2

After meeting with HoS, Director of Pupil Progress will monitor the situation until further information comes to light. Referral may be placed on waiting/monitoring list.

### Stage 3

Please do not mention to student or parents

- a likely specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia
- the likelihood of extra time or any other access arrangement(s)

**After meeting with HoS, Director of Pupil Progress asks tutor to inform parents of course of action:-**



*Example of conversation by tutor to parents: I have spoken to the Director of Pupil Progress and she has suggested a programme of learning Skills weekly lessons to support X's difficulties with spelling/organisation/study skills. As with any extra in the School there is a charge but once you have given me permission she will be in touch ... If you have any queries or questions here are her contact details .....*

Or



*Example of conversation by tutor to parents: I have spoken to the Director of Pupil Progress and she is very keen to find out a bit more about X's learning profile in view of her difficulties with spelling/organisation/exam technique/time management. If you are happy with this, Mrs Bell will make an appointment or a series of appointments with x then she will be in touch with you directly to discuss x 's needs. If you have any queries or questions here are her contact details.....*

Tutor speaks to tutee once parents have given permission



Tutor alerts Director of Pupil Progress who will contact student and parents

## Appendix B

The following guidance applies in relation to those girls who experience specific visual difficulties when reading. This would include any degree of visual stress which is alleviated by reading through colour.

### Identification of Individuals

1. Any individual with visual stress will have this identified on their Individual Education Plan, copies of which are available to staff via Merlin.
2. A list of those girls affected by this condition is accessible via Merlin/List Manager/Exam Arrangements.

### Coloured Overlays and Paper

1. Girls are expected to bring their own coloured overlay for reading purposes (appropriate to their needs) to every subject lesson. Mrs Bell will remind the girls and House staff that they must adhere to this.
2. If subject departments would like to have their own stock of overlays, the link provided below will allow them to buy packs containing a range of eleven colours:  
[www.crossboweducation.com/visual-stress-resources/page-overlays](http://www.crossboweducation.com/visual-stress-resources/page-overlays)  
Order by phone: 08452697272 - A pack of 10 mixed coloured overlays costs £22.59
3. Tinted A4 paper will be available in the Resources Department for girls to access.

### Emailing Work to Girls

For those worksheets which require a written element, staff are encouraged to email these to the girls on the list below in advance of lessons, so that the girl in question can print out the worksheet herself onto her preferred colour. Girls will have a personal supply of coloured paper in House, for this particular use. Alternatively, some girls may prefer to type directly onto the worksheet, if it is emailed to them as a Word document. In this instance, we will check that they have an application on their computer enabling them to tint their screen appropriately (e.g. the 'Tint and Track' software available from [www.crossboweducation.co.uk](http://www.crossboweducation.co.uk)).

NB. The functionality of the Microsoft Surface Pro device can facilitate this process due to the various accessibility options provided.

## Appendix C

### Policy on the Use of Word Processors in Public Examinations

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Learning Skills and Special Educational Needs or Disabilities Policy, September 2017 and it has been compiled in accordance with the JCQ booklet 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' with effect from 1/9/17 – 31/8/18.

1. The use of a word processor must reflect the student's normal way of working at school and must be appropriate for their needs.
2. It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet as the candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen. Therefore, it is those examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought, plan and produce extended answers which are those where candidates will frequently need to type.
3. The use of a word processor will not be granted to a student because she prefers to type rather than write or because she can work faster on a keyboard or because she uses a laptop at home.
4. There are a variety of reasons why the use of a word processor might be granted:
  - The student has a specific learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly or fluently.
  - Formal assessment has shown the student to have a below average speed of handwriting.
  - A student has a medical condition or physical disability which impacts on her ability to write by hand. (Evidence will be required from a relevant medical professional).
  - A student may have a sensory impairment which makes word processing advisable.
  - Formal assessment has indicated that a student has illegible handwriting and this is judged to be significantly impacting on her performance in assessed work, based on teacher feedback.
  - In some instances a word processor may be granted because the candidate's quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand.

NB: This list is not exhaustive.

In all cases the use of a word processor must be the student's normal way of working prior to the exam series in question.

If a word processor is used in any internal/public examination in accordance with this policy, the grammar and spell check facility, together with any predictive text facility must be disabled unless the student has also been granted the use of a scribe/spellcheck in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Any student who wishes to use a word processor in public examinations or has been advised to do so by their subject staff must meet with the Director of Pupil Progress to confirm that they qualify to do so. They will be required to attend a session with the Director of Pupil Progress to ensure that they understand how to use the word processor efficiently in an examination.

The use of word processors in controlled assessment or coursework components will be considered standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.