



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of practice 2014 states that:

“A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if she or he:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age; or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream school.

OUR AIM

To support pupils who have additional needs and challenges, through their education at Downlands, using an approach of respect, care and aspiration. The importance of self-esteem and confidence, for all pupils, are paramount to take advantage of the learning opportunities at Downlands. The School is committed to involving the pupil and his or her parents/carers whenever appropriate when plans for support are being made.

This policy explains how the school makes provision for pupils with SEND, in line with the school's ethos, mainstream status and with current legislative requirements (SEND Code of Practice 2014, Equality Act 2010).

The SEND Coordinator for the school is Mrs Vicky Cornish
The SEND member of the Governing Board is Mrs Clare Brittain

IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF SEND

This is a graduated and continuous approach throughout a pupil's time at Downlands.

Transition planning before a pupil joins Downlands - Primary Liaison

- The designated Achievement Leaders work closely with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to collect, share and disseminate information on all pupils transferring to Downlands Community School.
- Downlands SENCo meets with SENCos from feeder schools in the summer term to discuss SEND requirements of transferring pupils
- Downlands SENCo is invited to the Annual Reviews of any Year 6 pupils transferring to Downlands Community School
- Parents/carers of prospective pupils with additional needs are encouraged to visit the school for a separate look around and discussion of support requirements for their child with the SENCo
- All Year 6 pupils transferring to Downlands Community School receive a visit in their feeder primary school from the designated Head of Year 7
- Additional visits to Downlands Community School are arranged for pupils who might benefit from extra familiarization with the school and key support staff by the SENCo
- All Year 6 transferring to Downlands Community School have a complete day's induction at Downlands in the summer term
- A 'Confidential Notes' booklet is produced by the Head of Year, in collaboration with The SENCo, following their visits, which is disseminated to all staff
- The SENCo creates a year group page on The School's SEND Intervention Register for the incoming Year 7

- Primary feeder schools send to the SENCo relevant information, for example, individual learning plans, support programmes, visit records from external agencies
- SEND information is loaded on to the School's Information and Monitoring System (SIMS) which automatically updates all class trackers

Transition planning before a pupil joins Downlands – Secondary Transfer

- Downlands relevant Head of Year receives admission details from West Sussex County Council and passes any SEND issues on to SENCo
- Feeder primary schools are visited by the relevant Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher responsible for admissions and the SENCo to obtain all relevant information on pupils transferring to Downlands.
- Downlands SENCo invites the pupil and parents/carers to visit Downlands Community School
- Downlands SENCo obtains screening data, curriculum levels, and intervention history from feeder school
- Downlands SENCo enters pupil details on to The Schools SEND Intervention Register
- SEND information is loaded on to the School's Information and Monitoring System (SIMS) which automatically updates all class trackers

Screening and Assessing Pupils

- In their first half term at Downlands the school receives Key Stage 2 SATs data
- In their first half term at Downlands Year 7 pupils sit Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs). These are computer based tests and externally marked
- In their first half term at Downlands Year 7 pupils sit NFER reading and spelling tests. These are computer based tests and externally marked
- In July of Year 9 pupils sit NFER reading and spelling tests. These are computer based tests and externally marked
- In June/July of Year 9 pupils who have identified needs have a Diagnostic Reading Assessment from a qualified assessor
- Pupils with Statements or Education and Health Care Plans annually have a Diagnostic Reading Assessment from a qualified assessor
- All pupils with identified needs from screening are recorded on The Schools SEND and Intervention Register, and on SIMS
- All pupils are assessed within each subject every term and judged to be above, on or below target. This information is placed on SIMS
- Any class teacher can refer any pupil, at any time, to the SENCo for further assessment
- Any reports and diagnosis' from health professionals are recorded on The Schools SEND and Intervention Register, and on SIMS
- A parent/carer can contact the school and refer their child to the SENCo for further assessment
- Concerns regarding autism, dyspraxia, sensory impairment, information processing speed delay, social communication and interaction difficulties, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, movement and health should, after discussion with the parents/carers, be referred to the child's doctor

KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT FOR YOUR CHILD

The aim at Downlands is for all pupils' to achieve their attendance, behaviour and attainment expectations. The expected level of attendance is 95% or above, and the

expected behaviour is to show respect for others, earning more achievement than behaviour points, which is the same for all pupils. Academic expectations are graduated on the basis of Year 6 SATs results and subsequent screening data.

- Attendance and behaviour will be monitored by the Head of Year and their Pastoral Support Officer (PSO). The school has a PSO for each year group. The Head of Year reports fortnightly to the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Pastoral care. The Assistant Headteacher reports termly to the Governors Pupil Welfare & Outcomes Committee. Attendance and behaviour support programmes are arranged by the PSO and Head of Year, involving Pastoral Support Programmes, Education Welfare and other outside agencies where appropriate
- Academic attainment is monitored by the class teacher. Heads of Department review within their departments; Achievement Leaders, SENCo and Deputy Headteacher meet termly to review for each year group
- The allocation of teaching assistants to pupils is directed by the SENCo
- Some pupils in years 7 and 8 are placed, on the basis on screening data from primary schools and their first half term at Downlands, in small nurture classes for English and maths. The class teachers monitors their progress
- Teaching assistants and nurture class teachers meet fortnightly with the SENCo
- The SENCo meets termly with the SEND Governor
- The school will contact a child's parents/carers to notify them of any intervention programme
- All teachers work email addresses are available on the school's web site for parents/carers to use. Alternatively parents/carers can contact the school via phone or letter

MATCHING THE CURRICULUM TO YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

Downlands Community School is a mainstream school, delivering the national curriculum and striving to enable pupils to achieve the qualifications which reflect their potential. To this aim there are a number of strategies employed to help match the curriculum for pupils with additional needs.

School SEND Register

Details of all pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in the school are on the School SEND Register, which is on the school administration computer system accessible to all staff. For many of these pupils the register is not only a record of screening test results, categories of need, interventions, but also differentiation and access guidance for staff to implement in the classroom. Reports and advice from external professions are also recorded on the SEND Register and disseminated to teaching staff.

In-class Teaching Assistants

Teaching assistants work across the secondary age range and curriculum with pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, or Education Health and Care Plans, or have a high level of need. Teaching assistants do not stick entirely with one pupil and the pupils who receive support do so from a number of teaching assistants. The reasons for this are to help the development of relationships with a number of staff, stimulate the ability to work with others, reduce intensity and dependency, to avoid pupils feeling bereft if 'their' teaching assistant is absent, and to develop independence skills.

Duties include:

- Support pupils in the classroom
- Read texts and scribe responses as appropriate

- Question pupil's understanding of information and tasks
- Help pupils plan and organize work
- Give social and emotional support to individuals
- Build self-esteem and give positive encouragement
- Support teachers in the delivery of the curriculum and provide feedback
- Observe individuals or groups of pupils
- Work with small groups as well as individuals
- Communicate between staff and pupils
- Assist staff with outside visits and field trips if available
- Assist with the differentiation of work
- Support pupils in specific examinations
- Prepare and photocopy materials and organize resources
- Liaise with departments and individual members of staff
- Keep records on individual pupils and work done in the classroom
- Monitor support levels for pupils and feedback at fortnightly meetings
- Maintain school support records

Support Classes in English

The Learning Support Department has a room equipped for small group tuition, which is staffed by one highly experienced special needs teacher. All Year 7 pupils remain in mainstream English classes for the first half term, their need to feel part of their new school and class is very important. During this time the tests that they have sat are marked, analysed, along with Key Stage 2 data, and those who the SEND teachers and English department think might benefit from being taught English in a small nurture group are timetabled to begin after the October half term.

Lessons in the Learning Suite focus on the acquisition of literacy skills, which can be at a fundamental level of reading, spelling, writing and comprehension. The work follows the mainstream English class curriculum but is highly differentiated, in a small group. If pupils catch up their peers in the mainstream class they are returned to it, otherwise they stay in the nurture class for the remainder of the school year. A nurture English class continues in Year 8 for those pupils the SEN teachers and English department think require it. This intervention will be monitored and evaluated using national curriculum levels which the teacher records on the pupil tracker system. In Key Stage 4 (Years 9, 10 & 11 at Downlands) pupils who are struggling to access the curriculum are placed in a smaller class.

Support Classes in Maths

A nurture support maths class is provided in Year 7. The selection process is the same as for the English nurture class. The nurture maths class is taught by a highly experienced special needs maths teacher in The Learning Suite. It operates under the same principles as the nurture English class. This intervention will be monitored and evaluated by using national curriculum levels which the teacher records on the pupil tracker system. The maths department use a setting approach to classes throughout years 7-11, providing smaller class for pupils struggling to access the curriculum.

Specialized Support for Specific Learning Difficulties

Some pupils in Years 7-9 with significant specific learning difficulties are identified by the Learning Support Department for additional tuition to help boost skills and develop personal independence strategies. The sessions are very intense with considerable focus on each pupil, and their particular difficulties, with lots of individual attention and feedback.

These pupils are withdrawn from a subject lesson to have these sessions. This intervention will be monitored and evaluated by using the national curriculum levels recorded on the pupil tracker system.

Foundation Learning in Key Stage 4

The purpose of offering Foundation Learning at Downlands Community School is to provide vocational courses with significant emphasis on raising self-esteem, to pupils who would benefit from these options and who would struggle to continue with GCSE courses in modern foreign languages and humanities. The Head of Curriculum, Achievement Leader of Year 8 and Learning Support Department meet during the spring term and decide which Year 8 pupils to offer the Foundation Learning programme to. A letter then goes home to the parents/carers of these pupils offering them the choice of Foundation Learning instead of a modern foreign language and humanities GCSE options. Pupils could still choose GCSE options if they wish. This curriculum option lasts for 3 years (9, 10 and 11).

The principle priority of the course is to raise the self-esteem of pupils who have found their schooling very difficult. In order to do this staff will use an approach which is positive, focussed on recognising strengths and on what has been achieved. Staff working in this area are conscious of keeping an open mind, being particularly patient, adaptable, pupil focussed and are positive role models for the pupils.

The activities planned are intended to develop skills for life, for example: Jamie Oliver Btec Home Cooking Skills, Levels One or Two, incorporating knowledge of ingredients, healthy eating, economic shopping as well as food preparation; VCert in Health and Fitness Level One or Two maintaining good health and fitness levels, monitoring health and fitness; Forest Schools camp craft, conservation and the environment. In addition characteristics that employers value, namely, punctuality, reliability, being appropriately equipped, cooperating with others, inter personal skills, working well independently and as a team are taught and encouraged.

The Foundation Learning Programme is 10 lessons per fortnight:

- Three lessons on the Jamie Oliver Btec Home Cooking Skills course
- Two lessons on the VCert Health and Fitness course
- Five lessons of Forest Schools

Pupils record their progress both in coursework folders and digitally through still and moving images. Photographic evidence is the main source of evidence used by the department for recording the performance and development of skills.

Learning Mentors for Targeted Groups

The school has three Learning Mentors who focus on the progress of targeted groups and individuals who may, or are, experiencing difficulties keeping up with their peers. These can include pupils who are Pupil Premium, Achievement for All and/or for whom English is an additional language. Learning Mentors have access to a computerised tracking system (SIMS) with which teaching staff record national curriculum and GCSE levels throughout the year. By using this system the Learning Mentor can monitor the progress of the pupils.

Learning Mentors are directed by the SENCo, Achievement Leaders and Senior Leadership Team. Caseloads are discussed at termly tracking meetings.

For pupils experiencing difficulties in a subject area the Learning Mentor will meet with their teacher to find out what course work is outstanding or in which skills additional guidance is required. These aspects will then be followed up at the appointment with the pupil. Sessions are carefully planned so that a pupil avoids missing the same class lesson all the time.

EVALUATING PUPIL PROGRESS

Pupils at Downlands are assessed for curriculum progress every term, and the assessment results are recorded as 'above, on, or below' target. Targets are the predicted grade a pupil could attain at end of Year 11 based on their Year 6 SATs results and screening data. From the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11 a trajectory towards the Year 11 target is mapped out and this is the bench mark for assessing if a pupil is 'above, on, or below' target throughout the five years. These judgements, in addition to attendance percentage, behaviour and achievement points, and homework tasks can be viewed by parents/carers on the school's SIMS App or are available from the school office.

Parents/carers can also contact any of their child's teachers via their email address which are available on the school web site, or by leaving a message at the school office.

In addition to teacher consultation evenings the school has study skills evenings, for both individual subjects and year groups, parents/carers forum evenings, and the Learning Support Department hold coffee mornings for parents/carers of pupils with SEND. A full list of parent events can be found on the school web site.

SUPPORT FOR PUPIL'S OVERALL WELL-BEING

Pupils

Pupils are regularly involved with reviewing their progress and encouraged to express their needs and concerns with relevant staff.

Form Tutor

Each pupil is in a tutor group and has a form tutor they see at the start of every school day. The tutor monitors their tutee's progress, being aware of attendance, behaviour and attainment. Because they see the pupil's every morning, the tutor develops a key relationship with their tutees and is often the first professional to notice changes in well-being.

Pastoral Support Assistants

Each year group has a designated Pastoral Support Assistant. They do not have a teaching commitment and are the contact point for parents/carers for all matters that are not curriculum based. They work under the direction of Achievement Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team, liaising with teachers, parents/carers and external professionals. Pastoral Support Assistants implement design and implement behaviour and attendance support plans.

Achievement Leaders

Each year group has an Achievement Leader who oversees the progress of pupils both academically and pastorally. The Achievement Leaders lead the form tutors and Pastoral Support Assistants, making key decisions on the movement and further support of pupils. If school based behaviour and attendance programmes are not working Achievement

Leaders will commence Pastoral Support engaging near to school behaviour and Educational Welfare support.

Counselling

The school employs a counsellor one a day week, commissioned through The Dialogue Centre in Hove. The Dialogue Centre provides qualified and experienced counselling for pupils in schools throughout Brighton & Hove and Sussex. Pastoral Support Assistants and Achievement Leaders refer pupils to the Assistant Head (Behaviour/Inclusion) for counselling, if the pupil is willing. Following assessment by the counsellor the Assistant Head (Behaviour/Inclusion) manages the waiting list and consults if further specialized counselling would be appropriate.

The work of the counsellors is confidential, their notes are not accessible to the school or parents/carers but they must inform the Assistant Head (Behaviour/Inclusion) (who is also the school's designated member of staff for child protection) of any child protection issues that arise in their sessions. Counsellors are managed by the Assistant Head (Behaviour/Inclusion) and provide feedback on the progress of sessions. Annually The Dialogue Centre produces a report for the school based on the entry and exit responses of pupils to questionnaires.

School First Aid Support

The school receptionists in the school office are also first aid trained. All medical concerns in the school are referred to the school office. Pupils either report to the school office to receive medical attention or agreed medication, or the office staff are called to the location of the pupil. Care plans and medication for pupils with medical needs are kept and administered by the office staff.

Parent/Carer and Pupils Surveys

The school provides the opportunity to receive feedback at teacher consultation evenings and additional surveys.

ACCESSING SPECIALIST SERVICES AND EXPERTISE

The SENCo, Achievement Leaders, Assistant Head (Behaviour/Inclusion), Designated Safeguard Lead and Pastoral Support Officers have regular contact with the following list of external professionals, which is not exclusive and other agency links are pursued if seen fit for purpose: School nurse, YMCA Counselling Service, Burgess Hill and Hassocks SEND Alliance, Think Family, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Alternative Placement Centre, Child and Young Persons Planning Forum (CYPPF), West Sussex Sensory Needs Service, Family Link worker, Solutions, Barnardo's, School's Police Liaison Officers, Woodlands Meads SEND School Burgess Hill, Young Carers Association, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Youth Intervention Support, YES Service, Area D Pupil Placement Panel, Area D Safeguarding Panel.

TRAINING OF STAFF SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND

All teaching assistants at Downlands receive a 6-month induction-training programme from the SENCo, in addition to the whole department training programme from external professionals. Teaching assistants are also part of the school's performance management programme and work towards annual personal and school targets. Within this they are encouraged to pursue their own professional development either within aspects of special needs or curriculum areas.

INCLUSION IN TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

All trips and activities are open to all current pupils at Downlands. Parents/carers are informed by letter of forthcoming trips and activities outside of the classroom. Any aspects of medical, behavioural, financial or physical concern that may affect a pupil's participation in a trip are discussed with the parents/carers seeking their advice and requirements. The school will support Pupil Premium students contributing up to half or £150 of a trip, whichever is the lesser.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL SITE

The school can be accessed without steps via reception, technology and Pupil Services and most areas of the school have wheelchair access, using a lift to the first floor for English, Maths and Modern Foreign Language classrooms. However, the food technology rooms can only be accessed up a flight of stairs. If a pupil was unable to access the food rooms, the school has arranged in the past for a pupil to have food technology lessons, with support, using the kitchen in the Learning Suite. There are disabled toilets located throughout the school. The school tries it's upmost to be able to communicate with parents whose first language is not English with the use of translators.

TRANSITION

See Section One for transition to Downlands.

When pupils move on to other schools and colleges during their compulsory schooling, records, screening data and reports are forwarded to the receiving school/college. Pupils (parents/carers) are encouraged to make visits to their intended school for meetings and preparation for transition where possible. In the event of a pupil having significant needs or an Education Health and Care Plan the SENCo will meet and/or speak with the SENCo at the receiving school. Annual Reviews of Statements and Education Health and Care Plans will include representatives of future schools and colleges where this is known.

In preparation for completing formal education at Downlands and moving on post 16 pupils receive:

- Careers guidance interviews with the school careers coordinator
- Have one week of work experience in Year 10
- The school hosts an 'On From 16' evening inviting parents/carers and local colleges to a presentation and information evening, which explains the process and provides parents/carers with the opportunity to speak to representatives from various colleges
- The school gives all Year 11 pupils an 'On From 16' booklet which outlines the process of moving on from school, lists all local colleges, an explanation of course levels, grades required and the application process
- Autumn term Year 11 PDC lessons prepare pupils for work experience and college applications, in addition to financial planning and understanding personal banking in the spring term
- Pupils are helped to complete Personal Statements and Curriculum Vitae.
- If necessary school will accompany pupils to college interviews but this is usually done by parents/carers

The school writes a reference for all leavers which is sent to the colleges they are applying for and then once transferred, relevant information for example, additional needs support

information, exam access arrangements and Child Protection details are supplied to designated members of staff in the receiving colleges.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

The senior leadership team decide how the school's budget is spent, overseen by school governance. The SEND allocation is proportional to the whole school budget. Nearly all the SEND budget is spent on staffing; 2 SENCOs, one learning support teacher, one part time specific learning difficulties qualified assessor, 8 general Teaching Assistants, 4 core department Teaching Assistants (English, Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Languages), 3 Learning Mentors and a part time department administrator.

Teaching Assistants are timetabled, by the SENCO, in each period to a focus pupil, one with a Statement, Education Health and Care Plan, or a significant need. They are to assist this pupil's access to the curriculum and also a satellite of other pupils in the class with recognised additional needs. Teaching Assistants do not remain sat alongside any one pupil, this would not only be a barrier to developing independence skills but also socially stigmatising and isolating at secondary level.

Core department Teaching Assistants work with small groups of pupils, as directed by their head of department, to assist with developing a skill or unit of work which has been identified as below target.

Learning Mentors are directed by the SENCO and Achievement Leaders to work with pupils who have or who are at danger of falling behind in their work.

INDIVIDUAL ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

Decisions on the quantity of support any individual pupil receives depend on the severity of need outlined in a Statement or Education Health and Care Plan. In addition, discussions with SLT, Achievement Leaders, Pastoral Support Assistants and the SENCO take place termly. At these meetings unproductive intervention is also discussed and support reallocated. The primary data used for allocating intervention are: attendance, attainment (progress to target), and behaviour record.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The school actively seeks parental involvement and welcomes the contribution from parents and carers. The following assist parental involvement:
Inviting parents/carers to be involved when plans are being made or reviewed to support. Individual pupils who have a learning difficulty or disability, for example, an Education Health and Care Plan, or Pastoral Support Programme. Both processes require parental/carer input.

The school actively seeks parental involvement and welcomes the contribution from parents and carers. The following assist parental involvement:

- Encouraging parents/carers to be involved appropriately when plans are being made or reviewed to support an individual pupil who has a learning difficulty or disability

More generally:

- Downlands SIMS App enables parents/carers to track their child's attendance, attainment, behaviour, homework, school events and make direct email contact with staff
- Consultation evenings
- Parent/carers forum meetings
- SEND parents/carers coffee mornings
- Year group information evenings (New Year 7, Year 8 options, Year 9 options, Year 10 GCSE course and Year 11 'On From 16' evenings)
- Department/subject information evenings
- Christmas and summer fairs, and other PTA events

COMPLAINTS

Parents/Carers of children with SEND who feel that they wish to make a complaint about the School's support for their child should use the School Complaints Procedure. A copy of which can be found on the Downlands School website. Parents who may have complaints about the Education Health and Care Plan procedures or the content of the Plan should refer them to the Local Authority (West Sussex), in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice.