



DAWN HOUSE SCHOOL – STAFF HANDBOOK	
Local Offer 2017/18	
Section: 1	Policy No:
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From the parent carer’s point of view:

1. How does the school know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

I CAN's Dawn House School in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire is a day and residential special school for children with severe speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) and Asperger’s Syndrome www.dawnhouseschool.org.uk.

The school provides intensive and specialist support for children and young people aged 5-19 years.

All pupils at Dawn House School have statements of Special Educational Need or Education, Health and Care Plans that identify speech and language difficulties as their primary area of need.

The communication supportive environment at Dawn House means that pupils receive:

- Full access to the national curriculum (pre 16) within small class groups
- The integrated education and therapy personalised to individual need to learn and develop independence
- An enriched curriculum that supports the transition to adulthood (post 16).

At Dawn House School, a team of specialist speech and language therapists works collaboratively with teaching, support and care staff to support pupils’ language, communication and access to learning.

Other areas of need are identified through in-depth assessment and through other specialist staff working as part of the school team. Dawn House employs occupational therapists, a learning mentor, a family liaison officer and a child psychotherapist. We also work closely with CAMHS and targeted support teams from pupils’ local areas and educational psychologists.

The Further Education Department (FE) at Dawn House provides education and therapy for up to 40 young pupils in a separate centre on the school site. Students can go to the FE

department for one to three years and many young people then move successfully on to their local mainstream FE college, to higher education or to employment. All students access literacy, numeracy and life-skills work in the Further Education department together with the specialist therapeutic support they need. They also have options to access local colleges with Dawn House School staff supporting as well as supported work based learning or work experience.

2. How will school staff support my child?

Who will oversee and plan the education programme and who will be working with my child and how often? What will be their roles? Who will explain this to me? How the school governors or trustees involved and what are their responsibilities? How does the school know how effective its arrangements and its provision for children with special educational needs are?

In the primary department, each pupil has a core team of staff which includes teacher, speech and language therapist and teaching assistant.

Pupils in the secondary department are vertically grouped at key stage 3. Each tutor group in the secondary department has a core team consisting of a teacher, speech and language therapist and learning support assistant. The core team is responsible for the pastoral care of the pupils.

The Further Education provision based at Dawn House is enhanced through close partnerships with Vision West Notts and Portland College, both of which are situated close by. We work with local employers and training providers to support learning and development. Learners continue to benefit from tutors, teachers and therapists working closely together.

The Community and Family Liaison Officer at Dawn House School provides a unique and valuable service to parents, making sure there are good links between home and school which enable parents and staff to work together to meet the needs of the pupils. The officer supports transition both into and out of Dawn House School.

Staff are also able to accompany parents on visits to schools, colleges and potential work settings, assisting them in identifying appropriate future provision and placements for their child.

Advice and guidance on a range of other issues, including managing behaviour and making leisure and social links within their home community are also offered.

Knowing that we are doing the best for our pupils is important to us at Dawn House. We do this in a range of ways:

- The school has regular Ofsted inspections, which consistently rates the school as 'Good' with some aspects of our work outstanding.
- In addition to this we carry out our own checks which ensure our school, teaching, learning therapy and residential care are all of a high quality.

- Our residential provision also has yearly Ofsted inspections which show our high quality provision extends beyond the school day.
- Every year we look at and analyse the results of assessments and external exams – this means we can be sure that we target support where it is needed. We are very proud of the successes of our pupils.
- The therapy team at Dawn House also regularly assesses pupils, and looks at how much progress pupils make so that we know what we are doing works.

3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's/young person's needs?

*What are the school's approaches to differentiation?
How will that help my child/young person?*

We believe that what is taught in school should make sense to pupils, is relevant, engaging and interesting and enables them to make good progress through effective differentiation according to need.

The primary curriculum is effectively differentiated to ensure access and progression for all pupils. Teachers and therapists work together to identify the specific language concepts and vocabulary needed for a topic.

Lessons are very practical, using highly visual approaches. Staff use learning from experience, signing, pictures and symbols to support all language. Academic, personal and social skills are developed to improve each child's confidence, independence and self-esteem as a learner.

In the secondary department all subjects including English, maths, and science are delivered by subject specialists with students grouped according to social as well as learning needs.

At key stage 3 there are vertically grouped classes, again grouped according to social as well as learning needs.

At key stage 4 students are grouped according to learning needs in English and maths through the blocking of the timetable across key stage 4 and FE.

In the FE department, the core curriculum is delivered to all students on Dawn House site. The core curriculum includes functional skills, study skills, strategies for learning, social communication and independence in addition to therapy which continues to be an integral part of the provision.

4. How will both you and I know how my child is doing and how will you help me to support my child's learning?

In addition to the normal reporting arrangements what opportunities will there be for me to discuss his or her progress with the staff? How does the school know how well my child is doing? How will I know what progress my child should be making?

What opportunities will there be for regular contact about things that have happened at early years school, e.g. a home / school book? How will you explain to me how his or her learning is planned and how I can help support this outside of the school? How and when will I be involved in planning my child's education? Do you offer any parent training or learning events?

Dawn House has termly monitoring schedules. These involve the teacher, therapists, care staff and pupil. Together, we set measurable, achievable yet challenging targets for the following term.

The school has its own full time Family and Community Liaison Worker. The Family and Community Liaison Worker visits all families before the pupil is admitted to the school and is the key link between home and school. On entry to the school the pupil is supported by our learning mentor who maintains close contact with the family during the initial weeks.

Of course, as well as this, staff teams are regularly in contact with families through home/school books, telephone and email to ensure that there is carry over from school to home – but also to ensure that any successes or problems are shared as soon as possible.

Staff monitor pupil progress closely and regular compare students' progress and attainment with information available from the DfE. Over the last three years progress at Dawn House has been outstanding across all key stages compared to similar settings.

Homework for pupils at Dawn House is planned with the pupils in mind, and there will often be opportunities for parents to be involved – staff will give guidance about how you can help your child.

The school holds annual parent days on a Saturday, so no-one needs to miss work to attend. There are a series of workshops for parents in the morning and lunch is available at a small cost. During the afternoon, there is an opportunity to meet with core teams and discuss progress. Parents are welcome to come into school at other times – to talk or join in activities. The school hosts a conference each year in October to which parents and other professionals, as well as FE students, are invited to attend. The day delivers key note speeches, workshops and presentations as well as informal discussions.

5. What support will there be for my child's/young person's overall well-being?

What is the pastoral, medical and social support available in the school for children with SEND? How does the school manage the administration of medicines and providing personal care? What support is there for behaviour, avoiding exclusions and increasing attendance? How will my child be able to contribute his or her views? How will the school support my child to do this?

The core team of **teacher, teaching assistant and therapist** is responsible for pastoral care of pupils. They work closely with the residential staff and parents to ensure that pupils' well-being is always high priority. Our school nursing auxiliary is responsible for administering all prescribed medication. Health and medical care plans are drawn up in consultation with parents.

Many of our pupils have emotional or social needs and all of our staff are trained in supporting or managing behaviour in school. Staff have specialist understanding of pupils' strengths and difficulties and this means that many behaviour incidents are avoided. For

pupils who need focussed support for emotional difficulties our **learning mentor** and behaviour support group plans personalised programmes working closely with core teams. Families and staff can also draw on the support of our **child psychotherapist**. We pride ourselves on our flexibility in meeting pupils' needs through personalised programmes through which students thrive. Exclusions are rare.

Pupils are encouraged to play an active part in the school community with opportunities ranging from elections to the School Council to representing students on the School Governing Body. Pupils' views are sought on a regular basis. Staff are skilled at using imaginative ways of capturing pupils' honest opinions!

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting / school / college?

Are there specialist staff working at the school and what are their qualifications? What other services does the school access including health, therapy and social care services?

All teaching and therapy staff are specialists, coming to us with a range of professional qualifications and experience. We strongly believe in staff building on this and so we have a vibrant programme of training to develop specialist knowledge. All staff have an in-depth understanding of pupils' needs, and we regularly explore new ways of supporting them.

Where we need additional specialist knowledge we work closely with local colleagues – but will also look at whether we can support a member staff to train and develop their own knowledge, e.g. on the staff team we have staff qualified in the following areas: Head of Assessment Service and SENCo, B.Phil Ed in Sensory Impairment, NASENCO Cert Ed in Secondary Education and currently MA in Special Needs with training for specialist dyslexia teacher status; OT ASD specific with additional training in Ayres' Sensory Integration, completed Modules 1 and 2 of the Sensory Integration Network Training) other staff, Certificate in Asperger's Syndrome L2, Certificate in ASD Awareness L2 Dyslexia screening qualification, Dysphagia qualification, child psychotherapy.

All staff at Dawn House, from teachers to office administrators to domestic staff have a knowledge of pupils' speech, language and communication needs. All staff participate in the regular training events we have including regular safeguarding updates.

7. How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

Will he or she be able to access all of the activities of the school and how will you assist him or her to do so? How do you involve parent carers in planning activities and trips?

Dawn House is an inclusive community and all pupils are included in the range of activities planned by the school. On entry to the school a personalised risk assessment is drawn up in consultation with parents which identifies the support needed by each individual. This information is used when planning all off-site visits.

8. How accessible is the school environment?

Is the building fully wheelchair accessible? Have there been improvements in the auditory and visual environment? Are there disabled changing and toilet facilities? How does the school communicate with parent carers whose first language is not English? How will equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs be secured?

Dawn House is wheelchair accessible throughout and all facilities can be accessed by pupils with a range of needs. The environment is communication friendly and as such has information available for all levels of literacy. This includes information available to parents, some of whom have English as a second language. Reasonable adjustments are made to the environment to meet sensory needs. Equipment is provided through LA funding or comes with the child on entry to school.

9. How will the school prepare and support my child to join the school transfer to a new school or the next stage of education and life?

What preparation will there be for both the setting / school / college and my child before he or she joins the setting / school / college. How will he or she be prepared to move onto the next stage? What information will be provided to his or her new setting / school / college? How will you support a new setting / school / college to prepare for my child/young person?

Our transition arrangements for pupils are excellent. Following an initial assessment, in collaboration with placing local authorities, the school can make individualised plans for pupils starting at Dawn House. For some pupils, there may need to be special arrangement, e.g. starting with a part-time timetable, or arriving just after other pupils, or spending some time with our learning mentor or a teaching assistant at the beginning of each day.

In the FE department the needs and aspirations of students are identified and inform personalised programmes to ensure students are supported to realise their ambitions. Our Family Liaison officer plays a pivotal role in supporting transition out of Dawn House School. Staff, in particular LSAs will accompany parents on visits to schools, colleges and potential work settings, assisting them in identifying appropriate future provision and placements for their child.

10. How are the setting's / school's / college's resources allocated and matched to children's/young people's special educational needs?

How is the setting's/school's/college's special educational needs budget allocated?

All pupils at Dawn House School have a statement of Special Educational Need or an Education, Health and Care Plan. This outlines the type and level of support pupils need; the school makes sure that this is in place – but also regularly checks that it is effective.

11. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child will receive?

Describe the decision making process. Who will make the decision and on what basis? Who else will be involved? How will I be involved? How does the school judge whether the support has had an impact?

All children at Dawn House School receive specialist, integrated support for their education and communication needs. All pupils have individual education plans which are reviewed each term. This means that if a pupil needs additional or different support this can be identified and planned for. Parents, and if appropriate pupils, are involved in this process.

We are most concerned about whether any support is having an impact and so regularly review progress so that any changes can be made as quickly as possible. To judge this, we use:

- Education and language assessments and checklists
- Feedback from staff
- Feedback from pupils and parents

12. How are parents involved in the school? How can I be involved?

Describe the school's approach to involving parents in decision making and day to day school life including for their own child or young person.

In addition to close consultation with parents before and on entry to the school, there are monthly coffee afternoons for parents, the annual Pupil Participation Conference where parents join with staff to take part in training, parents' consultation day, annual reviews and more social occasions such as the Christmas performance and sports day. All parents are invited to join the Friends of Dawn House who organise regular fundraising events such as fashion shows and car boot sales and parents are also members of the school governing body.

13. What our Parents and pupils say about the school:

How satisfied are you with your child's placement?

- "I am delighted with the placement, it's all I wanted and more. My son is very happy in his school and looks forward to going every day. He is making steady progress with most subjects although he is never going to be very academic! I am impressed with the vocational sessions he has had, especially that he was given a choice. His speech, language and social skills have improved and I was told he would always 'Front' his sounds but now he is able to sound his 'g' and 'K', he has proved past specialists wrong. This has to be down to the intensive and integrated SALT within lessons and one to ones. The school have also taken a lead role in tackling his psychological resistance to food and, as part of a multi-agency approach, increased his intake and thus his long term health."
- "everything brilliant- fantastic doing really well, school inform me about everything"
- "very satisfied, excellent communications, really, really pleased- more communication in 4 weeks than 4years in previous school"

How satisfied does your child say they are with their school placement?

- "I asked him if he liked school and he said a resounding yes. He said he liked the work (which surprised me!) and that particularly he liked PE, Maths and Music, science and ICT. He also said he liked his friends (he has a strong relationship with some of his peer group) and the food. He said it made him happy that he could talk better now and more people understood what he was saying.
- "loves it, looks forward – eager to go"

14. Who can I contact for further information?

Dawn House School website www.dawnhouse.org.uk - there is lots of information here about the school, the curriculum and what we achieve.

We welcome visits from parents. If you'd like to hear more about Dawn House School and discuss whether or not we could be right for your child, please do get in touch.

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