

Category	General Management		
Document Name	Statement of Purpose		
Approval By	St Dominic's School Governing Body		
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St Dominic's School is a 38-week Residential and Day academy for up to 110 pupils and students. It is registered and approved by the DfE (No. 936/7010) for boys and girls between the ages of 7-19 years with a range of ability levels and complex special needs, which include: speech & language difficulties, social communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties, motor planning, co-ordination and perceptual problems, emotional vulnerability and some health problems. At present, our provision would not be suitable for children and young people with mobility problems due to the nature of our site.

St Dominic's School was established in 1929 and is one of a group of schools under the Trusteeship of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, since 1 January 2018. Pupils and students at St Dominic's School come from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds. We celebrate in school assemblies, and work with the pupil/student, families and placing authorities, to ensure we are meeting the cultural, religious and spiritual needs of each pupil/student. The majority of places are Local Authority funded.

SCHOOL VISION

To be an outstanding school that gives every child and young person the best chance to fulfil their potential, achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the best educational, care and transition pathways for children and young people from ages 7-19 years that experience difficulties with learning and communication because of their special or complex educational, health or care needs.'

REFERRAL, ADMISSION & REVIEW PROCESS

Referrals and admissions can occur throughout the year and at any age. Families may request informal visits or the pupil/student's Local Authority may enquire or apply formally. Consideration will be given to applications made by families and Local Authorities on behalf of the pupil/student who, in the opinion of the multi-disciplinary assessment team and the Principal, will be able to benefit from the provision available. This provision includes small class groups, modified curriculum, waking day curriculum and therapy, both 1:1 and blended.

All pupils and students admitted to the school will have a Statement of Special Educational Needs / Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Admission to St Dominic's is based on the school being able to meet the needs contained within the pupil/student's Statement of Special Education Needs (SEN) / Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and by assessing any additional needs which may not be explicit in the SEN Statement / EHCP.

St Dominic's will consider both the needs of the pupil/student concerned and the likely effects of his/her admission on the safety and well-being of the existing groups of pupils and students. The

pupil/student will spend 3 days or more at the school on assessment, either during the day or overnight, whichever is appropriate. During this time, they are able to contribute their views and wishes while being assessed by the school's multi-disciplinary Assessment Team.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The school is situated on a beautiful, elevated site on the Greensand Ridge in the southwest corner of Surrey. A few miles to the south are the borders of Hampshire and West Sussex. St Dominic's stands in 56 acres of wooded grounds with ample space for recreational activities and magnificent views in all directions. The school is easily accessible by road and is less than a mile from the main line station at Witley with its frequent links to Waterloo and Portsmouth.

St Dominic's offers a range of other facilities on site including a climbing wall, a purpose built surgery and an extensive therapy provision. Weekly clubs and activity programmes are on offer to all pupils and students and there is a range of outside learning opportunities, which includes two outdoor classrooms and Forest Schools. Pupils and students are also helped to access appropriate community based leisure facilities such as shopping, cinema, bowling and swimming. Some students may attend community based clubs and events.

St Dominic's has been awarded "Healthy School Status" and continues to strive to maintain a healthy diet and life style for pupils, students and staff by constant feedback, monitoring and input from pupils and students, families and guardians and staff members. The school holds Autism Accreditation status and the Eco Schools Award.

ACCOMMODATION

There are 2 residential areas: Phoenix House for KS2 & 3 and Main House for Ks4 and Sixth Form. These areas have comfortable lounges, dining rooms and bedrooms. Breakfasts and evening meals are served in the residential areas to encourage a feeling of home for the pupils and students. Group meetings bring everyone together in an enjoyable, fun atmosphere which contributes significantly to their self-esteem and confidence. For the older pupils and students, there is an emphasis on their interpersonal and independence skills.

All pupils and students are encouraged and supported to personalise their own rooms. The fittings and furnishings in the shared areas of the house reflect the needs of the group as a whole.

The Key stage 4 and Sixth Form residential area is housed within the main building which also accommodates the school's administration offices. The other residential area is in a separate building but within close proximity of the main building. As well as the usual classroom facilities, the school has a large gym area, chapel, music room, cricket pitch, football field, basketball and tennis court, an activity area including swings/slides/rope climbing/balancing equipment and a climbing wall.

CARE STAFF

The residential areas are staffed by a team led by the Head of Care who ensures that families and guardians are kept fully informed about their child's welfare and progress. Both residential areas are led by an Area Leader, whose role it is to coordinate and manage both pupils/students and

staff. The strong professional and collegiate working relationships ensure that education, therapy, care and medical staff provide a cohesive 24-hour curriculum for our pupils and students.

Every area has a telephone where pupils and students can make and receive calls in private. There are a variety of evening activities run by St Dominic's staff, including a football club, golf, basketball, climbing, archery and offsite activities such as youth clubs, scouts, cadets and swimming. For the creative, there are craft activities, cooking, drama club, individual music lessons and computer games.

The Care Team help the pupils and students to take personal responsibility for their clothing and personal hygiene thus encouraging and teaching social awareness and instilling independence to the individuals.

The emotional welfare of the pupils and students at St Dominic's School is fundamental to their wellbeing. We have supportive, caring and highly trained staff who can offer individual help to them. The atmosphere and stability of the residential areas contribute greatly to the pupils and students' sense of security, which is of vital importance to their emotional development.

All pupils and students are encouraged to take an active part in decision-making and in the day-to-day running of their residential area. As breakfast and suppers are provided in the residential areas, the pupils and students are encouraged to work with staff on their menu choice, with health guidelines being offered by the care staff.

The Care Team have an active role in the staff structure at St Dominic's School, attending hand-over meetings, attending link meetings, providing reports for annual reviews, planning individual programmes and working alongside teaching and medical staff for the welfare and development of each pupil and student.

The residential care provision and team received a 'Good' judgment grade from Ofsted in February 2017.

Aims and Objectives

Residential Provision

1. For each pupil and student to reach their individual potential by:

- Setting appropriate and achievable targets;
- Giving support with homework;
- Developing their social and life skills;
- Developing a sense of personal responsibility for clothing and hygiene;
- Being offered the opportunity to attend after school activities and learn new skills.

2. For each pupil and student to feel happy and have a sense of wellbeing by:

- Encouraging and developing friendships;
- Celebrating birthdays and other significant festivals;
- Creating an atmosphere of belonging, staff interest and empathy. Staff listening and responding appropriately;

- Creating a relaxed atmosphere where play and entertainment are encouraged;
- Encouraging each pupil/student to personalise his/her own room;
- Adjusting a menu to meet their needs {within reason}.

3. For each pupil and student to develop socially acceptable behaviour by:

- Learning appropriate greetings and discouraging inappropriate sexualised behaviour;
- Develop a sense of personal hygiene – toileting, hand washing, menstruation, etc;
- Learning table manners and understanding turn-taking;
- Gaining an understanding of what is and is not appropriate clothing for certain circumstances.

4. For each pupil/student to feel secure in a safe environment by:

- Ensuring each pupil/student knows the routine and should this change for any reason, explanations are given beforehand;
- Ensuring all staff have training in Health and Safety, Fire Evacuation Procedures, First Aid and Child Protection;
- Ensuring that external doors to residential areas are locked and alarmed at the end of the waking day to prevent unauthorised access. However, pupils and students can exit in an emergency.
- Providing an adequate level of staff to ensure that pupils and students are supervised at all times;
- Developing in each pupil/student a sense of “stranger danger”.

5. For each pupil/student to develop a sense of self-confidence by:

- Offering routines within which the pupil/student feels comfortable;
- Setting achievable targets and so developing new skills;
- Offering encouragement and praise;
- Making learning a new skill fun.

RESIDENTIAL CARE AIMS

We aim to create a safe, caring and learning environment, which is conducive to the fulfilment of the needs of our pupils and students; allowing for developmental progress towards independence through the empowerment of the individual, the acceptance of responsibility, and development of full potential.

Environmental

- Provide small units which are cheerful, inviting, comfortable, appropriately resourced and relaxing to live in;
- Foster respect in pupils and students for their living environment, encouraging them to take some responsibility for the upkeep and decor of their area, and personalise their own space;
- Use the local environment as a learning resource and to be involved in the local community.

Within the Waking Day Curriculum

- Provide a programme of self-help, life and social skills which encourages maximum independence potential;
- Offer a wide range of stimulating activities;

- Allow free time in which pupils and students are encouraged to develop their own interests, use the time constructively, and become self-motivated;
- Liaise with teaching, therapists, medical and support staff on a regular basis.

Personal

- By positive reinforcement, encourage pupils and students to develop a real self-concept through building of self-esteem and confidence;
- Provide limitations in the form of expectations of reasonable and appropriate behaviours;
- Encourage pupils and students to take responsibility for themselves and their behaviour;
- Encourage good communication both within the community and with outside agencies;
- Provide appropriate role models in the form of staff who are well-adjusted, caring, calm, understanding and tolerant, and who actively listen to the pupils and students;
- Promote trust, compassion, respect and honesty in relationships.

General

- Plan, assess and monitor progress of pupils and students, providing reports and setting targets;
- Offer whole community celebrations which encourage the individual to feel part of the greater whole;
- Within resources, allow for the training and development of care staff;
- Allow pupils and students to take calculated risks and allow for the possibility of failure within the learning process.

Spiritual

- Promote spiritual development through positive role modelling and discussion in a secure and supportive environment;
- Develop within them their own spirituality.

Cultural

- Help pupils and students to develop an understanding of cultural diversity through celebration of difference and the encouragement of friendship throughout the school.

The minimum staffing ratio is one staff member to three pupils for KS 2& 3 and 1 staff member to 4 KS 4 pupils and Sixth Form students. Each residential area has at least one staff member who sleeps in overnight. There is a member of the Senior Leadership on-call each night and they will respond to any emergencies to assist the sleep-in staff. There is a hand-over meeting at the beginning and end of each shift.

All staff have an annual performance and development review meeting. This process includes setting targets and agreeing training priorities for the coming year.

Each of the care staff receives supervision time and there are area meetings, which take place at least once a month. Discussion and decisions from all of these meetings are recorded. In addition to these meetings, the care staff also meet with the whole staff team.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

St Dominic's operates an Equal Opportunities Policy of Recruitment. Applications for care staff are invited from both male and female as well as from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. All applicants for employment are required to complete a full application form detailing their employment history, qualifications and experience and stating they are in good health. (Internal applicants for promotion are also required to complete a new application). Applicants must also disclose any criminal offences and consent to an enhanced DBS Certificate.

The interview process includes a formal interview and a visit to the site. Prior to any appointments being finalised, St Dominic's must be in receipt of:

- Two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the most recent employer. Referees are specifically asked if they know of any reason why the applicant should not be employed to work with vulnerable children/young people. References are followed up by a phone call to the referee;
- A clear, enhanced DBS check;
- Original documentation supporting any qualifications listed in the application;
- A recent passport photograph;
- Proof of identity.

The interview and selection process includes the applicant visiting the school to meet the pupils and students and staff. This gives the opportunity for the applicant to see first-hand some aspects of the job and allows for the staff team, and most importantly, the pupils and students, to voice their opinion on the suitability of the applicant. The interview panel normally consists of three people, depending on the position; however, one is always a senior member of staff who has done the Safer Recruitment training.

Once appointed, the new member of staff is on a six-month probationary contract. During this period, he/she must complete the school's induction programme. In addition, if an appointment was made on condition that they complete or commence a particular qualification route, this too is monitored. Throughout the first six months, new staff are supervised.

St Dominic's places great importance on Continuing Professional Development for employees. We recognise the particular value of in-service training. St Dominic's also recognises the particular needs of staff working with pupils/students with complex special needs. The Crisis Prevention Institute's MAPA (Management of Actual and Potential Aggression) training and Child Protection are compulsory for all staff.

HEALTH CARE

St Dominic's has its own full time nurse. Each residential pupil/student is registered with the school GP, and the school works closely with Chiddingfold Medical Practice.

EDUCATION

Class groups are small with a maximum of ten pupils/students. Staffing levels are high and each teacher has at least one full time teaching assistant/therapy assistant/learning mentor working within the class.

Learning is promoted through full time attendance at the school and through a personal learning plan (PLP). There is a meeting of care and teaching staff where learning objectives are set and reviewed on a termly basis and all staff work with the pupils and students to ensure their individual targets are achieved. Annual Review Reports are sent to all families once a year.

THERAPY

Therapy is an integral part of the programme offered at St Dominic's School and there are extensive resources aimed at meeting the therapy needs of the pupil and students. The school has both small and large work areas, which can be utilised for individual or small group work. There is a fully equipped area for Sensory Integration and Occupational Therapy.

Therapists and therapy assistants work collaboratively with staff across the waking day curriculum to provide a blended approach to meeting the learning needs of the pupils and students. This approach provides input and support for all pupils and students at a universal level, allows for support to be targeted as required and for therapists to deliver specialist therapy as appropriate.

The department is staffed by a team of qualified therapists and therapy assistants who are trained to carry out therapy programmes under the guidance of the therapists. All pupil and students are fully assessed during their first term at school by each therapy area, regardless of stated needs. There is a close liaison with teaching staff and joint planning and delivery occurs in some curriculum areas.

The department consists of 5 full time speech and language therapists, 4 full time and 1 part time occupational therapist, and 5 therapy assistants.

Therapists and therapy assistants work predominantly in the classroom with teachers, teaching assistants and learning mentors to provide a blended provision.

CONTACT WITH FAMILIES/FAMILY SERVICES

Contact with families is positively promoted. The residential areas each have a telephone available for families to call during the evenings. A phone is available for the pupils/students to develop the skills of using the telephone. St Dominic's has a family focussed model of delivery that aims to meet the needs of the whole family and maintain positive relationships with all family members.

Contact arrangements of family members are reviewed regularly as part of the placement and LAC Review. Families are consulted through the review process and by questionnaire.

COMPLAINTS

The School's Complaints Policy is set out in separate documents. This is given to all families and guardians and placing authorities and details how to ensure worries or concerns are brought to our attention. It also sets out the procedures for making a formal complaint.

CHILD PROTECTION / SAFEGUARDING

St Dominic's has a commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of each pupil and student. In particular, our aim is to provide a safe environment which enables pupils/students' individual needs to be met and developed, and to protect them from exposure to harm.

We believe it is vital that everyone involved in the care of our pupils and students is alert to the possibility of abuse. Our policy and procedures recognise this possibility and aim to promote an environment in which abuse is unlikely to occur. St Dominic's has a Safeguarding Policy which sets out the course of action for members of staff, pupils, students and families, volunteers and friends if abuse is alleged, suspected or observed. St Dominic's also actively encourages staff members to read the guidance on Safer Working Practice, published by the Department of Education. At induction, all staff receive a copy of Keeping Children Safe in Education, which they sign in confirmation that they have read and understood. The school has nine staff trained in safeguarding who work together as a team and deliver safeguarding training to new staff and refreshers to all staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is:
Mark Oliver, Head of Care

The Safeguarding Team is:
Angela Drayton, Principal
Vicky Perry, Head of Education – Teaching & Learning
Nina Clarke, Behaviour Support & School Counsellor
Haley Scanlon, School Nurse
Simon Reynolds, ICT teacher / e-safety co-ordinator
Liz Godfrey, Head of Key Stage 3
Emma Jones, Head of Key Stage 2
Matthew Bell, SENCo

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

St Dominic's comprehensively sets out the policy and procedures for behaviour management, including control and discipline and the use of sanctions and physical interventions in our Positive Behaviour Management Policy. (This and all other policies are available on request.)

St Dominic's policy is consistent with Department of Education and Department of Health legislation and guidance. Proactive / positive strategies used on a day to day basis are designed to ensure that early and preventative measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of any incident of challenging behaviour escalating. An emphasis on positive attention from adults, demonstrating a caring interest and positive reinforcement, is used to influence behaviour.

When necessary, Individual Behaviour Support Plans (IBPs) take into account and aim to address environmental factors and communicative functions which may be possible triggers for challenging behaviour. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and only in response to prevent injury to the pupil/student and other people or severe damage to property. Any physical intervention used,

including restraint, is discussed and recorded in the Behaviour Support Plan. This plan is agreed with families/families and placing authorities and reviewed at regular intervals.

Any sanction or physical intervention used is recorded as part of the incident reporting process. The records are monitored by senior managers and they are also available to families and placing authorities.

In order to support the positive behaviour management policy all members of staff have received training in MAPA (Managing Actual and Potential Aggression). Disengagement and holding skills lay the foundation for intervention. The training received is listed below, and all staff are expected to adhere to these principles.

MAPA (Management of Actual and Potential Aggression) is a safe, non-harmful behaviour management system designed to help professionals provide for the best possible Care, Welfare and Security of disruptive and possibly violent pupils. This training teaches how to:

- Identify the behaviour levels that contribute to the development of a crisis and choose an appropriate staff intervention for each level;
- Identify useful non-verbal techniques which can help to prevent acting-out behaviour;
- Use verbal techniques to de-escalate behaviour;
- Adopt principles of personal safety to avoid injury if behaviour escalates to a physical level;
- Provide for the Care, Welfare, Safety and Security of all those who are involved in a crisis situation.

CHARTER OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

These are discussed at tutor time, in PSHCE, at Key Stage 2 Forum with the younger pupils and in Student Voice meetings with the older groups.

- All pupils/students with a learning disability have the same human rights and values as any other person;
- All pupils/students with a learning disability are individuals with their own individual needs – physical, emotional, social, spiritual, cultural and sexual;
- Each pupil/student is to be protected from abuse in all forms – physical, sexual, neglect or emotional;
- Each pupil/student and/or their representative has the right to complain. Furthermore, these complaints should be treated with respect, listened to and resolved;
- Each pupil/student will be encouraged to be as independent as possible and to exercise choice;
- A pupil/student's choices, views and wishes should be respected;
- Each pupil/student is to be treated with dignity and respect and addressed by their own name;
- Pupils/students should never be talked about as if they were not there;
- Each pupil/student's privacy should be respected at all times and in all places. The only exception would be when a pupil/student is placed in danger by this principle;

- All information about a pupil/student should be treated confidentially, kept secure and only shared with people who need to know;
- Every pupil/student is entitled to the best care at all times;
- Every pupil/student should, as far as possible, be involved in decisions that affect them;
- Families and those with parental responsibility will be consulted in all aspects of care planning for a pupil/student;
- Each pupil/student should have access to a telephone and be aware of other sources of help and advice e.g. Child Line.

This document is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the school's Governing Body.