

<b>Category</b>	General Management		
<b>Document Name</b>	Statement of Purpose		
<b>Approval By</b>	St Dominic's School Governing Body		
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<b>Version</b>	V2.4	<b>Next Review Due</b>	August 2021

St Dominic's School is a 38-week, day academy for up to 150 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. All 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, 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. 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 School. 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 Advanced Autism Accreditation status and the Eco Schools Award.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

As well as the usual classroom facilities, the school has a dedicated Performing Arts Centre, a large gym area, chapel, cricket pitch, football field, basketball and tennis court, an activity area including swings/slides/rope climbing/balancing equipment and a climbing wall.

## **Aims and Objectives**

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.

### **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 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.

## **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING**

St Dominic's operates an Equal Opportunities Policy of Recruitment. Applications 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 may, depending on the position, also include an informal interview with a pupil/student panel, which allows the pupils and students to voice their opinion on the suitability of the applicant. The formal 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.

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;
- Medical clearance;
- Confirmation of qualifications listed in the application;
- Proof of Eligibility to Work in the UK;
- Proof of identity.

Once appointed, the new member of staff is on either a six-month or twelve-month probationary contract, dependent on the post appointed to. 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 probationary period, 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 training 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). 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 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 school 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 pupils 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 4 full time and 1 part time speech and language therapists, 3 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 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 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:  
Matthew Bell, SENCo

The Safeguarding Team is:

Angela Drayton, Principal  
Dr Kirsty Glaysher, Head of Integrated Services  
Mr David Clarke, Head of Lower School  
Mrs Chown, Head of Upper School  
Mrs Caroline Nesbit, School Nurse  
Ms Kennedy, Admissions & Family Liaison Manager  
Mrs Amme Pryor, Assistant Head of Upper School (Key Stage 4)  
Mrs Nina Clarke, Assistant SENCo  
Mr Rob Chowns, Regional Safeguarding Lead

## **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.