



Dacorum Education
Support Centre

Teaching and Learning at DESC Policy and Practice

DESC values the mental health and wellbeing of every member of its community.

Our policies reflect the core values of respect and support for each other in every aspect of life. Our aim is that all in our community, through working together, to feel safe and secure in an environment, which enables and equips every individual to thrive and be respectful of each other strengths and differences.

March 2020

Introduction:

At DESC we place the learner and their family at the heart of what we do.

Our learners arrive at centre with significant barriers to learning. This can present as:

- Low self-esteem
- Significant gaps in learning
- Poor/Non attendance
- Low literacy levels
- Challenging behaviour
- Significant Mental Health issues
- A history of changes in schools
- Safeguarding concerns
- Disaffection with the school system

Our first priority therefore is to re-engage learners through our twin-track approach of addressing their needs through a therapeutic and personalised learning programme to break the cycle of disaffection with education.

Many of our learners have struggled in the past with purposeful, trusting relationships, so staff invest heavily in building a positive and meaningful rapport with our learners. This is key to our success and in ensuring positive behaviour management strategies deployed in and around centre.

Our curriculum provision is centred on the needs, interests and aspirations of each individual learner. Each learner has a bespoke package of learning and support to ensure maximum progress in Key Stages 1 through to 4. Teaching and learning is central to our work as educators. This as a whole centre priority helps to secure positive outcomes and futures for our learners.

At DESC all staff, together with the Management Committee, are committed to this approach. We believe that learning in its holistic meaning is when learners gradually acquire and assimilate knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes that enable them to make greater sense of the world.

Aims:

- To ensure that all our learners are provided with a rich and varied personalised learning experience that enables them to re-engage with education and learning.

- To ensure that teachers/deliverers have the skills and knowledge to provide all learners with a meaningful and aspirational curriculum, and that appropriate support and intervention is deployed to this aim.
- To equip all learners with the tools to be successful and to make sustained progress for life after DESC. This could be:
 - Returning back to mainstream education,
 - Transitioning to specialist provision,
 - Remaining at DESC in to KS4,
 - Progressing to college, modern apprenticeships or employment.

The Learning Environment:

The learning environment should be organised:

- To provide a calm and purposeful learning space
- To provide individualised and bespoke lessons to maximise engagement and progress
- To provide learners with opportunities to develop their ideas through independent enquiry
- To ensure that all available space and resources are used effectively to ensure high quality learning
- To ensure all resources are effectively stored, appropriate, organised and are accessible for all
- To create effective displays to support teaching and learning and wider learning
- To enable learners to use and access ICT
- To provide opportunities to develop reading

Our Learners:

Our aim is for learners at every Key Stage to become independent, resilient and well-rounded.

They are provided with the opportunity to:

- Apply new skills and knowledge effectively
- Communicate appropriately about their learning experience and therefore as staff we get a flavour of exactly what it is like to be a learner at DESC across all Key Stages (Student Voice).

- Acquire and assimilate knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes to make greater sense of the world through providing varied experiences to all learners
- Provide opportunities to work independently or as part of a group or team (when appropriate).
- Develop reading through an array of different opportunities both in and outside of the classroom
- Make informed decisions at key transition points about their next steps (eg. Post-16)

In addition behaviour expectations are clearly reinforced (refer to the DESC Behaviour Guide). These are simple and understood by all;

- ***Be in the right place at the right time***
- ***Let learners learn and teachers teach***

Teachers/Deliverers:

The teachers/deliverers will:

- Value every learner irrespective of age, ability, race, gender, disability and previous history
- Be clear on the curriculum intent, implementation and impact of what they are teaching to learners.
- Be aware of the needs of each individual learner
- Be clear on the skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes which are the outcomes of the learning process
- Deploy appropriate questioning techniques (through Bloom's Taxonomy)
- Design engaging, challenging and differentiated learning tasks
- Provide opportunities for learners to work collaboratively in a group, when appropriate
- Value and promote the home/ DESC Centre agreement
- Monitor and rectify misconceptions throughout the lesson to ensure that maximum progress is achieved
- Show outstanding knowledge and passion for their subject area

Our Principles:

We believe that our learners learn best when they:

- Feel safe and secure
- Are happy
- Have been fed

- Have forged positive relationships with staff and fellow learners
- Are interested and motivated
- Achieve success and gain recognition
- Are given tasks which match and stretch their ability
- Are building confidence
- Are aware of boundaries and limitations
- Are challenged and stimulated
- Take personal responsibility
- Experience the wider world

Prior Knowledge and Understanding:

We pride ourselves in developing personalised learning programmes to meet the individual needs of our learners. We manage this in the following ways:

Information Gathering:

Information is obtained from all available sources. We use the DESC Information Gathering Form (DIG) to assimilate information from school, social care and other professionals and agencies (See Appendix 1) at KS4. At KS1-3 regular meetings are held with the supporting school and link tutors/ coordinators aim to attend all relevant meetings relating to the child (eg. TAF).

An admissions meeting combined with a tour of the relevant centre is set up for each learner and their family. At this meeting expectations are laid out and questions answered. This is an opportunity for us to learn directly from the young person and their family what their hopes and interests are so that we can begin the planning for their programme. This also allows us to hear their voice and gain any further pertinent information.

Once we have all relevant information where necessary we will put a risk assessment in place.

Baselining:

Given the chequered educational history of our learners, it is vital that we obtain as much accurate baselining information as possible to make guided and informed decisions about their educational provision. Baseline assessments are designed to capture a holistic picture of need, including learning needs and soft skills, using standardised testing. These scores are then transferable when making referrals to outside agencies and can be used to identify learners who may be in need of Exam Access Arrangements.

Baseline assessment data is also used to inform and monitor interventions.

Upon entry to centre learners will receive baseline testing in the following areas:

Academic Potential

- **WRAT 4/5:** A nationally norm-referenced test that measures skills in:
 - Word reading
 - Spelling
 - Sentence comprehension
 - Math computation

Wellbeing

- **Boxall Profile:** A framework for the precise assessment of our learner's social and emotional aptitudes. It provides staff with insights and allows teachers/deliverers to understand learner behaviour, and how to plan accordingly.
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Data is used in different ways across Key Stages to ensure an accurate picture of need is shared with all staff. Key documentation is updated termly or when circumstances for a learner change significantly.

Key Stage 1 & 2

- Information provided by the referring primary school or last school attended.
- On entry a Boxall Profile is completed for each learner which is then repeated half-termly.
- Information provided by attached outreach caseworker when applicable is provided.
- Pupil Profile completion
- WRAT 4 Assessment completion (where appropriate)
- Roots and Fruits completed for each learner (STEPS)
- Pupil Passport to be completed. This is then used as a document outlining learning and behaviour needs to aid transition back to school
- Targets are set based on all assessments undertaken

Key Stage 3

- Information provided by the referring secondary school or last school attended.
- On entry a Boxall Profile is completed for each learner which is then repeated half-termly

- Information provided by attached outreach caseworker when applicable is provided.
- Pupil Profile completion
- WRAT 4 Assessment completion
- Roots and Fruits completed for each learner (STEPS)
- Pupil Passport to be completed. This is then used as a document outlining learning and behaviour needs to aid transition back to school
- Targets are set based on all assessments undertaken

Key Stage 4

- Information provided by the referring secondary school or last school attended.
- Information provided by attached outreach caseworker when applicable.
- Pupil Profile to be completed
- Roots and fruits completed for each student (STEPS)
- WRAT 4/5 Assessments completed
- Neales Analysis completed (Literacy)
- Core subject baseline tests to take place during induction weeks
- SDQ Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire administered
- Analysis, then either at:
 - British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS – (Looking for issues with Speech, Language and Communication)
 - Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH – Looking for processing, working memory issues and possible dyspraxia profile)
 - Lucid LASS (Looking to identify dyslexic/dyscalculic traits)

All staff across all Key Stages recognise the learners' individual needs (Pupil Profile). Learning is catered to the needs of each and every learner. The Pupil Profile is updated and reviewed half termly.

Our Curriculum:

Our curriculum provision is centred on the needs, interests and aspirations of each individual learner. Each learner has a bespoke package of learning and support to meet their needs from Key Stages 1 through to 4.

Key Stage 1 & 2:

The rationale for the majority of learners at KS1 and 2 is to support and prepare them for a successful reintegration back in to mainstream school. For some learners it will be supporting a successful application for an EHCP (Education Healthcare Plan). For others it will be a positive transition to a specialist provision. Our curriculum therefore prioritising learning depending on the needs of the individual or group. For all our learners the Personal and Social Development curriculum is paramount and as such, a nurture-based approach is taken.

12-week Hub programme:

Our learners arrive in The Haven having displayed a range of difficult and dangerous behaviours often as a result of underdeveloped social and emotional skills. Mostly, in this regard they are working far below age-related expectations which is causing them to access very little of a broad and balanced curriculum in mainstream education. We use a nurture-based and PSD-focussed curriculum, and a phased approach, to re-engage learners, restore positive feelings about school and themselves as learners and teach essential social and emotional skills that will allow them to increasingly engage with learning across the primary curriculum.

Learners have access to English, Maths and other National Curriculum subjects on a needs and interest-led basis, in addition to the core curriculum outlined below.

KS2 learners also have access to weekly outdoor learning provision in vertical groupings with the KS3 learners which regularly incorporates Science, Geography and Physical Education learning. The 12-week programme is adapted for each group from the following core learning areas for each age-group:

Reception & Key Stage 1:

Phase 1: Relationship Building

- Sharing and taking turns
- Playing together and compromise
- Using manners
- Conversation and asking questions
- Joining in with activities
- Repairing mistakes with friends

- Explaining wants and needs

Phase 2: Emotional Regulation Strategies

- Identifying and naming feelings
- Identifying feelings using facial expressions.
- Understand how my behaviours make other people feel.
- Learning calming tools.

Key Stage 2:

Phase 1: Relationship Building

- Sharing, playing together, compromise, manners
- Conversation and asking questions
- Repairing mistakes with friends
- Explaining wants and needs
- Understand that choices have positive and negative consequences

Phase 2: Emotional Regulation Strategies

- Identifying feelings in myself
- Identifying feelings in others
- Consider how my behaviours affect other people's feelings
- Learning tools to help me regulate

Phase 3: Attitudes and Behaviours for Learning

- Feeling happy to have a go and take part
- Developing a growth mind-set
- Developing resilience

Phase 4: Preparing for Change

- Talking through worries about school
- Identifying people in school who help me
- Planning how to overcome difficulties and trigger points

- Saying goodbye and celebrating successes

Extended provision and 6th Day Provision:

Some learners may receive education at DESC on a short-term basis in between school placements. This may happen if a child is difficult to place in a new school or whilst awaiting an EHCP which would support school placement. Depending on their age and range of needs they may be placed into a 12-week hub programme which has already started or they may receive individual or paired provision. Their curriculum will follow the same principles as the hub programme, with targeted work to support with their next transition.

Key Stage 3:

The rationale for the majority of learners at KS3 is to support and prepare them for a successful reintegration back in to mainstream school. For some learners it will be supporting a successful application for an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan). For others it will be a positive transition to our KS4 Centre.

The curriculum model therefore is a twin track holistic and academic approach.

Learners returning to mainstream will follow the 12-week intensive Hub Programme.

12 - Week Hub Programme

Learners work in small groups of 4 with a dedicated hub teacher and TA. They follow the principles of Tuckman's **Forming-Storming-Norming-Performing** model. They explore this through topics such as:

- Having a Conversation
- My Strengths
- Dealing with Anger
- Conflict Behaviour
- Bullying

Learners also have lessons in English, Maths and ICT, as well as more practical subjects such as Home Economics, Art and PE. In addition, learners spend time doing enrichment activities which promote collaborative working, life skills, social cohesion and resilience. Meal times or break times are included but are used as learning opportunities to build social skills during unstructured times.

All learners at Key Stage 3 undertake Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) which gives them opportunities for developing their leadership skills, team building, communication, confidence, self-esteem, independence, and decision and choice making.

Year 9 Transition Programme

The Year 9 Transition Programme is for learners who have been identified as benefitting from a long-term placement at DESC and will be moving on to our KS4 provision.

The curriculum is aimed at addressing barriers to learning and improving social skills but with a greater focus on transition to our KS4 Centre. Learners are offered lessons in English, Maths and ICT, as well as more practical subjects such as Home Economics, Art and PE. In addition, learners spend time doing enrichment activities which promote collaborative working, social cohesion and resilience. These activities will usually take place at Barncroft Campus involving staff from the centre in order to build relationships with new staff and to prepare the learners to move across for Year 10/11. Meal times or break times are included but are used as learning opportunities in how to behave during unstructured times in school.

Learners are also involved in Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC).

Group Provision

Group provision is designed for:

- Learners who are awaiting a place in the hub programme
- Learners who need settling-in time before entering the hub programme
- Learners who need smaller adult: learner ratios
- Learners who are on short-term respite from school

Group provision has a focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills as well as covering subjects such as Home Economics, Art, ICT and social skills. Time is also built in to deliver literacy and numeracy interventions for pupils who need it.

Learners are moved to hub programmes if and when it is appropriate.

Learners are also involved in Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC).

Day 6 Provision

In the case where a child has been permanently excluded from their school we will undertake their educational provision until the date of the Governors Disciplinary Hearing.

We will make arrangements to contact the family and map out a suitable plan according to the needs of the individual learner.

Key Stage 4:

All learners follow a core curriculum of English, Maths, ICT and Personal Social Development (PSD).

Qualifications are targeted at the appropriate level to the learner and are built up over time. This will include entry level qualifications, Functional Skills and GCSEs at Foundation and Higher Levels.

Learners then have access to a range of options.

GCSE Qualifications

- Art
- Drama
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- Science
- Sociology
- Statistics

Furthermore we are able to source additional GCSE's in Modern Foreign Languages, Technologies given our expertise bank within our current and former staff.

Vocational Qualifications

- Business Studies
- Finance
- Health and Social Care
- Home Cooking Skills
- ICT
- Multi-Skills Construction
- Sport and Active Leisure

Non-examined Qualifications

- Communications
- Horticulture

In addition learners are also offered the Prince's Trust Achieve Programme

Alternative Provision

- Building1 Zone
- C&G Plastering
- CSEC
 - Nails and Beauty
 - Motor Mechanics
 - Horticulture
- HealthyU
 - Hair and Beauty
 - Fitness Training
- Frame Works Scaffolding

This is supplemented by Work Experience when appropriate or relevant.

Interventions:

From information gathered at baselining plus the DESC Information Gathering Form (DIG) to assimilate information from school we identify the appropriate intervention based on gaps identified and contextual need.

Support in the Classroom:

Teaching Assistants are valued members of our team. The use of a Teaching Assistant is planned for by the teacher/deliverer to gain the most effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

The Teaching Assistant can:

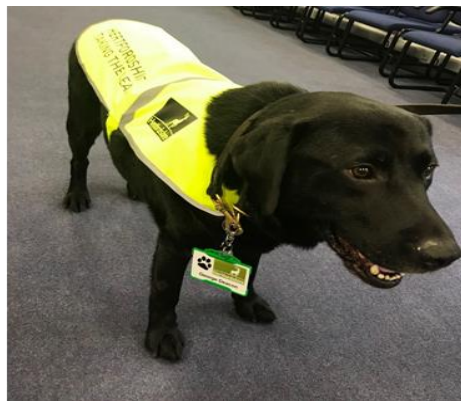
- Proactively support teachers/deliverers with their lessons
- Proactively support learners within their lessons
- Lead interventions when required
- Deliver the work in the short term absence of the teacher/deliverer as they are the consistent person for the learner

Therapy Dogs:

We have two therapy dogs (George and Marley) who are very much an integral part of our learning support

George (Black Labrador)

George currently works in the Haven with our KS1 & 2 learners. George is specifically used to encourage and develop reading.



Marley (Border Collie)

Currently works at KS3. Marley is used during outdoor learning to encourage participation, promote engagement and to teach key skills.



The benefits of therapy dogs for our learners are:

- **Cognitive** – companionship with a therapy dog stimulates memory, problem solving and game playing
- **Emotional** – a therapy dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. They also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as helping to relieve anxiety
- **Social** – a therapy dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussions, encourages responsibility, wellbeing and focused interaction with others
- **Physical** – interaction with a therapy dog reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses
- **Environmental** – a therapy dog being utilised in centre increases the sense of a family environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the day is over
- **Reading** – reading to therapy dogs has been proven to help learners read without judgement or criticism. This comforting environment helps to nurture learner's enthusiasm for reading and provides them with the confidence to read aloud.

SEN Support:

Learners are identified as being in need of SEN support either from their previous school information, or from information gathered during their baseline testing. All learners receiving SEN support are recorded under one or more of the four broad areas of need described in the SEN Code of Practice (2015):

- Communication and Interaction (C&I)
- Cognition and Learning (C&L)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Sensory and/or Physical (S/P)

Once primary SEN need has been identified, this information is used to tailor teaching and design interventions that best meet the needs of each individual. This support is reviewed formally on a termly basis, and informally through teacher feedback and discussion with the learner on a regular basis.

Where appropriate, evidence of this support may be used to request specialist support, or to inform an application for an EHCP needs assessment.

(For more information please refer to our Inclusion Policy).

Teachers/deliverers will:

- Support all learners to access the appropriate curriculum for their needs
- Develop social and emotional literacy alongside the academic curriculum

- Effectively prepare all learners to be successful in their next steps
- Identify and address any underlying or unidentified learning needs
- Communicate effectively with parents/carers to facilitate the implementation of an effective curriculum and any additional services we choose to access

Access Arrangements

Many learners will require support to access their formal examinations at DESC, to ensure they can express their ideas fully. Baseline data, as well as regular teacher feedback, helps to build a picture of adjustments that enable a learner to work to their full potential. Adjustments that may be applied for include:

- Centre Certified arrangements:
 - Reader/Computer Reader
 - Rest Breaks
 - Prompter
 - Modified Language Papers
 - Modified Layout Papers
- Externally Assessed Arrangements:
 - Scribe/Use of a Word Processor
 - Extra time
 - Oral Language Modifier

Where learners have been identified as benefitting from one of the externally assessed arrangements in lessons, they will be put forward for formal assessment by a qualified assessor. Parents and carers will be informed of the testing date and the results as soon as they become available. Testing takes place in the first half term after Christmas.

Access Arrangements information is shared with colleges and other Post-16 providers, to ensure that every learner has continuity in their support.

Therapeutic Support:

Supporting both the learner and their family we are able to offer swift and appropriate access to a range of therapeutic interventions.

This might be:

- Counselling,
- CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy)
- Drawing and Talking
- Life Coaching
- Mindfulness
- Access to our Parenting Practitioner(s),

- Referral to our Mental Health Worker(s)

Assessment:

Please refer to the DESC Assessment and Marking Policy.

Monitoring:

There is an annual cycle of monitoring Teaching and Learning. This includes:

- Informal Learning Walks
- Formal Lesson Observations
- Work Scrutiny
- Learner Voice/Feedback
- Robust and regular Line Management
- Performance Appraisal
- Open door policy

CPD:

To equip all staff to fulfil their roles we invest heavily in appropriate and relevant CPD. This includes:

- Robust Induction for all staff
- Regular staff and team meetings
- A rich programme of INSET days
- Targeted training
- Teaching and Learning Group
- Access for all to online materials and training
 - Educare
 - MindEd
- Opportunities for collaborative work
- In house sharing of expertise
- Work Shadowing
- Leadership Exchange Programme
- Golden Ticket Scheme

Resourcing:

Materials in all areas should be well organised, accessible and labelled. They should be situated near all working areas.

- Learners should be taught and shown by example that resources are finite and that we all have a duty of care for equipment
- Relevant resources and equipment are available in each classroom

Finance:

Curriculum areas are allocated funding according to the needs identified in the centre budget.

- Requests for resources should be discussed with the appropriate Line Manager, Deputy Headteacher and the Business Manager respectively
- A clear subject finance action plan be presented to the Business Manager and Deputy Headteacher
- Discussions with all budget holders take place to ensure that appropriate expenditure fits in line with whole centre development ensuring maximum student impact
- The allocated budgets are reviewed quarterly

Pupil Premium Spend:

All Pupil Premium spending is co-ordinated by Dustin King, (Assistant Head). Individual strategies for each learner in receipt of PP are discussed and agreed before being approved. An annual report regarding the Pupil Premium Spend expenditure is put on the website.

Achievements and Recognition:

Social, physical, creative and academic achievements are recognised and celebrated in many ways and is a daily aspect of centre life by:

- Verbal or written praise by all members staff in daily contact with our learners
- Display of work
- Phone calls to parents
- An effective Rewards System

- Two celebration events throughout the course of the year.
- Learners are encouraged to be involved in displaying their work around the centre and that this reflects personal achievement
- Respect for learners' work is shown by how work is presented, displayed and marked appropriately and with purpose

Equal Opportunities and Diversity:

All learners have the right to equality of opportunity. At DESC we believe in equality and value diversity in all aspects of our work. As an education provider we are committed to eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, religion, sexuality or social class.

For further information please refer to our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Record Keeping:

All teachers/deliverers keep detailed records of their work with individual learner's activities and progress. The Centre has a policy for planning, assessment, recording and reporting of subjects/curriculum areas that should be adhered to. Other records are left to the teacher/deliverers professional discretion.