



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

BACKGROUND

Donaldson's College is a grant aided special school (GASS), subsidized by the Scottish Executive Education Department, and seeks to work collaboratively with Local Authorities and Health Trusts under the terms and conditions of the Additional Support for Learning Act (Scotland 2005).

Donaldson's College welcomes visits from interested parents, carers and professionals. We accept referrals for placement from Local Authority Education and Social Work departments, and occasionally from Health Trusts throughout the UK. At present, we do not offer privately funded places but we are happy to provide information for parents and carers who wish to approach their local education authority to request placement at Donaldson's for their child.

Donaldson's is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and local authorities. We aim to provide clear written communication at each stage of the admissions process and to encourage open communication between Donaldson's staff, parents/carers and other professionals from the Local Authorities and Health Trusts.

We are strongly committed to holistic, child-centred assessment in line with the recommendations in the Integrated Assessment Framework and consider that the combination of collaboration with Local Authority professionals and parents/carers, a strong multidisciplinary admissions assessment process and a flexible approach to designing individual placements allows us to be confident that we can meet the language, social and educational needs of our pupils.

ADMISSIONS STATEMENT

Donaldson's College offers day and residential places to d/Deaf pupils, who benefit from being educated in a bilingual British Sign Language (BSL)/English teaching and learning environment. This environment ensures the development of full communication potential, using a range of strategies such as BSL, lip-reading and Signed English (SE). All pupils receive an individual communication profile and each pupil's language development and learning is based on the profile. Pupils may follow a curriculum that aims towards accessing and attaining National Qualifications.

However, some of our d/Deaf pupils are likely to have additional support needs – (such as autistic spectrum disorder, learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties), which will require a differentiated curriculum and more intensive pupil support to facilitate their learning. Additionally, we offer places to



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

hearing pupils with severe, low-incidence speech and language disorders, who benefit from visual systems of education, including TEACCH, SE and BSL.

REFERRAL

Most initial enquiries are made informally through a telephone or email. All such enquiries should be directed to the Principal who is responsible for all referrals and admissions.

The Principal is happy to discuss informally any aspect of the referral and admissions process at any time during the school year. Referrals are recorded on the pupils referral information form (Appendix 1).

ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

In order to ensure that Donaldson's can meet the language, educational and social needs of a young person referred for placement, each pupil will be offered an admissions assessment which involves:

- a three day assessment visit to Donaldson's during which the young person works within an appropriate class and/or residential group and undergoes observational assessments by the multidisciplinary team of teachers, care staff, speech and language therapists, educational audiologist, BSL tutors and support staff. Pupils referred for residential placements are resident at Donaldson's during the admissions assessment visit.
- Visits by Donaldson's staff to the young person's current school or nursery.
- Home visits for residential and nursery referrals.
- Liaison and discussion between Donaldson's staff, parents/carers and professionals from the Local Authority or Health Trust.

Any one to one support workers, who work with the young person in the Local Authority or Health Trust can provide important continuity by accompanying the young person during the admissions assessment. Donaldson's will negotiate this with the referring authority for appropriate pupils. Donaldson's does not ask for a Local Authority contribution for admissions assessments.

As well as ensuring that Donaldson's can meet the needs of the individual pupil, the admissions assessment identifies any additional resources that are needed from the Local Authority or Health Trust in order to meet those needs effectively. Additional resources may be an extra member of staff, special pieces of equipment or services such as clinical psychology.



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

Following the admissions assessment visit, Donaldson's may agree to accept the pupil on a trial placement of up to 6 months in duration. Before the trial placement is arranged, the Principal will provide a written report of the admissions assessment for local authority professionals and parents/carers and will request confirmation, in writing, that the Local Authority will provide the additional resources identified.

All local authority contributions must be agreed and recorded in advance of the trial placement.

TRIAL PLACEMENTS

Trial placements are offered after a successful admissions assessment. During the typically three to six month trial placement, the young person attends Donaldson's and is fully integrated into the school and/or residence. Any additional resources, such as one to one staffing in school or the residence, must be agreed and in place for the start of all trial placements.

It is the intention that all trial placements will go on to become permanent placements, reflecting the accurate outcome of the admissions assessment. Donaldson's recognises the disruption caused to a young person by terminating a placement after only a few months, but very occasionally, it may be necessary to end a pupil placement following the trial placement if Donaldson's is not able to meet the pupil's identified needs.

The standard Local Authority contribution applies to trial placements and permanent placements and Local Authorities must sign the Donaldson's Contribution agreement before a trial placement commences.

POST-PLACEMENT REVIEW

The outcome of the trial placement is decided at the post-placement review meeting attended by the Head of Primary for primary pupils or the Deputy Principal for secondary pupils, members of the Donaldson's admissions assessment staff team, parents and carers and Local Authority representatives. The post-placement review meeting is chaired by the Principal. Donaldson's admissions assessment team write reports that will be sent out, in accordance with our reporting procedures, at least a week in advance of the post-placement review. The purpose of the post-placement review meeting is to review the trial placement, confirm a permanent placement, (or occasionally, terminate the placement) and to identify any changes that need to be put in place to better support the education and care of the pupil.



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

PLACEMENT MODELS

All placements are designed to best meet the needs of the individual pupil, taking into account the views of the young person, parents/carers, Donaldson's multi-disciplinary admissions assessment team and the views of professionals from the referring Local Authority or Health Trust. All types of placement are offered initially as trial placements. All placements are subject to annual review.

For pupils who have Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs), all placements will reflect the requirements laid out in the plan. All pupils receive Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) developed by the multidisciplinary team of professionals, parents/carers and whenever possible, pupils themselves. All pupils are encouraged to participate in developing their own personal learning plan in a meaningful way, at a level that takes account of their profile of abilities and difficulties.

Primary

The maximum class size is six pupils, although this may occasionally increase to a maximum of seven pupils during the course of the school year. The Primary school follows the 5-14 Curriculum Guidelines, as well as making use of the Elaborated Curriculum for some pupils. Speech and Language therapy, BSL tuition and Educational Audiology services are provided within an integrated model to meet the needs of individual pupils as detailed in their IEPs. Specialist staff deliver, Music, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), British Sign Language (BSL), swimming and Physical Education (PE).

Secondary

The secondary offers a range of subjects taught by specialist secondary teachers. The subjects we offer include English, Maths, Sciences, PE, ICT, Deaf Studies, Religious and Moral Education (RME), Art and Design, Craft, Design and Technology (CDT), Modern Studies and Home Economics. Pupils may work towards National Qualifications at levels matched to their abilities and interests including Access Levels 1, 2 and 3 as well as Intermediate and Higher qualifications. Additionally we offer qualifications in BSL at CACDP Levels 1, 2 and 3. Access to the curriculum is provided through communication which meets the needs of the individual young person including BSL, spoken English and manually coded English. Teachers adapt and deliver the curriculum to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning.



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

Skillstart and Life Skills

For some of our pupils who have learning difficulties or other additional support needs, we offer the Skillstart provision within the secondary school. The Skillstart base provides a form of extended learning support within the secondary school and pupils follow a differentiated curriculum designed to consolidate basic skills in literacy, numeracy, language and communication and PSD. Skillstart pupils access a wide range of specialist subjects taught by secondary subject teachers and usually progress to the two year, post-16 Lifeskills course. The Lifeskills course is designed to promote and develop independent living skills.

Shared Placements

Donaldson's offers shared placements for pupils whose educational, social and communication needs are best supported through this model. Shared placements are designed around the specific needs of individual young people, taking into account the importance of providing a broad and cohesive educational experience for the young person, while giving opportunities to maintain links with local peer groups

Residential placements

Donaldson's residence provides a caring environment for our residential pupils on Monday to Thursday nights during the school terms. All residential pupils receive an individual Care Plan that is linked to the IEP through close working links between the school and residence staff teams. Requests for part-time residential placements are considered on an individual basis and Donaldson's can occasionally offer packages of residential respite care for our pupils.

Extended days

Some of our day pupils spend extended days in the residence in order to provide respite for parents/carers or to allow the young person to have opportunities for social integration with his/her peers in a bilingual English/BSL environment. These arrangements are funded by Social Work departments and are considered on an individual basis by the Principal, in consultation with the Donaldson's staff team.

Nursery placements

Donaldson's nursery accepts referrals for nursery placement for hearing and d/Deaf children aged between 2.5 and 5 years old. The nursery is operational during the afternoons. Progression from Donaldson's nursery



Donaldson's College

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2006

to Donaldson's primary is not automatic and is subject to approval at the annual review of the pupil in his/her pre-school year.

Policy review

The Donaldson's Admissions Policy is reviewed regularly by the senior management team and approved by the Board of Governors.

Summer 2006