



DUNEDIN SCHOOL
Delivers unique education to individuals

*“My son has never
been so happy”*

Parent of S3 pupil

What Makes Us Unique?

Dunedin is a “second chance” school which caters for a very small number of young people for whom secondary mainstream schooling has not been appropriate. Pupils can be referred by educational psychologists, social workers or by a private placing request.

Many young people arrive at Dunedin with a feeling that they have somehow “failed” in mainstream, and there are usually significant personal, social and emotional barriers to their learning. Some pupils also have additional learning and support needs such as ASD, dyslexia, dyscalculia etc. Most have spent a substantial amount of time out of school and are highly anxious. We aim to offer an alternative to the mainstream setting so that the young people who come to us feel they can make a fresh start.

Dunedin strives to provide a supportive and nurturing environment, sympathetic to individual needs. We foster the emotional wellbeing of the pupils, and encourage them to re-engage with their own education and develop a positive attitude towards learning. As well as offering a broad curriculum, and working towards formal qualifications where appropriate, pupils have opportunities to develop their skills and confidence, through the many extra-curricular trips and activities which are organised throughout the year.

The Learning Environment

For many of our pupils, the large mainstream setting has been a challenge, and Dunedin provides a much smaller, less intimidating and more informal learning environment. Teachers and pupils address each other by first name; there is no school uniform, and no bell to mark the beginning and end of each class. A maximum of 21 pupils can be enrolled at any one time, and they are taught, in groups of 4 or 5, by a small team of subject specialists and a support for learning teacher. Teachers are able to work more flexibly and co-operatively, to put the needs of pupils first, than is often the case in a mainstream setting.

Parents/carers and other professionals are important partners in the work of the school. Parents are especially encouraged to visit or contact us at any time to discuss their concerns.



Aims

Dunedin endeavours to provide structured yet flexible learning opportunities tailored to the individual, in a welcoming, sympathetic and calm environment which promotes learning and enables each young person to realise his or her own potential.

We aim to:

- encourage pupils to recognise Dunedin as a “second chance” school where they will be respected as the individuals they are
- reintroduce pupils to a holistic educational environment
- support pupils in developing self-respect, self-confidence and self worth
- foster in pupils mutual trust and tolerance of others
- provide a broad and appropriate curriculum
- encourage a positive attitude to learning
- motivate pupils to aspire to their full potential and, where appropriate, to present them for formal qualifications and/or exams
- support pupils to move on to appropriate and sustainable destinations

“My son’s confidence continues to grow under Dunedin’s ethos for which we will always be in your debt. We were in a very different place 3 years ago and are so thankful that he was given a second chance.”

Parent of S5 pupil

Curriculum

All staff work with pupils to try to build their confidence, help them to re-engage with education and achieve their potential.

The school provides a broad curriculum of examinable and non-examinable subjects. The school's flexible approach to learning allows pupils to develop at their own pace, and a high staff-to-pupil ratio and small-group teaching also cater to individual needs.

Teaching groups are carefully considered to create a calm learning environment and, although a group usually comprises pupils working at similar levels, the ability to co-operate is also an important factor.

In S1 to S3, pupils normally follow a broad, general curriculum, based around the principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. This covers most aspects of the 8 curricular areas:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Wellbeing
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Religious and Moral Studies
- Sciences
- Social Studies
- Technologies

Towards the end of S3 and from S4 onwards, pupils can begin to work towards National Qualifications, if that is an appropriate pathway for them.

The school can enter pupils for National Qualifications from National 1 to Higher level. Freestanding units are also offered in most subjects and at a variety of levels. These can be in addition to, or as an alternative to, external examinations.

Subjects in which we can offer qualifications include:

- Art
- Computing and Information Technology
- English and Literacy
- Environmental Science, Biology and Chemistry
- Geography
- Health and Food Technology and Hospitality
- History
- Mathematics, Applications of Mathematics and Personal Finance
- A Modern Language
- Modern Studies
- Photography
- Sociology

Non-examinable subjects include:

- Citizenship
- Cookery
- Comparative Religions
- Current Affairs
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Enterprise
- Life Skills
- Personal and Social Education
- Sport

Activities:

Outdoor education and school trips play an important part in the pupils' personal and educational experience at Dunedin, and we are always looking for ways to take learning out of the classroom.

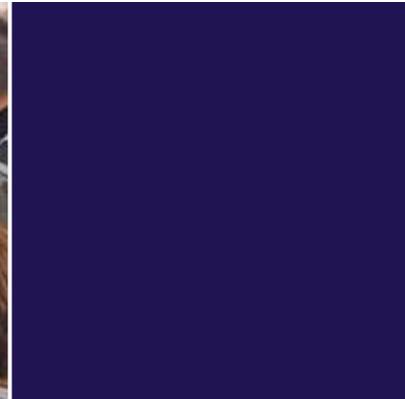
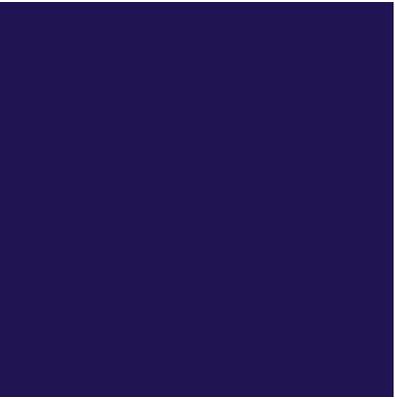
Examples include:

- History trip to the Museum, Mary King's Close, Craigmillar Castle
- Art trips to Edinburgh Galleries, Jupiter Artland, the Botanic Gardens
- Creative writing workshops at Edinburgh Castle and the National Portrait Gallery
- Science lectures at The Royal Infirmary
- Activity tasters in canoeing, fishing, horse-riding
- Ongoing sport such as badminton, tennis, walking, swimming
- A one night residential focusing on challenge and teamwork

The school is also always looking to establish links with organisations that can help us enrich our curriculum and in the last few years we have worked with The Lyceum, Drake Music, The National Trust and Edinburgh College.

“My daughter has completely changed since starting. Her confidence has improved and she is learning and enjoying learning which is most important.”

Parent of S3 pupil



Pastoral Care and Support

Whilst all staff are responsible for the health and wellbeing of all pupils, the school also operates a tutor system which means that each pupil is allocated to a particular member of staff who oversees his or her pastoral care. Over time, this member of staff will develop a good working relationship with both the pupil and his or her family.

Dunedin operates within GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child), and each tutor will also work closely with other professionals (such as educational psychologists, social workers or mental health professionals) to provide the best support for their tutees.

Every pupil at the school has the opportunity to attend a planning or review meeting at least once in the year, and for more senior pupils who are preparing to move on from school, these meetings are often more frequent.

“My son has had a brilliant first session at Dunedin. He has engaged fantastically well with his learning and is making great progress – something that just would not have been possible in his previous mainstream school. We have nothing but positive feedback for this wonderful school and its dedicated creative and caring staff.”

Parent of S1 pupil

“Isla has flourished here in a way I wouldn't have dreamed possible.”

Parent of S6 pupil



The School's History

Dunedin School is a small independent school providing education for young people experiencing a range of social and emotional difficulties. The school was established as The Dunedin Co-operative in 1979 and operated out of Millar Hall. In 2000, the school became a Company Limited by Guarantee, and a registered charity in Scotland. A period of planning and fundraising followed and in 2007, the school moved into Liberton Bank House, a building of historical and literary importance, after it had been renovated and adapted to our purposes.

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Dunedin School is a Scottish registered charity (Scottish Charity number SC030591)