

DUNEDIN SCHOOL

Delivers unique education to individuals

**Liberton Bank House
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Background Information

The School's History and Background

Dunedin School was established in 1979 and operated out of Millar Hall, in Cameron Toll, Edinburgh, for almost thirty years, providing a small and nurturing educational environment as an alternative to mainstream.

In 2000, the school became a Company Limited by Guarantee, and a registered charity in Scotland. Its first Board of Governors was established, and a period of planning and fundraising followed to secure the purchase of a building which would serve the needs of the school in the 21st century.

The school finally moved into its own premises - Liberton Bank House - in 2007. It is a building of historical and literary interest and was sympathetically renovated and adapted to the school's needs by the Cockburn Association. We have been welcoming young people from Edinburgh, and beyond, to this building ever since.

Aims

Dunedin endeavours to provide structured yet flexible learning opportunities tailored to the individual, in a welcoming, sympathetic 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
- support pupils in developing self-respect, self-confidence and self worth
- foster in pupils mutual trust and tolerance of others
- reintroduce pupils to a holistic educational environment
- 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

Curriculum

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. A high staff-to-pupil ratio and small-group teaching also cater to individual needs.

The timetable is constructed to provide a curriculum that suits each pupil as far as possible. The teaching groups are carefully considered to create a calm learning environment in which the pupils can reap maximum benefit. Groups are formed through discussion with all staff and, although a group usually comprises pupils working at similar levels, the ability to co-operate as a group is also an important factor.

Staff work with pupils to try to build confidence and to help them to re-engage with education.

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, although pupils are only presented for National Qualifications and examinations if it is appropriate and at a suitable level.

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 we can offer qualifications in 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
- Modern Studies
- Photography

Non-examinable subjects include:

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

Tuesday and Friday afternoons are usually reserved for activities such as badminton, walks or the gym. In addition, pupils have many opportunities throughout the year to take learning outside the classroom through visits to museums, galleries, theatres, cinemas, zoos and other places of educational interest.

The school is 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.

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.

Structure of the School Day and School Year

The academic year comprises 35 weeks at Dunedin.

The school does not have a local catchment area, and pupils may travel to attend from across Edinburgh and the Lothians. Many pupils travel to school by taxi; older pupils who live within a reasonable distance of the school are encouraged to travel independently by bus.

Pupils generally begin arriving at school from 8.15am onwards. The school runs a “breakfast club” and cereals, juice, toast and fruit are freely available for pupils when they arrive. Classes begin at 9.00am.

The school operates a 5-period day as follows:

Period 1 9.00-10.00	Period 2 10.00-10.30	Break 10.30-10.45	Period 2 (Continued) 10.45-11.15	Period 3 11.15-12.15 [11.15-12.00 Tues & Fri]	Lunch 12.15-1.00	Period 4 1.00- 2.00	Period 5 2.00-3.00
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Staff at Dunedin

Dunedin has a small staff that works collegiately and supports one another. The school operates a flat management system which means that there is no head teacher. Instead, teachers are subject specialists who can deliver the curriculum, and are in charge of their own departments, but they also contribute to the day-to-day and longer-term management of the school. Decisions are made by consensus, and flexibility and co-operation are vital.

Almost all staff are employed on a part-time basis to reflect the curricular and educational needs of the pupil roll. They are supported by a teaching assistant who works flexibly and takes on a wide range of duties.

The school also has an administrator who works full time. The administrator provides a consistent point of contact for both pupils and their families throughout the week, and plays a central role in the smooth running of the school.

All staff attend regular meetings to discuss the business of the school. These meetings are often held in the evening, and staff receive remuneration for attendance.

Teachers can access both SCIS and the City of Edinburgh Council's professional learning and development courses, and are very much encouraged to pursue continuing professional development. All staff also undertake an annual professional review where they can reflect on their own practice with other colleagues, and prepare for the GTCS Professional Update.

New teachers are usually supported by a "buddy" - a more experienced member of staff - when they take up a position at Dunedin. The "buddy" can offer regular advice and support - as well as explain how Dunedin works!