

Send monitoring systems and provision

Introduction

Summerhill offers a safe and nurturing environment for children with SEND. We closely monitor pupils who may be struggling with their learning, but we try to avoid labelling them whenever possible. Summerhill does not label children SEND as all children are seen to have different needs and our community, its environment and values, addresses many of these needs. Those that are not seen to be addressed are brought to the staff meeting and the Special Attention List. This means that the children gain confidence and acceptance in the community for who they are, whilst learning about what is and is not acceptable behaviour amongst their peers.

New children and children at Summerhill who have needs that may impact on their learning, or their access to learning are put on the Special Attention List. Students on Special Attention are discussed at regular Special Attention meetings. The monitoring is confidential, to prevent the process from being intrusive, and to allow for an open discussion between the staff. Issues are primarily defined as anything that may prevent a child from freely making decisions about learning and attending lessons. Regular literacy/numeracy meetings, involving all staff, assess the literacy and numeracy skills of all children. Children with learning difficulties are offered help in a number of ways when the child is ready to accept help, such as one-to-one teaching.

At the end of each term the whole staff takes part in oral reports; each child is discussed individually and their general progress is monitored this way. Any actions arising from oral reports are recorded in the oral report.

The daily life of the school is governed by the school Meetings, in which everybody has an equal vote. The school's philosophy is to allow freedom for the individual - each child being able to take their own path in life and follow their own interests. This leads to an inner self-confidence and real acceptance of themselves as individuals. All of this is done within the school's structure of self-government through school meetings and laws which are at the core of the school and emphasise the distinction between freedom and license. Through this they learn to compromise, communicate, negotiate and assume responsibility. It also allows them to develop empathy and a consideration for the feelings of others.

System in place

School meeting and ombudsman system

School meetings give pupils the power to change community life through the democratic process. Both pupils and staff are answerable to the whole community.

Anyone, no matter how small, can bring a business to the meeting. This system facilitates

- Being responsible for your community
- Learning to be responsible for your own actions
- Listening to discussions and cases and then casting your vote.
- Hearing and discussing other people's cases however trivial they may seem
- Being aware that what you say is important and can change things

In addition, everyone has the right to bring up another community member that has broken the law or taken an action that they feel was wrong or affected another person negatively.

The ombudsman system supports this process. Ombudsmen are available when disputes arise between community members. They listen to disagreements and evaluate the problem as impartially as possible. They encourage the two sides to talk, try to understand and interpret the cause of the dispute, and try to negotiate a settlement between the two sides. They will represent the person who has been wronged by taking a case to the school meeting. Any community member can get help from an ombudsman to take a case to the school meeting if they don't feel ready to do so themselves or are having difficulty communicating confidently in front of the community.

These systems are invaluable in assisting children to develop in a whole range of communication and interaction, language and social, emotional and mental health skills.

Pupils may

- **Regularly attend school meetings**
- **Speak and give their opinions in school meetings**
- **Bring grievances to school meetings**
- **Take part in workshops and training to become secretary or chair of school meetings**
- **Be secretary of school meetings**
- **Chair school meetings**
- **Use ombudsman to resolve conflict**
- **Be elected to the ombudsman committee**

Special Attention List

Pupils on the Special attention list are discussed twice a term in special attention meetings. These meetings focus on the reason for the child's inclusion on the list with an emphasis on areas of strength and areas of weakness. Special Attention List meetings involve all full-time teachers and houseparents, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the needs of each child and that a full picture of each pupil and their progress is obtained.

Should any member of staff have a question or concern at any time a case can be brought to the regular staff meeting.

- **All pupils on SAL are discussed twice a term (including in relation to reports that have been provided to the school)**
- **The discussion is focused on strengths and weaknesses followed by (possible) actions and may result in short- or long-term plans.**

Staff Meeting

Staff meetings, involving all full-time teaching staff and houseparents, take place twice a week. Any concern regarding a child (including those classified as SEND) can be brought to the staff meeting at any time. These concerns may be classroom based, however, many are not, and may concern everyday skills. This allows the immediate sharing of knowledge and observations and formulation of actions, should they be required. In addition to concerns, staff meetings also provide a forum to share classroom practice that has proven useful for a particular pupil.

- **Any concern about a pupil's wellbeing is brought to the staff meeting**
- **Classroom practice that suits individual pupils is shared in the staff meeting**

Literacy/Numeracy Meetings

Termly Literacy/Numeracy meetings assess the literacy and numeracy progress and skills of all children. Each child is discussed by all full-time teaching staff and houseparents and observations about their progress with regards to literacy and numeracy are shared.

- **Each pupil's progress in literacy and numeracy is discussed and recorded every term.**

Oral Reports

After the end of every term, all full-time staff meet and discuss each pupil (with or without SEND). Each child is discussed individually and their general progress is monitored this way. Any actions arising from oral reports are recorded in the oral report. This system is a safety net to ensure nothing is missed with respect to any child through the term.

- **Each pupil's general progress in the school community is discussed at the end of every term and any concern is highlighted and actioned.**

Provision

There is the freedom to attend formal lessons or not at the school. Children have the opportunity for unlimited play, an important element of our curriculum, which we believe is good for both their physical and mental health. Children are allowed to fill their time with freely chosen actions. There are no age-related academic expectations at Summerhill. This is vital to allow children to develop at their own pace, enjoy what they do and achieve the results they want to achieve.

Our timetable and lessons are tailored to each individual's needs, and our small class sizes allow for differentiation and effective learning for all children. All teachers support and develop each pupil's functional interaction, communication, speech and language skills, including pupils for whom English is an additional language. Teachers monitor progress and keep a record for each child in a way that informs their teaching and planning. Some subjects offer open sessions where pupils can go to receive extra help. We offer various forms of assistance to those with learning difficulties, such as one-on-one teaching, when the pupil is ready to accept it. This help is offered when discussion by staff during Special Attention meetings conclude that this will be a beneficial step.

As students approach their GCSEs, if we believe they require it, we may recommend an assessment by an educational psychologist to determine if they are eligible for access arrangements during exams. This assessment can also benefit them in the future when they leave Summerhill, as it may be challenging for them to adapt back into the mainstream education system where their learning difficulties will be more apparent.

- **Classes range in size from 1-8 pupils and the learning needs of each child are taken into account**
- **Pupils may be offered individual lessons**
- **Older pupils can sign up for individual studies and focus on a chosen area of learning**
- **Open sessions can be accessed in various classrooms for extra support**

September 2024

Updated May 2025

Updated November 2025