

ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES

Family Handbook





Borne out of love and devotion by a group of parents of children with Down syndrome, Down Syndrome Association (Singapore), is a primarily self-funding, non-profit social service agency established in 1996 to support and educate families, professionals, and the public about the genetic condition. The Association is committed to providing holistic support for families and caregivers; facilitating a person with Down syndrome to attain his or her full potential; and enabling them to contribute back to the society.

Vision

To be the Centre of Excellence for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.

Mission

- Develop individuals with Down syndrome through lifelong learning and social integration.
- Support families through specialist services, information, and education.
- Advocate for equal opportunities, quality of life and their contribution to society.

Preface

This Family Handbook is written to help families understand Adult Education Services (AES) and its processes.

The information contained in this handbook does not create any contractual rights or obligations for staff or families. This handbook is to be used as a guide and is not inclusive of all policies and practices. Changes to specific policies and/or procedures will be distributed to families in writing. Any questions and/or concerns should be directed to Head, Adult Enhancement Programme or Head, Independent Living and Training Centre.

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Adult Education Services

The programmes under Adult Education Services are designed to provide person-centered support for your child to enhance their abilities and instill a level of independence in their daily life.

These services include:

- **Adult Enhancement Programme (AEP)**
AEP focuses on training functional and essential life skills, as well as capacity building which promotes independence and for some of our learners, they are prepared for, and placed into, open employment. The programme provides formal job support so as to maximise our learners' success in the workplace.
- **Independent Living and Training Centre (ILT Centre)**
ILT Centre was started to address growing concerns from our aging caregivers who gave feedback to DSA that a programme is needed, whereby their adult children could practise their independent skills in a communal setting with others in a simulated, home-like environment.

The intended aim of supported independent living is to help persons with disabilities live as independently as possible – with a centred focus on working with them in preparation for independent living. It is about working on the individual's strengths, capacity, and goals to help them live safely and independently in a supported living environment.

Core Principles

AES programmes are delivered with the following core principles aimed at enabling our adult learners to:

- Be least dependent on others.
- Develop personal strategies to manage self-care and activities of daily living.
- Develop and maintain skills of independence (e.g., money skills, independent travelling).
- Integrate with the wider society.
- Provide job training, when feasible, to prepare for employment.
- Promote social inclusion through participating in community spaces, accessing and enlarging our presence through our involvement in community events.
- Facilitate leisure and recreational activities that build identity, create memories, improve family bonds, and establish lifelong friendships.

Admission

For learners who are assessed to be suitable to join a programme within DSA's Adult Education Services, they must fulfil the following criteria:

- Persons with Down syndrome, aged 18 years and above
** Persons with other special needs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*
- Able to understand and/or converse in English
- Able to perform activities of daily living (feeding, toileting, personal hygiene) independently
- Free from infectious diseases and complex medical conditions
- Certified by a doctor or psychologist that they do not have serious behavioural issues
- Female learners must be able to manage and clean themselves during their menstruation

Applicants need to submit their full medical reports with their application. They are to undergo a mandatory medical assessment conducted within the year before joining the programme. This is to ensure that staff are fully informed of all conditions, thus being more effective when working with the learners.

Withdrawals

Families are required to provide four weeks, written notice of their intention to withdraw their child from any DSA programme. Our FSS executive will help with the referral / transfer process if the learner is transferring to another organisation.

Fees and Payment Methods

All fees are due within the first five business days of each month.

There is no pro-rating, waivers or discounts in fees due to absence for short-term illness, public holidays, shut-down, family vacations or personal reasons.

Payment for AES programmes fees can be made via:

1. GIRO (highly encouraged)
2. Cheque
3. PayNow
4. Online Bank Transfers

Fees do not include the cost of lesson-specific items, such as ingredients and outings. Parents and caregivers will be notified on the additional cost.

Service Delivery

AEP

Mondays to Fridays, 9:00am to 4:00pm

ILT Centre

Mondays to Fridays, 10:00am to 4:00pm

The Curriculum runs from January to December, each year. There are two breaks each year. Parents and caregivers will be notified in writing prior to the shutdown period for alternative arrangements during this period:

1 week in June – typically during the last week of the June school holidays.

2 weeks in December – typically during the last two weeks of December.

Outings

AES Training Officers or Lifestyle Educators will accompany the learners on outings from time to time. Parents and caregivers are advised that they will be responsible for any costs associated with the outings, such as transport fares and admission fees.

Progress Monitoring

The progress of each learner will be documented and monitored by the Training Officers or Lifestyle Educators. Annual meetings will be conducted with families to discuss the progress, and future goals of each learner. Informal communication will also take place, when necessary.

Medication

Please note that the Training Officers or Lifestyle Educators are not authorized to help administer medication to your child as they are not medically trained. Therefore, if your child is sick, it is preferred that he/she remains at home to rest. Should your child attend the programme, he/she should be able to consume his/her medication independently.

Attendance

Learning and acquiring proficiency in skills requires time. AES places great importance for the learners to be present regularly for their lessons. Learners are required to maintain 75% attendance. Failure to maintain the minimum attendance may result in the learner losing a place in the programme. We appreciate that the parents and caregivers help their child maintain a healthy attendance record.

Absent due to medical reasons

Absenteeism due to medical reasons requires a medical certificate from a doctor, or a letter from the parent or caregiver to be given to the respective Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator. Please inform the staff about the medical condition, and please avoid attending the programme during the medical leave period.

In accordance with our infection management policy, learners who are unwell and have medical certificates, are required to stay home (e.g. cough, cold, fever, influenza). This is intended to prevent the spread of any illness to the other learners and staff. If they have a physical injury (e.g., hand, arm, foot, or leg sprain), it is advisable that your child rests and recuperates at home to prevent further injury to the affected area.

Absent due to holiday

Parents and caregivers of learners going on a holiday during the Programme period need to give at least one-week notice, in writing, indicating the length of time the learner will be away.

Absent due to family events or appointments

If learners are unable to attend an AES programme due to a family event, or a scheduled appointment, parents and caregivers must notify the respective Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator at least one day prior to the event or appointment.

Dress Code

As this is an adult programme, learners are required to dress appropriately. All learners are allowed to wear shirts that do not display their previous school's or organization's logos. They are advised to wear covered shoes, preferably sports shoes, as we have morning exercises.

Male learners

Short-sleeved or long-sleeved t-shirts or polo t-shirts, and Bermuda shorts, pants, or jeans are acceptable. Sleeveless shirts or singlets are not allowed.

Female learners

Short-sleeved or long-sleeved t-shirts or polo t-shirts, and Bermuda shorts, pants, or jeans are acceptable. Dresses and skirts are not practical because of the morning exercises. Singlets, or tank-tops are not allowed.

Confidentiality

The individual dignity of learners, families, and DSA staff will always be respected and protected in accordance with PDPA. Information about learners and their families will not be disclosed to anyone other than persons who are authorised to view such information.

Photos, Videos and Media

Photos of learners may be taken during his/her enrollment in the programme for the following purposes:

- Internal purposes such as monthly reports, documentation, parent workshops, trainer in-service programmes, and progress evaluations.
- DSA's corporate newsletters and social media - Instagram and Facebook accounts for awareness, advocacy, and fundraising.

As we respect the wishes of families who do not want their child photographed, please note that there is an option to abstain from photo-taking in the application form.

Communication

Learners attending the AES programmes will be assigned to one Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator who will be the main contact for the parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers are to provide the details of one designated contact person for the Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator to contact.

Communication with the respective Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator is via telephone, WhatsApp, email, or in-person. Please note to call the relevant Training Officer, Lifestyle Educator, or Supervisor, during office hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm from Mondays to Fridays.

Should any parent or caregiver wish to raise their concerns or issues, they may email Head of the programme or the Assistant Director (Services).

Mutual Respect Policy

Creating the best outcomes for AES learners requires the relationship, between caregivers and staff, to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust, and mutual respect.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, family members and caregivers the importance of treating staff with respect so that we can work together to ensure a safe and positive relationship.

Safety Protocol

Learner missing before arrival to AES programmes

When a learner fails to arrive by 10:00am for either of the AES programmes, the respective Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator will notify the parent/caregiver. This will allow the parent/caregiver to check on the child's movement from home to DSA.

Learner missing during operating hours

When a learner goes missing during the hours of the AES programmes, the Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator will activate the standard protocol to search for the learner. Parents and caregivers will be notified accordingly.

Learner missing after operating hours

When a learner leaves DSA and goes missing after the programme hours, it is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to conduct the search, if necessary, as well as any coordination or phone calls with relevant authorities.

Behaviours of concern management processes

DSA and AES are dedicated to providing a safe environment for all the learners, members, staff, and volunteers. Should a learner exhibit inappropriate behaviours (e.g., stealing, damaging DSA property or public property, or leaving the premises without permission), the Training Officer or Lifestyle Educator will address the issue immediately with the support of the Head and Assistant Director. Caregivers will be informed of any such incident.

Should a learner physically assault another person, an incident report will be filed, the parents or caregivers will be notified, and the situation will be assessed and we may suspend the learner for a period to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Safety Measures During a Pandemic or a Major Health Concern

DSA and AES are dedicated to providing safety and security for all learners and staff. This includes matters of public health. During times of heightened health precautions, due to a pandemic, or an outbreak of a contagious illness, there will be extra measures implemented to ensure that all learners and staff are safe. We seek the cooperation of all parents and caregivers, as this may require learners needing to stay home as a result of "minor sicknesses" such as cough or runny nose.

DSA will always ensure that all learners and staff are taking all precautionary measures, such as safe-distancing, taking temperature, limiting the number of people in a particular area, as well as other measures set forth by MOH and the Government.



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