

Inclusion / Special Educational Needs Policy (SEN)

IB World School 000703

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This IB Inclusion / Special Educational Needs Policy (SEN) has been developed in accordance with the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme, Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate(2010)*, *Candidates with assessment access requirements(2014)* and *The IB guide to inclusive education: A resource for whole-school development(2015)*. It is also based on and consistent with the Polish legislation, IB philosophy and practice as well as the School Policy and is linked with the School Mission Statement, the School Statutes. Underlying the IB in IB World School 000703 is the belief that regardless of their individual needs, all students should be granted meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. In IB World School 000703 there is a general understanding that teachers, students and their parents form a unique learning community working towards common goals. This belief affects the way in which inclusion / SEN Policy is understood and provided in the school.

The term *Special Educational Needs* is commonly applied to students with perceived individual differences, ranging from intellectual giftedness to learning disabilities, students with autism, Asperger Syndrome, attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD), dyslexia, dyscalculia, developmental and communication challenges as well as behavioural and emotional problems – mental health issues, students with medical conditions such as chronic illness.

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers (*Learning diversity and the IB Programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*). In this process teachers, educators, coordinators, and parents/legal guardians collaborate to meet individual learning needs and to develop inclusive practices. Our school deems it essential that teachers and other members of school society recognize their students' individual strengths and challenges.

All teachers involved in the IB programme at our school:

- are made aware of the policy and the relating issues upon entering the programme,
- are continuously updated on the developments and current issues,
- regularly participate in workshops and have access to webinars concerning issues of special educational needs,
- regularly reflect, plan and collaborate on handling the issues relating to students with special educational needs during staff meetings.
- make sure that the policy and its relevance are constantly monitored and reevaluated.

All of the above help teachers in the IB show understanding and awareness of the issues relating to:

- differentiated Approaches To Learning (ATL's) and Approaches To Teaching (ATT's) as an opportunity to build each student developing process responding to their individual learning needs,
- the learner's cognitive system and its structure based on the mental hierarchical representation of the world,
- how the learner's cognitive system provides meaning and organization to experiences,
- the processes by which meaningful learning takes place, specifically subsumption or progressive differentiation of the conceptual framework in terms of detail and specificity, and integrative reconciliations assisting in comprehension and recall,
- factors affecting students' learning processes, particularly with regard to inquiry-based learning,
- how best to attend to students' unique needs.
- materials and expert staff advice on teaching strategies helpful in overcoming possible challenges and barriers are made available to all teachers.

Thus the school:

- safeguards interests of all students,
- provides all students with equal access to the curriculum by identifying and removing barriers, makes it possible for all students to achieve their full potential,
- creates an effective learning environment and a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, which facilitate the teaching/learning process,
- differentiates teaching and learning methods to provide a range of learning approaches for achieving common goals,
- activates students' prior knowledge and understanding,
- helps students extend their learning by combining high expectations with ample opportunity to use cognitively rich material,
- makes use of differentiated assessment strategies and tasks which support all students in gaining independence and becoming advocates for their own learning,
- affirms the identity of all students and builds their self-esteem,
- promotes attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB Learner Profile.

INCLUSION / SEN PROCEDURES

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH POTENTIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Students who might potentially have special educational needs are identified on the basis of:

- their medical history - physical disabilities, chronic illness, mental health issues,

- noticeable discrepancies between their current level of academic performance and that of the same-age peers,
- perceived difficulty in studying.

In accordance with provisions of the Polish law, the school may screen for potential educational needs but the official testing is left to experts at appropriate mental health centers assigned to the school. The students (and in case of minors - their parents/legal guardians) are referred to such centers, where they are diagnosed by specialists and informed about their condition. The documentation confirming their condition is made available to them, and, upon their wish, to the school. This is then made available, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation, made available on the need-to-know basis to the student's teachers.

HANDLING STUDENTS WITH SEN

Each case is discussed individually by the expert staff, teachers of a given students and, if need be, the student and their parents/ legal guardians to ensure that all the student's needs are met to their greatest advantage. Additionally, teachers and parents/legal guardians of students with special educational needs are provided with ongoing psychological and pedagogical assistance, in which way they receive support not only in tackling child-raising and teaching problems, but also in developing their educational skills.

The teachers' responsibility is to adapt the educational requirements that have been written in the formal report, monitoring and evaluating any employed adaptation. If they identify any difficulties that may appear, they report this the class head teacher and school counsellor.

Procedures for students with assessment access requirements are individualized by the school, based on the IB publication *Candidates with assessment access requirements (2014)* for removing barriers of learning. Access arrangements to students during summative IB assessments as well as through the course of study - including classroom work and formative assessment that are the part of everyday learning and teaching.

Teacher support teams are established to communicate and work collaboratively to make sure that all needs of students with any kind of difficulties are met. These are made up of subject teachers, class head teachers and psychologists and counsellors who identify students requiring psychological and pedagogical help, psychological guidance and counselling. Students, parents/ legal representatives of students are aware of the inclusion policy at the beginning of the school during the first meeting with parents the IB coordinator. This policy is then made available at the school website.

There is an ongoing communication between parents/ legal representatives of students and teachers and expert staff during parent - teacher meetings, as well as via electronic register, email and phone.

POLICY DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSES

The IB coordinator and school specialist have access to student files. They are stored in a dedicated safe place. All teachers of the school sign the confidentiality clause, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Inclusion/SEN Policy is coordinated by the IB coordinator and school counsellor / psychologist and review semiannually. These, together with meeting of whole staff , as well as smaller groups such as particular class/ student / subject team meetings make sure that the inclusion policy remains a work in progress, keeping up to date with the needs of the student population and in line with learning needs legislation as well as roles and responsibilities. Through reflection and collaboration, the staff can then evaluate the outcomes of the application of the policy and work on its improvements in accordance with the current needs. This is done by asking such questions as:

- How can students with special educational needs effectively evaluate and reflect on their own learning to help them improve targeted challenges and become more independent learners?
- How do we communicate learning support process and procedures that are in line with IB standards and practices?
- How can we better identify students with special educational needs and ensure they receive support they need?