

ist International
School of Tallinn

Inclusion Policy

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Mission

The International School of Tallinn (IST) mission is to support the holistic development of every individual to become responsible global citizens and independent lifelong learners by providing a rigorous inquiry and multicultural learning environment.

Vision

We want to create a global community that values inquiry, critical and creative thinking, open and entrepreneurial mindedness, and acts with tolerance and compassion.

Philosophy and Aims

We at IST

- Want to make all children feel welcome, valued, and included in the school community, regardless of their different learning needs.
- Acknowledge students' individual strengths and challenges.
- Have high aspirations for our students and provide them with high-quality learning opportunities to ensure that they achieve their highest potential.
- Take into consideration the needs of the whole school community.
- Make adjustments to ensure that pupils and members of staff are not disadvantaged.
- Celebrate big and small achievements.
- Identify and overcome barriers to learning for groups and individuals.
- Help students feel challenged, yet supported throughout the school year.
- Believe that it is the responsibility of every teacher, as a teacher of all students, to make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners.

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

IST is an inclusive, non-selective school, where students with a broad range of needs are supported. The terms *inclusion* and *inclusive education* refer to a broad understanding that embraces the diversity of all learners and all minority groups. At the centre of international education in the IB are students aged 3 to 19 with their own learning styles, strengths and challenges. Students of all ages come to school with combinations of unique and shared patterns of values, knowledge and experience of the world and their place in it. Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to identify and remove barriers. (IBO, 2013)

In Estonia, schools provide support to students based on need: general support, enhanced support, and special support. If general support provided by the school does not meet the student's needs, then the school can provide enhanced or

special support based on the recommendation of an external advisory team. If a student receives an enhanced or special support recommendation, they are considered a student with special educational needs (SEN).

The Range of Special Needs at IST

Within the teaching resources available, we aim to support the following groups of students who have been identified as having particular educational needs.

- Students with general learning difficulties particularly in reading, spelling and mathematics or who may be generally underachieving in a specific area of learning.
- Students with specific learning difficulties.
- Students with specific physical or medical conditions.
- Students with mild behavioural or emotional difficulties.

Student Support Services Coordination

The school offers the following support services:

- Medical Support
- Counselling Support
- Learning Support

Student Support Coordinator

The Student Support Coordinator works school wide, and with external agencies, to ensure that the student support services offered by the school are operating effectively. The position encompasses the coordination of school programmes and services such as School Nursing, Counselling, and Learning Support; it is created with the aim of providing information and serving as a resource to others; achieving defined objectives by planning, evaluating, developing, implementing and maintaining services in compliance with established guidelines; and serving as a resource to the specialist service providers and members of the Management Team. The Student Support Coordinator is a point of contact for parents, in order to provide information about Student Support Services, as well as internal and external referrals, as requested.

Admission of Students with SEN

Students with special educational needs are enrolled in the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) in the event that their needs are able to be met, based on the resources and services available.

If a student is applying for admission to International School of Tallinn and they have already been identified as having special educational needs, any results of prior testing and/or existing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need to be provided to the Admissions Office with the application. Applications will not be processed until all supporting documentation has been submitted and the school can make an informed decision as to whether or not it can meet the student's needs. If

parents do not provide documentation in regard to the student's SEN and it later transpires that the student had been diagnosed with a condition that would require

SEN support, the school will re-assess whether or not the student's needs can be met.

To ensure that IST can meet the pupil's learning needs, comprehensive information must be provided. This information is to include:

- Progress reports from the last school or kindergarten
- Evidence for any educational support needed or required

IST (with parental permission) may contact the previous school of applicants with specific questions as to the child's performance. Should any further questions arise from this process, IST reserves the right to require additional documentation. This may require additional testing by a certified and approved practitioner.

More information about admission can be accessed in the Terms and Conditions of Admission and Exclusion Procedure.

Identification of SEN for Enrolled Students

It is the homeroom/subject teacher's role to identify the student's learning styles, scaffold their learning and differentiate the curriculum in order to help or develop the student's true potential.

Model of Action

Students' learning needs are identified through a staged model of assessment and provision. This graduated approach allows for a continuum of addressing students' needs across the school, recognising that students' needs may vary or may be of a temporary nature.

Identified students are placed on the Learning Support Programme at the appropriate stage. Teachers and parents are informed, and appropriate action is taken. The list of students, which is updated regularly, is disseminated to appropriate staff.

Referral Process

- Students who are experiencing academic difficulty are referred by the homeroom teacher or parent to the Student Support Coordinator.
- Students who are experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties (EBD) are referred by the homeroom teacher or parent to the school psychologist.

- Concern Form is completed by the teacher/parent.
- A member of the Student Support Team will be assigned as the case manager.
- Students are flagged as a 'Student of concern'.

- The Student Support Team, which consists of the Student Support Coordinator, respective IB coordinator, school psychologist, and any/all of the teachers with whom the student works, will review records, grades, classroom work, assessments, observations, and teacher input.
- The case manager will meet with teaching teams, students and parents to discuss.
- The Student Support Team either places the student in the Learning Support Program or devises a behaviour support plan.
- Students will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Learning Support Program

Stage 1 – Teacher Intervention

Students are identified as requiring intervention through early identification procedures.

- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is devised by the Student Support Coordinator, homeroom and subject teachers. The homeroom teacher is required to inform parents of concern and devises an IEP, in consultation with the Student Support Coordinator.
- In consultation with the Student Support Coordinator, the teachers would provide differentiated instruction and a variety of teaching strategies, which may aid to overcome potential barriers to learning.
- The homeroom teacher keeps the parents informed on the progress.
- The student's progress and IEP targets are reviewed termly by the homeroom or subject teachers.
- The homeroom teacher and subject teachers remain responsible for working with the student on a daily basis and for planning and delivering a personalised learning programme.
- Intervention at classroom level may also be through differentiated/flexible grouping.

Stage 2 – Student is Assessed

Stage 2 Intervention implies that additional or different strategies to those at Stage 1 are put in place. Assessment and advice from specialists (in

house or external) are provided under the supervision of the Student Support Coordinator and in consultation with parents.

- Despite the provision of a differentiated programme and a variety of teaching approaches/strategies, the student's difficulties persist, and s/he makes little or no progress.
- The Student Support Coordinator refers the student onto a specialist (external where necessary) for further assessment (on parents' permission).
- Costs are covered by parents.
- Feedback from any assessments carried out is passed on to the Student Support Coordinator, Learning Support staff, and homeroom and subject teachers. This information is confidential and shared only with relevant members of staff.
- Parents are formally consulted and invited into school to discuss possible future intervention.
- The homeroom or subject teacher in consultation with the Student Support Coordinator (and external specialists if required), devises an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The student is invited to participate in this process, if possible.
- The Student Support Coordinator informs parents and teachers regarding the IEP.
- The student's progress and IEP targets are reviewed termly by the homeroom/subject teacher and/or case manager.
- The homeroom and subject teachers remain responsible for working with the student on a daily basis and for planning and delivering a personalised learning programme.
- This stage incurs no additional costs to parents for learning support intervention, however any assessment of need undertaken in school or by an external agency will be charged accordingly.

Stage 3 – Learning Support Team Intervention

If the student shows no further progress, the Student Support Coordinator invites parents for a consultation meeting to discuss future intervention.

Stage 3 intervention may include one or more of the following:

- In class support
- Individual or small group withdrawal

- Additional teaching and learning resources
- Full assessment from external agencies/specialists that the school may consider necessary
- The Learning Support teacher, in consultation with homeroom/subject teachers and the outside specialists when necessary, devises an Individual Education Plan. The student is also invited to participate in this process.
- The IEP is disseminated to appropriate teaching staff and parents on a termly basis.
- The student's progress and IEP targets are reviewed termly by learning support staff. In this process, teachers and students are consulted.
- This information is recorded and disseminated to appropriate teaching staff and parents on a termly basis.
- A written report is produced at the end of the academic year.
- At this stage parents will be asked to make additional payments should their child receive additional support provision (i.e., hiring a learning support teacher/assistant, support person, etc.)

Further Action

If the student's progress is still not satisfactory despite the additional intervention put in place:

- The School Director is informed along with the Coordinators, and parents.
- At this stage a further assessment of the student will be necessary.
- A request is made for a school panel to meet and decide on further action.
- Depending on the case, the school panel may consist of all or some of the following members: School Director, Study, Coordinators, Student Support Coordinator, homeroom teacher, and any specialist required to give evidence.
- The school panel's final decision may result in:
 - the child remains in school on a temporary contract or
 - parents are advised to find an alternative school provision that may cater for their child's needs. Parents will be given at least one term's notice if the school resolves that it is unable to fully meet the child's learning needs.

Progress Review Process

At each stage reviews will be held on a termly basis. Students and parents are informed if a student's position changes. Following the review of an IEP, the Student Support Coordinator, IB Coordinator and homeroom teacher will decide whether to keep the IEP as it is, amend it, or cease it, based on the recommendation of the IEP review meeting. If it is decided to cease the IEP

because the student no longer requires the special education provision within it, we will continue to monitor the student's progress using the school's standard assessment policy.

Records of students' work are maintained to guide planning and assessment of needs whenever necessary. This information is also used when providing feedback to teachers and parents.

At any stage it may be necessary to gather further information from home, previous schools or other outside agencies/specialists where there has been intervention.

A student will be removed from the Learning Support record if it is decided that they have made sufficient progress and are able to access the standard curriculum successfully. However, they will continue to be monitored in case any issues arise.

Learning Support Program Requirements and Assessments

We at IST want to make sure that inclusive access arrangements are applied in the circumstances if it is observed that they could reduce or minimize barriers for the student (IBO, 2018). All our pupils have an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Some of our pupils will require a curriculum which is differentiated in order to:

- Understand the relevance and purpose of learning activities.
- Experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement.

We follow the principle of optimal support, which means that the access arrangements must neither be more nor less than what the student requires. The access arrangements are used for learning and teaching: they are used during classroom instruction, classwork and related activities and tests. The arrangements are also continuously monitored to ensure the optimal support. (IBO, 2018)

Homeroom and subject teachers use a range of strategies to meet pupils'

individual learning needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives; work is differentiated within the classroom setting allowing pupils to achieve success, and assessment is used to inform the next stage of learning.

Early intervention is a critical aspect of developing effective learning, having the progress of students with specific learning needs regularly assessed by referring to: their performance in formative and summative assessment, reports, reviewed IEPs, observations, work samples, portfolio, standardised screening tests and where necessary full diagnostic assessments of need.

Assessment for all students is described in our school's Assessment Policy. For students receiving special education services, the testing accommodations and modifications in their IEPs are adhered to during in-class tasks and during external assessments.

Students whose IEPs stipulate a modified curriculum or modified grades may receive alternate rubrics: either one from an earlier level (e.g., a year 5 student is assessed on a year 3 rubric), or a customized rubric where the highest level possible is not the level 8 descriptor as published in the IB guides (e.g., a 3 or a 5 is entered as a 5 or a 7, respectively). This is a decision that will be made by the IEP team. A comment of "modified grade" needs to be made by the teacher when the modification is put in place.

Primary Years Programme (PYP)

Every student has individual needs, including learning styles, and each homeroom teacher is responsible for fostering a differentiated and wholesome learning environment. Intervention is intended to decrease risk factors and provide a firm basis for strong future development along the programme continuum. Target groups and flexible groupings are in place to support differentiation. If the external advisory team has recommended Estonian National Simplified Curriculum to be followed for a student, an IEP with learning goals will be devised based on the curriculum.

Middle Years Programme (MYP)

When planning adaptations to teaching and assessment for students with learning support requirements, all teachers are expected to respect the general principles stated below:

1. In some cases a student's learning support requirement and/or a medical issue may render it difficult for the student to access the typical MYP assessment. In order for the student to access the assessment, reasonable adjustment may be considered.

Reasonable adjustments are actions that are uniquely designed for a candidate and are taken to remove or decrease a disadvantage faced by a candidate with learning support requirements. They do not include standard inclusive assessment arrangements such as extra time, word processor, reader, rest breaks, prompter and scribe.

Reasonable adjustments may include changes in the location/setting, presentation of the test or method of response. In all cases, the learning outcome should remain the same to maintain academic rigour.

- The reasonable adjustment should not give the student undue advantage over his or her peers.
- To the maximum extent possible, it would be beneficial for the student to stay as close as possible to the standard.

Examples of such reasonable adjustments include:

- a candidate with severe physical challenges would be assessed on adapted physical education (PE) such as adapted games and exercises.

All teachers are expected to differentiate learning and organise access arrangements, for both classroom participation and tests, according to the individual needs of the student.

2. A school cannot provide reasonable adjustments that affect the nature of the final assessment of a student.

3. While exemption from a particular subject or aspects of a subject is a reasonable adjustment, it will only be considered as the very last resort when all other alternative arrangements have been evaluated thoroughly. In cases where a candidate receives exemption to one or more criteria of a course, a final MYP grade may be awarded by using achievement levels that have been assessed.

4. Students with identified learning support requirements are still expected to participate in courses in all subject groups to be eligible for an MYP certificate.

5. All students requests for inclusive assessment arrangements must be supported with evidence:

- recent medical/psychological/psychoeducational reports (valid for two years)
- educational evidence.

N.B. Educational evidence needs to show that the access requested is the student's normal way of participating in classroom activities and tests. A letter from a homeroom teacher, an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a letter

from a teacher from an earlier school are examples of educational evidence. All evidence is to be submitted to the Student Support Coordinator.

6. Where the student's requirement has been supported with the necessary documentation, inclusive assessment access arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and finally agreed by the Student Support Coordinator.

7. Where any special access arrangements are made for assessment, they must correspond to this policy and mirror the conditions available to the students in the classroom. Such special assessment access arrangements must be recorded and be available to the IB on request.

8. Where a student suffers from a temporary condition affecting final assessment, the teacher must contact the Student Support Coordinator for advice on an appropriate course of action.

9. Local and national legislation mandates adjustments to methods of curriculum delivery for special educational needs. In Estonia, the Basic and Upper Secondary Schools Act recognises learning diversity, inclusion and equity in education and regulates all curriculum adaptations for students with learning difficulties and special educational needs. If the external advisory team has recommended a student to study on the Estonian National Simplified Curriculum, additional curriculum modifications and adjustments are possible.

Diploma Programme (DP)

All students should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with a learning difficulty or special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment, special arrangements may be

authorised by the IBO during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations.

It is the responsibility of the IB Diploma Coordinator to apply for inclusive assessment arrangements for students with SEN for the IB DP final examinations. This involves liaising with the Student Support Coordinator,

Case Manager and Parents to ensure that all the required documentation is collected and made available during D1, the first year of the Diploma.

All requests for special arrangements will be submitted by the Diploma Coordinator with supporting documentation from a medical or psychological service. The main special arrangements, which require authorisation from the IBO are additional time, word processing and software, amanuensis, transcripts, readers, communicators (inc. augmentative devices), calculators, practical assistance, modification of examination papers, extensions to deadlines and exemptions. (IB 2014)

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- Monitor SEN provision in the school.
- Inform the IB Coordinators of SEN provision.

Admissions Team:

- The admissions officer will liaise with the Learning Support Coordinator, Study Coordinator, and the relevant programme coordinators, regarding any applications for students identified with SEN.

Student Support Coordinator:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy.
- Coordinate the provision for students with special educational needs.
- Liaise with and advise teachers and teaching assistants.
- Coordinate and manage the learning support staff to ensure the needs of the students are being met.
- Liaise with parents of students with special educational needs.
- Maintain the SEN register and oversee the records of students with special educational needs.
- Support the professional development of staff by providing continuing professional development sessions on aspects of special needs.
- Liaise with external agencies and organisations for advice and support to provide quality provision for students with special educational needs.
- Coordinate and oversee the development and implementation of Individual Education Plans, as applicable.
- Organise and implement a formal review process for IEPs.
- Liaise with other schools and share appropriate data to ensure effective transition for students with special educational needs.
- Liaise with the Admission Team regarding applications for students identified with SEN.
- Act as the Case Manager for SEN students.
- Maintain records of SEN students.
- Organise IEP review meetings.

Learning Support Teacher/Assistant/Support Person:

- Maintain records of SEN students.
- Develop and implement goals of the SEN students' IEP.
- Liaise with homeroom/specialist teacher regarding the implementation of recommended strategies/accommodations for SEN students.

- Provide direct instruction to students either on a one-to-one basis or within the classroom, based on the goals of their IEP.
- Attend IEP review meetings.
- Liaise with parents of students with special educational needs.

School Psychologist:

- Maintain records of students who have special educational needs and emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Listen to concerns about academic, emotional or social problems.
- Support the professional development of staff by providing continuing professional development sessions on aspects of students' psychological or behavioural issues.
- Help students process their problems and plan goals and action.
- Promote positive behaviours.
- Meet with parents and teachers to discuss learning, behavioural, familial and social problems.
- Counsel parents on topics like substance abuse and communication.
- Study and implement behavioural management techniques.
- Research and implement learning programs.
- Evaluate and advise school disciplinary practices for troubled students.
- Participate in special education by administering psychological tests.

Parents/Guardians:

- Submit details of any SEN, including IEPs, with the child's admission application to the Admission Team.
- Attend IEP review meetings held by the student(s)' Case Manager.
- Liaise with Learning Support staff on a regular basis.
- Support their children with SEN and actively encourage them to achieve to the best of their potential.

Students:

- Refer self to the Learning Support department.
- Participate in the development of goals for their IEP.
- Demonstrate commitment and personal responsibility towards achieving their goals.

*School Study Coordinator/SEN Coordinator

Alignment with Other Policies

IST believes in collaboration and the staff works together to ensure the alignment between policies. All school policies are reviewed on a regular basis. The school ensures that the updates are implemented.

...to our Admission Policy:

IST is an inclusive school and non-selective school, where students with a broad range of needs are supported. IST, taking into consideration the school's resources, attempts to find the best solutions for integrating and supporting pupils with special educational needs. We embrace the diversity of all learners and minority groups.

...to our Assessment Policy:

IST acknowledges the variety of abilities and the individuality that exists in the academic, personal, and social aspects of development. Differentiation of instruction, considered exemplary practice in all circumstances, is one manner of dealing with learning exceptionalities. Inclusive assessment techniques may be appropriate in some instances for students with identified and documented learning needs.

...to our Language Policy:

We acknowledge that our students come from a range of language backgrounds, and we appreciate that many of our students speak English as a foreign language. The fact that IST students have varying degrees of English-language proficiency, both spoken and written, is built into our curriculum. Students with limited English language proficiency are offered additional support at every level.

Policy Review

School administration has overall responsibility for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Inclusion Policy. The Study Coordinator will ensure that the inclusion policy is reviewed by staff once a year in order to reflect the current needs of the school population and to ensure consistency with IB expectations. All staff will commit to following and reflecting on the policy throughout the school year. It will be available on the school website for all stakeholders to view.

References

Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act (Riigikogu, 01.08.2020)

Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes (2016)

Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom (IBO, 2013)

Sotogrande International School Student Support Services Handbook (2017)

The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development (2015)

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