



GATEWAY
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs/ Inclusion Policy

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IB & Gateway Mission Statement

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Gateway International Montessori School Mission Statement

To provide students with a solid academic, social, emotional, and spiritual foundation preparing them to be inquisitive, self-reliant, problem solvers and peacemakers who collaborate to celebrate their national and global heritage and who are rooted in a strong set of core values and ethics.

The International Baccalaureate Learner Profile

The Learner Profile is an integral part of forming and developing this policy; thus, we encourage our school community to acquire and practice the IB Learner Profile attributes which are embedded in the IB philosophy and thus are reflected in its mission statement:

Inquirers – we acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable – we explore concepts, ideas, issues, and perspectives that have local and global importance.

Thinkers – we contribute to discussions in a meaningful way, we do not shy away from challenging questions and we think creatively and critically to reach answers and take responsible actions on complex problems.

Communicators – we regularly deliver stimulating presentations and drive excellence in group assignments by collaborating effectively and by expressing ourselves creatively and with self-awareness.

Principled – we act with integrity and honesty; and take responsibility for our actions, as well as respecting the dignity and rights of people everywhere. **Open-minded** – we are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view besides critically appreciating our history and culture.

Caring – we work hard to make a difference in others' lives through our commitment to our school, local, and global communities throughout our lives.

Open-minded – we are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view besides critically appreciating our history and culture.

Risk takers – we are articulate in defending our beliefs, are open to exploring new ideas with determination, and face challenges and changes with resilience and perseverance.

Balanced – our endeavors are directed towards creating active participants in a wide range of activities that balance the different capabilities we possess- intellectual, physical, emotional, and social, recognizing the importance of creating an independent citizen who can interact efficiently with the world in which we live.

Reflective – we support our learning and personal development by critically reflecting on and evaluating our learning experiences, thus understanding our strengths and weaknesses

Philosophy

Each day we challenge and inspire students to love learning and to shape a better world. The purpose of the Special Educational Needs Policy is to ensure that students with identified learning needs are supported in ways that allow for the actualization of both the Gateway International Montessori School and IB mission statements. Gateway International Montessori School is committed to making our classrooms safe and has inclusive environments where every student has an opportunity to learn, grow, and realize their potential to shape a better world.

In Gateway International Montessori School, our programs of study and schemes of work within the school take into account a wide range of student abilities, aptitudes, and interests. There are some students; however, who have particular educational needs which will necessitate additional provisions.

In Gateway we aim to enable each student to progress and be appropriately challenged and provide him\her with a broad, balanced, and differentiated education; our purpose in giving attention to educational needs is to provide a system that enables the needs of all students to be addressed and to recognize the continuum of need and range of provision required. Thus, we adopt a SEN Policy based on inclusion and differentiation but for students with mild and moderate learning incapacities as the school does not have the resources to administer a program for students with severe learning disabilities, such as severe speech disability, severe autism, severe physical disabilities, etc.)

Definitions

SEN

SEN represents a broad range of students' learning and assessment needs along a continuum of learning difficulties to gifted and talented.

This may include:

- Learning disabilities
- Specific learning difficulties
- Communication and speech disorders
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Social, emotional, and behavioral challenges
- Multiple disabilities and/or physical, sensory, medical, or mental health issues
- Gifted and Talented

{IBO, 2014}

Further explanations of learning needs/difficulties are provided in Appendix 1.

Inclusion

“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 inclusion in IB programmes, 2016).

Differentiation

Differentiation is “an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for student differences in classrooms” (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). It is a process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals so learning opportunities can be created that enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate personal learning goals (Heacox, 2009).

Thus, Gateway International Montessori School supports students with less severe learning disabilities and also comprises gifted and talented students. Within the teaching resources available, we aim to support the **following groups of students, who have been identified as having particular educational needs:**

1. Students with general learning difficulties particularly in reading, spelling, and mathematics, or who may be generally underachieving in a specific area of learning.
2. Students with specific learning difficulties in spelling and reading.
3. Students with specific physical or medical conditions.
4. Students with mild behavioral or emotional difficulties.
5. Students who require an advanced program of study

Thus, the Purpose of this policy could be summarized in the following listed points:

- Define what is considered SEN and inclusion.
- Define and outline strategies for supporting students with SEN at Gateway.
- Outline school procedures for identifying and supporting students with SEN.
- Outline how teaching staff is supported in identifying and supporting students with SEN.

Goals and Aims of Gateway International Montessori School SEN\ Inclusion Policy

In accordance with the Gateway International Montessori School and the IB mission statements, Gateway strives for excellence by adopting an equal opportunities policy for all our students. We, therefore, provide an educational program in an inclusive environment, encouraging students to achieve their full potential. In other words, Gateway is aware of the IB inclusion philosophy and the special dispensations available to students and will ensure to work closely with the IB to access available dispensations when necessary.

The Goals of Gateway International Montessori School Special Educational Needs\ Inclusion Policy are listed below:

- provide a positive and friendly environment to all learners with varying needs, recognizing and capitalizing on differences and diversity
- provide all children access to the curriculum through inclusion and differentiated teaching methods
- To monitor student success as shown through data, and communicate with all stakeholders about students, their progress, and their changing needs
- guide all students to reach their unique intellectual capabilities
- provide teachers ' support and resources for classroom /subject inclusion
- provide an atmosphere of open communication with parents regarding additional / SEN support.

In specific, the current policy aims to:

- Supplement the provisions of the IBO handbook on special educational needs and assist with their implementation into our program.
- Strive for the accurate and timely identification of students with special educational needs. Further, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and accommodations, and the academic progress of students with special educational needs.
- Ensure that once identified, students are treated in a way so that their privacy is respected, while their self-esteem is supported and developed.
- Ensure a school-wide context for the support of students with special educational needs, so that all members of the academic community are familiar with the contribution they can make to offer their

support, and resources are used effectively and efficiently. Efforts to develop staff expertise are made on behalf of the school.

- Encourage and foster a positive partnership with the parents, for parents to be in a position both to offer support at home and also contribute to the decision-making process concerning their children.

Inclusion of Students with SEN in Gateway International Montessori School

Gateway International Montessori School is responsible and ensures that its Policy for Inclusion is implemented effectively throughout the school. The school curriculum is annually reviewed by the Pedagogical Senior Leadership Team to ensure that it promotes the inclusion of all pupils. This includes learning outside the classroom. The school seeks advice where appropriate around individual students, from external support. Also, differentiation, as a teaching and learning methodology, is implemented to ensure the success of our inclusion policy. At our school, every effort is made to provide the least restrictive learning environment that appropriately matches the needs of each student. Therefore, inclusion can be implemented differently for each student, depending on many factors such as, but not limited to:

- The student's skill level
- The student's previous learning experiences
- The unit of study

Forms of inclusion in Gateway International Montessori School include:

- Students present in the General Education classroom
- Access to a common curriculum for all students
- Support in the General Education classroom from School Counselor and Psychologist, collaborative co-teachers, and modifications from the General Education teacher
- Additional time to work in another setting: for students whose best language is not the language of instruction. Summer intensive language courses at school will be supplied as well as advising their parents to send them to summer schools abroad, extracurricular classes after school, the availability of extra time allocated in the students' and teachers' schedules for additional classes in languages and math as well as other subjects if possible.

The Professional School Counselor's Role:

The Professional School Counselor works with students and staff in the regular classroom. The Counselor's responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

- Providing classroom guidance, and individual and/or group counseling to students with special needs within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program.
- Consulting and collaborating with staff and parents to understand the special needs of a student
- Advocating for students with special needs in the school and the community.

- Assist families to understand how specific disabilities impact student ability to succeed in targeted curricular areas.
- Assisting the student and IB program coordinator to complete the necessary formalities required to obtain permission from IBO to provide special assistance to that student.
- Connects with an extended school platform facility that identifies students who may need to be assessed to determine special education eligibility within the scope and practice of the comprehensive school counseling program. This facility is made available to parents and students on request through a specialized institution.

These specialized institutions assist the School Counselor/Psychologist:

- Identification of the assessment tool to be used for the student depending on the need of the child and administration of the same.
- Interpretation of the assessment findings to parents, teachers, principals, and other professional staff.
- Screenings resources and providing support services to the school.
- Orienting teachers about the differently able students and providing information about their type and what is the role of the teacher as a whole.
- Sensitizing the teachers towards the need of the student.

Special Need Organizations Role

To provide instruction and support which facilitates the participation of students with Special Needs in the regular school and classroom; they provide the necessary information to the school; the academic team and the class teacher before the child enters the school regarding the student's disability, medical concerns, and/or equipment operation (ways to meet unique needs).

Role of the Class Teacher

- To be vigilant that students with disabilities are included appropriately, to ensure that all students in a regular classroom have equal opportunities to benefit from the instructional program.
- To problem-solve with teachers in collaborative meetings about the special needs of the student and the help that can be provided to the student.
- The Special Needs organizations and their Special Need Educators collaborate with the regular education teacher in adapting the curriculum, providing appropriate support instructions, and assessing the overall progress of the child.
- The class teachers serve as case managers and are responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the designated students' Individual Educational Programs (IEPs)
- At Gateway, Special Needs students, according to their cases, are further accommodated within the school's support program where each learner is provided opportunities to overcome learning

difficulties under the close vigilance of the assigned support teacher. The support teacher monitors the student's progress and provides motivation and emotional support to the child.

The process for identifying Special Educational Needs and applying for special arrangements in the Diploma Programme are as follows:

- At the start of each academic year, the IB program coordinator will address the school community to explain the IB and the school's commitment to inclusion and its supportive philosophy towards students who have special educational needs; the IB program coordinator will give an overview of the support on offer to staff and parents through meetings and workshops. At the workshops, the coordinator will outline the provision offered by the IB, this information will also be communicated to parents through a letter in English.
- Parents will be made aware that they can take the first step by contacting the school if they feel their child needs support.
- The coordinator will make staff aware of the SEN process as laid out in this policy at regular intervals throughout the academic year at meetings, staff briefings, and in response to parent and/or teacher concerns.
- If a subject teacher suspects a student has Special Education Needs, he/she will notify the class teacher and coordinator of their concerns.
- The class teacher and coordinator will speak to the student and their parents, explaining the process and the different types of support the IB can give in final exams and assessments (as seen in this policy)
- If there is an agreement to carry on with the process, the school counselor will be contacted and will meet with the student and parents.
- The school counselor will recommend medical institutions or recognized Special Needs organizations where the student can be given a test and diagnosed.
- The student's teacher (and other teachers if necessary) will provide the IB required sample of the student's work, teacher comments, and teacher's provisions for the student.
- The diagnosis and student/teacher work will be sent to the IB who will make a decision on extra provision based on the evidence received.
- The coordinator will ensure that all documentation and registration of SEN students in the school conform with IB expectations and that "special arrangements" are authorized through IB Cardiff through the IBIS website. The Gateway IB Gateway Division understands its responsibility to determine whether accommodations can be made for individual students and that all such accommodations must be in agreement with IB policy.
- Accordingly, the school recognizes that applications for special arrangements have specific requirements and require the appropriate supporting documentation. Hence, the school shall ensure that all special arrangements comply with Section 4 of the Candidates with special assessment needs document.

The Four Principles of Good Practice:

Differentiation

“Differentiation can help learners access the content at an appropriate level through a variety of resources” (*Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes* 5).

Differentiation is a system of strategies that appropriately structure the curriculum so that each learner can reach his/her true potential. Differentiation “puts students at the center of the planning” helping teachers “respond specifically to their needs” (*Making Differentiation a Habit: How to Ensure Success in Academically Diverse Classrooms* 57).

According to what is quoted above, it is important to ensure that each learner is supported to make the most effective use of the range of learning opportunities provided and this is attained by the availability of a variety of activities and resources that match the goals and methods of the learner and are relevant to their skills and knowledge. Moreover, all students should have an understanding of themselves as learners so that they will be able to self-advocate independent learning skills within any of the IB programs.

Teachers learn to differentiate through various means including, but not limited to:

- Content – Modifying resources and learning goals or providing opportunities for students to select what they want to learn.
- Process – Providing variety or choice in how students will learn.
- Product – Capitalizing on students’ learning preferences and strengths by permitting them to choose when demonstrating their learning.

Differentiation can take many forms and is closely tied with the Four Principles of Good Practice outlined by IB. In Gateway International Montessori School, we **have adopted those Four Principles of Good Practice** as part of our learning and teaching approaches and process.

This is essential for all learners; however, their relevance to those with special needs and high achieving or gifted ones is vital to succeed in the development of the whole person and to ensure an equal opportunity policy for all our students.

These four Principles of Good Practice are implemented in Gateway as shown below:

1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem

This is accomplished by promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners and by valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to enhance learning. Also, it is attained by continually liaising with parents to establish an understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals.

By creating such an environment, in which all students feel accepted, they are likely more receptive to developing the Learner Profile traits. Students who feel confidently supported in their academic endeavors are more likely to be **risk-takers** who participate actively in class, as well as **inquirers** who pursue further learning opportunities. When we acknowledge students' differences in positive ways, they are more apt to be **open-minded**.

At Gateway International Montessori School, students create their Student Council body which reaches out to the internal and extended community and supports extracurricular activities/events to help the community. Besides, students participate in Service as Action, Community Projects, Personal Projects, and CAS to promote and carry out a lot of projects that enhance and affirm their identity and self-esteem. Students are encouraged to present their ideas not only to their IB students but to all the school's different divisions and also to their parents.

Their work also includes activities to support community building such as planting, recycling, and tutoring young children. This sense of belonging increases self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, our students have the opportunity to participate in activities and reflections tied to the Learner Profile attributes to help them grow in their understanding and display of these traits. Finally, students are encouraged to create service projects, contributing their time and talents to the community.

In addition, subject-area teachers have participated in professional development opportunities on strategies to increase student communication in the classroom. By providing each student with opportunities to communicate, and using a variety of forms to facilitate that communication, we can ensure that each student's voice is heard. When students feel acknowledged, they feel valued and can open themselves up to continued learning experiences.

2. Valuing prior knowledge:

As it is clear that those learners who have diverse learning needs will not necessarily all share the same previous learning and background knowledge. It may be that these learners have a wealth of relevant background knowledge that can be activated as a base for further learning. However, the teacher may have to build up background knowledge in preparation for further learning. Therefore, teachers should explicitly activate learners' prior understanding, use this knowledge to differentiate tasks and activities that will build up the further background knowledge necessary for new learning to occur, record information in learning profiles that will support planning for future differentiation, and consider and allocate the time and the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson.

Teachers at Gateway International Montessori School in addition to helping students bridge their experiences with the information they are learning in class, recognize the need to link past class material with new learning to help students forge the connection. By clearly addressing how past learning relates

to current information, teachers can help students take each strand of learning to create their conceptual world.

While it is of prime importance to make connections between prior knowledge and present learning, in some cases, students may not have past experiences that can be used to tie these pieces together. In these situations, building background knowledge related to concepts and vocabulary is of utmost importance. At Gateway International Montessori School, teachers help students build background knowledge related to vocabulary and concepts by focusing on the four principles devised by Blachowicz & Fisher:

- Students are active in developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them
- Students personalize word learning
- Students are immersed in words through language-rich environments
- Students build on multiple sources of information to learn words through repeated exposure

In addition, teachers at Gateway International Montessori School help students develop the necessary background knowledge by providing explicit and unambiguous input. Gateway teachers understand that acquiring new information is easier when it is appropriate to the student's language proficiency levels.

Keeping this in mind, teachers use aids, such as photographs, pictures, gestures, modeling, manipulatives, and graphic organizers when teaching vocabulary and concepts to students. Learning a subject-specific language is also facilitated by the use of slower, vocalized, and repetitive speech. All of these techniques help students to attain the information necessary for them to make connections and further develop their learning.

3. Scaffolding:

In order for students to gain autonomy in learning there must be a gradual release of responsibility, often known as scaffolding. Teachers start gradually to decrease their substantial support as their students acquire knowledge and experience through multiple practices. This strategy is used to foster and fuel learners' increasing independence in taking responsibility for developing strategies for their learning.

In Gateway International Montessori School, we are practicing mainly three Learning Strategies which are *categorized* into three groups: **Metacognitive, Social, and Cognitive:**

- Metacognitive Strategies are applied by *helping* our students monitor their thinking and learning through self-reflection, self-awareness, and interaction. Social
- Strategies are practiced through the use of group discussions and cooperative learning.
- Cognitive Strategies are practiced by teaching our students to use and apply a specific technique to a learning task. Such techniques utilized at Gateway International Montessori School include:
- Before, during, and after reading strategies
- Setting a purpose for reading

- Text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-real world connections
- Graphic organizers
- Concept maps or webs
- Interaction strategies (Think Pair Share, Inside-Outside Circle, etc.)
- Visual cues and aids
- Demonstrations
- Dramatization
- Small structured collaborative groups
- Teacher used language
- Use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas and initial plans

These Scaffolding Techniques, together with the use of comprehensible input by teachers in assisting students in the acquisition of information by incorporating instruction, modeling, practice, and application, lead to the increase of students' confidence, and thus achievement. Teachers may also provide particular SEN students with sentence stems to facilitate their communication during various tasks. Finally, larger assignments or assessments may be broken into smaller, more manageable tasks, ensuring that particular SEN students can accomplish each step that is a pre-requisite for the next. By purposefully scaffolding learning experiences, teachers can create a ladder of success for all students.

4. Extending learning:

This is based on the provision of opportunities to experience the enjoyment of reading, and to be aware of a wide range of genres for writing, which is crucial to developing student learning. Also, the use of assistive technology and software enables learners with language issues to access material they can engage with. Thus, teachers can help learners extend their learning by combining high expectations with numerous opportunities for learner-centered practice and interaction with cognitively rich materials and experiences.

At Gateway International Montessori School, one of our main instructional goals is to provide **student-centered classrooms driven by inquiry**. To facilitate the achievement of this goal, teachers rely on subject-specific strategies, as well as whole-school strategies. **Reciprocal Teaching** is used throughout the subject areas to increase communication and thinking among students. Through the use of **Reciprocal Teaching** (summarizing, question generating, clarifying & predicting) students at Gateway are given opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers while interacting with a variety of contexts and concepts.

Teachers in all subject areas have also been instructed on the use of **Thinking Routines**, to help extend learning for our students. These routines help students explore angles of an issue, more accurately process information, search deeper into a concept, and develop empathy as they investigate various

perspectives. Both of these teaching methods allow students to communicate more effectively, think deeply, and cultivate intercultural understanding.

All these practices of differentiation are integral parts of Gateway International Montessori School's approaches to learning and teaching; more professional development is planned every year in Gateway's improvement plan to develop and increase our teachers' professionalism in these fields of learning and teaching.

Admission Procedures

- Families with children who are admitted to Gateway International Montessori School with special needs must present a recent psycho-educational assessment that has been conducted by a licensed school psychologist within the last two years. These results will determine the appropriateness of the child's enrollment in the school. In other words, we require that parents inform us of any previous testing and this is clear in Gateway International Montessori School's admission form and the health information form parents are asked to fill in on admission.
- The health information form must be completed and be available in the students' files as well as a copy with the doctor responsible, especially the health forms for students who have any health problem so that the school would be a secure and safe environment for the applicant where he would feel cared for. Gateway International Montessori School ensures the confidentiality of this health information entrusted to us by parents.
- Thus it is clear that previously identified special needs or previously received support must be communicated at the time of application. In some cases, parents may be asked to commit to providing extra support for their child, which may take the form of in-class support or out-of-school provision, or both, and may include a financial contribution.
- Accordingly, if it later appears or becomes clear that the child had a previously diagnosed condition or that prior testing took place and the parents did not provide the documentation as stated, the family may be asked to withdraw the student. This would be at the recommendation of the Head of the School.
- If the need for an educational evaluation and/or the introduction of additional support is identified after enrolment is completed the school will require full parental cooperation in order to provide a program that is in the best educational interests of the student.

Identification of Students Who Need Counseling Support

Students who need counseling support are identified in several ways, including:

- Teacher recommendation
- Parent recommendation
- Coordinator or her /his assistant

- Student self-advocacy

The reason for counseling support may be academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral. In any case, parental permission is needed for continuous counseling services.

Support System

The school counselor/psychologist works with students individually and/or in small group settings to reach their academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral goals. The frequency with which the school counselor meets to work with individual students varies. Counselors may meet with students weekly, or monthly, as needed.

When determining topics for group sessions, the school Counselor creates surveys so students can give input as to the areas in which they need support. Group sessions are based on these requests and any needs that arise throughout the year.

Identification of Students with Medical or Health Issues

Annually, the Licensed School Doctor reviews Gateway International Montessori School student health forms to identify students who have a health concern or medical diagnosis. Students with medical/health issues must receive a diagnosis from a licensed medical practitioner. The school doctor has to follow up on the student's health condition and provide him with all the aid needed at school. Any concern about this student's health issue must be communicated to the student's family, possibly recommending a visit to a medical practitioner for diagnosis of the issue and treatment options.

Support System

The School Doctor checks in periodically with each student who has a medical/ health issue to discuss his/her medical treatment and progress, as well as any related questions he/she may have. In addition, the School Doctor talks with the student to determine the impact his/her medical/ health issues may be having on his/her academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral goals.

The School doctor communicates with families regarding their students' medical /health issues and provides them with all the information detected in their son's /daughter's health condition and its development.

The school doctor also provides information and resources for teachers to use when working with students who have medical or health-related issues. Teachers adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessments to meet students' medical and health needs.

Procedures After Admission

a) Identification of Students with Special Educational Needs

- Students that face learning, behavioral or emotional difficulties after their registration are referred to the school counselor and psychologist. Diagnosis can be done within the school or by referral to a specialist in the community or a combination of both. Special educational needs that can be accommodated within the program are limited to Learning Disorders and disabilities secondary to mental health problems (e.g., depression, anxiety). Other special educational needs, including motor disabilities, need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Students with special educational needs identified before their enrollment in the program, should inform the program coordinator as early as possible in the application process and provide supporting documentation. If the supporting documentation (such as psychoeducational assessment reports) is outdated and needs to be renewed, or is incomplete given what is requested by the IBO, then parents and students will be advised to renew or seek additional documentation. This could either be done within the school with the responsibility of the school's psychologists, or by referral to a qualified specialist in the community; the second choice is preferred more in our Schools.
- The program coordinator, when reviewing applications (to check the compatibility of subject choices with university applications and to note student-specific health or SEN issues) will call for a meeting between the coordinator, class teacher, subject teachers, School Counselor/Psychologist, parents, and possibly the student to gain insight into the specific learning/assessment difficulties and to inform faculty accordingly.

b) Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations comprise academic arrangements, which pertain to the educational process, and testing/exam accommodations. When a student is diagnosed with learning, behavioral, or emotional difficulties, the school counselor/psychologist is responsible for calling a meeting (if/when advisable) between the program coordinator, the class teacher, and the subject teachers to discuss the particular difficulties faced by the student and to suggest effective academic arrangements or examination accommodations.

- Academic arrangements could include such arrangements as preferential seating in the classroom, individual guidance by the teachers, supplemental material (e.g., notes, diagrams), use of technology, etc. Further, academic arrangements could also include special educational support arranged by the above-mentioned staff members, who could meet regularly with the student for individual advising.
- At the end of each term, a faculty meeting is arranged with the participation of the program coordinator, her \ his assistant, the class teacher, the subject teachers, the school counselor, and the

psychologist. Parents and students are notified to attend if willing. The purpose of the meeting is to review the individual progress of students with special educational needs.

- Testing/exam accommodations are subject to provisions of the IBO handbook for special educational needs. They also depend on the functional limitations presented by the students. For in-school daily assessment purposes such as quizzes, unit tests, and presentations they could include extra time, breaks, the use of an amanuensis, the use of a personal computer, etc.
- The school will make an effort to grant these accommodations whenever possible but depending on the task, availability of teachers on duty, Invigilators, etc. For the IBDP final examination, accommodations are formally requested (by completion of the D1 form) and supported with the requested, relevant documentation to receive approval by the IBO. Exam accommodations for formal school examinations, i.e., mid-terms and finals, are provided in accordance with the accommodations approved (or requested) for the final IBO examination. All invigilators are responsible for understanding and correctly applying special assessment arrangements applicable to in-school or the final IBDP examinations.

The Following arrangements are provided by the school to students with special assessment needs as per guidelines from and with the prior permission of IBO

The IB allows the school to make their own decision on provision for SEN students in exams based on the following criteria from the DP Handbook 9.1.2 “Assessment requirements not requiring authorization”:

A Separate Room:

A candidate is permitted to take an examination in a separate room if it is in the best interests of the candidate or other candidates in the group. For example, lighting may be a particular consideration for a candidate with a visual impairment, or a room with an echo may be difficult for a candidate with autism. Furthermore, a candidate’s condition or the nature of the inclusive assessment arrangement (for example, a scribe, or a computer) may disturb other candidates, in which case a separate examination room is justified. If the examination is taken in a separate room, all regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations must be observed. The candidate must be kept under the constant supervision of an invigilator.

The coordinator may arrange for appropriate seating to meet the needs of individual candidates (for example, sitting near the front may be appropriate for a candidate with vision or hearing difficulties).

An assistant, if necessary, a nurse, maybe in attendance if this is necessary for the welfare or safety of a candidate. The assistant must not be another candidate or a relative of the candidate.

A candidate who normally uses an aid (for example, a colored overlay, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a low vision aid, a magnifying aid, or colored filter lenses) is allowed to use the aid in examinations .

Magnifying devices to enlarge and read print may be used by candidates with vision issues. These may include magnifying glasses and line magnifiers. For a candidate who has color blindness, the coordinator (or invigilator) is permitted to name colors in an examination paper (for example, on a map in a geography examination). However, no other form of assistance may be given without authorization from the IB Assessment Centre.

A candidate who is hypersensitive to sound is permitted the use of noise buffers such as headsets, earplugs, and individual workstations with acoustic screens. If an individual workstation is employed, all regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations must be observed. The candidate must be kept under the constant supervision of an invigilator.

Note: It is in breach of regulations if candidates are found in possession of any other mobile devices in the examination room.

Additional Time:

- Additional time is authorized for written examinations and certain activities connected to internal assessment according to the candidates' assessed needs. For written examinations, additional time is normally restricted to 15 minutes for each hour of the examination (that is, 25% grace time). For periods of less than one hour, the additional time is given on a case-by-case basis. More than 15 minutes per hour may be authorized for candidates with a severe condition or where the special arrangements play a greater demand on time.
- Additional time is not authorized for a component where the completion of a task within a limited time is specified in an assessment criterion.
- at the discretion of the coordinator, a candidate who is allowed additional time takes his / her examinations in a separate room. This is to avoid disturbing the candidate when other candidates in the group leave the examination room at the scheduled time.
- An additional time of 30 minutes per hour (that is, 50% more time) is normally authorized for candidates using examination papers in Braille. Time above 30 minutes per hour is authorized, according to the assessed needs of the candidate.
- At the discretion of the IBDP coordinator, a candidate is given additional time to complete assignments during the two-year program (for example, the extended essay, the theory of knowledge (TOK) essay, language A world literature essay) without authorization from IBCA.

Rest Period:

- A candidate may be permitted rest breaks if required to do so due to medical, physical, psychological, or other conditions.
- During a rest period, the candidate is not permitted to read, respond to the examination paper, or write notes of any kind. A rest period is distinct from “additional time” during which the candidate continues working.
- The amount of rest time required, or whether more than one rest period is necessary, depends on the candidate’s circumstances. Ten minutes per hour is normally authorized. During the rest period in an examination, the candidate’s script and examination paper is covered, collected, or turned face down on the desk/table.
- The candidate leaves the examination room for part or all of the rest period, but is supervised to ensure that the security of the examination is maintained. There is no communication with, or disturbance to, other candidates.

Amanuenses/Writer:

- An amanuensis (or scribe) is a person who writes down the dictated response of a candidate for the requirements of an internal and/or external assessment component. The use of an amanuensis is permitted for all forms of assessment where a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten response or use a word processor.
- If a candidate is allowed both an amanuensis and a reader, the same person fulfills both roles whenever possible. The candidate takes the examination in a separate room. The dictated responses of the candidate must not be overheard by other candidates.
- Because the examination is taken in a separate room, an invigilator is present in addition to the amanuensis. This is to ensure the proper conduct of the examination so that no questions arise regarding the appropriateness of the assistance.
- The amanuensis transcribes the candidate’s responses verbatim, draws all visual material (for example, diagrams, maps, and graphs) according to the exact instructions of the candidate, not offer information that is used to answer questions, including advice on which questions to answer, when to move on to another question or the order in which questions should be answered.
- The amanuensis is familiar with the terminology used in the subject, but whenever possible, is not the candidate’s teacher for the subject being examined.
- Conversation between the candidate and the amanuensis is confined to ensuring that the candidate’s responses are transcribed correctly. There is no discussion about the examination paper or the candidate’s answers.

Readers :

- If a candidate has difficulties in reading or attention, the role of the reader is to read the examination paper to a candidate and to read back the candidate’s answers if requested to do so. However, the

assistance of the reader is not confined to the written examinations; a reader may assist a candidate with all internal and external assessment components.

- An examination paper is read out loud without any alteration to its wording. Explaining Instructions and answering questions about the rubrics of the examination paper (for example, how many questions to answer, and the time available for the paper) are permitted; however, the reader is not allowed to interpret or explain questions on the paper.
- If there is more than one candidate for the same examination requiring a reader, they are grouped. However, if a candidate requests that his or her answers be read out loud, that candidate takes the examination separately.
- The reader is familiar with the terminology used in the subject, as any mispronunciation is confusing or unsettling for the candidate. The reader pronounces words clearly and should be someone whose speech is easily understood by the candidate. However, whenever possible, the candidate's teacher for the subject concerned is not appointed as the reader.

Prompters:

- A prompter is a person who ensures that a candidate is paying attention to the examination. This arrangement would normally be authorized for candidates diagnosed as having a neurological or cognitive disability resulting in a severe attention problem, by the rule and regulation of IBO and without disturbing other children in the class.
- The prompter only prompts. No other form of assistance is given. The means of prompting is a gentle tap on the candidate's arm or desk/table. The prompt is not given verbally.
- The prompter is familiar with the candidate's behavior so that he or she knows when the candidate is not attending to the task, rather than thinking.
- The position of the prompter concerning the candidate is left to the discretion of the coordinator. However, the prompter is seated in a position that provides a view of the candidate's disposition rather than his or her work. This is achieved without the candidate feeling as though he or she is under any pressure or scrutiny.

Communicators:

- A communicator is someone who is able to convey information to a person with a hearing impairment through the use of lip-speaking, fingerspelling, or sign language.
- A communicator is used for conveying the oral instructions of the coordinator/invigilator without authorization from IBCA (sen@ibo.org or help@ibo.org).
- If a communicator is required so that a candidate can access the questions in an examination, it is mandatory to obtain authorization from IBCA (sen@ibo.org or help@ibo.org). Authorization is given if the communicator is a qualified teacher of the deaf who can fingerspell all technical words. However, it is unlikely that this arrangement is necessary if the examination paper has been modified to accommodate the needs of a candidate with a hearing impairment.

Audio recordings of responses to examination papers:

- If a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten or word-processed script and an amanuensis is not a viable alternative, an authorization may be given to audio record responses. However, this arrangement is authorized only in exceptional circumstances, after other alternatives have been considered and rejected.
- This arrangement is only available for examinations where there is no requirement to produce visual material (for example, illustrations, tables, diagrams, or sketch maps).
- The candidate takes the examination in a separate room. The recording is transcribed verbatim by a person appointed by the school (for example, a school secretary). No corrections or alterations can be made to the candidate's response.
- The coordinator is responsible for checking the original recording against the transcript to ensure that no corrections or alterations have been made. The candidate's transcript is sent to the examiner. The coordinator retains a copy of the recording until the close of the examination session.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The IB Program Coordinator is responsible for approving and submitting the request for special assessment arrangements to the IBO and for ensuring that such arrangements are also applied to all formal in-school examinations. The coordinator is in addition responsible for liaising whenever necessary between parties involved (parents, student, administrative assistant, class teacher, subject teachers, school counselor/ psychologist) and for ensuring adequate and effective flow of information to all concerned parties, as appropriate.
- The class teacher and the IB program coordinator assistant should be fully informed of which students have special educational needs and the nature of their needs, to work more closely with the subject teachers and the student on academic arrangements, and to monitor students' academic progress. The assistant is responsible for recording students who have special educational needs, which have been identified before their enrollment in the program or during their studies, to encourage parents to provide the appropriate supporting documentation. Furthermore, the IB assistant monitors the academic performance of the students and draws attention to the coordinator and/or school counselor/psychologist in case of any difficulties that might arise.
- Requests for appropriate assessment accommodations from the IBO are prepared by the school counselor in collaboration with the assistant and class teacher and are approved/submitted by the IB program coordinator.
- The school counselor/psychologist offers expertise on psychopathology, including disorders first diagnosed in infancy, childhood, or adolescence, mood, and anxiety disorders, etc. He\ She should be fully informed, by the class teacher, the program Coordinator assistant, the Coordinator, or by the parents, about students who have special educational needs, and are responsible for reviewing the relevant documentation. S/he can contribute to the accurate and timely identification of special

educational needs in the case of the student's first presenting difficulties in learning or emotional difficulties. In such cases, students are referred by subject teachers (class teachers, coordinator, coordinator's assistant) and are seen with parental consent, or are self-referred. The school counselor and psychologist can also offer consultation to the Coordinator, her \his assistant, or the class teacher, depending upon availability. School counselor and psychologist use their professional judgment when deciding to inform the Coordinator and possibly other parties of difficulties that have been directly reported to them by students or by their parents.

- All the staff working with students with special needs work under the direction and supervision of the school counselor and psychologist to provide special educational support regularly.
- The subject teachers should be informed of the students with special educational needs who are in their class in the context of a dedicated meeting between teachers – the school counselor – the class teacher – coordinator. These meetings and other in-school training sessions should ensure a basic understanding of teaching students with special educational needs and familiarize teachers with academic arrangements. Teachers should work closely with the school counselor/psychologist on how to best teach and assess these students. (see Appendix 2 for an example of guidelines provided to teachers).
- The parents should inform the coordinator and/or the school counselor/psychologist if there is a history of a special educational need, and provide adequate supporting documentation.
- *The students* are encouraged to be fully aware of their special educational needs and collaborate with the school on the listed procedures. We hope to create an environment in which students feel comfortable providing feedback on the educational process to all those involved. All students are introduced to the school psychologist and counselor as part of a “study skills” session to take place during the 1st term of the first year of their enrollment in the program.
- During an “induction” meeting with incoming parents, scheduled in the first term, parents are introduced to the school counselor/psychologist and her\his responsibilities to better inform them of available in-school services and possible academic or assessment arrangements.
- The families of high-achieving or gifted students receive periodic contact from subject area teachers about their student's progress and performance on differentiated tasks and individualized projects.

Procedures to communicate with IBO by IB Coordinator

- The DP coordinator, on behalf of the candidate, will submit the request for inclusive assessment arrangements to IB six (6) months before the written examinations using the online request form on IBIS.
- The following supporting documentation will be submitted (uploaded) with the online Request for inclusive assessment arrangements:
 - Medical/psychological/psycho-educational documentation (translated into English, where necessary)

At least one piece of educational evidence

Examples of educational evidence include:

- anecdotal observations from the school such as records or correspondence from a class teacher, a learning support/inclusion coordinator, or a school counselor
- an individualized educational plan (IEP)
- Samples of the candidate’s work (e.g. showing unsuccessful work owing to lack of access or successful work owing to access given); the work submitted, which needs only be in one subject, must be work that has been written in English
- evidence of correspondence or records from a previous school where the candidate was enrolled, and whether the assessment arrangement was used.

Further details and reading are available in the IB publication Access and Inclusion Policy, November 2018. If needed, please refer to the school administration for a copy.

Implementation of the SEN Policy & Support of Teaching Staff

To ensure that the SEN Policy is implemented the below procedure must be followed:

Description	Action	Stage
The policy must be reviewed as stated in the review process	Review of policy	1
The policy is communicated to staff using the school management system and shared with parents via the school’s website.	Communication of Policy to staff and parents	2
Teachers must be informed of individual students with SEN via the school management system. Records must be regularly updated by the senior leadership team in consultation with the school counselor.	Update of school’s records of students with SEN	3
The senior leadership team will observe all teachers to ensure that lesson planning and delivery are differentiated. Teachers must be provided with feedback and guidance as to how to support all students’ learning needs.	Teacher support and appraisal system	4
The IB Coordinator leads internal professional development and collaborative workshops that are focused on the IBO’s <i>Approaches to teaching and learning</i> . Issues surrounding SEN must be discussed at weekly IB meetings where the IB Coordinator and teachers must provide regular updates relating to students’ learning needs.	Teacher training and collaboration	5

Policy Creation

The SEN/ Inclusion Policy was created by a committee that consisted of the School Head, School Principal, School Counselor & Psychologist, and the IB program coordinators. In addition, input was gathered from the School's Doctor, the IB Coordinator's Assistants, and IB staff members.

Professional Development

- The School counselor/psychologist as well as the school doctor raise awareness by conducting/participating in professional development opportunities before the beginning of the academic year (during the induction period) and throughout the scholastic year to lay the foundation for coordination between the teaching staff and administrative body and the school doctor and counselor as well as explaining the preliminary measures and steps a teacher or admin should do to deal with cases that need help.
- It is also preferable later if training could be received via the IBO in one of the workshops about Creating Inclusive Classrooms and Differentiation in Classrooms

Communication of the SEN/ Inclusion Policy to Gateway International Montessori School Community

The SEN/ Inclusion Policy is to be shared with staff, families, and students in a variety of modes of communication. The policy will be available on our website in written English form. Staff members learn about the SEN/ Inclusion Policy during specific collaboration times set aside for policy study. In addition, the SEN/ Inclusion Policy will be highlighted during the IBDP Informational Presentations to parents and students. Within the next few years, we might translate the policy into Arabic (the most predominant mother tongue of our student body) and place it on our website. This will allow our SEN/ Inclusion Policy to be accessed by all families, including those who are not proficient in English.

Confidentiality

- Children have a right to privacy. In the interests of maintaining confidentiality and showing respect for students who are experiencing difficulties in school, all involved parties must avoid casual and informal discussions with those students. Discussions about students with parents or other staff members must be held in private and with due consideration for the student's rights.
- Staff must maintain confidentiality by not referring to any child outside of the classroom by name or identifying features, not referring to social or learning difficulties in front of other students or members of the KIS community, and being sensitive about making comments or drawing conclusions about a student's behavior or learning profile.

Review Process

Every five years a committee will be formed to examine the inclusion practices for SEN students, at which time this policy will undergo a complete review. The committee will include but is not limited to, the School Head, School Principal, School Psychologist/Counselor, program coordinators, and as well as the senior leadership team. The purpose of the committee will be to review the current document to ensure its accuracy and to provide continued support to meet the needs of all of our learners. Our first full review will take place during the 2023-2024 school year. If the review is needed in the years between formal reviews, a committee can be formed to make amendments to the policy.

The implementation of the SEN / Inclusion Policy, in classrooms at Gateway International Montessori School, will be supervised by the senior leadership team, as part of the teacher observation process.

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The Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures (2021). IBO

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Appendix

Appendix 1: A description of learning needs/difficulties

Specific Learning Difficulties (Asperger Syndrome, Dyslexia, etc) and Communication and Speech Disorders

- Significant difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, or manipulating numbers associated with difficulties in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notation, dyslexia, dyscalculia)
- Speech and language difficulties characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, and articulation problems).

Social, Emotional, and Behavioral issues

Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessional preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial, uncooperative behavior; and anger, frustration, and violence.

Physical, Sensory, and Medical Issues

- Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious but affect mobility.
- Sensory impairments:
- Hearing - embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties;
- Visual - includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.
- The most common are congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia, and other cancers.

Mental health issues

A wide range of conditions can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions such as schizophrenia and manic depression to eating disorders, anxieties, and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a student's life.

Appendix 2: Developmental Disabilities Guide

Do any of your students show the following symptoms?

- 1) Carelessness: Often lacks concentration and attention. Has difficulty paying attention for a long time. Motivated by self-interest. → Poor academic performance
- 2) Hyperactivity disorder: Often leaves one's seat in the classroom. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
- 3) Impulsivity: Often has difficulty waiting for one's turn. Often interrupts or intrudes on other people (e.g. cutting in on someone's conversation.) Has difficulty controlling one's impulsiveness.
- 4) Learning: Although there is no overall delay seen in their intellectual development, one or more of the following abilities is extremely poor: listening, speaking, reading, writing, calculating, or guessing. The child demonstrates weak ability in, for example, writing essays, doing homework, or poor handwriting.
- 5) Conversation: The ability to understand what has been said or the ability to speak is weaker than that of his or her peers of a similar age.
- 6) Physical activity: Has difficulty carrying out certain actions especially using hands and feet together in motion although there is no numbness in a limb. Has very poor hand-eye coordination.
- 7) Communication: Communication is often one-way. Talks about almost only what they are interested in. Has difficulty understanding the intentions of other people through their gestures and language used. Has difficulty understanding abstract conversations and idiomatic phrases. Interprets words and phrases literally. Often makes up words and uses and misuses technical words. Makes unnatural remarks.
- 8) Social skills: Lacks cooperativeness and feelings of empathy. Improper actions and behavior. Has difficulty acquiring common sense and manners. Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly by parents and therefore does not respond. Showing little respect to parents.
- 9) Creativity: Easily disrupted by a sudden change in schedule. Interests and concerns are one-sided. Showing almost no interest in topics he or she is not interested in. Disinclination to adopt new things and preference for repetitive, often simple routines. Difficulty with organizing and planning or predicting things.

Of course, everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. However, students with learning disabilities have lots of trouble staying focused and controlling their behavior, therefore it can affect how well they do in school or other areas of their lives. They do not seem to listen when spoken to directly and they

seem to show little improvement even after instructions were given. Note: Situations will however improve if dealt with properly.

These symptoms might be the special features of students with **developmental disabilities**.

What is Developmental Disability?

Developmental Disability is not developmental delay. A learning disability represents one or more areas of weakness, but there are areas of strength, too. Areas of weakness and strength are unbalanced. Students with learning disabilities usually have no physical or mental disabilities. They have trouble making friends or getting along with their family members because they have difficulty developing interpersonal relations with other people. They have very low self-confidence and are often discouraged because they have been scolded many times for a long time. This causes secondary issues such as being bullied and isolated.

Developmental disabilities are believed to be caused by a small brain abnormality in the nervous system where information transmits. There are no treatments to completely cure this, however, with proper support they can learn to become more sociable.

What is Asperger's Syndrome?

A School is a very stressful place for children with Asperger's syndrome even if they seem to be coping with school-life situations well.

How to handle students with such symptoms?

① Be a good listener.

When there is a problem, first allow students to explain their opinions and feelings. Ask how problems made him or her feel. How did he or she decide what action to take? There must be a reason behind their actions. Problems often occur due to misunderstanding the feelings of others and a lack of self-awareness. This is a key element of Asperger's syndrome. Communicating in a second language is even more difficult for them.

② Give detailed instructions in a normal voice and tone.

When you talk to students about his/her inappropriate behavior, talk in a normal voice and tone and give detailed instructions about what was wrong. Students will feel misunderstood if scolded loudly by a teacher, and lose trust in the teacher and the school. This will eventually cause more trouble. Students with learning disabilities are usually over-sensitive to loud noises. Taking the student somewhere quiet might be helpful.

③ Explain specifically and perseveringly.

If a student does not follow the teacher's instructions, it is possibly because the instructions were not understood well. In such cases, giving specific explanations is more helpful than giving abstract explanations. Instructions like "Don't do *such* things.", "Don't do *what people don't appreciate*." Or "Don't *hurt* someone's *feelings*." are too abstract. Use specific words they said to identify what words were unacceptable to say and describe what actions were inappropriate. Also, it could be helpful to explain things visually not verbally. Finally, complement students if they did something that they could not do before. This will help students build self-confidence.

④ Take the student to somewhere quiet when he or she gets into a panic.

When a student is panicking, calming down is not easy. It is better to take the student to a quiet place to calm down.

The above advice details are just examples of basic responses teachers can use. Since everyone is different and everyone has different characteristics, there are different ways to respond. You must be aware of the characteristics of the students you are concerned about. If you have any questions regarding your students, please consult with the Gateway Psychologist and physician.