

STUDENT SUPPORT/SEN POLICY (Whole School)

1. Philosophy

ICS focuses on the strengths, abilities and talents of all students. In a highly diverse and inclusive setting, ICS provides a curriculum committed to reflective and purposeful inquiry. When planning, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. Some students however with special educational needs have particular learning and assessment requirements that could need targeted differentiated strategies and support in order for them to successfully access a full curriculum.

The teachers and the Student Support Department take into account these requirements and make provision, where necessary, to support individual students and thus enable them to participate effectively in all educational and social activities that take place in the school.

Children may have special educational needs (SEN) either throughout, or at any time during, their school years. This policy ensures that planning, differentiation and modification of teaching and learning strategies for children with special educational needs are implemented by taking into consideration the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the student.

2. Inclusive Practice

- *Inclusion at ICS is a process by which the school develops its cultures, policies and practices to include all students.*
- *With the right training, strategies and support children with mild to moderate special educational needs can be successfully included in our full curriculum education. Students with more complex special educational needs are sometimes educated in a smaller group environment and included with general education students whenever possible.*
- *An inclusive education offers excellence and choice and incorporates the views of all professionals who work in the multi-disciplinary team; including parents and children (when deemed appropriate).*
- *The interests of all students must be safeguarded.*
- *To ensure that students are supported in their transition to higher education and are enabled to acquire the necessary study skills.*
- *To ensure a systematic, coherent, structured and consistent approach to maximise retention and progression.*
- *To provide a coherent range of guidance and learning support mechanisms capable of meeting the needs of the student body.*

3. Students with Special Educational Needs

3.1. We recognize and respect the fact that children:

- Have different educational and behavioural needs;
- Require different strategies for learning;

- Acquire, assimilate and communicate information in different ways and at different rates;
- Need a range of different teaching approaches and experiences.

3.2. Students with ASD/Asperger's

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a term that refers to a broad definition of autism including the classical form of the disorder as well as closely related disabilities that share many of the core characteristics.

Autism is a developmental disability that affects a person's ability to communicate, understand language, play, and interact with others. Students with ASD can vary significantly in characteristics, from severely impaired cognition to being gifted and talented in particular areas and subjects.

Asperger's Syndrome is a developmental disability on the autism spectrum. It is characterised mainly by:

- Difficulties with social development and interaction.
- Problems with communication skills.
- Some cognitive processing difficulties, which include executive function, sensory perception and the ability to comprehend the perspective of others (theory of mind).

A Sample of Strategies:

- Use student's interests and abilities to teach across the curriculum
- Reward, reinforce and be positive
- Ensure structure and predictability in the student's day (e.g. visual timetables, explanation of any changes to routine, use of closed instead of open-ended questions/tasks)
- Classroom structure; list and schedules; predictability and consistency
- Detailed explanations and instructions
- Ensuring that the student has or is taught a means of communicating wants and needs using sign, symbol or spoken language
- Peer support and mentoring
- Preparing for transitions; preparing student prior to activities
- Using a workplace outside the class in which the student can have a calm and quiet start to a session, working with a learning support assistant on a
- structured programme of activities designed to prepare him or her to participate in class activities (e.g. using 'social scripts' to rehearse appropriate classroom behaviours)
- To seat the student in the classroom where learning is best accessible to him.
- Using a clear visual behaviour management plan in a discrete area of the classroom (e.g. a clear and immediate visual reward chart illustrated on a Velcro board)
- Ensuring that all staff are briefed on the warning signs that may indicate a potential escalation of negative behaviour
- Providing clear concise instructions, teaching multiple meanings of words and explaining the meanings of abstract language

- To assist with self-regulation, create a home base: A place in the school to (a) plan or review daily events, (b) escape the stress of his/her current environment, or (c) regain control if a tantrum has occurred

3.3. Students with Learning Difficulties

A learning difficulty (LD) is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. The term learning disability is used to describe the apparent unexplained difficulty a person of at least average intelligence has in acquiring basic academic skills. This difficulty can interfere with academic progress and success and affect the student's personal and education life. Learning disability does not refer only to one kind of difficulty but to a group of difficulties experienced in the areas of movement (dyspraxia), reading (dyslexia), writing (dysgraphia) and maths (dyscalculia).

A student with learning difficulties can be affected in the following areas:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

Other Characteristics:

- A distinct gap between the level of achievement that is expected and what is actually being achieved
- Difficulties with socio-emotional skills and behaviour

A Sample of Strategies

- Provide alternative assignments
- Help students focus on specific parts of the assignments
- New content should be taught by using concrete examples and demonstrations
- Allow students to progress at their own rate
- Modify assignments to help students compensate
- Provide students with more opportunities to practise skills than required by the rest of the students
- Provide aids during instruction (e.g. calculators, spelling dictionaries)
- Substitute in content area instruction with lower reading level
- Modify tests and assessment measures to compensate for the student's specific learning difficulties
- Provide opportunities and encourage students to self-monitor
- Help the student improve on work habits (by assisting self-monitoring, peer reward system and open daily communication with parents)
- Help understanding and written language with mind maps, lists with new words/vocabulary and software)
- For sight words and vocabulary use word lists, e-books and audio books
- For improving math skills support real-life applications and exercises that are hands-on
- Mapping and webbing for reading comprehension

- Praising the student's strengths and areas of success so that self esteem is enhanced
- Chunking of assignments into obtainable segments
- Using flexible grouping and/or pair arrangements; ones where the student can work with more able peers
- Considering carefully the student's learning style and ensuring that this is reflected in the style of teaching and in the support services

3.4. Students with ADHD

A student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has difficulties with either activity or attention control or both. The child seems to be always on the go, does not settle to anything, has poor focus and concentration, poor ability to organise activities or to engage in activities or tasks that demand sustained mental effort and focus, or who cannot stay or sit still and are always impatient and cannot wait for others.

The diagnostic features are:

- **Inattention** - very short attention span, extreme distractibility
- **Hyperactivity** - excessive movements, especially in situations expecting calm such as mealtimes
- **Impulsiveness** – the student will not wait his/her turn, acts without thinking, thoughtless rule-breaking (ADHD UK Alliance)

A Sample of Strategies

Inattention:

- Decrease the length of the task
- Break one task into smaller parts to be completed at different times
- Give two tasks (preferred task to be completed after less preferred)
- Fewer spelling words or math problems
- Use fewer words in explaining tasks (global verbal directions)
- Make tasks interesting:
- Allow students to work with peers
- High and low interest tasks
- Use of overhead projector when lecturing can help
- Allow student to sit closer to teacher
- Use games to over-learn rote material
- Adapting the length and nature of tasks, for example, using alternatives
- Alternating periods of concentration with the opportunity to move around and change activity

Hyperactivity:

- Channel it into acceptable venues
- Encourage directed movement in classroom (allow standing at the end of a lesson)
- Use activity as a reward (e.g. running an errand)
- Use teaching activities that encourage active responding (talking, moving, working at the board)
- Teach students to ask questions that are on topic

Impulsiveness:

- Limit choices in tasks, topics, and activities
- Recognize that impulsiveness can mean increased energy at a task
- Teach children who interrupt how to save their ideas and recognize a pause in the conversation
- Help the student list impulsive acts. Then, list the negative consequences for impulsive acts and the more pleasant alternatives if thought had been used instead
- Use games in the classroom that require sustained concentration and impulse control to help improve them in the student
- Establish a daily routine; provide models for what you want the student to do
- Teach children who interrupt how to recognise pauses in conversations and how to hang on to ideas
- Teach student hand signals and use them to tell student when and when not to talk
- Make sure student is called on when hand is raised in appropriate manner
- Acknowledge positive behaviour of nearby students
- During games, give the student a responsible job (e.g. team captain, care and distribution of the balls, score keeping, etc.)
- Pair with responsible peer (rotate responsible students so that they don't wear out!)
- Ignore minor, inappropriate behaviour
- Supervise closely during transition times
- Set up a behaviour contract
- Set up achievable rewards as well as consequences
- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences
- Use "prudent" reprimands for misbehaviour (i.e. avoid lecturing or criticism)
- Attend to positive behaviour with compliments etc.

3.5. Students with Behavioural Problems

Besides the school-wide behavioural system that encourages responsibility and consequences, the teacher will work with the LSA, the coordinator and the director in developing an individualized behavioural plan for the students who are exhibiting escalating problems in this area. Some strategies that can be applied are the following:

- Addressing factors within the *class* that may be contributing to the problem – (e.g. addressing teasing by using circle time or group time as an opportunity for discussing teasing and how to respond to it)
- Teaching the child alternative behaviours (i.e. taking quiet time in a specially designated area at times of stress)
- Providing the child with a channel of communication other than tantrums (i.e. designating another student as the 'listening partner'; completing a 'think bubble sheet', identifying causes and triggers of stress and possible solutions)
- Using a carefully designed system for targeting behaviour, drawn up together with the child, and linked to a strong reward system which, wherever possible, involves parents
- Providing the student with a cool-off area
- Arranging one-to-one or group work where conflict resolution strategies can be discussed and/or role-played

- Involving the pupil in a planned programme to build self-esteem, such as mentoring younger students or students with special needs who have trouble experiencing friendships

4. Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

4.1. Teachers and Students with Special Educational Needs

All teachers are responsible for identifying students with special educational needs and, with the guidance of the Student Support Coordinator and the Director of Student Support, will ensure that those students requiring different or additional support are identified at an early stage.

Early identification of students with special educational needs is a priority. The student support team will use appropriate screening and assessment tools, and ascertain student needs and progress through:

- Evidence obtained by teacher observation/ assessment.
- Evidence obtained by director/coordinator observation/assessment.
- Student progress in relation to the year group's literacy and numeracy goals and strategies.
- Standardised screening or assessment tools.

On entry to the school students with special needs should have received a comprehensive assessment by an educational psychologist. We help parents set up this assessment either at our school (for an additional fee) or for the psychologist to assess the student outside the school. Many times we provide the parents with information but the parents may choose to recruit their own educational psychologist.

This formal assessment will help to inform ICS of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and attainments, and will be used to improve continuity in learning. The records provided help the student support team to design appropriate differentiated learning programmes. For students with identified special educational needs records will be used to:

- Identify the need for support and level of support within the class
- Assess learning difficulties
- Ensure on-going observations/assessments and provide regular feedback on achievements / experiences, for planning next steps in learning
- Involve parents in a joint home-school learning approach through ongoing communication.

Specifically the teacher (with the help of the student support team) is responsible for:

- Providing support for children who need help with communication, language and literacy in the classroom environment
- Planning to develop children's understanding through diverse experiences
- Planning for children's full participation in learning, and in physical and practical activities, including excursions and trips (when teacher accompanies)
- Helping children to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely
- Helping students believe in themselves and manage their emotions.

4.2. Students with a Statement

Parents whose children underwent a statutory assessment and have a statement of special educational needs, and those for whom a statement is in the process of being developed, continue to be able to request an independent, private school such as ICS. The local education authority must give full consideration to the parent's requests. Where a local education authority names an independent school in a child's statement, the local education authority must fund the placement.

Where a local education authority disagrees with what parents want and does not name the independent school in the child's statement, the parents have the right of appeal to the SEN Tribunal.

Where appropriate, statements should name independent schools approved to cater for children with special educational needs. Parents whose children have special educational needs continue to have the right to educate their child, at their own expense, at an independent school or special school if they choose to do so.

4.3. ICS and Statements

The staff of Student Support at ICS is committed to helping parents present their case to their Borough in order to receive partial or full funding:

The steps that the Director of Student Support and the Student Support Coordinator will take regarding this process are the following:

- Letter with all the appropriate information regarding inclusive education at ICS, support services, IILP procedures and appropriateness of placement for the particular student
- Phone conversation with representative of the Borough regarding the inclusive education at ICS.
- Invitation for a visit to the representative of the Borough in order to confirm that ICS is the appropriate placement for the student.
- Visits of student support director or coordinator to the Borough.
- Cooperation with professionals that the parents and/or borough work with in order to assess the suitability of ICS.

After the above steps have been taken, ICS will have to withdraw from this process and will be able to provide only documents, IILP and reports to supplement the above steps in case the LA still harbours hesitations regarding ICS as an appropriate educational placement for the particular student.

The statement of a student with special needs attending ICS **must not** have any reference to the English National Curriculum as ICS is an IB world accredited school.

5. The Student Support Department

5.1. Structure of the Student Support Team

The Student Support Department consists of the student support team. The head of the student support team is the Director of Student Support (Primary and Secondary). The

primary and secondary schools, each, have a Head of Student Support, an on-site Speech and Language therapist, a team of Learning Support Assistants (primary) Co-teachers (secondary). In the primary school, the primary years special education program has a head teacher who manages the program and line manages the other special needs teachers of the programme. The team also consults with a team of occupational therapists (Maximum Potential) and psychotherapists who attend to students on a needs basis (when deemed necessary by the Director and Coordinator of Student Support along with the multi-disciplinary team). Literacy and numeracy support is provided on a need basis.

Therapy sessions will be rescheduled and made up for the student when the missed sessions are due to an illness or absence of the therapist.

When therapy sessions are missed due to student's travelling or other unexcused absence the sessions will not be made up. The exception to this is due to a student's illness. In this case, the therapist will make up all the sessions missed.

Therapy sessions will not be made up when the school is closed due to school-wide events (e.g. sports day), except if at the discretion of the therapist there is available time to make up the session missed.

There is always flexibility when a session is missed. ICS wants to ensure that the students receive the best and most appropriate support, thus staff will work with parents to find the time to make up for missed sessions when it is appropriate and feasible.

5.2. All staff of student support is responsible for the following:

- The student support team does its best to secure the necessary provision for any student identified as having special educational needs.
- The student support professionals ensure that all teachers are aware of the importance of identifying and providing for these students.
- They will ensure that the students with special educational needs are included in all the activities of the school together with their peers.
- They observe students with special needs in order to best help the teacher address specific concerns regarding the student. They informally assess in order to have a clear picture of what are the needs of the student. They have weekly meetings as a team to address concerns regarding specific students and to find constructive solutions.
- They work closely with the student's teacher so they can support the successful learning of the student by removing any barriers to learning.
- They work with the head of each school through regular meetings so there is increased awareness and heightened sensitivity of particular concerns regarding students.

6. International Individual Learning Plan (IILP)

The approach at ICS is a multi-disciplinary approach. This means that the team developing the IILP and supporting the student consists of professionals from various disciplines and the parents. This ensures a holistic approach to special needs and a more fair recognition and approach to special needs and the student's academic and social success.

Besides the parents, one of the most important members of the team developing the IILP is the child's teacher(s) and/or co-teachers. Equally valuable to the development and implementation of the IILP's goals is the LSA if the student is supported by an LSA. The

LSA must work closely with the teacher and the rest of the team in developing goals and strategies that will be useful for the student. The director of student support as well as the coordinator will make sure the co-teacher and the LSA receive guidance and support in developing goals and strategies appropriate for the special needs of each student.

- The IILP includes three major targets/goals that the teacher/co-teacher and LSA believe are the most important ones for the educational and social success of the student. Once these three goals have been met, new ones will be developed. The IILP's priority is to help the teacher and the LSA guide the student's learning process in the inclusive environment of the classroom.
- The team responsible for developing the IILP are the teacher, coordinator, LSA (when one is supporting the student) and any professional who is supporting the student (S<, Counsellor, OT, PT). However, the therapists include their goals and their feedback in the reports they write to accompany the IILPs.
- The IILPs are reviewed twice a year with the parents present. This is an opportunity for the parents to share their goals, thoughts and perspectives regarding their child's educational success. It is imperative that parents have an active voice while trusting the team of professionals to provide quality services to their child.
- The IILPs are reviewed a total of three times during the school year. Each review happens at the end of each term: 1st review at the end of the Autumn Term; 2nd review at the end of the Spring Term; 3rd review at the end of the Summer Term.
- The 2nd review which takes place at the end of the Spring Term is an internal review.

The 1st review, which takes place at the end of the Autumn Term, and the 3rd review, which takes place at the end of the Summer Term, include the entire team and the parents in order to share information regarding the student's progress. During the last review, the team takes into consideration the parents' goals and feedback from the two reviews, convenes to discuss the learning and social goals for the coming school year and develop the new IILP.

- The dates for reviewing the IILPs for each school year will be shared with the parents as soon as they are confirmed by the student support team. The department allows some flexibility regarding the dates and time of the IILP review meetings in order to accommodate the parents' schedules and personal engagements.
- The therapists' reports will accompany the IILPs, so the parents can have a holistic picture regarding their child's educational needs at ICS.

7. Intention to Discharge a Student from the Student Support Services

The Student Support Department will share written notification of intention to discharge a student from student support services, if the Director and the student support team have evidence that the student is not benefiting from a particular service or if the student needs to receive a different type of support service.

The Student Support Department will also stop support services and notify parents through an official letter when parents have requested the termination of services for their child. In

this case, the parents should check with admissions policy at ICS to know when and what they are entitled to after they terminate their child's support services.

Parents should share information of moving or leaving the school with the Student Support Department in addition to the head of primary or secondary as this affects the provision of student support services to their child.

8. Partnership with Parents

8.1. We pride ourselves for our inclusivity. This means that we could not conceive an educational program for students with special needs without the support, feedback and input of the student's parents. Parents are partners in their child's educational process and learning experiences. We strive to inspire trust in our parents because we want them to feel confident in our professional expertise. We also strive to have them share their children's successes, talents and weaknesses so we are able to design a successful educational program for the students.

8.2. The student support coordinator is the everyday contact person for the parents. The coordinator has a responsibility of updating and keeping the parents/guardians informed of the progress or concerns regarding their child. The coordinator is always willing to talk to parents. Communication with the parents can happen in one of the following ways:

- Phone conversation
- Email
- Official letter
- Parents can request a meeting that is not scheduled (e.g. meetings besides IILP review meetings)
- The director and/or coordinator can request a meeting with the parents that is not regularly scheduled
- The **secondary** school Head of Student Support will share a brief update with the parents every week. The **primary** Head of Student Support monitors this information sharing through the LSA's daily e-book (on-line) communications. In the case of a student who does not have an LSA, the student support coordinator will communicate with the parents regarding any feedback.

8.3. At all stages of the student support process, the director of student support and the coordinator keep parents fully informed and involved. We welcome the wishes, feelings and knowledge of parents at all stages. We encourage parents to make an active contribution to their child's education.

8.4. We inform the parents of any change in their child's educational program, and we share the process of decision-making by providing clear information relating to the education of children with special educational needs.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1. The director and coordinator with the cooperation of the teacher, LSA and specialist staff (therapists) monitor and review the progress of the children by developing, implementing and reviewing the IILP in their year group and make sure that independent learning is fostered to the maximum degree possible.

9.2. Progress may be recognised when students with learning difficulties

- develop ways to communicate from concrete methods (body language and objects of reference) towards abstract methods (pictures, symbols, print, signs, ICT and the spoken word)
- develop a range of responses to social interactions: from resistance to tolerance; from tolerance to acceptance; from passive cooperation to active participation; show desire and ability to work in pairs and in small group
- demonstrate the same achievement on more than one instances and under changing conditions
- show an increase in knowledge and understanding about a subject
- demonstrate an ability to maintain and generalize skills over time and in a range of different settings
- move from a dependence on predictable routines toward a greater degree of independence shown by risk-taking and increased self-confidence
- demonstrate a reduced need for support, *for example, from an LSA or from/with a word processor (assistive technology)*, in carrying out particular tasks
- develop a wider consistent use of learning positions and a familiarity with learning environments
- show a reduction in the frequency or severity of inappropriate behaviour that challenges learning through more appropriate behaviour
- demonstrate an increased ability to cope with negative emotions and/or situations, e.g. frustration and failure, with new learning tasks, challenging assignments or situations
- show initiative and are more risk takers regarding their learning and participation

9.3. The director and coordinator share and inform the school staff of changes in student support policy and how this policy is affecting the progress to the school regarding inclusivity and acceptance of all students.

9.4. The director and/or coordinator have weekly meetings with other management staff of the school regarding the status of students with special needs, the student support policy, and other new initiatives regarding the growth and development of the student support department

10. Accountability

Accountability is essential for the progress of the student support team, increase of professional standards and the preservation of professional ethics and knowledge. Following are some ways that the student support department will ensure accountability:

- Student support resources are used to raise standards among relevant students
- Students make good progress and achieve well
- Good practice is shared among all professionals
- Inclusion is supported through everyday actions and learning
- The requirements of Statements are met (when there is a statement)
- The input of all specialist therapists is considered and implemented successfully

- Training succeeds in increasing knowledge and skills of support staff evident in their rapport and work with the students
- Besides the end of year school-wide appraisal, the Heads of Student Support will observe the LSAs/Co-teachers once every term and provide constructive feedback with the director
- The director will observe and participate in therapist sessions when feasible and provide feedback to the specialist therapist, once a term.
- The director will offer constructive feedback once a term to each Head of Student Support and Head of PYSE

11. Confidentiality

All student support documents are kept in locked file cabinets in the student support offices. Information is only shared within ICS with staff who have a need to know. We will only release this confidential information to 3rd parties outside of school with written parental consent.

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