



# Learning support and inclusion policy

Guidelines for members of the Primary, Middle and High school community



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This document has been reviewed by the schools IB Coordinators and a team of teachers across all schools: 2020-2021

Year of next intended review: 2024-2025

\*new staff will be given this policy to review as part of the induction process.

## A Policy statement

At Skagerak International School, the objective of learning support in making provision for students who need learning support (LS) is in line with the school's and the IB's philosophy and mission regarding the inclusion of all students in learning: "Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers." This requires the acknowledgement of Learner variability, which embraces all students and does not exclude on the grounds of strengths, challenges, age, social status, economic status, language, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexuality.

All students have a right to full educational participation and provision for their special needs, as set out in Chapter 5 of the Norwegian Education Act (*Opplæringsloven*).

*Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, (2016)*

*Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom.*

*Removing barriers to learning. IB publication (2019)*

## B Philosophy

At SIS we value and respect all students equally and aim to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to engage in the curriculum. We seek to offer every student with special educational needs a broad, balanced and relevant education and enable learners to experience educational success and be fully included in their school community. We recognise that some students will need additional facilitation and support during part of their school education to ensure access to the whole curriculum. In addition, we recognise that some students will require additional challenge and extension in areas where their abilities are particularly strong or advanced.

For the purpose of this document, the term **Learning Support** is defined as follows:

*Students have special educational needs if they have a particular diversity or challenges when learning which call for special educational provision to be made for them. Students have a learning difference or special need if they:*

- *experience a significantly greater difficulty or challenge in learning than the majority of students of the same age, or*
- *have a medical issue which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for students of the same age in schools.*

The school is guided by, and works closely with, the support services and networks provided by the local municipalities.

*Board: 16 November 2011*

## C IB Learner Profile

*"IB programmes promote the education of the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth through all domains of knowledge. By focusing on the dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, independent critical and creative thought and international-mindedness, the IBO espouses the principle of educating the whole person for a life of active, responsible citizenship. Underlying the three programmes is the concept of education of the whole person as a lifelong process. The learner profile is a profile of the whole person as a lifelong learner." (1)*

All students are equally regarded in terms of the learner profile, and the aim to develop the attributes of the whole person applies equally to everyone. The LS policy promotes the principle of inclusiveness across the school and amongst the members of the school community. Just as the IB Learner profile establishes the importance of taking a holistic approach to the person, so the LS policy establishes the importance of taking a holistic approach to the school community.

*IB Learner profile booklet (2006)*

## **D Purposes, beliefs and principles**

ref. *Special education needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (2010)*

ref. *PYP: Making it Happen (2007)*

ref. *MYP: From Principles into Practice (2008)*

### **Purposes**

The purposes of promoting an inclusive whole-school approach in relation to special education needs are:

- to better support each student and their parents within the best possible learning environment and conditions.
- to provide more consistent approaches and promote common understandings about special education needs across the school community.
- to better support and guide teachers and administrators.
- to contribute to the efficacy of the programme.

### **Beliefs**

Students must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because their language or the form of language used in their home is different from the language in which they are taught. LS provision is regarded as a whole school matter and all teachers are teachers of students with special educational needs. We aim to support teachers by providing them with information about students with special educational needs and advice on strategies for support through IEPs (Individual Education Plans).

### **Principles**

The four principles pertaining to special educational needs in the PYP and MYP concern the importance of:

- affirming identity and building self-esteem
- valuing prior knowledge
- scaffolding
- extending learning.

These principles are organized into a model and explained further in *Special education needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (2010: 5-7)*.

## **E Responsibilities**

The school aims to meet the needs of students with special educational needs through the following:

### **Board**

The Board ensures that there are adequate resources, including staffing positions, to meet the school's obligations. This is done in conjunction with the annual budgeting process.

### **Principal and Senior management team**

The school's Senior management ensures that staffing allocations, timetable structures, physical conditions and resources, systems and processes, routines and procedures, communication and relationships between staff, students and parents are all in place to effectively implement its provisions. Where necessary, the school's Senior management liaises with outside agencies to ensure good cooperation between them and the school. The Senior management is also accountable for the way that the school utilizes resources provided by the state and the municipality.

## Learning support coordinator (LSC)

The LSC is responsible for organizing and monitoring all provisions for special needs and learning support in the school. The LSC works closely with the principal in drawing up Individual Educational Plans for students and preparing necessary documentation to submit to the authorities to access additional funding for students:

- to receive additional one to one or small group teaching (in addition to their timetabled classes in HS)
- to receive additional resources/equipment where necessary, and
- other services such as access to a school psychologist where the student has emotional/psychological issues.

They will investigate referrals and co-ordinate with teaching staff, Senior management, parents and external agencies such as the PPT (*Pedagogisk – psykologisk tjeneste*), school nurse or family doctor. Regular in-house training and resources are made available to all staff. A full job description for this position is published in the staff handbook.

## School Counsellor (PS/MS)

The SC is responsible for investigating referrals brought forward from teachers, parents or students themselves. They provide emotional and psychological support on a one: one basis and serve to liaise with administration and subject teachers to keep them informed about students' issues. The SC cooperates with parents where necessary and refers onto outside agencies in the community to best serve the needs of the student and their family.

## Head of Pastoral Care (HS)

The Head of Pastoral Care is a member of the HSLT and has responsibility for planning, coordinating and implementing an inclusive pastoral and counselling program for the HS. This includes ensuring all contact teachers are aware of those students with Learning Support needs and that their specific pastoral needs are met throughout the academic year. The contact teacher liaises with the HPC and LSC to ensure students are receiving an appropriate level of support.

For academic issues the LSC and DP Coordinator are involved. For non-academic issues such as anxiety or depression this is with the HPC in their dual role as Psychosocial Counsellor. Other services such as access to a school psychologist or external health services where the student has emotional/psychological issues is covered here also. An integral part of the Pastoral Program is information and advice related to emotional wellbeing and mental health and all contact teachers work to support students with learning support needs who often require extra help both socially and emotionally. The HPC supports this function and provides information and support to all contact teachers.

## PPT teacher (PS/MS)

When students are allocated a certain number of hours of teacher assistance, usually as a result of a PPT evaluation, the school will allocate these hours to a suitably experienced teacher. This teacher must liaise with the classroom teacher and will address the needs of the student in terms of planning, teaching and learning and assessment. This will primarily mean collaborating with the teacher to differentiate learning, modify tasks and assessment, and provide one-to-one or small group teaching where needed within the class or by withdrawing the student. While in the class, the PPT classroom teacher is also available to support other students in the class from time to time, since it is important to help students to be independent or integrated into group work without being obviously singled-out for special attention. The PPT classroom teacher is expected to take normal classroom management responsibilities and to step in for the class teacher if necessary – for example, taking control of the larger group of students while the class teacher spends one-to-

one time with the LS student(s).

Occasionally, the school is allocated hours to support students who are unable to attend school. These hours are given over to home visits. The PPT homeschool teacher works very closely with the parent(s) and the LS coordinator to plan appropriate teaching and learning. Apart from this and from the location, other aspects of the role are the same as described above. The PPT coordinator supervises each PPT classroom and homeschool teachers. A full job description for this position is published in the staff handbook.

### **PPT teacher (HS)**

When students are allocated a certain number of hours of teacher assistance, usually as a result of a PPT evaluation, the school will allocate these hours to a suitably experienced teacher. This teacher must liaise with the classroom teacher and will address the needs of the student in terms of planning, teaching, and learning and assessment. This will primarily mean collaborating with the teacher to differentiate learning, modify tasks and assessment, and provide one-to-one teaching for the student outside of the students' regular timetable. The student is encouraged to advocate for what tasks and subjects they would like to prioritize during the sessions with their PPT teacher. If possible, the subject teacher will be prioritized to deliver PPT support classes.

### **PPT assistant (PS/MS)**

The role and duties of PPT classroom assistants are broadly similar to that of PPT teachers, described above. However, PPT classroom assistants are not responsible for planning, differentiation, assessment or classroom management. The classroom teacher will make those modifications and will guide the classroom assistant in deciding how best to support the student in class.

The LS Coordinator supervises each PPT classroom assistant. A full job description for this position is published in the staff handbook.

### **Learning support routines**

The Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) is responsible for maintaining a list of all the students in the school that have been identified as having learning diversities or special educational needs. Strict information security regulations apply to this information and it is stored securely and made available only to a limited group of staff with specific responsibilities. Only relevant information is passed to the finance office so that the school can claim funding allocated by the local municipalities.

Information required by teachers, such as areas of intervention from the students' individual education plans (IEPs) are available in the staff Team – Learning support. There is a full briefing at the start of the academic year for all teaching staff concerning the students with identified special education needs. During the year, updates are given at weekly staff meetings and the students' progress and situation is monitored. Meetings are held with parents and outside agencies when required. The LSC is responsible for attending these and ensuring that other staff members are involved, as appropriate.

### **External professional expertise**

Where an educational psychologist, psychiatrist, speech and language therapist or other professional or agency is deemed an appropriate form of professional support to assess and/or meet the needs of the student, the LSC will source and forward details to parents. SIS has no influence over, or responsibility for, the terms set by these external individuals or agencies, though the school can offer advice or arrange for additional support where this is funded through the municipality.

## F Common understanding for Learning Support within the SIS context

### Legal

The regulations that apply to this area of the school's operations are contained in the Education Act (*Opplæringsloven*), chapter 5: § 5-1 the right to special education, § 5-3 on assessment and evaluation of students, § 5-4 on case processing in connection with decisions about special education and § 5-5 exemptions from the provisions concerning the content of training (which refers to the requirement to prepare IEPs for each LS student, specify objectives and monitor progress in relation to these objectives).

The Private Education Law (*Friskolelova*) § 3-6, Special education and educational-psychological service, specifies that the student's local municipality (*kommune*) or county (*fylke*) is responsible for providing the student with the opportunity of having expert assessments prepared. These authorities will make decisions about special education and covers the costs of such provisions. The municipal educational and psychological services (PPT) should assist the school in working with human resources and organizational development to provide a better situation for pupils with special needs.

### Inclusion

The school takes the same view as the IB regarding the principle of inclusion.

*"Inclusion is more about responding positively to each individual's unique needs, (strengths, and variabilities). Inclusion is less about marginalizing students because of their diversities.*

*The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education:*

*Inclusion is a process by which schools and others develop their cultures, policies, and practices to include all students.*

- *An inclusive education service offers excellence and choice, incorporating the views of all stakeholders.*
- *The interests of all students must be safeguarded.*
- *The school community and other authorizing bodies should actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.*
- *All students should have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.*
- *With the right skills training, strategies and support, the majority of students with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.*
- *Mainstream education will not always be appropriate for every student all of the time. Equally, just because mainstream education may not be appropriate at a particular stage, it does not prevent the student from being included successfully at any other stage."* (3)

*Special education needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (2010)*

### Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning

The school uses UDL practices and principles in planning for teaching and assessment across all programmes.

*We believe that UDL is based on the premise that variability is the **norm**. A universally designed curriculum is proactively designed from the outset to meet the needs of the greatest number of users. The school aims to use the UDL design cycle to identify barriers, preferences, needs, and goals of learning, design flexible assessment and develop flexible and engaging methods and materials. (See appendix 1 The UDL Design Cycle)*

Teachers using the UDL design cycle will personalize learning activities, tasks, assessment criteria or conditions and provide accommodations including provisions such as support or resourcing. The school routinely caters for students with learner variability in both ways. The teaching team (teacher, classroom assistants, LS coordinator, IB programme coordinators, principal) aim to personalize the student's learning in order to provide them with the greatest opportunity for success in relation to the goals that have been set for them. The school (board, Senior management team) ensure that sufficient

resources are in place to effectively implement the necessary provisions.

## Differentiation

*Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, **with each learner**, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals.” (10)*

*Special education needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (2010)*

It is the expectation of the school that all teachers differentiate learning as a matter of course. All levels of the schools offer student-centred programmes and it is part of the planning process of these programmes to consider ways of differentiating teaching and learning according to the needs and goals of each student. The unit planners should specify the approaches and strategies that are to be employed. It is essential to plan ways that each student can access curriculum content at the appropriate level.

The age of the student, their length of time in the programme and the degree of independence expected of them should also be taken into account. As students get older, their ability to manage their own learning processes and their confidence with a range of approaches to learning should enable them to organize learning situations, tasks and processes in ways that they know to be most effective for themselves. Teachers should guide and facilitate this movement towards independent student-directed learning.

## Admissions

According to the Norwegian Private School Law (*Friskolelova*), the school is not permitted to ask for any information about special education needs when students apply to enrol at the school. The purpose of this is to ensure that there is no discrimination against such students and no compromise to their right to education. Once a student has accepted a place at the school, the school is permitted to inquire about any known special education needs or learning challenges (for example, gifted and talented students). If such documentation exists, previous IEPs, professional assessments and guidance letters from the PPT are passed on from the previous school or the parents. In addition to the normal admission procedures, contact is made between the Learning Support Coordinator (PSMS) or Head of Pastoral Care (HS) and the new student and their family, so that the school can prepare for the student's arrival.

## Identification

Existing students who have, or are suspected of having, learning difficulties or special educational needs will be identified through the following:

- Referrals directly from teachers
- Information, concerns or direct referrals from parents
- Students giving rise for concern through staff meetings.

Where a student is not making progress as expected in class, the homeroom/contact teacher will write and submit a referral to the LS coordinator (regardless of whoever identifies a potential/suspected learning difficulty or LS) accompanied with the appropriate documentation. This will usually arise after a discussion at a staff meeting where the staff will agree that a referral is warranted. The referral procedure will involve a range of relevant teaching staff and all communication shall be documented, including that with parents or guardians. It is essential that parents are informed of the concerns and have input to the subsequent steps that are taken.

Further investigation, e.g., appropriate screening and assessment, in an educational context, will take place to establish the extent of the student's difficulties and appropriate action, based on the findings, put in place to support the student's needs.

## School based support

When a student identified as having learning difficulties or LS is found to need interventions that are **additional** to or **different from** those provided as part of the schools **usual differentiated curriculum**, they will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) drawn up by the teachers and with the full support of the parents. The type of support deemed appropriate will range from withdrawal support (individual or small group) to in-class support in the Primary and Middle schools to extra 1:1 or small group instruction in addition to regularly timetabled classes in the High school.

## Parental support

We value the input and support of parents and aim to work in partnership with parents at all stages of intervention. Parents are informed when a student is highlighted as having a *possible* special educational need. They are kept fully informed as to any results from testing and actions taken as a consequence. Once support is established, there is frequent and regular contact between the LS coordinator and parents.

## Dyslexia-friendly school

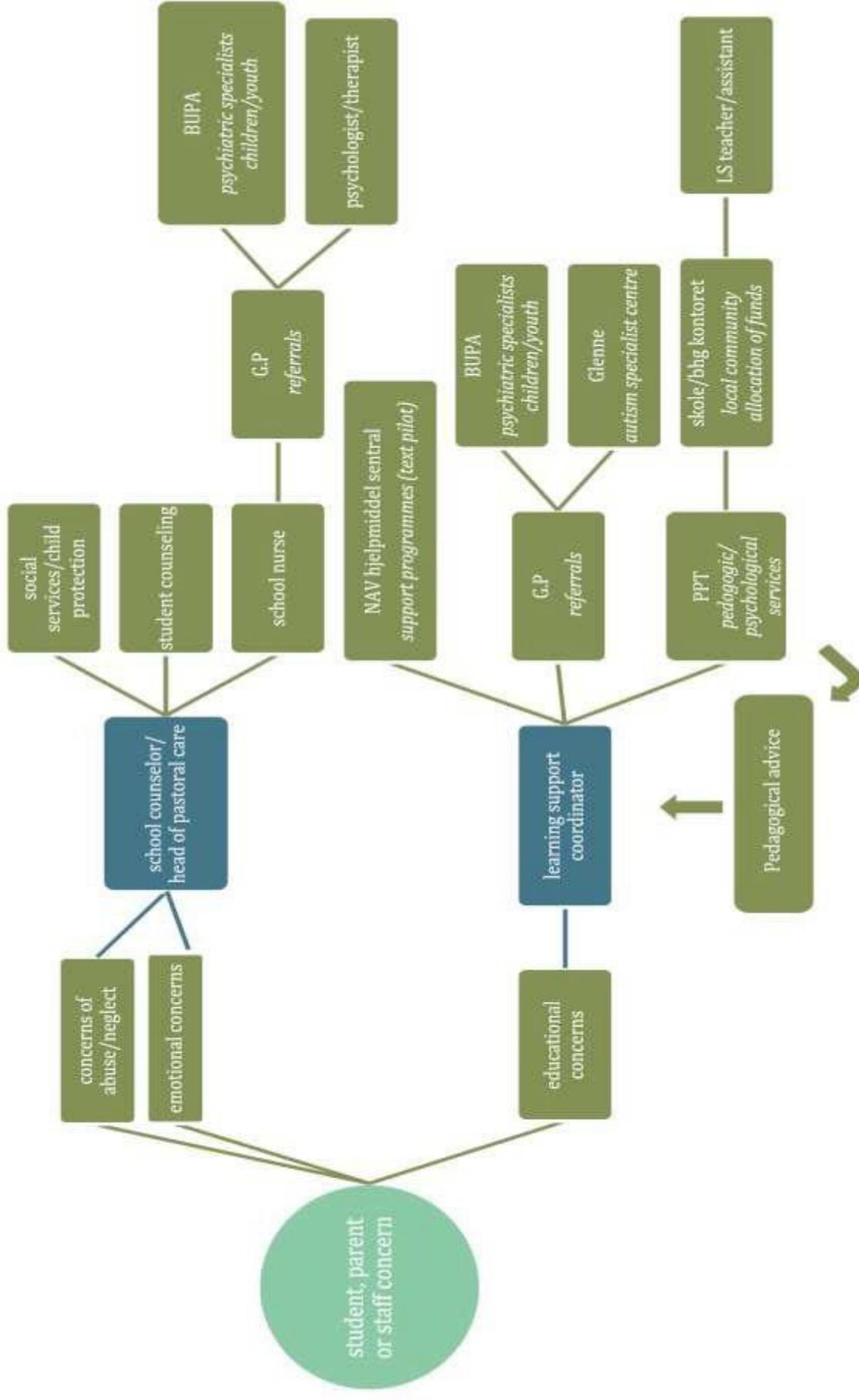
The school cooperates closely with the Norwegian dyslexia association and has been evaluated by the association in relation to the support given to students with dyslexia. The criteria against which we were evaluated were:

- Objectives: governance, leadership, decision-making
- Educational plans (IEPs): skill-development, literacy, IT
- Reading materials / educational aids
- Educational programmes
- Teaching and learning
- Assessment and evaluation
- Identification of students
- Procedures for tests and exams
- Communication with students
- Communication with parents

As a result of this process, Skagerak International School was deemed to be a “dyslexia-friendly school” from 14 September 2011. It is the first international school in Norway with this designation, which is rarely given. The dyslexia association recommends the school to parents of students with dyslexia and also puts us in touch with those who need services that we can provide such as diagnostic dyslexia testing in English.

**Support from the municipal, health and social welfare agencies**

The school has access to a variety of public and private resources and expertise. The referral processes are as follows:



## **G PYP guidelines and procedures**

### **Modification of curriculum**

Modification of the curriculum is achieved via an IEP or individualized education plan. The IEP is based on observation and school and local testing by the authorities, or PPT (Pedagogical and Psychological Services) It includes a detailed report of the student's abilities and needs. The IEP is used to plan for development according to the child's pace and needs. The Learning Support coordinator, classroom teacher, and other relevant team members meet and plan for differentiation in specific academic areas. The classroom teacher, and in some cases, the LSC and principal, also meet with the child's parents to advise them of modifications to the curriculum, give advice for helping at home, and request information that may aid in planning instruction. In some cases, the classroom teacher may meet additionally with psychologists or other professional personnel. The child's learning should continue to be framed by the IB/PYP scope and sequences and the child should move through the phases as he or she is able. The IEPs must be approved by the parents, and in cases of older students, by the student as well. Progress on the IEP is reported once yearly to the PPT.

### **Assessment**

Assessment in the PYP is varied and allows for students to express their understanding in many different ways. There are no formal grades given in the primary years. Students work with teachers and peers to set individual goals for progress and development. Student progress reports identify student progress as 'exceeding grade level expectations', 'at grade level expectations', 'developing toward grade level expectations', and 'needs improvement.' IOPs are not included in the progress reports. In some cases, where a child is well below the phase the class is working toward, a designation of \*, or 'does not apply at this time' may be given. A decision to place a child at a different grade level can occur if this is requested by the parents, after exploring social and psychological impacts and upon approval from the local authorities.

## **H MYP guidelines and procedures**

### **Modification of curriculum**

Where students have identified with specific diagnoses, the normal MYP curriculum can be modified as a result of consultation between the LS coordinator, the MYP coordinator, the principal, the student and his/her parents. The aim is, wherever possible, to ensure that the student continues to follow the minimum requirements of the MYP ie one subject in each of the eight subject groups. The student's learning should continue to be framed by the full range of MYP subject objectives and approaches to learning.

Since it is the school's policy that every student learns both English and Norwegian, a third language is not essential according to the requirements of the MYP. Therefore, the most common accommodation is for the student to be released from Language Acquisition in order to receive extra time and/or support for their personalized programme.

In the case of students with learning variances that requires extension in classroom content, it will almost always be the case that the teacher can accommodate this within the usual range of open-ended learning activities and assessment tasks. Enrichment is the preferred strategy in order to keep students within their year-level cohort.

However, if the subject teacher, MYP coordinator, LS coordinator, student and parents agree, it is occasionally possible to accelerate learning by placing the student in a higher-level class. This is only possible where there is more than one teacher per subject and where the classes can be timetabled at the same time which is not common. Students who are identified as needing enrichment in the Primary and Middle schools

have been invited to attend a Future Problem Solvers club that serves to further develop critical thinking skills and transfer skills from a broad range of skills and subject areas

## Assessment

*“Any grade awarded to a student in any subject must not be a misleading description of the student’s level of attainment according to the course objectives. Schools may modify conditions in relation to the interim objectives developed by teachers to suit the needs of their students and the local context. In the final year of the MYP, the same assessment criteria must be applied to all students in a given course, regardless of whether they have a special educational need. Variations in assessment conditions are intended only to minimize the effect of a student’s functional limitations resulting from a special educational need.”*

*MYP Coordinator’s Handbook 2011:32*

## Notes

- Special arrangements for assessment must comply with this policy and must mirror conditions available in classroom
- The MYP coordinator is to be consulted regarding either routine or one-off strategies for either modifying or accommodating for special needs during major assessments that form part of a student’s summative assessment
- Special arrangements must be recorded and be made available to the IB on request in the case of moderation

## IBO examination sessions: MYP certificate candidates

Students in MY5 who would like to qualify for the MYP certificate can be registered with the IB so that learning support can be applied during exam sessions. The MYP-specific document, *Candidates with assessment access requirements* details the standardized access arrangements for candidates with higher incidence learning support requirements, including dyslexia, vision impairments, hearing impairments, information processing challenges and physical challenges. The onscreen assessments will then be personalized for individual candidates making use of the opportunities technology offers to meet a range of access requirements. The MYP coordinator will liaise with the LSC prior to formal registration so that the appropriate procedure for registration is followed.

## I DP guidelines and procedures

### Modification of the curriculum

For certain documented conditions including learning support, limited arrangements are available. This is in accordance with the IB regulations related to special assessment arrangements. An application for each student is made by the LS Coordinator and DP Coordinator with the required documentation for example medical certificate and a letter of educational evidence is provided by the LSC or HPC. This must all be translated into English.

This primarily relates to students who require a split examination session who will take the IB over an extended period of time.

### Assessment

For certain documented conditions including learning support, special assessments are available. This is in accordance with the IB regulations related to special assessment arrangements. An application for each student is made by the LS Coordinator and DP Coordinator with the required documentation for example medical certificate or sample of writing and if required a letter of educational evidence is provided by the LSC or HPC. This must all be translated into English.

If an application is successful students are eligible for various accommodations. For example, extra time to complete internal and external assessments, access to a word processor and spell check.

### IBO examination sessions: Diploma candidates

The LS Coordinator informs all HS students and staff that for certain documented conditions including SEN special access arrangements are available. This is in accordance with the IB regulations related to special assessment arrangements. An application for each student is made by the LS Coordinator and DP Coordinator with the required documentation for example medical certificate or sample of writing and if required a letter of educational evidence is provided by the LSC or HPC. This must all be translated into English.

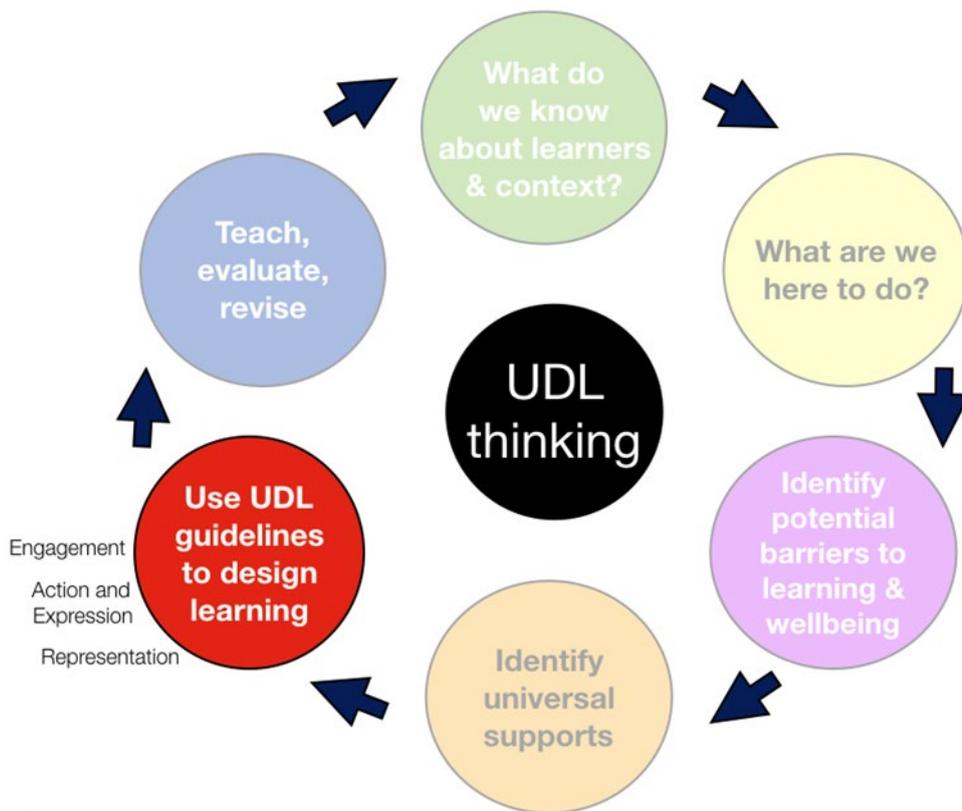
If an application is successful students are eligible for various accommodations. For example, extra time during examinations, access to a word processor and spell check.

## J Acknowledgements

The following documents were used in consideration for this policy:

- *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing Barriers to Learning*; International Baccalaureate Organization; Cardiff UK; updated 2020
- *Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom*; International Baccalaureate Organization; Cardiff UK; December 2019
- *The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development*; International Baccalaureate Organization; Cardiff UK; updated November 2019
- *Using UDL in the IB classroom*; International Baccalaureate; December 2016

## K Appendices



Chrissie Butler CORE Education Adapted from Planning for All Learners cycle CAST 2012

Appendix 1: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Design Cycle

