

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Policy

Updated 2019

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Introduction

IB 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” [IBO, n.d.].

At AICJ Junior and Senior High School all students are equally valued and an inclusive educational programme is delivered whereby students with special educational needs (SEN) learn alongside their peers to promote mutual understanding and respect. The provision of a differentiated learning environment is therefore pivotal in ensuring that the different learning needs of all students are effectively supported.

With this in mind, this policy aims to:

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

This policy has been developed with reference to the IBO publication “*Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*” [IBO, 2010].

Policy review process

This policy will be reviewed annually according to the below timeline:

→ → → → → → → →			
July – August	Sept – Oct	Nov – Dec	January
IBDP Coordinator and Principal review policy.	Suggested changes discussed and agreed with teachers.	Changes finalized and confirmed by school management.	Updated policy implemented.

Definitions

SEN

SEN represents a broad range of students' individual 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 behavioural 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” [IBO, 2010, p. 3].

Differentiation

Differentiation is “an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for student differences in classrooms” [Tomlinson and Allan 2000 cited in IBO, n.d.]. 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 [IBO, n.d.].

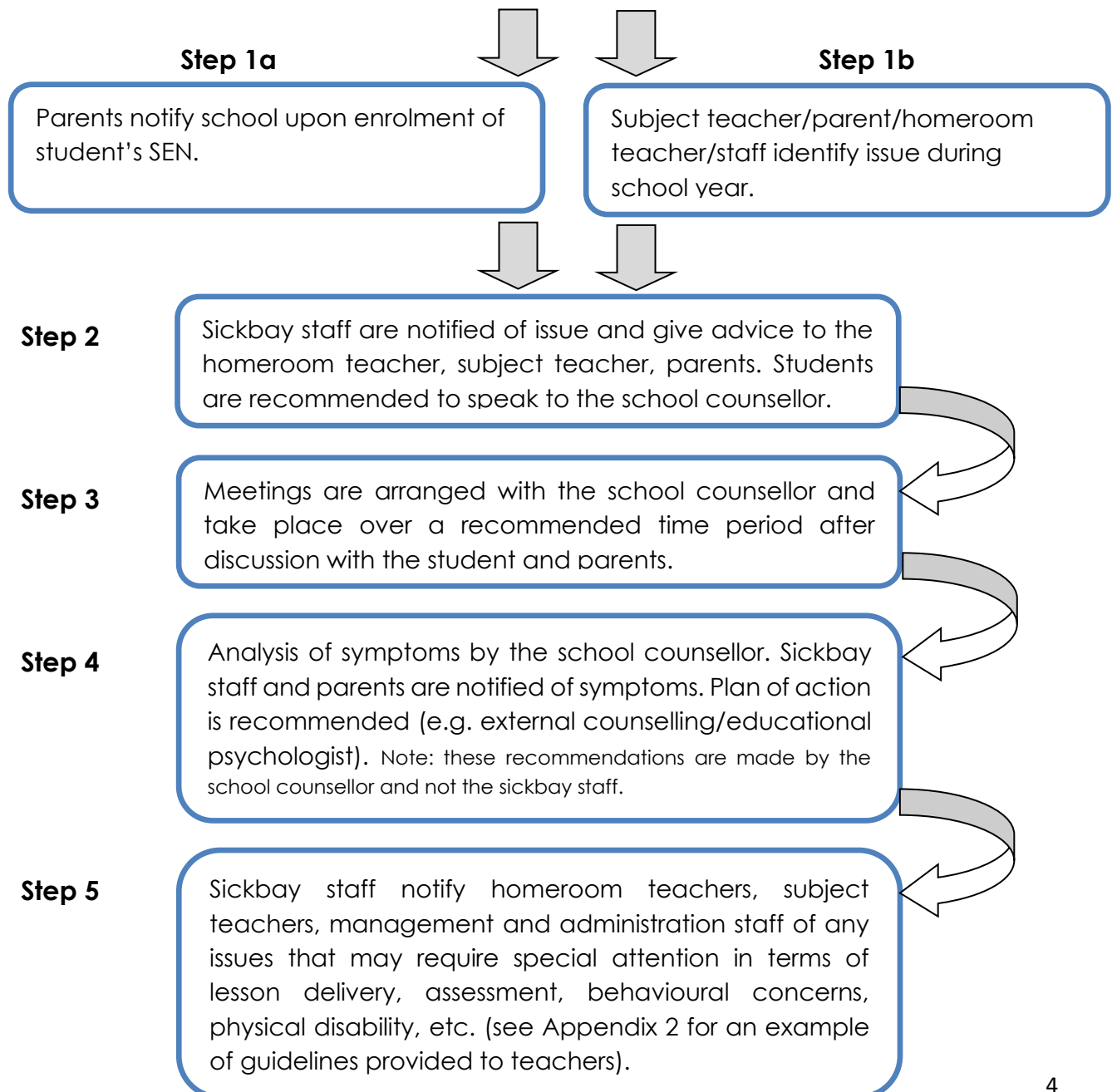
Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a temporary strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be impossible or much more difficult to accomplish” [IBO, 2010, p. 6].

Identification of students with SEN

The diagnostic procedure for identifying and supporting students with a special educational need at AICJ is as follows:

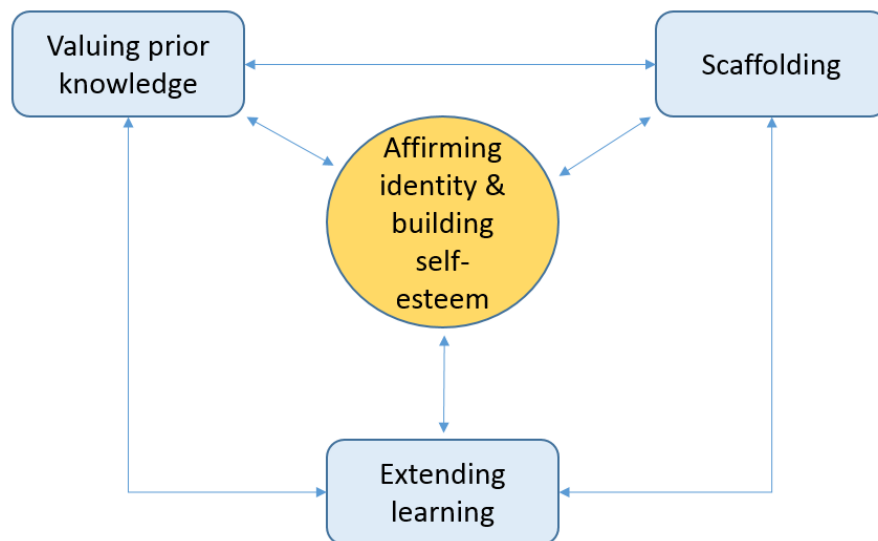
Admissions examinations: prospective students sit the IB course entrance exams and interview. Students are enrolled into the school based on the result of their entrance exams.



Supporting students with SEN across the school

Inclusion and differentiation

In line with IB principles of an inclusive education, AICJ promotes the inclusion and support of all students within the school. All teachers are expected to differentiate teaching and learning based on the IBO's *Four principles of good practice*:



[IBO, 2010, p. 7]

Differentiated learning is a key element of the IB Diploma programme and must be discussed at IB, departmental and subject meetings on a regular basis. Where appropriate feedback from meetings must be provided to the executive management.

Four principles of good practice

AICJ Junior and Senior High School follows the *Four principles of good practice* as laid out in “*Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes*”.

- Affirming identity and building self-esteem
 - Teachers must foster a learning environment that recognises and respects the diversity of all students.

- Parents must be liaised with during the school year at PTA lunches, and parent and teacher conferences in order to collaborate to achieve shared goals.
- Teachers must work with parents and students to affirm students' identity and build self-esteem so that students fulfil the characteristics of the Learner Profile.
- Value prior knowledge
 - Teachers must activate student's prior learning and use it to build future tasks. Subject teachers must keep track of subject specific performance and adapt teaching and learning accordingly.
 - Teachers must keep their own records of student performance in accordance with the school's assessment policy.
 - Teachers must utilise students records (e.g. Approaches to Learning Reports and Written Reports) to inform their teaching and expand on students' prior knowledge.
- Scaffolding
 - Teachers must scaffold learning to enable students to master concepts. Teachers who have difficulty scaffolding must be given assistance by the IB Coordinator.
 - Teachers must utilise scaffolding as a means to support students in developing their understanding of IB assessment criteria; for example, through the use of assessment rubrics.
- Extended Learning
 - Students must be encouraged to utilize technology in order to metacognitively engage with a range of material to expand their knowledge and understanding.
 - Higher achieving students must be challenged with more complex material and theory, whereas lower level achievers must be supported with more accessible material and theory in order to help them achieve their specific learning goals.

- Teachers must differentiate teaching and learning to ensure that all students are appropriately stretched and challenged.
- Teaching and learning must be student-centred and must provide students with opportunities to explore concepts across a range of contexts.
- Teachers must utilise technology as a tool to enhance teaching and learning to allow greater access to material and exploration of concepts.

Support of students with SEN

To ensure that students' assessment needs are met, the IB Coordinator - in consultation with the school counsellor – must contact parents/guardians in writing to suggest that their child may benefit from being assessed by an educational psychologist. An assessment by an educational psychologist is required for students to receive special dispensation from the IBO in terms of having access to extra time, a computer, a reader or a scribe during examinations. The assessment report from the educational psychologist must be made available to IB Diploma Coordinator and Principal. All documentation must be kept by the IB Diploma Coordinator, with access given to the Principal. If parents/guardians wish to proceed with an assessment, the school will assist in arranging meetings between students, their parents and the educational psychologist. All costs incurred due to an assessment by an educational psychologist must to be covered by the student's parents/guardians.

The IB Diploma Coordinator must provide guidance to teachers on how to support students with SEN. Teachers must utilise approaches to teaching and learning that are differentiated to cater for students' different learning needs. The IB Diploma Coordinator must ensure that the assessment needs of the student are accommodated for in accordance with the guidelines stated in the IBO's *Access and inclusion policy* [2018]. This may include sending a "Request for inclusive assessment arrangements" to the IBO via the IBIS website. Teachers must be informed of the outcome of such requests.

Implementation of the SEN Policy & support of teaching staff

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

Stage	Action	Description
1	Review of policy	The policy must be reviewed as outlined on page 1.
2	Communication of policy to staff and parents	The policy is communicated to staff using the school intranet system and shared with parents via the school's website.
3	Update of school's records of students with SEN	Teachers must be informed of individual students with SEN via the school intranet. Records must be regularly updated by the Vice Principal in consultation with the school counsellor.
5	Teacher support and appraisal system	The Principal and IB Coordinator must observe all teachers to ensure that lesson planning and delivering is differentiated. Teachers must be provided with feedback and guidance as to how to support all students' learning needs.
6	Teacher training and collaboration	<p>The IB Coordinator must lead internal training and collaborative workshops that are focused on the IBO's <i>Approaches to teaching and learning</i>. Workshops must be held twice in an academic year.</p> <p>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.</p>

Appendix

Appendix 1: A description of learning needs/difficulties

Specific learning difficulties (Aspergus 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, articulation problems).

Social, emotional and behavioural 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 and uncooperative behaviour; 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 being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anaemia, diabetes, renal failure,

eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia and other cancers.

Mental health issues

- A wide range of conditions that 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.

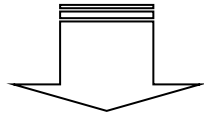
Appendix 2: Developmental Disabilities Guide

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 seat in classroom. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
- 3) Impulsivity: Often has difficulty waiting 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. Has weak ability in, for example, writing essays, doing homework and has poor handwriting.
- 5) Conversation: Ability to understand what has been said or 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 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 use 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 interests toward topics he or she is not interested in. Disinclination to adapt 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 properly.

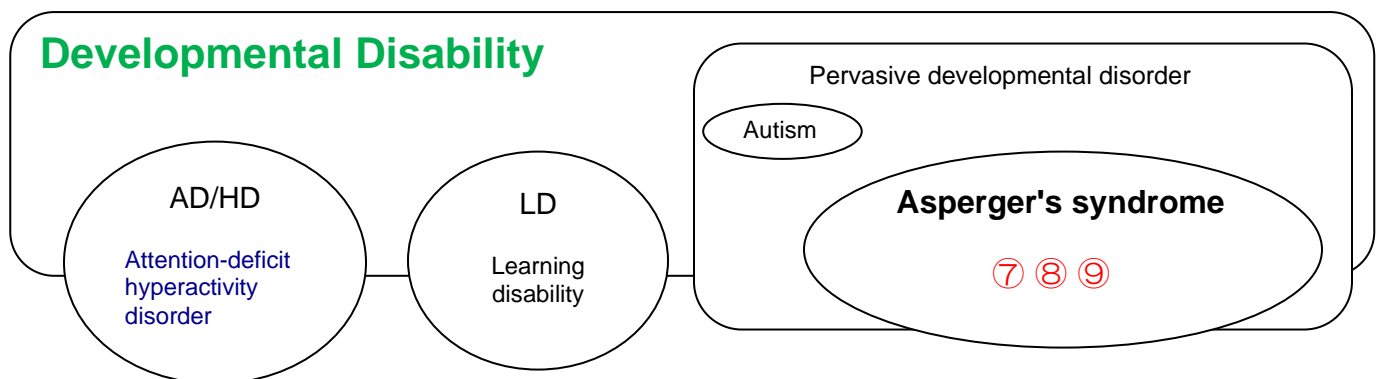


These symptoms might be the special features of students with **developmental disabilities**.

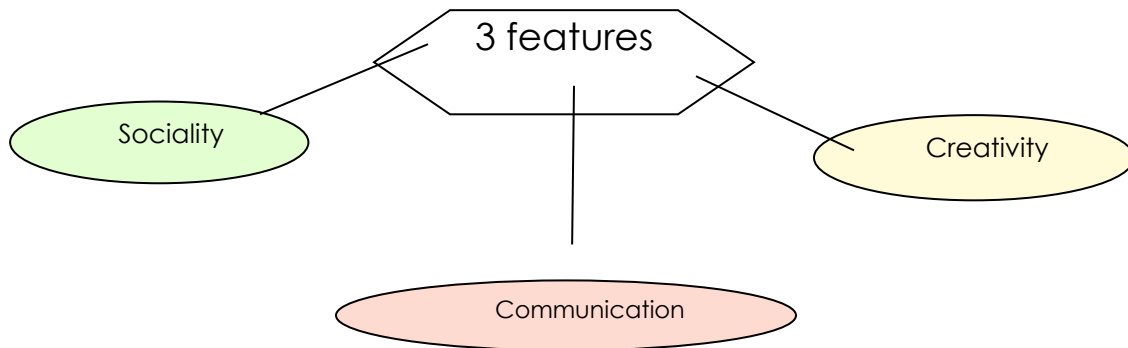
What is **Developmental Disability**?

Developmental Disability is not developmental delay. A learning disability represents one or more areas of weaknesses, but there are areas of strengths, too. Areas of weakness and strength are unbalanced. Students with learning disabilities usually have no physical or mental disability. They have trouble making friends or getting along with their family members because they have difficulty in 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?



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 Aspergers' 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 of what was wrong. Students will feel misunderstood if scolded loudly by a teacher, and lose trust towards 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 teacher's instructions, it is possibly because the instructions were not understood well. In such cases, giving specific explanation 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 exact words he or she 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, give students a compliment if he or she did something that they could not do before. This will help students build self-confidence.

④ Take 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, like sickbay, to calm down.

The above advice details just examples of basic responses teachers can use. Since everyone is different and everyone has different characteristics, there are different ways to respond. It is important that you are aware of the types or the characteristics of the students you are concerned about. If you have any questions regarding your students please consult with the sickbay nurses. There are books you can borrow from the sickbay that might be helpful to understand things better.

At AICJ, there are students who have been diagnosed with a developmental disability. There are also students who clearly show symptoms of some kind of developmental disabilities but have never been to a doctor to find out about it or hesitate to get to know more about their problems for different reasons. It is important to build trust with students and their parents before recommending consultation with a doctor.

Examples of Problems in Classroom

Students have trouble communicating with friends or teachers because it is not easy for them to understand the feelings of others. They usually feel that they are always scolded firmly by their teachers. They face troubles for being too obsessed with own rules and ideas because they criticize or argue strongly with others who do not seem to understand or agree with them.

Please note that students studying in a second language may not understand the second language being taught, but may respond and function perfectly normally in their first language. For the above to be a concern, the student must display symptoms in both their first and second language classes.

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