

## **AIS IB Diploma Program Inclusion Policy** (2017)

The American International School, Vienna, believes that the school community should value the diversity of student learning as well as respect their individual learning differences. An environment of respect, international-mindedness, differentiated teaching and learning strategies, and collaborative planning of teachers, students, and parents in support of student's needs all help to empower students as responsible learners. Actions should be taken by the school to remove any barriers to student learning in order for the learner to contribute in a safe environment. The school supports the IB World Schools Learner Profile so that all students are supported to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, and risk takers in a caring and open-minded environment. (IB Learner Profile, IBO, 2013)

### **Mission and Guiding Principles**

Within the rich cultural context of Austria, AIS Vienna

- Nurtures an inclusive learning community
  - In partnership with families, we support healthy social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.
  - We differentiate instruction to accommodate diverse interests and needs.
  - We cultivate active and creative students.
- Challenges students to strive for personal excellence and to explore their passions
  - We balance an academically engaging program with co-curricular opportunities to empower students for success now and beyond AIS.
  - We motivate students to explore new and existing passions through guidance and opportunities.
- Fosters respect through compassion for others and our world
  - We encourage empathy, honesty and kindness towards others.
  - We embrace diverse values and perspectives with an aim to act with an open mind.
  - We strive to have a positive impact on others and our environment.

### **Student Support Services Philosophy**

AIS honors each student's right to learn and grow in a collaborative student/teacher/parent partnership. In order to meet the unique needs of our diverse learners, we will educate, support, and counsel students in the most appropriate and inclusive setting possible, within the capacity of the school's facilities, resources, and support personnel.

In order to implement and support the inclusion of diverse learners, the teachers will focus on the development and support of student learning in the DP through the following approaches to teaching and learning as well as through the consideration of the school's Life Skills.

**Approaches to learning should encourage the development of:** (IBO, Geneva, 2013)

- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Self management skills
- Research skills
- Thinking skills

**Approaches to teaching should demonstrate a concurrency of learning and be approached in a way which is:** (IBO, Geneva, 2013)

- Based on inquiry
- Focused on conceptual understanding
- Developed in local and global contexts
- Focused on effective communication and collaboration
- Differentiated to meet the needs of all learners
- Informed by assessment (formative and summative)

**Some of the aforementioned aspects are emphasized and to some extent overlap with the school's Life Skills (2015) with expectations that include:**

- For participation – asks questions in class, offers answers and comments when called upon, follows instructions, works positively and is focused in class;
- For class work and homework completion – brings required materials to class, uses class time wisely, completes homework assignments, submits assignments on time;
- For behavior – arrives on time for class, is not distracted by, and does not distract others, shows respect for others and their views, cooperates with the teacher, follows established classroom and school rules;
- For working in groups – participates in group discussions, listens to other group members, contributes fully to group research, and group presentations.

### **Learning Support Requirements**

In order for students to reach their full learning potential, some require inclusive access accommodations in order to support one or more of the following:

- Autism spectrum;
- Asperger's syndrome;
- Learning disabilities;
- Medical needs including physical and mental health concerns;
- Sensory concerns, e.g., auditory, visual;
- Social, emotional, or behavioral challenges; and
- Speech and communication difficulties.

## **High School Program Purpose & Goals** (adapted from Student Support Services Handbook, pgs. 16-17, 2016)

It is the goal of Learning Support services at AIS to provide programs/assistance/methods that support learners with special needs and those working with them. Our focus is on the learner interacting with content and skills in the most appropriate environment. The driving questions are: how does the student learn and how can we better facilitate that learning?

### **Direct Services for Students with Special Educational Needs**

- The high school learning support specialist develops a management plan for students who have a psycho-educational evaluation that qualifies them for accommodations on standardized tests on file in the counseling office. The management plan provides a snapshot of each student's areas of strength, areas that may cause academic difficulties, and suggested accommodations and strategies to support the student.
- Through consultation with student's classroom teachers, the Learning Support Specialist collaborates with the classroom teacher in order to assist with the implementation of the student management plan, which includes recommended accommodations.
- Through pull-out support the learning specialist and/or learning support assistant works individually or in small groups with identified 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students in place of a class, during free blocks, lunch, before/after school; topics include learning strategies, test taking strategies, note taking skills, study skills, organizational skills, goal setting, self-advocacy and time management.
- Through in-class support by the Learning Support Specialist and/or Assistant can be provided to students and teachers in the regular education classroom to directly support differentiation of instruction, use of specific strategies, and access accommodations.
- Students who wish to improve their academic performance have the option of meeting with the learning support specialist and/or learning support assistant to discuss study skills and organizational strategies.
- Accommodations for tests/exams can be arranged through the learning support specialist, provided the student qualifies and is approved by the IB for access accommodations.
- Helping students who may need to access accommodations in college, by providing guidance about post-secondary issues and college readiness.

## Indirect Services

- Student Support Team (High School Counselors, IB Coordinator/Academic Dean, Principal, and Learning Support Specialist) meetings are held once per cycle to discuss student needs and progress.
- Grade level planning meetings [with counselors, teachers, and Learning Specialist in order to discuss and review student progress as well as teaching and learning strategies.](#)
- Customizing course materials for students in collaboration with teachers by adding additional scaffolding when this is needed in order for students to be successful.
- The Learning Support specialist is available for consultation with teachers for the purpose of differentiating instruction and/or for providing specific information regarding particular learning difficulties and diagnoses.
- The Learning Support specialist reads and abstracts psycho-educational evaluations for staff, as part of the Management Plan for individual students.
- Regular communication between learning support specialist, learning support assistant, parents, tutors and other involved professionals.
- A location is maintained for studying and working on assignments throughout the school day as well as after school, [15:30-16:30, Monday through Thursday.](#)
- Collaboration between counselor, teachers, learning support specialist, learning support assistant and/or other involved parties when emotional and/or social issues impact learning.
- Transition between divisions is supported by collaboration between personnel from each division.
- Connecting students and families with available community services (i.e. testing, tutoring etc.)

## Referral Process

Students are added to the learning specialist's "caseload" in several ways

- Students have IEPs, 504, or service plans from prior schools, and their needs can be met "within the framework of the regular classroom and the limits and capacity of the school's resources and personnel."
- Students are referred by the previous year's learning specialist.
- Students are formally referred by the Student Support Team.

## **Entry-Exit Criteria**

Students already attending AIS and experiencing academic difficulties are referred to the Student Support Team (SST) according to the following procedure:

- Concerned teachers gather information, collect “evidence”, and document observations.
- Teachers discuss possible interventions and ways to differentiate instruction. This may include some or all of the following: informal assessment by the learning specialist, referral to appropriate outside agency (i.e. psycho-educational evaluator, speech/language therapist, counselor, etc.), and private tutoring.
- If difficulties persist, the student may be referred for testing, and the student may become part of the resource teacher’s case load.

Exit criteria depend on the age/grade level of the student and the degree of success. It is a decision made with input from the student’s teachers, the counselors, and the principal. When a student designated as “special needs” is working at or above grade level (i.e., maintains grades of C- or better) and is able to function independently, the learning specialist’s role becomes one of monitoring and communication.

If despite interventions “within the limits and capacity of the school’s resources and personnel” a student fails to maintain grades of C- or better, then the principal, counselor, and learning specialist meet with the parents to discuss options.

## **Procedures of the Student Support Team**

Every two weeks the SST (Student Support Team) meets in order to discuss those students already identified with a learning support need as well as other students that are referred by teachers. The Learning Support Specialist discusses with the teacher the specific concern, which is further discussed with the other classroom teachers, respective High School counselor, IB DP Coordinator, and High School principal. Aspects that are taken into consideration may include: transitioning from a different school/country, working in a language other than the student’s Mother Tongue, type of previous learning environment or type of school, medical, emotional, or learning needs of the student.

Once the student is identified as possibly having a learning support need, the student and parents are contacted by the Learning Support Specialist for recommended testing. The Learning Support Specialist provides additional information for the educational psychologist from the data collected using the behavioral screening instrument for teachers and parents. Once the Individual Educational Psychological report is received, the Learning Support Specialist notes the scores and recommendations for learning as well as develops a management plan for the student. The teachers are informed of the accommodations and needs of the student for teaching and learning. Once the management plan accommodations are in place, these aspects are used as evidence for submission to the IB for access to

accommodations along with the educational psychologist's report. The Learning Support Specialist informs the parents if an updated report is required, which should be no older than three years and valid for the duration of the Diploma program for the individual student.

**IB approved access accommodations may include:**

- Extended time;
- Modified exam papers;
- Use of laptop, word processor, and spell check;
- Use of calculator;
- Rest periods;
- Readers;
- Scribes;
- Small group work requiring a separate exam room; and
- Extension to deadlines.

**Professional development opportunities**

Through the school's professional development fund teachers and staff are provided with opportunities to attend workshops for differentiation and inclusion as well as for school visitations visiting schools that have implemented programs of inclusion. IB workshop and conference funds are also available for teachers to use every two years for IB approved workshops.

**Confidentiality**

AIS treats all information concerning a student as confidential. The learning support received by a student will be communicated by the Learning Support Specialist with permission from the parents/guardian to the counselors, High School principal, program coordinator, as well as teachers and staff directly responsible for supporting the student. Any data included in the individual educational psychological report will be retained within the student's file. The school's management plan including learning support will be shared with the student's teachers.

**School's review of IB Diploma program inclusion policy**

The Learning Support Specialist, High School counselors, High School principal, IB Diploma coordinator, and other members of the school's Student Support Team will review the inclusion policy document every two years.

**Bibliography**

AIS Student Support Services manual (2016)

American School of The Hague inclusion policy (2016)

Candidates with assessment access requirements (IBO, 2014)

IB Conference of the Americas presentation, IB and Inclusion: an update, Washington, DC (July 2014)

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

IB Learner Profile (IBO, 2013)

IB Programme standards and practices (IBO, 2010)  
Learning diversity and inclusion in the IB programmes (IBO, 2016)  
Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom (IBO, 2013)

### ***APPENDICES (Student Support Manual, 2016)***

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY (Student Support Manual, 2016)**

The School shall accept students who are able to work toward the successful completion of the school's academic requirements within the framework of the regular classroom and the limits and capacity of its facilities, resources, and support personnel. In order to maintain an environment in which English is the predominant language, places for non-English-speaking students shall be limited.

The Director shall determine Admissions in accordance with the Admissions Criteria and the following order of priorities:

1. Children of US or Canadian citizens with diplomatic status, qualifying AIS faculty and administration, and Ambassadors to Austria
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Children whose strongest academic or native language is English

4. Children of diplomatic or transient international families, with priority given to underrepresented nationalities
5. Children of AIS Alumni or returning families
6. Children of residents or citizens of Austria for whom the above priority categories do not apply

In reserving places for the next school year, the order of priority is maintained until April 1 of the current school year.

## **Admissions Guidelines**

### **School Capacity and Class Size**

Admissions will be granted according to class size limits that ensure that standards of excellence will be maintained.

### **Academic Standards**

Students will be admitted only when their previous records and/or screening indicate a high likelihood that they can successfully complete grade level requirements in grades K-8 or, in grades 9-12, the requirements for an American High School Diploma, an International Baccalaureate Diploma, or the AIS Austrian Matura equivalency program. Admission decisions are made upon review of transcripts, other records, placement tests and, when possible, an interview. Applicants with grades below an American "C" or the equivalent for students coming from non-graded instructional institutions may be considered ineligible for admission.

### **Age**

A child must be four years old by September 1st of the year entering Pre-Kindergarten, five years old by September 1st of the year entering Kindergarten, or six years old by September 1st of the year entering first grade. Children must be toilet-trained.

### **English Fluency**

The number of students in the Elementary School EAL program is limited to a maximum of 12, or approximately 20% of grade levels 1-5 (30% in PK and K). Exceptions to this guideline may be made by the E.S. Principal in consultation with the EAL department.

The Middle School EAL program is limited to approximately 20% of students in grades 6-8; EAL classes are restricted to 12 students. Each grade-level 6-8 offers an intermediate / advanced EAL class, Core Class (EAL 2). In addition, sixth grade students may enter the EAL 1 beginners' program. Students in grades 7-8 are required to demonstrate intermediate or advanced EAL skills based on admissions testing. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made by the M.S. Principal in consultation with the EAL department.

All entering High School students not having English as their native language must, at a minimum, complete the IB English B program by graduation. Applicants to the high school may be required to take an English test during the application process to establish the applicant's fluency in writing, reading and speaking English and will not be eligible for admission unless found to be sufficiently fluent or considered capable of meeting requirements.

## **Living Arrangements**

All students must live throughout their attendance at AIS with their parents or AIS accepted guardian(s), who must furnish evidence of guardianship and power of attorney. Otherwise, the student will be required to withdraw. Students must be legally authorized to reside and attend school in Austria during their period of enrollment at AIS. Proof thereof may be requested by AIS at any time. If proof is not provided, the student may be asked to withdraw.

## **Part-time Students**

Part-time students may be enrolled in AIS when their attendance is mutually beneficial to both the student and AIS. All conditions for entrance for full-time students apply

## **Reserved Spaces**

As part of the contractual agreement between AIS and its teaching staff, the right of admission is granted to children of faculty whose needs can be met by the available services.

## **Admissions Procedure**

### **Application**

Applicants must complete all application procedures before being considered for admission. The school reserves the right to exclude students or to require special supplementary measures at parental expense. Exclusion of a student may occur before a student enrolls or at any time after enrollment. Students who fall into certain categories, including but not limited to the following, may be excluded by the Director:

- Students for whom there has not been full disclosure of educational records at the time of admission
- Students who require a significant modification of AIS' instructional program
- Students who require services or facilities not provided by AIS

An admissions committee assesses all applications and makes a recommendation to the Divisional Principal following a review of the following documentation:

- Completed application for admission form: one per applicant
- Application fee: per applicant, amount as per current fee schedule

- Family information form: one per family
- Academic records/transcripts: a record of the applicant's academic achievement for the current academic year and the two previous years must be submitted. Official English translations thereof are also required if the documentation was not originally issued in English. This documentation is required of all applicants.
- Recommendation forms:
  - Applicants to Grades 1-5: Classroom teacher recommendation form
  - Applicants to Grades 6-8: Principal/Counselor form Grades 6-12
  - Applicants to Grades 9-12: Principal/Counselor form Grades 6-12, English Teacher Recommendation form and the Math Teacher Recommendation form
- Self-evaluation form: applicants to Grades 6-8
- Proof of date of birth and nationality: copy of the biographical page of the applicant's passport or a copy of his/ her birth certificate. This is required of all applicants.
- Medical records, including:
  - Medical history
  - Record of immunizations
  - Illness history
  - Current physical examination by a physician
  - Potassium iodide tablets consent form
- Additional information as required by the admissions committee

## **Screening and Placement**

The school reserves the right to place students in the appropriate grade level as determined by documentation and screening tests, or to withdraw its admission offer if the screening shows that the applicant's academic level is not compatible with the School's expectations or resources. Placement in individual courses will be determined through previous courses, testing, and counseling at AIS.

## **Personal Interview**

- Circumstances permitting, a personal interview of applicants, together with parent(s) or guardian(s) is required before admission is granted.
- A personal interview of all applicants with special learning needs, together with parent(s) or guardian(s) is required before admission is granted.

## **Glossary of Terms**

**academic language:** language used in the learning of academic subject matter in formal schooling context; aspects of language strongly associated with literacy and academic achievement, including specific academic terms or technical language, and speech registers related to each field of study.

**accommodation:** allows the student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response, and/or presentation. The accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures.

**adaptation:** a modification made to a device or to a service or program that renders it usable by or appropriate for a person with a disability. At school, a standard curriculum or lesson may be adapted, for example, to better meet the needs of a student with special needs.

**authentic language:** real or natural language, as used by native speakers of a language in real-life context; not artificial or contrived for purposes of learning grammatical forms or vocabulary.

**BICS:** Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills; the language ability required for social conversation and interpersonal communication.

**CALP:** Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency; the language required for academic achievement, such as the ability to infer, analyze, synthesize, and communicate using academic and specialized vocabulary.

**collaboration:** a style for interaction between at least co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work towards a common goal.

**exceptional students:** students with learning disabilities, talents, or styles that require some assistance or modification for successful learning to occur.

**IEP (Individualized Education Plan):** a written document that describes the student's current abilities, establishes goals and objectives for the school year, outlines general and special education programs and services to meet those goals, describes any testing modifications and other program and personnel supports, and describes ways to inform parents of child's progress.

**language proficiency:** the level of competence at which an individual is able to use language for both communicative tasks and academic purposes. Proficiency varies as a function of the context, purpose, and content of communication.

**learning disability:** the term "learning disability" means a disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding spoken or written language. It may show up as a problem in a person's ability to listen, think, speak, write, spell, or do math, despite at least average intelligence.

**learning strategies:** mental activities or actions that assist in enhancing outcomes; may include metacognitive strategies (e.g., planning for learning, monitoring one's own comprehension and production, evaluating one's performance), or social/affective strategies (e.g., interacting with another person to assist learning, using self-talk to persist at a difficult task until resolution).

**modification:** an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure.

**mild to moderate:** of average or above-average intelligence; able to make progress through the regular curriculum with slight adaptations in presentation of material/concepts to be learned.

**primary language** (also known as L1 in research documents): the language that was acquired and used first by students regardless of their later proficiency in that language. Students may have more than one primary language.

**pull-out instruction:** when students are withdrawn from their regular classrooms for one or more periods per week for special instruction in small groups.

**scaffolding:** supporting student learning by assessing current levels of understanding and/or ability and determining effective actions to help each individual reach her/his academic and social potential.

**second language:** the language that is used by individuals in addition to the primary language.

## Modifications and Accommodations (Student Support Manual, 2016)

	Accommodations	Modifications
Definition	Accommodations are alterations in the way tasks are presented that allow children with learning disabilities to complete the same assignments as other students.	Modifications are a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student.
Curriculum	No change to the curriculum; learning outcomes remain the same.	Changes made to the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the student.
Assessment	No change to assessment criteria.	Assessment criteria may be changed to meet the needs of the student.
Grading	No change to grading criteria.	Grades may be modified and so indicated on report cards or transcripts.

<p>Type of Student</p>	<p>All students, particularly those who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Diagnosed with mild disabilities</li> <li>· EAL</li> <li>· Struggling</li> </ul>	<p>Only those with significant disabilities or those who may be exceptionally able.</p>
<p>Determination of service</p>	<p>May be made at the teacher's discretion or with the SST. Collaboration with the learning support teacher.</p>	<p>Developed by the SST in preparation of individual learning plan (ILP) and/or for goal setting purposes.</p>
<p>Documentation of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Not required for informal accommodations;</li> <li>· Formal documentation may be required when seeking accommodations on external exams (e.g. IB)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Individual Learning Plan (ILP)</li> <li>· Letter home outlining how changes of curriculum affect student's future academics</li> <li>· Progress reports and report cards by case manager</li> <li>· Transcripts</li> </ul>

<p><b>Examples</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Material of same content at simpler or more complex reading level</li> <li>· Provide in large print or audio tape</li> <li>· Present instructions orally</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Allow for verbal responses</li> <li>· Use of computer/word processing</li> </ul> <p><b>Timing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Extended time for assessments</li> <li>· Allow frequent breaks</li> </ul> <p><b>Setting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Preferential seating</li> <li>· Provide space with minimal distractions</li> <li>· Use of study carrel</li> <li>· Test in small groups setting</li> </ul>	<p>Partial completion of requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Learning 10 words instead of 20</li> <li>· Learning knowledge-based facts instead of abstract relationships in history</li> </ul> <p>Adjustments made for learning rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Reinforcement of basic facts while class learns fractions</li> <li>· Provide altered reading level text in English/Modern Language class</li> </ul> <p>Alternate curriculum goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Social inclusion – student’s grade is weighted to reflect behavior/collaboration skills as opposed to only academic skills</li> </ul> <p>Alternate assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Assessment tasks reflect changes to curricular expectations and are graded according to individual achievement of the modified curriculum.</li> </ul>
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**Definitions for Student Support (Student Support Manual, 2016)**

**Mild Support:**

The student needs some support which would not exceed an hour per day at the maximum. Typically, these students have a range of achievement from on or above grade level to below grade level by about one year in any given area.

Mild Support is provided by trained professionals in a balanced service delivery model of consultative support, accommodations, small group instruction or in-class support. The dimensions of Mild Support include:

- Consultative support from a learning support specialist
- Monitoring student performance
- Study and organizational skills support
- Formal accommodation (e.g. extended time for in-class and standardized testing).
- Literacy support (reading, writing, speaking and listening)
- Mathematics support
- Small group instruction
- Learning Support Center (strategies and focused skills classes)
- Assistive technology (e.g. voice to text software)
- Speech and language therapy (as needed)

### **Moderate Support:**

The student requires additional support that exceeds an hour per day and the level of achievement is more than one grade level below in any given area. The student has learning outcomes which are substantially different from the prescribed curriculum, and specifically selected to meet the student's special needs. As well as regular courses, a student's program may include some courses that are modified and others that are adapted. The dimensions of Moderate Support might include:

- Co-taught classes in core literacies
- Specialized small group instruction
- Specifically designed courses in mathematics (primarily for secondary students)
- Social skills support
- Study and organizational skills support
- Assistive technology
- Curricular modifications - when required and appropriate
- Speech and language therapy (as needed)
- Occupational Therapy (as needed)

