



Special Education Needs/ Inclusion Policy

Revised 2022

Mission

In the publication, 'Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes' (2010), the IB states, "Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. This can only be successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is the learner profile in action, an outcome of dynamic learning communities."

Greenfield College fully adopts the IB vision of inclusion and welcomes diversity among our students, respecting their different abilities and personal challenges. Greenfield College is committed to providing quality education and has put in place an effective system that helps students achieve their full potential leaving no student behind. We strive to integrate suitable learning pathways and experiences to meet the individual needs and talents of students, while paying full respect to the learners' backgrounds and culture.

Definition of Special Needs

A student has a special education need if he/she falls under one of the following categories.

- 1- If he/she experiences more learning difficulties than the majority of his/her classmates
- 2- If he/she has a medical condition (physical or developmental) that hinders full achievement
- 3- If he/she has a social/psychological condition that affects the learning process

As a consequence, a student with special needs experiences problems in one or more of the following areas:

- 1- Behavioral, emotional or social
- 2- Psychological
- 3- Cognitive and learning
- 4- Developmental
- 5- Physical/sensory disability

Practices

The importance of inclusion and embracing learning diversity is highlighted in several IB publications and in the programme standards and practices. The following practices require schools to demonstrate their support for learning diversity:

A9. The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy

B1:5. The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programmes

B2:8. The school provides support for its students with learning and/or special educational needs and support for their teachers

C1:6. Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles

C3:10. Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles

Hence, Greenfield College adopts practices that aim to:

- 1- Help identify struggling students and highlight their strengths, challenges and needs.
- 2- Create educational opportunities that use students' strengths and talents to overcome weaknesses.
- 3- Encourage students to be more responsible of their own learning.
- 4- Boost the self-esteem of the identified students and provide all needed support.
- 5- Support teachers to better understand their students' challenges and needs to better communicate with them.
- 6- Implement an integrated curriculum that implicitly defines the steps to be followed to ensure differentiation of students' needs.
- 7- Apply different teaching methods, strategies and styles.
- 8- Scaffold and reflect on students' progress.

Identifying Special Needs:

Students with special needs might be identified at different stages of their learning cycle. The admissions committee, parents, school nurse, counseling unit, supervisors, and teachers all take part in the identification process.

- 1- Identification of Special needs at the admissions stage
 - a- The parents/ guardians or caregivers are asked in the interview to disclose of any special need of the applicant.

- b- The parents/guardians are asked to provide the school transcripts, academic reports, disciplinary reports, medical reports or any record related to learning difficulties or disabilities.
- c- Every applicant sits for entrance exams. When needed, the exam will be followed by an interview that assesses not only prior knowledge, but also critical thinking and communication skills of the applicant.
- d- The applicant might be asked to sit for an ability test.

If any of the above admission measures suspects that the applicant has a special need, the student is referred to the counseling unit for further assessment. The decision to admit new applicants is taken based on the ability of the school to meet the set of recommendations put by the counseling unit and that will ensure that the student with special needs will achieve his best potential.

2- The role of teachers and supervisors in identifying special needs: monitoring students' progress, behavior and achievements

Many of the special needs of students can be suspected and identified by teachers and supervisors. Informal observation alerts teachers to issues that written tests may provide. It gives insight into learning needs and gaps. The academic achievements of individual students, their relationship with their peers and teachers, their psychological and mental wellbeing, their physical health and status, are closely monitored by teachers and supervisors. Mild learning difficulties can be addressed by applying differentiated learning and different teaching methods. When a more difficult special need is suspected, the teacher or supervisor fills in a referral form that is sent to the counseling unit for further assessment and action.

In most cases, the difficulties identified by the class teachers and supervisors are signaled by one or more of the following:

- The student's academic performance does not meet the class's requirements.
- The student's behavior changes and shows either more dynamism or withdrawal.
- The student fails to communicate with others.
- The student demonstrates symptoms of physical and/or sensory problems.

3- The role of Parents/ Guardians in identifying special needs

Parents at GFC are our partners in the learning journey of our students. They are always encouraged to report any problems or special needs that they observe or identify while following up their children at home. They are also constantly reminded to inform the counseling unit of sudden lifestyle changes or circumstances that they believe might affect their child's psychological wellbeing, and/or academic achievements.

4- The role of the counseling unit in identifying special needs

The counseling unit consists of the school psychologist (head of unit) and teachers/counselors. They all collaborate to support students with special needs as well as their parents and teachers.

The counseling unit studies the forms referred to them by teachers, supervisors, parents, or even students themselves. They then proceed as follows:

- 1- Meeting with the parent to understand their concern, gather data, and listen to feedback.
- 2- Scheduling preliminary class visits to closely observe the referred cases.
- 3- Meeting with class teachers, supervisor and director to better understand the problem.
- 4- Meeting with the student suspected of having special needs for further assessment.
- 5- Proposing the most appropriate intervention methods.
- 6- Following up on the students' progress.

Additionally, the counseling unit plays a crucial role in helping teachers, supervisors and parents in identifying their children's needs for inclusion measures. This is achieved by regularly organizing workshops to further educate both teachers and parents on the diverse types of special needs, means of identification, intervention strategies and follow-up methods.

Intervention Methods

The type of intervention planned for students with special needs depends on the diagnosed problem.

Yet, all plans should:

- 1- Be individualized and tailored to the specific needs of the student.
- 2- Be shared with teachers, parents and the students themselves who must participate in the planning process.

- 3- Be followed up by checking on its proper implementation and closely monitoring the student's progress. This progress can be measured by:
 - a- Improving academic achievement.
 - b- Narrowing the attainment gap between the student and the class average.
 - c- Showing Improved behavior.
 - d- Manifesting enhanced social and communication skills.

All intervention plans should be documented and records must be kept with the director and head of unit.

Intervention Practices for mild learning difficulties - Tier 1

As requested by the IB, GFC curricula incorporate differentiation for students learning needs and styles. The instructional methods are prepared to help meet these needs. Teachers and coordinators are trained to show satisfactory development in the above IB practices.

Despite meeting the above practices, some students might need extra help without the need to be referred to the counseling unit. These are identified by teachers as having mild learning difficulties. In such cases, the following intervention methods are followed:

- 1- A general meeting with the subject coordinator and the cycle director is held with the subject teachers to discuss the student's problem.
- 2- Informal class observations are scheduled to further understand the student's behavior and challenges.
- 3- An action plan is put in place to help the student achieve better. This plan is reported in a special form "Learning Support form" (Appendix A). The action plan might include the following:
 - a- Preparing a student's portfolio that includes the personal profile, previous and current grades, objective and skill assessments, informal observations, student's preferences, learning style, challenges, areas of struggle, and intervention methods.
 - b- Allocating 10-minutes from each session to revise the objectives given in that specific session "The Golden 10".
 - c- Giving extra sheets that reinforce the objectives that the students are struggling with.
 - d- Offering a 1-on-1 extra sessions in the struggling subject areas.
 - e- Suggesting extra resources that can help the student better understand the objectives.
 - f- Assigning extra work based on the student's style, talents and preference. This can be in the form of writing songs, building projects, doing experiments, playing games, creating a blog... etc.

- g- Allowing students to retake exams to revisit their mistakes.
- h- Engaging the students in specific activities that keep them attentive in class.
- i- Teaching the student study skills that help them memorize faster (concept maps, recording lessons, and other visible thinking strategies).
- j- Teaching the student time management skills to help them keep track of the time needed to fulfill their work.
- k- Encouraging students to reflect on their own learning and to run self-assessments.
- l- Encouraging students by giving achievement cards whenever needed.
- m- Suggesting extra readings if the student's language is interfering with the comprehension of other subjects.
- n- Closely monitoring student's progress and measuring their progress.

It is here worth noting that the school nurse plays a crucial role in monitoring students diagnosed with physical illnesses or sensory impairments.

- 4- The director holds meetings with the student's parents to communicate the action plan in order to follow-up on the student's progress and to create a bridge between what is being practiced at school and what can be done at home to reinforce the efforts for more efficiency.

Intervention Practices for Moderate to severe learning difficulties- Tier 2

When all the above actions fail to improve the student's academic level, the teacher fills in a referral form (appendix B), emails it to the director who in turn sends it to the counseling unit.

The counseling unit schedules meetings with the director in the presence of teachers and coordinators to discuss the case. They also meet with parents to get more information. The counseling unit members then closely observe the student in class to further assess the problem. In some cases, the unit may produce an individualized action plan that can help the student achieve better without the need for external support. Yet, in many cases, the student is referred for external assessment with specialists who are not available in school such as speech therapists, psychomotor therapists, clinical psychologists, audiologists, developmental pediatrician, optometrists, ABA therapists...etc. In such cases, the academic struggle cannot be attributed to prior educational gaps or a language difficulty. It might be related to a specific disability that impedes learning to such a degree that the child might not be able to succeed in the general education classroom without taking more drastic measures. The referral is followed up to include more details about the case and an action plan is put in place following the referee's recommendations.

In general, Greenfield College caters to cases of mild learning disabilities. Yet, we strive to follow the recommendations of external referees within the capacity of our infrastructure and the capabilities of our teachers and support staff. Some arrangements include:

- 1- Modifying tests and assignments (this measure is clearly stated on the report card, but is not applied in IB classes).
- 2- Changing the location of the class in case of physical disability.
- 3- Providing access to:
 - modified exam papers: size, font, colour
 - additional time to complete tests
 - information and communication technology
 - extensions to deadlines (especially for IB students)
 - assistance with practical work
 - exemptions from official exams assessment (For the Lebanese program only)

IB Assessments and Inclusion

“The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Standard assessment conditions may put some candidates at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment.”

Greenfield College is always prepared to request inclusive access arrangements for examinations for students who have access requirements and special needs. The arrangements aim to ensure:

- 1- Flexibility in duration of assessments and deadlines.
- 2- Flexibility in the location of exams.
- 3- Flexibility in the format of exams.
- 4- Flexibility in the method of response

IB references (ibo.org)

Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom(2013-updated 2020)

Candidates with special assessment needs (2014) (specific to the Diploma Programme)

Language and learning in IB programmes (2012)

Learning diversity and Inclusion in the IB Programmes (2010- Updated 2020)

The IB guide to Inclusive Education: a resource for whole school development (Updated 2020)

Programme standards and practices (2014)

What is an IB education? (2013)



Appendix A

Learning Support Form

Your name _____ Date: _____

Student name: _____ Grade: _____ DOB: _____

Subject/ Teacher:

Area(s) of Concern:

Grade(s) Achieved:

Interventions Made (please put \checkmark next to all those that apply):

- ☐ Allocating 10-minutes from each session to revise the objectives given in that specific session “The Golden 10”
- ☐ Giving extra sheets that reinforce the objectives that the students are struggling with.
- ☐ Offering a 1-on-1 extra sessions in the struggling subject areas.
- ☐ Suggesting extra resources that can help the students better understand the objectives.
- ☐ Assigning extra work based on the student’s styles, talents, and preferences. This can be in the form of writing songs, building projects, doing experiments, playing games, creating a blog, etc
- ☐ Teaching the students study skills that help them memorize faster (concept maps, recording lessons, and other visible thinking strategies)
- ☐ Teaching the students time management skills to help them keep track of the time needed to fulfill their work

- ☐ Encouraging students to reflect on their own learning and to run self-assessments
- ☐ Encouraging students by giving achievement cards whenever needed
- ☐ Closely monitoring student's progress and measuring their progress

Did you contact the parents? _____ When? _____

General Comments about the meeting:

Results of Intervention:



Appendix B

Counseling Unit Referral

Name of student: -----

Class: -----

Date of Birth: -----

Referred by: -----

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1- Were the parents informed of this referral?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2- Has the student had any psycho-educational or external evaluations?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify

3- Does the student have any medical needs/condition? (physical, vision, hearing or medication)

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify

4- What interventions have been tried and what were the outcomes?

5- Describe briefly the reason(s) behind this referral

LEARNING BEHAVIOR

Please indicate the student's performance in the following areas. Put an X in the appropriate box:

General learning behavior	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Works independently on written tasks				
Follows spoken instructions				
Completion of tasks				
Arabic Writing	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Handwriting				
Organization and presentation				
Spelling				
Grammar				
Arabic Reading and Comprehension	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Oral reading				
Reading comprehension				
English Writing	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Handwriting				
Organization and presentation				
Spelling				

Grammar				
English Reading and Comprehension	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Oral reading				
Reading comprehension				
Math	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Conceptual Understanding				
Word Problems				
Computation				
Sciences	Exceeding grade level expectation	Within grade level expectation	Approaching grade level expectation	Well below grade level expectation
Conceptual Understanding				
Completion of tasks				

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

1- Behavioral aspect

- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Lack of concentration
- ☐ Withdrawal
- ☐ Lack of boundaries
- ☐ Aggressive behavior

2- Developmental aspect

- ☐ Stammering
- ☐ Disorder(s) related to the motor skills
- ☐ Disorder(s) related to the senses (for example: sight, hearing...)
- ☐ Disorder(s) related to the fine motor skills (for example: handwriting, pencil holding...)

3- Emotional aspect

- ☐ Sadness/withdrawal
- ☐ Family problems (for example: separated parents, mourning...)
- ☐ Hypersensitivity
- ☐ Fear/anxiety

4- Medical aspect

- ☐ Chronic disease(s) or illness
- ☐ Previous hospitalization(s)

5- Further notes and remarks

Date

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Signature
