Access and Inclusion Policy

2023 - 2024 Academic Year

Vision and Mission

We aim to create a world-class educational community where students can excel intellectually, feel safe to take academic risks, learn to celebrate cultural differences, and are well-prepared for engagement in the broader international community. To accomplish this, we work with each student and family to ensure that every child has their social, emotional, and developmental needs met.

General Information on Inclusion and Differentiation [1,2,3]

What is inclusion?

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organizational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community.

Principles of Inclusive Education

- education for *all* is considered a human right
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student
- every educator is an educator of *all* students
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities
- *all* learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
- full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
- assessment provides *all* learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
- multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right and a resource
- *all* students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens
- *all* students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are taken into account
- *all* students in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect
- diversity is understood to include *all* members of a community
- *all* students experience success as a key component of learning.

What is differentiated instruction?

Differentiated instruction is the 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.

Who are the students with learning support requirements?

Students with learning support requirements may:

- display difficulties or live with conditions that are a barrier to learning and therefore need particular teaching strategies for classroom management and effective education
- display a higher than average aptitude in one or more subjects that requires adaptation and extension of the curriculum
- have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements but require support to reach their full potential in learning and assessment
- require support to access teaching and learning including planned strategies to access curricular instruction and inclusive assessment arrangements to access assessment.

Students with identified challenges (such as: autism/Asperger's syndrome; learning challenges; speech, communication, physical and sensory challenges; social, emotional and behavioral difficulties; medical and mental health challenges) may have learning support requirements. Also, additional language learners may receive learning support to bridge and develop their language. However, learning support is not restricted to students with identified challenges and must be provided to any student who requires support.

Inclusive Education at SIS

At SIS, we believe that all students can learn and should have access to a caring and supportive learning environment, curriculum, and assessments. We include all students in a general education setting, unless the needs of the students are such that an alternative, least restrictive environment outside of SIS facilities is needed.

At SIS, we see education as a partnership with our students, parents/guardians, the school and other community stakeholders.

At SIS, we have zero tolerance for bullying, and student's rights are promoted.

At SIS, we believe that solid instruction comes from intentional planning, in order for us to meet the needs and effectively work with the diversity of our students. We plan for different ways of presentation, consider our students level of engagement, and how we assess the learning of our students. It's imperative to us to understand our students' strengths and needs in order to design and deliver effective instruction. When we design our lessons, we can keep in mind the barriers to our scholars' learning that will challenge their mastery of the skill or concept.

At SIS, all faculty and administrators collaborate to address individual students' needs for growth and success in the classroom. They problem solve and plan for individualized students in need of additional support for academic, behavioral and social emotional needs.

At SIS, we are committed to identify learning support needs of our students early and provide needed accommodations and support. Our faculty will observe and identify an area of difficulty as specifically as possible and formally agree on accommodations.

If an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Accommodation Plan is transferred from another school setting, the faculty of SIS will collaborate with parents and administrators to agree on the terms/parts of the plan that can be followed and implemented at SIS.

At SIS, we are committed to provide an inclusive environment where differentiation and accommodations are practiced. However, for now, we are unable to provide psychological, social, and educational testing. SIS will not be able to provide and write Individual Education Plans (IEP) and will not be able to provide specialized (evidence based) intervention types of programs. Parents will need to consult with a psychologist, special education professional, or school counselor for testing.

At SIS, each of the student's teachers is responsible for ensuring the accommodations are followed.

Examples of modifications and accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

> *Sensory Supports:* manipulative, models and figures, physical movement, media, academic language to label emotions/experiences, preferential and flexible seating

> *Graphic Supports:* anchor charts, chars, cloze notes, graphic organizers and representation, number lines, tables, timelines, visuals/picture supports

> *Interactive Supports*: Read Aloud, shared reading, think aloud, direct and explicit modeling, collaborative learning (peer to peer learning)

> *Linguistics Supports:* audio books, dictionaries, leveled texts, mnemonics, pre-teach vocabulary, sentence frames, word walls

> *Behavioral Supports:* clear behavioral expectations, coping and emotional regulations, routines and procedures, student choice, self-regulation strategies, frequent breaks, mindfulness practices, modeling healthy relationships, goal setting

> *Testing Supports:* Math Aids (hundredths chart, calculators, number lines, graph paper, fraction bars and circles, base ten blocks, cuisenaire rods, colored shapes, blank clocks), variety type of questions on assessments, additional time to complete work and assessments, read aloud/oral directions, simplified directions, provide quiet area with minimized distractions, shortened assignments, modified rubrics

At SIS, we recognize gifted and talented students that will be provided with differentiated instruction and support. In collaboration with parents, the avenues for applying these talents will be explored. While SIS is currently not providing assessments for identification, we'll consider student prior academic achievement, teacher recognitions, and other data sources.

At SIS, we recognize twice-exceptional learners, students who are both gifted and have a disability. While we are not able to formally assess and identify these learners, we can consider prior testing and documentation in order for our faculty to identify what accommodations and supports we are able to provide.

Support Procedures for Students and Families

During our admissions and enrollment process, families are asked to share any information regarding their student's background, including their educational, developmental, behavioral, and medical histories or other relevant information. Our school's Student Support Director and school's leadership team work directly with families during the enrollment process to ensure that SIS is prepared to provide support to each student entering our program.

Families of currently enrolled students (or the students themselves) who wish to ask questions or share concerns regarding student support services may reach out to the Student Support Director or Program Principal directly.

Title	Name	Contact
Student Support Director	Hrvoje Budimir	hrvoje@splitinternational.org
Elementary School Principal	Jill Budimir	jill@splitinternational.org
High School Principal	John Rogosic	john@splitinternational.org

Support Procedures for Teachers

Teachers who identify any students who they believe may benefit from additional support always complete an internal "Student Concern Form" (link located in the Staff Handbook). The Student Support Director processes these forms and coordinates the next steps in the student support process, in collaboration with teachers, the Educational Committee, and the program Principal. Requests and decisions regarding student support processes are discussed on the school's Educational Committee. Final approval for additional resources and support for students is made by the Principal.

Tiered Supports and Support Exit Structures

We are dedicated to providing an inclusive education that respects the diversity of students and their individual learning needs. Our support structures are designed to ensure that all students, regardless of their learning barriers, have equal access to our educational programs and are fully included in all aspects of school life. We also are committed to helping students develop the skills necessary to succeed without supports where possible, and transitioning them away from accommodations where appropriate, while continuing to provide accommodations as needed.

Types of Supports Provided

1. Differentiated Instruction: Teachers employ strategies that cater to a range of learning needs and styles, allowing students to access the curriculum at their level and pace.

2. Learning Support Services: Specialized support staff work collaboratively with classroom teachers to provide interventions and accommodations for students with identified learning differences.

3. Assessment Accommodations: Students with specific needs may be granted accommodations such as extended time, alternative settings, or the use of technology to ensure they can demonstrate their understanding effectively.

4. Language Support: For students with English as an additional language, we offer language acquisition programs tailored to help them develop proficiency.

5. Social and Emotional Support: School counselors are available to assist students with personal, social, and emotional challenges, contributing to a supportive learning environment.

6. Assistive Technology: We provide access to appropriate technological tools to support learning, including software for reading and writing assistance, and audio-visual aids.

7. Collaboration with Specialists: We suggest consultations with external specialists, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, and educational psychologists, to support students' specific needs.

Exit Structures for Support

1. Transition Planning: As students prepare to exit a support program or our school, we create a transition plan that includes the collaboration of teachers, support staff, parents, and the student.

2. Gradual Decrease in Support: To promote independence, the level of support is gradually reduced, allowing students to adjust and take ownership of their learning.

3. Parent and Student Training: We offer workshops for parents and students to develop strategies that support learning at home and in future educational settings.

4. Ongoing Monitoring: After exiting a support program, students are monitored to ensure they continue to succeed without direct support. If needed, reintroduction of services is available.

5. Post-School Planning: For older students, we offer guidance in post-secondary education planning, ensuring that the transition to universities or vocational programs accommodates their individual needs.

6. Documentation and Communication: We ensure that all necessary documentation of a student's learning journey and needs is effectively communicated to any subsequent educational institution, with consent, to facilitate a smooth transition.

Inclusion Policy Review Process

At the Split International School, all of our policies are designed to serve the needs of our students and community, while assuring that our program is in alignment with national and international standards. As a living document, this policy is regularly updated to ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of our students and community.

Our school's Educational Committee reviews and suggests updates to this policy on a yearly basis, which are reviewed and approved by the principals and school board for implementation. Students, families, teachers, staff, and other members of our community are encouraged to make suggestions and give feedback regarding this policy via our semesterly community survey forms, or directly in writing (via email) to our Educational Committee via the school office email address.

References

1. Programme Standards and Practices (IBO, 2014)
2. DP: From Principles to Practice (IBO, 2015)
3. Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes (IBO, 2016)