



DELEDDA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

INCLUSION AND ACCESS POLICY

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Introduction

IBO Mission Statement

“These 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.” (from: IBO Mission Statement, <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/>)

Our School Mission - Goals

“To inspire and motivate students to become life-long learners and to achieve their individual potential in all areas: intellectual, ethical, emotional, creative and physical.” (www.genoaschool.eu)

Our school mission is inspired by the core values of the IB learner profile, *“which describes a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success”* and *“imply a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them. Each of the IB's programmes is committed to the development of students according to the IB learner profile.”*.
<https://www.ibo.org/benefits/learner-profile/>

What are SEN (Special Educational Needs)?

The acronym SEN indicates situations which, for various reasons, may create persistent or temporary learning difficulties.

These could include:

- Specific learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysorthographia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia)
- Memory problems
- Attention deficit disorders
- Sensory impairments
- Motor impairments
- Neurodevelopmental difficulties
- Language impairments
- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Medical conditions

Special educational needs, and learning support needs, are varied and the specific nature of the pattern of difficulties is unique for each pupil.

Aims

The aims of this document are:

- to establish common procedures and practices within the school community to help foster a more inclusive learning environment for all students at DIS, helping them to overcome their permanent or temporary difficulties and empowering them with the necessary tools to pursue their academic and personal goals;

- to provide access to successful learning experiences to all students regardless of their abilities or barriers to learning;
- create a learning environment suitable for each child and ensure all pupils have access to the curriculum in an inclusive way;
- clearly identify and define the expectations of all partners involved in the process (students, parents, teachers);
- ensure that parents are able to play their role in supporting their child's education.

The policy and Italian legislation

In particular, the Inclusion policy aims at addressing the specific needs of those students with learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysorthographia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) or with particular medical and/or mental and/or social conditions that might affect the way they operate within an academic environment.

This policy delineates the actions to be taken, keeping in mind the IBO principles of inclusion as clearly outlined in the document "Learning Diversity and inclusion in IB programmes", 2016.

The school takes "Law 170/2010" and "Dir. Min. 27/12/12" as a starting point as, given that we are not part of the state school system, the full application of such laws is not required.

Inclusion and support principles

"Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers" ("Learning Diversity and inclusion in IB programmes", 2016).

"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 candidates with learning support requirements at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment. Inclusive assessment arrangements may be authorized in these circumstances". ("Access and Inclusion policy", 2018).

- All students enrolled at DIS should be able to have access to the best possible learning environment.
- Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), like all other students, shall become progressively more aware of their strengths and difficulties and be more and more in charge of their own education as they advance their studies in the school.
- Teachers and parents should act as a support system that works towards the student's autonomy, building on self-esteem and empowerment rather than acting as "substitutes".
- The school is actively involved in supporting professional development, promoting informative seminars for the community, and organizing courses and activities that might benefit not only SEN individuals but everybody else too, provided the budgetary constraints of the foundation allow for it.
- Parents are responsible for their own learning about these matters and strive to become aware of students' special needs and how to address them.
- All members must share their responsibilities and define their roles in the action through the preparation of a common document, the Personalized Didactic Plan (PDP).
- The PDP must contain enough information to allow teachers and students to operate within and outside the classroom, with the goal of preparing the students to reach the specific school objectives, including exam or end of the year project requirements (Terza Media, Personal Project, Diploma exams).

- The PDP should not be limited to a list of “concessions” or “exclusions” for the student, but rather constitute a true operative document that allows a successful didactic action. For this reason, it has to be widely discussed and shared among all stakeholders.
- Through developing and then mastering specific ATLs, as described in the ATL DIS chart, students become more and more responsible for their process of learning. Teachers and parents should have a supporting role in guiding pupils through this process.

Stakeholders

Members in this policy are all teachers of the school, including the principal and the coordinators, the school SEN referent, those students and their families for which a specific diagnosis has been made or is to be made by a recognized practitioner. The school also involves the professionals who take care of and work with the student to perform as a network.

Inclusion in practice

In class differentiation

“Differentiation is seen as the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals” (“Learning Diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, 2016”).

Teachers are to have a clear understanding of who they teach to implement approaches and strategies (ATT) that help remove learning barriers not only for SEN students, but for everybody in the class.

Teachers use a range of strategies to meet pupils’ individual learning needs. Lessons have clear learning objectives; work is differentiated within the classroom setting allowing pupils to achieve success and assessment is used to inform the next stages of learning.

It includes Scaffolding, Extending Learning Valuing prior knowledge and Affirming identity and building self-esteem (“Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes”, 2016).

Here some examples of ways teachers should use to promote learning considering differentiation and inclusion:

Scaffolding

- 1) give a planning at the beginning of the unit and of each lesson. This could be done via Managebac.
- 2) Hand out in advance a summary powerpoint
- 3) go over what has been done with a summary at the end of the class
- 4) Provide examples (work samples and task specific clarifications of assessment criteria)
- 5) Provide scaffolding in terms of: demonstrations, experiential learning, chunking information, visual aids, templates and graphic organizers to foster independence.

Extending learning

- 1) Engage students in different tools involving different way to learn (according with 4 learning styles – Visual, Aural, Verbal, Kinesthetic) could be used during the unit.

Valuing prior knowledge

- 1) Assess existing knowledge to identify gaps or overlaps in learning
- 2) Activate prior understanding through brainstormings at the beginning of the unit

Affirming identity and building self-esteem

- 1) Improve students' ATL to encourage the learner identity.
- 2) Consider students in terms of their strengths when a feedback is given to them when assessing a formative or a summative task.
- 3) Offer opportunities to the students to develop the attributes of the IB learner profile
- 4) Give the students opportunities to reflect on their learning

Operational Strategies to identify a SEN student

*) A difficulty with some aspect of learning or social, cultural, emotional adjustment can be identified as a cause of concern at any point throughout a student's academic career. A pupil's diverse needs are planned for and differentiated for as they progress within the educational setting. Even though students might begin their journey at DIS with no special learning needs, over time, specific issues which require identification, assessment and support may emerge.

*) Whenever a potential special need is identified in a student that has no prior documentation of any learning/emotional/social difficulty, the family must be contacted by the coordinator and the possibility of undergoing an assessment should be considered. In particular, given the special "bilingual" nature of the middle school (but also high school, considering that most students study in a language that is not their mother tongue), an expert or group of experts that are aware of the nature of the school should be ideally preferred. It is then crucial that the family communicates to the practitioner all possible details about the school, including teachers' observations and, when possible, an evaluation by the counselor.

*) The diagnosis/assessment is carefully reviewed by the SEN referent and the teachers council with the aim of translating it into an operative set of good practices. This is when a first version of the PDP is produced, by the end of November if the diagnosis/assessment arrives at the beginning of the year, and in any case within a month from the diagnosis if it is the first one. If the documentation arrives after the November deadline, the school might refuse to take it into consideration until the next year.

*) The preparation of the PDP must take into account:

- the content of the diagnosis/assessment
- teachers' observations and educational evidence produced by the school
- specific requirements for the preparation of the relevant exit exams of the cycle, as explained in detail in the next paragraph
- information collected by the family

*) The PDP is proposed and discussed in a faculty meeting and consequently approved by the faculty itself.

*) The school SEN referent, at the beginning of the year, organises a meeting with the student, his/her parent(s) and the class coordinator so that all parties sign the document. The PDP is reviewed at least one other time throughout the year.

*) If a PDP has already been produced for a student, at the beginning of the new year and by November 30th, the school will revise it and produce an updated version. A new diagnosis/assessment might be

necessary, according to the judgment of the school counsellor; generally the document should not be older than 3 years. In particular, for the DP, it cannot be more than 2 years old. The updated version of the PDP must be signed again by all actors.

*) Working with a personal tutor during lessons is allowed, if a pupil with SEN requires and requests it. Any request put forward by the family or by the teachers has to first be approved by the school and by the administration and will be an expense the family will take care of.

The role of each stakeholder

a. Periodically teachers are engaged in professional development training by attending meetings organised by the school counsellor where experts in the field may discuss topics such as learning disabilities, availability of special tools and software to help students, and differentiation in the classroom. They also share their best practices with each other during the meetings with the coordinators and school counsellor. The school SEN referent informs the teachers which students in each grade level have a PDP so each teacher is responsible to be aware of those students with special needs in his/her classes; in addition, s/he has to consider each SEN member of the class and the accommodations listed on the PDP when planning the lessons, tests and even units, so that the teaching plan effectively implements appropriate differentiated teaching strategies.

b. Students should be encouraged to undergo a process of self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-empowerment. To do so, throughout the year, the pupils meet with the school counsellor and/or SEN referent on a regular basis and they update their teachers on their needs and/or achievements. They will be guided by the school staff through a gradual process of independence in the use of tools, technology and aid, in general, to help foster their preparation and overcome their difficulties. They should be also encouraged to talk about their issues with their peers, their family and the school counselor and/or SEN referent.

When advised to use a particular tool such as a calculator, a spell checker, a text editor etc., they should make every effort to try to use it under the guidance of their teachers and family. If the student refuses to use one or more of such tools or does not want to follow some of the suggestions written in the PDP, the matter should be discussed with the SEN referent and the family. Students are also required to sign the PDP.

c. Parents should offer their support to their child in terms of awareness, acceptance and also practical help. They sign the PDP after having discussed its contents with the SEN referent, the class coordinator and, if possible, the student's tutor or therapist. They should also review all possible extra measures to take in order to help their child with the school. Purchase of software, choice of home tutors, direct help and other elements must be carefully decided and shared with the school, to make sure the action is aligned with the school's principles. Their aim should be that of making students more independent by the time they reach the Diploma Programme years.

d. The school SEN referent has the role of editing the PDP with the help of the Administrative Assistants, checking it during the school year and facilitating the communication between the different parts.

e. The programme coordinator has the role of monitoring the implementation of the SEN policy in the programme. She/he registers the student asking for the special arrangements where needed.

The school curriculum and exam requirements

The curriculum at DIS can be thought of in four phases or cycles. In each cycle, different actions might be necessary, according to the final objectives, especially in terms of external exam requirements. The PDP will

be modified and adjusted over time to ensure that the student is more autonomous in the use of special tools, less dependent on some of such tools that might not be allowed during exams and more aware of how to use his/her strengths and overcome difficulties.

In each cycle, pupils may have access to a combination of support strategies to address their needs, including the following:

- teacher consultation
- in-class task differentiation
- work in pairs
- group support
- home-support programme as parents are encouraged to support their child.

1) **Primary School:** young learners are quite likely to start the DIS curriculum with no identification of any special learning needs. Many pupils do not have a diagnosed SEN but may be experiencing difficulties in some areas like literacy (reading, writing, spelling, comprehension); numeracy (organisation, sequencing); behaviour; executive functions (i.e.: memory, speed of processing information); emotional/social adjustment.

Indeed, over time specific issues may emerge which require identification, assessment and support.

For these reasons, there are various classroom accommodations that are adaptations put into place in the environment, curriculum format, teaching/learning methods or equipment, which allow a student with barriers to learning to gain access to content, learn effectively, complete tasks and to pursue a regular course of study.

The final goal is that each student can experience levels of understanding and rates of progress that bring feelings of success and achievement.

Example: classroom teaching strategies and accommodations for students with attention difficulties:

- previously discussed prompts
- regular breaks
- behaviour plan
- encouraged use of planners
- opportunities created for movement, when possible
- work in pairs.

When a pupil has a specific diagnosis/assessment, a PDP is required (as specified in the previous paragraph). The type of compensatory tools and dispensatory measures (“strumenti compensativi e dispensativi”) needed for each student must be individualized and decided on a case by case basis; this is especially true for primary students, because of the vulnerable stage of development. The tools depend on the age and on the specific educational needs. For instance, the use of specific software could be the best choice for one student, but not for another. We think that is important not to overcompensate, to allow specific skills to still develop as much as they can.

To achieve the best support for each student, the collaboration with the therapist who takes care of the pupil and his/her family is crucial. The school SEN referent contacts the therapist and the families on a regular basis.

Beginning in Year 1 of the primary school cycle, teachers work on the development of ATL skills for each pupil. This is particularly important for SEN students, who need to become more aware of their learning style, weaknesses, strengths and to develop strategies to overcome these difficulties.

The work on ATL is done especially during Year 5, when the strategies have to be consolidated for the start of the MYP programme.

2) **MYP 1, 2, 3:** In case students are preparing for the Terza Media exam (Italian State exam normally taken after three years of Middle School), the PDP might align to those prepared in Italian schools. For instance, mind maps might be used by students during tests, if agreed with the teachers, or partial or total substitution of a written task with an oral task can be discussed. Modification of some assignments can be discussed. In general, any practice that the Italian legislation allows (refer to Law 170/2010 and Dir. Min.

27/12/2012) can be included in the PDP, with the approval of the MYP3 Head of Year who will carefully review it and assess it against the particular policies of those Italian schools where our students take the exam.

3) **MYP 4 and 5:** during these years, students gradually start to become equipped for the upcoming DP program. The main aim of the first two years of High School should be to get the students equipped with all the tools necessary to be autonomous learners in the Diploma Programme, helping them choose the right path within their DP subject choices. This transition is particularly delicate and the PDP should reflect it. Referring to the document “Access and Inclusion policy”, PDPs must ensure that students take progressively more responsibility in the use of certain tools (e.g. learn how to use computers with spell checkers, school--required graphic calculators). Substitution of written tasks with oral ones must be generally avoided because the final exams are mostly written. In addition, students are encouraged to rely less and less on mind maps, as they are not included in the allowed tools for the DP exams.

4) **DP 1 and 2:** in the last two years of High School, students prepare for a challenging set of exams that have rigorous, mostly external assessment that consist of several written papers and tasks and very few oral examinations. Students with special assessment needs, especially those who belong to the spectrum of dyslexia, must be advised to carefully choose their six subjects, their topic for the Extended Essay and all other “internal assessment” requirements. At the beginning of year 1 of the DP a new diagnosis/assessment must be produced, indicating the quantitative results achieved by the students in each component of the assessment(s) clearly, so that the PDP can more closely reflect what the actual assessment requirements of the students are in terms of the aforementioned document “Access and Inclusion policy”.

Especially during summative evaluations, teachers will make sure that students will be tested under exam-like conditions allowing them nothing more or nothing less than what is indicated in the PDP and what the IB indicates. Clearly, teachers, the school SEN referent, students and parents will continue to collaborate to make the learning experience effective and enjoyable; it is nonetheless worth mentioning that one of the primary objectives is preparing the students for the final exams.

At the beginning of both year 1 and year 2 of the DP, families and students with SEN meet the DP coordinator, the school SEN referent and/or the class coordinator to discuss strategies considering progress in the DP in addition to the upcoming exam registration.

During the DP, in collaboration with the School SEN referent, the IB Coordinator will submit to IB the appropriate accommodations form, along with necessary documentation, requesting assessment modifications when needed. All-inclusive assessment arrangements other than those listed in section A9.1.3 must have prior authorization from the IB Assessment Centre.

The IBO Coordinator will submit a Request for Inclusive Assessment Arrangements Form (D1) with supporting evidence and information including medical/psychological/psycho-educational documentation.

Parents may access further information regarding the possible arrangements available to their student by calling and speaking to the school SEN referent or the IB Coordinator. Once the IB Coordinator learns of the decision by the IB, the student, parents, and teachers involved will be informed.

List of possible exemptions, tech tools and compensation that the IB and school may permit

ITEM	PRIMARY SCHOOL	MYP 1,2,3	MYP 4,5	DP 1,2
Use of calculator	T.A. (depending by the age and specific educational needs)	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Use of multiplication tables, basic operation tables	YES	YES	NO	NO
Use of self produced lists of formulae	YES	YES	T.A. (to be minimized throughout MYP4, MYP5)	NO (but all students are given a booklet for some of the scientific topics)
Use of mind maps <u>according to the teachers</u>	YES	YES	T.A. (to be minimized throughout MYP4, MYP5)	NO (but all students are given a booklet for some of the scientific topics)
Use of self produced material and notes during tests	YES	YES	T.A.	NO
Use of computer for word editing	YES	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Use of spell checker	YES	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Use of vocal synthesizer	YES	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Extra time during tests (usually 25% but more can be discussed)	YES	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Reduction in the number of exercises	YES	YES	T.A.	NO
Partial substitution of written assignments with orals	YES	YES	T.A.	NO
Modified use of criteria in assessment – different weighting	YES	YES	T.A.	NO

Modified use of criteria in assessment – substitution of criteria	YES	YES	T.A.	NO
Possibility to take tests at a different time	YES	YES	YES	T.A.
Possibility to take tests in a different location	YES	YES	YES	YES (with approval from IB)
Rescheduling of tests/summative tasks according to needs	YES	YES	T.A.	NO
Possibility to have an alternative font and/or text/ background colour. E.g. a student with reading difficulties requires an accessible font (Lexia Readable).	YES	YES	YES	YES

T.A. = requires Teacher's Approval

Some of these items are limited by the physical and budgetary constraints of the school itself. Different actors will then be in charge of providing some of these resources, and this must be then clearly stated in the PDP. Items from this list, like every other part of this policy, might be amended, added or modified with the approval of the “Collegio Docenti”.

Policy Alignment to the Assessment Policy

The main aims of the assessment procedure are to:

- Evaluate achievement-ability discrepancies to identify specific learning disabilities
- Assess an individual's academic progress over time
- Shape a holistic picture of the student who is being assessed
- To compare a student's performance at certain time intervals

One of the goals of inclusive arrangements is to provide fair assessment conditions for all students in the school. Individual needs and difficulties are taken into account to design specific assessment settings that allow pupils to have the chance to demonstrate their level of attainment. That is done to ensure fairness and to allow teachers, examiners and moderators to evaluate the student's work with the standards applied to all (other) candidates. Indeed, depending on the PYP, MYP or DP program, it is the setting and condition of the assessment itself that can be modified, not the standards of evaluation, which are equally applied to all candidates. Indeed, teachers are to provide the best possible tools and conditions that allow all students

to be able to perform equally and to reach their maximum academic performance, assessed with one unique set of standards.

Throughout the primary, middle and high school periods, assessment is used to inform about different stages of learning. The ultimate goal of assessment is to grasp the student's levels of attainment and understanding, to ensure learning is taking place effectively in the conditions provided by the teachers. Assessment settings for SEN students are monitored and modified throughout the year.

The grades that are awarded are indicative of the student's level of attainment and learning and reflect IB grade descriptors. Formative assessments are mainly designed to generate corrective feedback, which should be applied to improve academic performance, as mentioned in the DIS Assessment Policy, linked below. Summative assessments in the MYP and in the DP are evaluated based on specific IB criteria and/or mark-schemes. Such criteria are inclusive by definition as they assess different aspects of learning, specific for each subject. Indeed, IB criteria allow for an all-rounded assessment of distinct qualities and skills related to learning. The nature of the criteria allows all students to enhance their strengths and work on their weaknesses. IB rubrics are used by all teachers to assess the students' work and award grades in each criterion; such rubrics are published on ManageBac and are available to students and families. This allows for optimal preparation, as rubrics are to be considered an extra tool the students can use to prepare for assessment.

In the MYP particularly, different assignments are designed to test different objectives. This implies that, throughout the academic year, all students are evaluated on all the distinct aspects of learning suggested by the IB criteria. Students with diverse qualities and weaknesses will likely perform differently depending on the assessed criteria. A key advantage of the diversity of assessments is that it fosters a reflection on the different elements of the overall learning experience. Such reflection becomes individualized, depending on the specific strengths and weaknesses of the students themselves.

In the DP, the ultimate goal of summative assessments particularly is to prepare the students for the final exams; IB criteria specific to such examinations are also used for in-class tests and assignments and are also made available for the students. To award final grades teachers use what the IB refers to as the best fit approach. Indeed, grade descriptors and rubrics are used to make sure that the student's level of attainment is accurately identified; more focus is put on the specific characteristics of each criterion than on the grade itself. For this reason, a teacher can decide to award a grade because its descriptors suitably reflect the student's overall performance, without only taking into account a mere average of the obtained grades. For more specific information on assessment, please consult the DIS assessment policy, on the school website (<https://genoaschool.eu>)

Policy alignment to the Admission Policy

The DIS entry exam is required for students who are accessing the MYP and the DP1 (<https://genoaschool.eu/admissions/>). Students that have special educational needs will take the entry test following specific guidelines upon the recommendation of the school counsellor based on documented special educational needs. Typical compensatory tools and dispensatory measures include more time allowed to take the test itself and the use of a calculator for math. All students are able to take the test on a computer. Furthermore, students with SEN can bring mind maps to the exam, provided these have been checked previously by the teachers.

Related School Policies

All the related school policies can be found on the school website.

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www.ibo.org

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<https://www.waterford.sz/downloads/policies/SEN%20Policy.pdf>