

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS **A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY**

Philosophy of the SEN Department

The International School of Moshi SEN philosophy supports the school's mission statement 'ISM seeks to make it possible for each student to develop his or her full potential.'

The SEN philosophy is linked to the instructional goals and objectives of International School of Moshi, and as such will endeavor to support those goals and objectives.

The purpose of ISM SEN Policy therefore is to increase the likelihood that children with Special Needs in the school will make progress and grow in confidence in their own abilities and to help the students become independent, motivated and life-long learners.

See also Board Policy 7.406

Objectives of the SEN Policy

The SEN Policy at ISM begins with leadership from the Board of Governors, the Director, and Head of each campus, all of whom must actively support the SEN Department in achieving the following objectives:

- To ensure that students with SEN have maximum access to the whole curriculum according to their potential
- To encourage a shared responsibility in the school, by all the school professional staff to support the SEN policy at all levels of education
- To allow the SEN teacher access to school decision making processes through Secondary and primary meetings
- To encourage and ensure that every curriculum is linked to and makes detailed reference to how their teaching and learning practice, assessment recording, reporting and curriculum area documents support children with Special Needs.
- To encourage and ensure that professional staff provide equality of opportunity for students with Special Needs in the classroom and in exam situations.
- To ensure the SEN policy works towards goals related to the aims of the school.
- To encourage staff to continue to assume responsibility for the learning of all children in their class and to ensure the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students
- To ensure that support is related to the curriculum
- To encourage an agreement among Staff on how a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum be taught in the classroom
- To encourage co-operative planning and teaching by all staff in support of the SEN Policy.
- To provide a climate of warmth and support in which pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem can grow and in which all pupils feel valued and are able to risk making mistakes without fear
- To identify, assess and provide support for pupils with SEN needs
- To develop contacts with outside professional agencies or skilled individuals.
- It is the responsibility of the school to see that all special needs staff are adequately trained and have opportunities for ongoing professional development

The Head of Campus has responsibility for overall management of the policy for Special Needs and for keeping the governing body fully informed. The Head of Campus should work closely with the SEN teacher, who should work closely with the teachers and take responsibility for the day to day operation of the policy with the support of the Head of Campus.

Admissions Policy and Special Needs Students

ISM's admissions policy sets out the criteria for admitting students to the school. We may not be able to meet all special needs.

The special need's unit **may** not be able to accommodate all students, (due to lack of human and material resources); these may include autism, severe visual or hearing impairment, Down's syndrome or other moderate to severe neurological dysfunctions.

The Head of Campus will consult with the Special Needs department before accepting students with special education needs into the academic programs offered by the school.

Parents must divulge all relevant information regarding their child's special needs and medical history (including a complete medical report of the child) to allow the school team to make an informed and realistic decision about the appropriateness of the child's placement at ISM. Each individual with special needs will be reviewed on an individual basis at the time of application.

The review will look at the resources the child will require in terms of human resources, financial, material and space resources as well as the parental commitment to supporting their child's educational program at home and school. The school recognizes that sometimes the placement of a child with moderate to severe special needs may be appropriate in the primary program. However, when the child comes of secondary age, the placement of the child at ISM will be reviewed again to assess the appropriateness of the child's placement at ISM.

The school leadership will consult with the SEN teacher and Diploma teachers before accepting a student with Special Educational Needs as a candidate for the IB Diploma program. A decision will be made whether suitable arrangements for both teaching and assessment can be made to accommodate the student. If a student with special learning needs is accepted into the IB program, careful consideration must be given to the candidate's choice of subjects.

Once the decision to admit a student to the school has been taken, it is our duty to provide all possible support within the limits set by the resources at the school's disposal.

Departmental Aims

The SEN teacher will aim

- To act as an advocate for individual students
- To promote teaching styles which encourage pupils with Special Needs to participate fully
- To provide professional support to colleagues
- To give staff information regarding students who need extra time for internal/external exams
- To encourage staff to continue to develop a healthy campus attitude to all students with learning disabilities
- To teach co-operatively with colleagues
- To teach individual and groups of students as appropriate
- To give students the opportunity to articulate their concerns regarding the challenges they face in their academic and social worlds.
- To monitor the identification and assessment of students with special needs
- To communicate the school SEN policy to parents and importance of parental involvement in their child's learning
- To ensure school management communicate appropriate information to PYP/MYP and Diploma parents regarding dispensation and course choices
- To develop and maintain contacts with Special Needs support services where available
- To maintain Special Needs resources in the school
- To maintain record keeping procedures and keep a Special Needs Register
- To keep up to date professionally regarding new information about special education needs topics.

Information about Identification, Assessment and Provision

The following stages outlines the SEN support offered to individual students:

1. Recognition and referral
2. Initial assessment and identification of needs
3. Case conference and agreement of the Individual Education Plan
4. Program of Study
5. Assessment and Review

Recognition and Referral

Learning Difficulties can arise at any time as a result of new curriculum demands, changed rates of learning, absence from school, settling into a new educational environment or a specific learning or language difficulty. There may be a need to challenge able students and stimulate a higher level of achievement, in a particular area, or across subject areas.

Initial Assessment and Identification of Needs

The Special Need's Department will identify learning difficulties and special needs of individual pupils (including the highly able) by the following methods.

- Liaison with parents
- Liaison with teachers via a standard written referral form
- Reviewing previous education history
- Observation in the classroom by SEN teacher and/or class teachers
- In-house screening and diagnostic tests where appropriate
- Referral requests to parents for formal assessments by educational psychologists to identify special education needs, if necessary. (After 2 years of SEN support with no formal assessment completed, the SEN department encourages parents to have a formal assessment completed on their child to support and guide the SEN programming and to help the class teacher, parents and child more fully understand the child's learning needs. Students with a formal assessment completed on them by an educational psychologist, speech therapist etc. will normally receive priority within the SEN timetable).
- Utilizing (where and when appropriate) expert advice from an educational psychologist or other outside agency.

Case Conference and Agreement of the Individual Education Program (IEP)

As soon as evidence has been collected, the SEN teacher will call and chair a Case Conference. Attendance at the case conference may include:

- class teacher or form tutor
- Head of Primary/Secondary
- Key secondary subject teachers (e.g. English/Mathematics)
- EIL/ESL teacher
- Campus head, or Director of ISM
- Parents
- And in some cases, the student (especially older students) may be invited.

During the case conference, the SEN teacher will review a draft copy of an IEP. The group will adjust the IEP during the meeting so all feel that the student's needs are being addressed and supported. The IEP will specify the student's learning objectives, the way they will be achieved, the staff that will be responsible and the time scale for evaluation and review. The SEN teacher retains oversight of the plan and may (but not necessarily) be directly involved in the teaching of the student.

The IEP may involve:

- in-class support
- placing the student in the Special Need's unit (Moshi Campus)
- withdrawal from particular subjects to work with the SEN teacher, EIL/ESL teacher or other designated teacher
- particular learning strategies of support offered by the class or subject teacher
- in-house and external exam dispensations for students
- in-house assignment modifications made for students
- additional support offered at home by the parents or by privately hired tutors
- Professional support from a specialist outside the school.

The IEP will then be rewritten by the SEN teacher as a final copy. Classroom teachers and coordinators will have a copy of the IEP, as will the parents of the student. A copy of the IEP will be placed in the SEN office. The student's school file in the main office will have a note recording the presence of an IEP in the SEN office file.

As the IEP is put into practice, the SEN teacher is responsible for ensuring that progress is being made. This may be done by informal discussion in many cases. A portfolio of student work should be compiled which follows the requirements in the primary school of the Primary Years Program. The parent should be encouraged to keep in touch with the SEN teacher or other named teacher and secondary students will be encouraged to use Guidance Hour and other opportunities to seek support and reassurance. The SEN teacher should not hesitate to convene another Case Conference if progress does not seem to be apparent.

Program of Study

As each child is a unique individual with differing needs, the program of study for each child will be unique to the child. Programs of study may also include recommendations given by educational psychologists in formal assessments. They will attempt to incorporate the child's learning style and multisensory methods. The SEN teacher will consult other appropriate specialists, if they are available, when developing a program of study for a student. In keeping with the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP), and Diploma Programme (DP) which has been adopted by ISM, the SEN teacher will, whenever possible, use materials related to the programs of inquiry as a vehicle to explicitly teach the skills with which the students require support. There may also be an element of counseling involved in a program of study for a particular child. The SEN teacher can encourage the development of the student characteristics and attitudes towards learning that is encouraged through the PYP/MYP/DP programs through informal counseling.

Assessment and Review

The IEP requires that:

- Procedures to assess progress of the pupil's IEP are taken at the review period stated on the IEP
- That the SEN teacher is responsible for progress being made

Assessment will be via means of criterion and standardized tests, student reports, alongside consultation of class teachers and the students themselves.

Access to the Curriculum

Students with Learning Difficulties whose First Language is not English

It may be beneficial for students with Learning Difficulties to postpone the learning of a foreign language to concentrate on improving their English, so that they can achieve in all their subjects.

In M3, referrals will be made for pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties regarding the option of Supportive Studies through SEN in M4 and M5. After discussion with the Special Needs Department, relevant subject teachers and tutors, Supportive Studies may be offered. This course benefits pupils who would struggle with the demands of taking all the MYP options. By studying fewer subjects, a pupil can spend more time improving the standard of work in their chosen areas. The student will receive Supportive Studies with the

SEN teacher, according to availability within the SEN timetable. Supportive Study groups are deliberately kept small so that individual needs can be met.

In Supportive Studies, strong emphasis is placed on pupils accepting responsibility for their own work and progress. They are encouraged to bring tasks that have been set by subject staff to each support session and identify areas for improvement. Help is then given to suggest suitable approaches for positive progress.

Furthermore, this option is reliant on individual subject staff supplying the Special Needs Department with information on a pupil's progress in a particular course, as well as information about the syllabus followed and relevant materials.

Individual students may also be given assistance with particular skills such as spelling, handwriting and study skills. ESL pupils may need continued assistance with improving the standard of their English in order to cope with the demands of their courses.

Appendix No. 1 Regulations from Examining Boards Regarding Exam Dispensation

IB Diploma Dispensation

The following information is a summary of a very complicated procedure; further information is available from the SEN Department.

Exam dispensation is approved in advance of the examination, to enable candidates, who may not otherwise be able to do so, to demonstrate their attainments.

Exam dispensation may be needed for:

- Candidates with a permanent or long-term disability e.g.
 - physical disability
 - hearing impairment
 - visual impairment
 - specific learning difficulty
- Candidates with a temporary disability or illness at the time of the examination(s).

Examples of the Range of Exam Dispensation That Can Be Applied For:

- extra time allowance
- supervised breaks or rest periods either in or outside the examination room – this time is not deducted from the time allowed for the exam
- modification to the visual presentation of papers e.g. enlarged print
- reading of aural tests to enable candidates to lip read
- use of bilingual dictionaries
- use of technical aids for candidates who have difficulty in writing
- some reduction of coursework to be submitted for assessment.

Evidence for Disability

- medical evidence and/or educational psychological evidence **must** be provided for candidates with specific learning difficulties
- historical evidence must be provided of the candidate's needs

Secondary Co-ordinators

Co-ordinators will be asked to complete the exam dispensation information and return it to the SEN teacher by the November prior to the application

Time Scale for Examinations

These applications must be submitted as early as possible and usually by the 15th January of the year the examination is to be taken.

International Baccalaureate Dispensation

The IBO believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions, which are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with Special Educational Needs at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized.

Time Scale

Applications for dispensation must be made by October in the first year of IB.

Application for Special Arrangements

The application should state whether the candidate has a temporary medical condition, a long-term medical condition, or a permanent disability.

Temporary medical condition

A detailed report is not required, a note or certificate from the doctor is sufficient.

Long term medical condition or permanent disabilities

A detailed report from a medical or psychological service is required.

All Candidates with Special Needs

An application for special arrangements must specify which arrangements are being requested. See 'Range of Special Arrangements'.

Supporting Documentation

A medical or psychological evaluation must have been undertaken no earlier than one year before the start of the candidate's study of the diploma program. Some flexibility is allowed for candidates with a permanent disability.

The supporting documentation must be a formal assessment from a medical or psychological service. A Special Needs teacher's report or IB Co-ordinators report alone will not be accepted.

Range of Special Arrangements that can be applied for

- Additional time normally 25%. However more than 15 minutes per hour can be given for candidates with a severe condition.
- Candidates may be given additional time to complete assignments without authorization. If an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for assessment is required, authorization from IBCA is mandatory.
- Candidates who are given extra time may also have additional rest break. Candidates are not permitted to work in rest breaks.
- Computers may be used for assignments but in examinations only as a typewriter without use of spellchecker etc.
- An amanuenses
- A Reader
- A Communicator for a deaf person
- A prompter for students with severe attention difficulties
- Modifications to exam papers e.g. enlarged, paper & print.

Further information can be gained from the IB Handbook on Special Needs & Dispensation.