

# Learning Diversity: Special Educational Needs Policy

## Tripada Singapore Internationalé School (TSI)



### IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

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.

### TSI Mission Statement

To lead the cosmic environment where each learner is an entrepreneur, innovator and able to lead differences with balanced approaches promoting internationalism for a

One World, One Family

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## **Tripada at a Glance**

Tripada is a renowned name in the field of education catering to more than five thousand students, with its different schools, for past fifty years. TSI is the first proposed IB candidate school in Gandhinagar, with a vision to have all the programmes: IBDP, MYP and PYP.

## **Special educational needs in TSI**

IB 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.” (IB mission statement 2004)

Difference and diversity are central in TSI where all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. Enhancing the motivation to learn from multiple perspectives, through collaborative teaching approaches, leads to positive outcomes for all students. These outcomes include improved academic and social skills, increased self-esteem, and more positive relationships with others in the community.

## **The goals of Special Education Needs Policy**

The goals of the Special Education Needs Policy are to:

- follow the national laws regarding Special Education;
- ensure that the special needs of our students are identified early, assessed, and provided for
- clarify the expectations of all stakeholders
- identify roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders
- assist all students in accessing all elements of the school curriculum and assessment policy

### **The staff at TSI acknowledge that:**

- students have different educational and learning needs, abilities and profile;
- students gain knowledge and skills at different rates through different means;
- all students are capable and unique;
- students are lifelong learners and should be helped in this;
- the school welcomes all students irrespective of their barriers

## **Inclusion**

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.

TSI supports the following principles of an inclusive education (Going by the philosophy of IB).

- Inclusion is a process by which TSI develop its culture, policies and practices to include all students.
- In TSI, inclusive education service offers excellence and choice, incorporating the views of all stakeholders.

- The interests of all students are safeguarded.
- The school community and other authorizing bodies actively seek to remove barriers to learning and participation.
- All students have access to an appropriate education that affords them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential.
- With the right skills training, strategies and support, the majority of students with special educational needs can be successfully included in mainstream education.
- Mainstream education will not always be appropriate for every student all of the time. Equally, just because mainstream education may not be appropriate at a particular stage, it does not prevent the student from being included successfully at any other stage.

## **Differentiation**

In TSI, each individual is supported to make the most effective use of the range of learning opportunities provided. There are a variety of activities and resources that match the goals and methods of the learner and are relevant to their skills and knowledge. It is sought that all students have an understanding of themselves as learners so that they are able to self-advocate independent learning skills within any of the IB programmes. Students and teachers need a wide range of strategies, and flexibility of timing and approach to achieve common goals.

‘A good curriculum is coherent, relevant, stimulating and challenging, and all tasks should be respectful of students as diverse learners.’ (Special educational needs in IB programmes)

Differentiation helps learners access the content at an appropriate level through a variety of resources, and becomes an integral part of each teacher’s curriculum planning.

## **Assessment**

Ongoing assessment is a vital key to inform teaching and learning for both teachers and students, when it comes to assessing the differentiated units of work or set tasks. Assessment allows for self-reflection and peer review, which enhances and supports all learners in gaining independence and becoming advocates for their own learning.

In TSI, assessment is diverse and relevant to the learner, allowing for differentiated assessments with different entry and exit points. The purposes and outcomes of the assessment process is explicit to all. Elements of social interaction and personal growth are a part of the assessment process.

Differentiation is implemented as an ongoing whole-school practice to:

- transform teaching and learning
- develop classroom relationships and expectations
- differentiate assessment practices.

If despite receiving all possible support from the school a student makes little progress or shows signs of difficulty in developing key skills, which result in poor grades in some curriculum areas, external support

provided by outside health, psychology or educational professionals is sought. As a result, an Individual Educational Plan may be developed for the student. The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will be communicated to the teachers by the form head of the school or the IB coordinator.

In the case of DP students, the Diploma Coordinator should obtain consent from the students or their parents or legal guardians to submit the report by these professionals to the IB Assessment centre as an evidence for requesting inclusive assessment arrangements. All such requests should also be supported by the head of the school. It is the parent's responsibility to act in advance concerning a student's assessment access needs and/or learning support needs, and to be cooperative concerning professional documentation. Once IBO informs the DP Coordinator about the parameters regarding the Special Consideration decision, the DP Coordinator shares that information with the student, parents, and teachers involved.

## **Four principles of good practice**

### **1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem**

Affirming the identity of a learner encourages the qualities, attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB learner profile, promoting responsible citizenship and international-mindedness. Affirming identity can be achieved by:

- promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners
- by valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to enhance learning
- by liaising with parents to establish understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals.

### **2. Valuing prior knowledge**

New learning and understanding is constructed on previous experiences and conceptual understandings in a developmental continuum. Therefore, In TSI, teachers:

- explicitly activate learners' prior understanding
- use their knowledge of learners' prior understanding to differentiate tasks and activities that will build up the further background knowledge necessary for new learning to occur
- record information in learning profiles that will support planning for future differentiation and inform teacher practice
- consider the time and the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson.

### **3. Scaffolding**

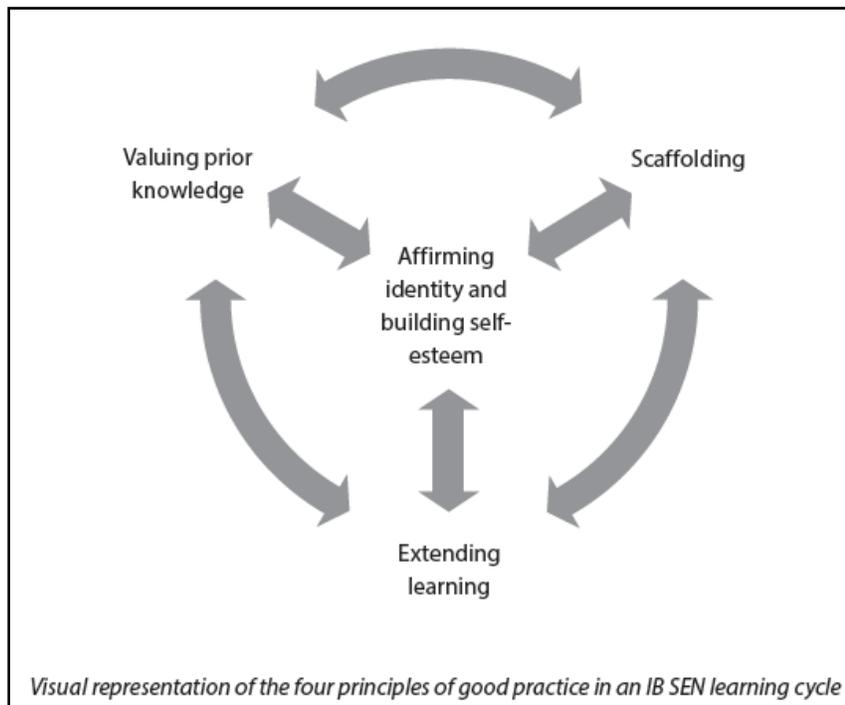
Scaffolding is a temporary strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be impossible or much more difficult to accomplish. Examples of these are:

- visual aids
- demonstrations
- dramatization
- small, structured collaborative groups

- teacher language
- use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas and initial plans.
- graphic organizers

#### 4. Extending learning

Teachers help learners extend their learning by combining high expectations with numerous opportunities for learner-centred practice and interaction with cognitively rich materials and experiences. Learners are required to read and write increasingly sophisticated texts in the content areas of the curriculum.



### Responsibilities

#### **The school shall:**

- provide training for staff and faculty to successfully implement and support the SEN and differentiated instruction;
- raise staff awareness of the needs of students identified as Students with Special Education needs;
- ensure that the program and the staff are compliance with national laws regarding students with disabilities;
- provide resources for the implementation and continuation of the Special Education Needs Policy.
- maintain discretion and confidence in providing special educational needs services.

#### **Teachers shall:**

- comply with all national laws and regulations regarding special education needs;
- participate in required training when it is available;

- encourage students to self-assess and/or reflect on their learning
- identify struggling learners and refer the student to the form master/mistress or the IB coordinator as required;
- provide differentiated instruction as described in the student's Individual Educational Plan;
- maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing special educational needs services.

**The IB Coordinator shall:**

- comply with all national laws and regulations regarding special education needs;
- apply to the IB for students' accommodations in different assessment types and circumstances;
- work collaboratively with the head of the school and teachers to support students with special educational needs;
- at enrolment, advise parents of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement.
- maintain discretion and confidence in providing special educational needs services.

**Parents shall:**

- play an active role in their child's education;
- communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's special educational needs;
- communicate to the school all information regarding any changes in these needs;
- make a request for required studies and services from the school or from external specialists in a proactive manner;
- provide documentation needed for IBO accommodation requests.

**Students shall:**

- express their feelings and their needs regarding their education;
- participate in discussions concerning them;
- indicate their choices;
- ask for information and support when they require them;
- take an active role in using the methods recommended to them.

**Accommodation for IB Assessment**

In-school assessment will be differentiated according to the teacher's decision. For major tests, IB external and internal assessment, under certain conditions the IBO authorizes the school to proceed to "Special Arrangements" regarding testing. For this authorization a professional assessment not older than two years old must be provided to the school and to the IBO. No special arrangement will be done without these documents and only the IBO is authorized to allow "Special Arrangements". When granted, these arrangements may include:

- access to modified exam papers;
- access to additional time;
- access to reading and writing aids;
- access to speech and communication aids;
- extension of deadlines or exemptions from assessment.

## **Bibliography**

- Candidates with assessment access requirements, IBO, 2014
- Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom, IBO, 2013.
- Inclusion/special educational needs policy in the IB Diploma Programme of Karinthy Frigyes Gimnázium
- Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes