

PINEWOOD-THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Learning Support Services-Procedures and Protocols

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Introduction

The purpose of this document

This document outlines the policies, procedures, and guidelines for the faculty and staff of Pinewood American International School of Thessaloniki. Its primary purpose is to detail the policies and procedures for granting Learning Support (LS) services to students with disabilities at Pinewood.

Developed by the school's Learning Support Services team, this document also incorporates advice and feedback from the school's psychologist, teachers, parents, and students. It is informed by both national and international best practices and undergoes regular review.¹

Pinewood is dedicated to ensuring, within the bounds of current legislation, that students with disabilities have equal access to and participation in all academic and learning activities.

Learning Support Statement

Pinewood values learning diversity and offers learning support for students with mild to moderate special educational needs. While we strive to accommodate all students, some needs may require external professional services, incurring additional costs to be covered by the family as determined by the school.

Pinewood is committed to offering an inclusive education, where the following principles apply:

- Education for all is a human right.
- Affirmative, responsive environments promote belonging, safety, and holistic growth.
- Every educator supports all students.
- Learning is approached from a strength-based perspective.
- Diversity is a resource for building inclusive communities.
- All learners have equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning.
- Connecting with prior knowledge unlocks full potential.
- Assessment allows all learners to demonstrate and celebrate their achievements.
- Multilingualism is recognized as a right and resource.
- Students are empowered to exercise their rights and responsibilities.
- Students' voices are heard and valued.
- Students develop into knowledgeable, caring individuals who foster a peaceful world through intercultural understanding.
- Success is a key component of learning for all students.

Principles of the Learning Support (LS) Services

Removing Barriers to Learning

The Learning Support Services helps students overcome academic, behavioral, and other challenges hindering their education. Our goal is to provide clear procedures for supporting students.

¹ Information retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (2018). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

LS services assists students and teachers with academic difficulties. We aim to improve student performance by addressing learning issues early and providing ongoing support to parents and teachers.

At Pinewood, LS services uphold professional ethics and quality standards, using valid data for interventions. Our principles include:

- Addressing issues early to prevent escalation.
- Providing regular support to parents and teachers.
- Ensuring procedural fairness for parents and students.

Referrals to LS services aim to meet student needs effectively. Interventions are outcome-based, evaluated by the team, and based on unbiased assessments.

Policies and procedures

Admission in Pinewood's LS program

There is a thorough, standardized, multi-step process that must be followed before any student enters our support system. All steps are outlined below. If, for any reason, the admission process fails to progress to the next step, this is an indication that the student may not qualify for the program, may not need the type of support offered, or may require a different type of support that cannot be provided within the perimeters of our Learning Support system.

Step1: Referral

The referral process for Learning Support can be initiated by a teacher, family, or the student themselves. Although all students have different learning needs, the recognition of a discrepancy between a student's academic ability and their age and grade level by their teacher may signal the need for additional academic support.

A learning specialist will observe the student on several occasions, in different lessons, and at various times of the day to help determine if the student requires Learning Support Services. Observation feedback is shared with the teachers who instruct the student. Additionally, feedback about the student's academic performance and social-emotional well-being will be gathered. If, after the observation period, the teacher and learning specialist determine that the student faces difficulties that cannot be managed within the classroom, the parents/guardians are notified of the need for additional support from the Learning Support Services.

Step2: Formal diagnosis

In order for our Learning Support team to offer exact and appropriate accommodations, as well as a differentiated and supportive learning environment to students who have successfully gone through the referral process, they will require the student to obtain and share with the LS team a formal diagnosis derived from either a medical or psychoeducational assessment. This assessment can be obtained internally or externally. Please note that psychoeducational assessment results should be based on widely accepted standardized assessment tools, and the reports must meet certain criteria. It is advisable for parents/guardians to consult the Learning Support Services team before contacting external professionals

to ensure they obtain the appropriate documentation. If a student already has a valid assessment that meets the criteria mentioned above, our team will obtain the documents, and the registration process in our system will move forward to Step 3.

Internal psychoeducational Assessment

The Learning Support Services team of Pinewood consists of trained and qualified professionals that offer educational testing services to current Pinewood students. Diagnostic assessments and evaluations aim to identify a child's strengths, weaknesses, learning style, and specific learning needs. The results of these assessments are used to create a profile for the child and develop an individualized learning plan to help them achieve optimal academic performance. The types of evaluations vary depending on each child's needs, situation, age, and linguistic background.

The standardized assessments offered at Pinewood, the American International School, include:

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale - Fifth Edition (WISC-V): This cognitive ability measure provides School Psychologists with information on a child's intellectual performance, cognitive processing strengths and weaknesses, and learning difficulties/disorders. The Psychoeducational Report focuses on Verbal Comprehension, Visual Spatial ability, Working Memory, and Processing Speed. The Full-Scale Intelligence Quotient is not included.
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - Fourth Edition (WIAT-IV): The WIAT-IV assesses the academic strengths and weaknesses of students. It provides information regarding eligibility for educational services, placement, and specific accommodations. Through this test, our team can design instructional objectives and plan interventions for each student.

Raven's Progressive Matrices:

The Raven's Progressive Matrices provides an assessment of nonverbal cognitive ability and will be administered to students whose English level is not yet age-appropriate. Through this assessment our team will evaluate the student's ability to make sense of complex or confusing data; the ability to perceive new patterns and relationships, and to forge constructs which make it easy to handle complexity.

- Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents: The Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents provide information on the emotional strengths and vulnerabilities of the students, such as optimism, adaptability, tolerance, support and sensitivity, to name a few.
- Sensory Profile 2: The Sensory Profile 2 provides you with a standardized evaluation of a child's sensory processing patterns in the context of home, school, and community-based activities. These significantly revised questionnaires evaluate a child's unique sensory processing patterns from a strengths-based perspective, offering deeper insight to help you customize the next steps of intervention. The forms are completed by caregivers and teachers, who are in the best position to observe the child's response to sensory interactions that occur throughout the day.
- Childhood Autism Rating Scales 2 (CARS 2): The CARS 2 is a standardized assessment, measuring the ability of children from 2 years old and older, to relate to people, to respond

visually and communicate verbally, to adapt to changes and stressful situation, as well as their nonverbal communication, emotional expression and regulation of emotions.

- The Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3), is a comprehensive set of rating scales and forms used to assess the behavior and emotions of children and adolescents. It evaluates a wide range of behaviors, including both positive and problematic behaviors, to help identify emotional and behavioral disorders. The BASC-3 is completed by parents, teachers, and the children themselves, providing a well-rounded view of the child's behavior across different settings and from multiple perspectives. This assessment tool is widely used for developing effective intervention strategies and supports within educational and clinical environments.

Step3: Creation of Documentation

After a student has successfully obtained the appropriate formal diagnosis, the Learning Support team will use the information obtained from their observations, teachers' feedback, and feedback from the parent/guardian to create personalized documentation that outlines the student's specific needs, recommended accommodations, and tailored strategies to support their academic and social-emotional development. This documentation will serve as a comprehensive guide for teachers and staff to effectively assist the student in their learning journey.

❖ Do's and Don'ts

This type of document is a clear, color-coded, one-page guide that any teacher can easily access. It provides important information about the student's learning style, preferred communication methods, approach strategies, and other crucial details that teaching staff should be aware of to create an accessible and supportive learning environment for the student.

❖ International Individual Learning Plan (IILP)

The International Individual Learning Plan (IILP) is a comprehensive document that provides detailed information about the student's academic and social-emotional needs, strengths, and challenges. This document outlines specific goals, recommended support strategies, and tailored accommodations to ensure the student receives the necessary support throughout the school year.

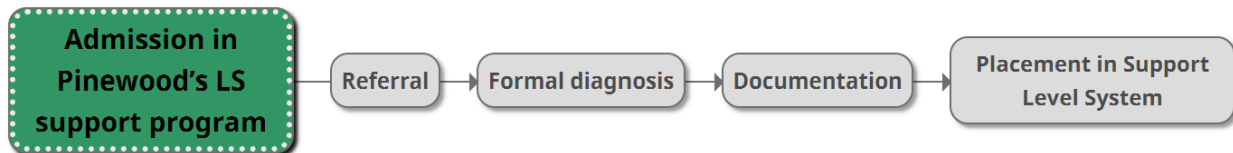
The IILP is updated and shared with teaching staff and the parent/guardian twice a year. At the beginning of the year, we set goals and establish a support plan tailored to the student's needs. At the end of the year, we evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, assess the student's progress, and suggest possible alterations to enhance the support provided in the following year.

Step4: Support Level System Placement

Once a formal diagnosis has been received and detailed documentation is in place, informative of the exact support a student will benefit from, the student will be placed in Pinewood's Leveled Support System. This system is structured to provide varying levels of support based on the student's needs.

Pinewood's level of support system is directly in line with the U.S. Department of Education's three-level support system, which includes **Mild**, **Moderate**, and **Intensive** support. Placement in the Leveled Support System ensures that each student receives the appropriate level of support tailored to their needs for academic success and personal growth.

If a parent/guardian wishes to remove their child from the Support System against the Learning Services team advice, they can do so by signing a **waiver of responsibility**.



The table below outlines the level of Support provided in each Level:

LEVEL OF SUPPORT- OVERVIEW	CHARACTERISTICS	TYPICAL RANGE OF SERVICES
<p>MILD</p> <p>School provided services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Few common classroom accommodations AND/OR ■ Some learning support services AND/OR ■ Some additional services (e.g., Psychological Counseling) 	<p>School provides services for students who have a diagnosis and are able to learn the grade level curriculum with minimal classroom accommodations (e.g. alternative seating arrangements, differentiated assessment etc).</p> <p>Students make expected academic progress, generally a year's growth in a year's time.</p> <p>For students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ where formal/ informal assessment data indicate student is performing six months to one year below grade expectations in one-two core subject areas, AND ■ who can make academic progress in the whole class setting. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-2 group push in and pull out sessions per week in areas/subjects of interest/need AND/OR 2. Some small group support sessions, i.e., study groups, organizations skills, etc., throughout the year AND/OR 3. A range of typical/general classroom accommodations (including testing accommodations) according to their IILP Plan AND/OR 4. Additional support services, such as referrals to external services for high functioning students (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, shadow teachers etc.) - whenever possible AND 5. LS feedback provided termly through email

MODERATE

School provided services include:

- Some common classroom accommodations
AND/OR
- Some curricular modifications in exceptional cases
AND
- Learning support services
AND/OR
- Additional support services (e.g., Psychological Counseling)

School provides services for students who have a diagnosis and make progress toward the grade level curriculum with classroom accommodations and/or minimal modifications e.g differentiated assessments and alternative seating arrangements. Students make some academic progress, but less than a year's growth in a year's time.

For students:

- where formal/ informal assessment data indicate student is performing around 1 year below grade expectations in one or more core subject areas, AND/OR
- who can make academic progress in whole class setting, AND/OR
- who exhibit characteristics of social-emotional and/or behavioral disorders (i.e., depression, anxiety, eating disorder, conduct disorder, intellectual disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that **contribute to difficulty functioning within grade expectations.**

1. Learning support services up to 3 push in and pull out sessions weekly in subjects and areas of need/interest **AND/OR**
2. Some small group support sessions, i.e., study groups, organizations skills etc., **AND**
3. A range of accommodations (including testing accommodations) according to a IILP Plan, **AND/OR**
4. Additional support services, such as referrals to external services for moderately functioning students (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, shadow teachers etc.) - whenever possible **AND**
5. LS feedback provided termly through email

INTENSIVE

School provided services include ALL of the following:

- Many classroom accommodations
AND
- Modified curriculum in highly exceptional cases
AND
- Learning support services
AND
- Additional support services (e.g., Psychological Counseling)

School provides services for students with a diagnosis who are unable to meet grade level expectations. Students require some modifications in the curriculum

For students:

- where formal/ informal assessment data indicate student is performing 2 years or more below grade level standards, AND/OR
- with below average intelligence as indicated on a current norm-referenced standardized cognitive assessment, AND/OR
- who exhibit characteristics of social-emotional AND/OR behavioral disorders (i.e., depression, anxiety, eating disorder, conduct disorder, intellectual disabilities, ASD, ADHD) **that result in an inability to meet school academic and behavioral expectations.**

1. Long-term up to 6 individual push in and pull out sessions weekly in subjects of need/interest **AND/OR**
2. Some small group support sessions i.e Study groups, organizations skills etc **AND/OR**
3. A range of accommodations (including testing accommodations) according to a IILP Plan **AND/OR**
4. 4.Additional support services, such as referrals to external services for moderately functioning students (e.g., Counseling, OT, SLT, PT, ABA (Autism/ADHD) Therapy, shadow teachers etc.) - whenever possible **AND**
5. LS feedback provided monthly through feedback form or email

The process of handling paperwork to secure individual accommodations and/or placement in our Learning Support system incurs an additional cost. A breakdown of the fees is provided below.

Services	Fees per academic year
Accommodations and record-keeping without support level placement	€100
Accommodations and record-keeping + <i>Mild</i> support level placement	€700
Accommodations and record-keeping + <i>Moderate</i> support level placement	€800
Accommodations and record-keeping + <i>Intensive</i> support level placement	€1200

Confidentiality

The Pinewood Learning Support (LS) Department communicates its policies and procedures to all teachers and professionals directly working with students that are registered in our Support System at the beginning of the year, as well as whenever sensitive and confidential information needs to be shared. All information is stored digitally, in separate folders for each child, categorized by their grade. Both the LS Department and the Leadership Team have access to this information.

Information shared with teachers is limited to what is relevant for providing an inclusive and accessible learning environment for each specific child. Strictly confidential information is accessible only by the Learning Support Services team and the Leadership Team.

No information is released by the school to any external party without written permission from the parent/guardian of the student. When information needs to be communicated and coordinated during transition stages or across divisions, it is done so following the guidelines and principles of our confidentiality policy.

Advanced Placement (AP) procedures

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program, recognized globally for its rigorous curriculum and assessments, is an opportunity for students to engage in college-level coursework while still in high school. However, the challenges presented by AP courses and exams can be significant, particularly for students with additional learning needs. The LS team at Pinewood is here to assist these students in several key areas:

- **Personalized Support:** We work closely with students to develop individualized learning plans that address their specific needs. This includes tailored teaching strategies, additional resources, and ongoing support throughout the academic year.
- **Skill Development:** Our team helps students build the necessary skills for success in AP courses, such as critical thinking, analytical writing, and independent study habits.
- **Exam Preparation:** We provide targeted support to help students prepare for AP exams, including study techniques, time management strategies, and practice assessments.

Applying for Accommodations with the College Board

For students with additional learning needs, obtaining formal accommodations for AP exams, as well as SAT and PSAT exams, is crucial. The LS team plays a vital role in this process:

1. **Documentation:** We assist in gathering and reviewing the necessary documentation, such as medical or psychoeducational assessments, which outline the student's specific needs.
2. **Consultation:** We advise parents and guardians on the appropriate documentation and guide them through the process of obtaining it, whether internally or from external professionals.
3. **Application:** We help prepare and submit the application for accommodations to the College Board, ensuring all required information is accurately presented.
4. **Implementation:** Once approved, we ensure that the accommodations are in place for the student's AP exams, as well as SAT and PSAT exams, and communicate these accommodations to all relevant teaching staff.

The College Board

The College Board is a not-for-profit organization that administers the Advanced Placement (AP) Program, among other educational initiatives, including the SAT and PSAT exams. Dedicated to expanding access to higher education, the College Board works to ensure that students worldwide have the opportunity to engage in college-level academic work during high school. Through its programs and services, the College Board aims to connect students to college success and opportunity.

Global Online Academy (GOA) procedures

As of May 2024, Pinewood is a proud member of the Global Online Academy, a not-for-profit consortium of 140+ international, independent, public, and charter schools from around the world. Started by a group of independent schools looking to bring the benefits of online learning to their teachers and students, Global Online Academy prepares learners for a global future by providing high-quality, networked learning experiences and interest-based courses and pathways. The schools that are members of Global Online Academy are well known for the strengths of their curricula and the excellence of their teaching.

GOA is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and does not discriminate against students with disabilities. Although GOA cannot offer special education programs for students with disabilities, it is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified students so that such students can participate in its programs and activities.

A description of the accommodations to be provided by the student's GOA teacher during the courses in which they are enrolled can be found [HERE](#).

Ensuring a Smooth Transition and Continuous Support

The LS team at Pinewood is committed to providing continuous support and ensuring a smooth transition for students with additional learning needs. We work collaboratively with teachers, parents, and students to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters academic success and personal growth.

By working closely with the College Board, the LS team helps students secure the accommodations they need to perform their best in the AP Program, as well as SAT and PSAT exams. With the right support in place, students can confidently tackle the challenges of AP courses and exams, paving the way for future academic and career success.

Inclusive Practices

Pinewood takes several steps to ensure that it provides an inclusive and diverse environment that makes all our students feel welcome and safe.

Pinewood's Inclusive Practices are:

1. **Diverse Learning Support Services:** Pinewood offers a range of learning support services tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.

2. **Individualized Support:** We provide individualized support plans for students with various learning needs, ensuring that each student receives the assistance they require to succeed.
3. **Accessible Facilities:** Pinewood is committed to providing accessible facilities to accommodate students with physical disabilities, ensuring they have full access to educational resources.
4. **Inclusive Curriculum:** Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive, catering to different learning styles, abilities, and needs of students.
5. **Qualified Staff:** We have a dedicated team of qualified professionals, including teachers, learning support specialists, and counselors, trained to support students with diverse needs.
6. **Regular Review and Improvement:** We regularly review our inclusive practices and policies to ensure they align with best practices and meet the evolving needs of our student body.
7. **Promotion of Diversity and Respect:** Pinewood promotes diversity and fosters an environment of respect and understanding where all students feel valued and included.
8. **Collaborative Approach:** We foster collaboration among teachers, support staff, students, and parents to ensure a holistic approach to supporting student learning and well-being.
9. **Inclusive Activities and Events:** Our school organizes inclusive activities, events, and initiatives to celebrate diversity and promote inclusivity among students and the wider school community.
10. **Emphasis on Student Well-being:** We prioritize student well-being and mental health, providing support services and resources to ensure all students feel safe, supported, and valued.

These inclusive practices reflect Pinewood's commitment to providing an environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Differentiation

At Pinewood School, we are committed to providing differentiated learning experiences to meet the diverse needs of our students, including those with additional learning needs or disabilities. Our approach includes:

1. **Individualized Instruction:** Tailoring teaching methods and materials to each student's unique learning style and needs.
2. **Flexible Grouping:** Using a variety of grouping strategies to ensure students work at their appropriate level of challenge.
3. **Modified Resources:** Adapting learning materials to be more accessible, such as simplified texts, visual aids, and hands-on activities.
4. **Differentiated Assessment:** Creating exam and assessment papers in collaboration with the learning support team. These assessments maintain the same level of knowledge and understanding but are designed to be more accessible. Modifications might include:
 - Simplified language
 - Additional visual supports
 - Varied question formats
 - Extended time
 - Oral assessments

By carefully designing these assessments, we ensure that all students can demonstrate their understanding and achieve success according to their abilities. Our goal is to provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment where every student can thrive.

Learning Needs

Pinewood school welcomes and supports students with a range of learning differences and disabilities, providing tailored assistance for various needs. However, in exceptional cases where a student requires highly specific and specialized support, we may not be able to accommodate their needs. Listed below are some of the needs we cater to:

- ❖ *Dyscalculia*: Persistent challenges with numbers, varying significantly among students. Some can multiply but not divide, while others struggle with simple subtraction despite high-level math skills. Challenges do not reflect cognitive abilities and success may vary day-to-day.
- ❖ *Dyslexia*: Persistent difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling, with strengths often seen outside the written curriculum. Challenges vary among students and do not reflect cognitive abilities. Success can fluctuate daily, leading to potential stress and unproductive behaviors.
- ❖ *Dyspraxia*: Challenges with coordination and motor-learning due to immaturity in brain processing. This affects planning and execution of tasks.
- ❖ *Mental Health Issues*: Recognizing and supporting students with conditions like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, OCD, and others. Emotional well-being is crucial for learning and development.
- ❖ *Speech, Language, and Communication Needs*: Difficulties impacting all areas of school life, including participation, reading, writing, thinking, and emotional management.
- ❖ *Physical Disabilities*: Learning needs may not correlate with the severity of the disability. Support focuses on physical access, managing fatigue, and fostering social and emotional independence. Conditions include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, and others.
- ❖ *Medical Conditions/Chronic Illnesses*: Conditions like allergies, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, cancer, chronic ear infections, and more. These conditions interfere with daily functioning and activities for extended periods.
- ❖ *Autism*: A spectrum condition with varied challenges in social interaction, communication, and imagination. Students may also have sensory issues and unique communication needs. Includes students with Asperger's syndrome, who may have advanced language skills but difficulties with social interactions.

Pinewood school is dedicated to providing the necessary support and accommodations to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Accommodations

Here's a list of the accommodations that Pinewood can provide in order to give access and provide students with equal opportunities to the learning process.

1. **Alternative Location/Separate Room:** Students with learning disabilities (L.D.) or disabilities can take their exams in a different room, often shared with other L.S. students. Individual rooms are provided in exceptional circumstances.
2. **Extra Time:** Additional time on tests, in-class tasks, and exams, which may be set at 25%, 50%, or 100%. Also includes 1-2 day extensions for homework (upon agreement with the teacher).
3. **Computer:** Students with significant writing impairments may use a personal or school-provided computer with basic word processing software. The computer remains offline during tests. Technical assistance and training are provided if needed.
4. **Reader (Oral Testing):** For students significantly impacted in their reading ability, a reader reads exam questions. Most students share a reader, but individual readers are provided in exceptional circumstances.
5. **Scribe (Oral Testing):** A scribe writes down exactly what the student communicates. The scribe can also serve as a reader if needed. They transcribe verbatim, draw visual materials as instructed, and do not provide any assistance beyond writing.
6. **Supervised Rest Breaks:** Students can take supervised 5-minute breaks every 45 minutes, without this time counting towards their total test time.
7. **Calculator:** For exams or tests requiring a calculator, standard calculators can be used- students should bring their own calculator.
8. **Reduced/Modified Homework:** Students **significantly** impacted by a disability may receive 25% or 50% less homework, with clear instructions on what to complete.
9. **Learning Support Assistant (LSA):** Students may have an LSA attend classes and exams to provide additional support. The cost and arrangement for an LSA are the responsibility of the parents or guardians.
10. **Preferential Sitting:** Students may be seated in locations most beneficial for their learning, either within the classroom or in a separate defined area.
11. **Spelling and Grammar Penalties:** Students with reading, writing, or spelling difficulties are not penalized for surface errors in spelling and grammar unless these are core competencies of the course.

*Please note that audiobooks are not currently provided as a learning tool at Pinewood school .

These accommodations aim to provide an inclusive and supportive assessment environment tailored to each student's needs.

Review

The Learning Support Services Procedures and Protocols will be reviewed annually at the end of each school year. During this review period, we will discuss the current limitations to inclusion and explore how future school development can address these challenges.

Pinewood is committed to continually improving our facilities and support systems to ensure we can effectively accommodate all students.

For more information you can contact the Learning Support team at learningspecialists@pinewood-school.gr

Resources:

[Level of Support System Consent Form](#)

[Refusal of Learning Support Services Form](#)

[LSA Agreement Form](#)