

Special Educational Needs Policy

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Purpose

All students selected through UWC National Committees meet certain selection criteria, answering questions relating to intellectual curiosity and motivation, active commitment, social competence, resilience, personal responsibility and integrity and motivation for the UWC values. Students selected to attend a UWC are generally high achievers within their contexts, and judged capable of gaining from studying for the IB Diploma.

Scope

This policy applies to all students of the College.

Policy Statement

UWC Dilijan is committed to encouraging all students to participate fully and confidently in college life. In accordance with the UWC values, considering in particular diversity, equity and inclusion, the college acknowledges its joint responsibility to help students with Specific Learning Difficulties to overcome obstacles to their learning.

UWCD follows established good practice in learning support provision by offering a graduated response, where support is increased or decreased according to student progress and student need. We have a Head of Learning Support to oversee and coordinate provision for students with Specific Learning Difficulties. The Head of Learning Support is qualified to conduct assessments to identify any requirements for inclusive access arrangements and to advise on strategies.

This policy is in line with the IB Access Arrangements procedures document: “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. This policy applies to candidates with long-term or permanent challenges.” (IBO, Access and Inclusion Policy, November 2018).

Procedure

Definitions

Special Educational Need (SEN) or a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) can be categorised as follows:

- Communication and interaction (eg. Asperger’s Syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Conditions);
- Cognition and learning (eg. attention deficit disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and processing difficulties);
- Social, emotional and mental health (eg. anxiety, depression);

- Sensory and/or physical needs (eg. visual or hearing impairments and sensory processing sensitivity).

These may overlap and are not confined to any particular level of intellectual or academic attainment.

Roles and responsibilities

The College Board of Governors and College Leadership Team are responsible for the strategic and financial decisions to allow the College to fulfill its duty of care towards all students and their progress.

College staff

The first level of support is provided by effective differentiation and adjustments by **subject teachers, mentors and toon parents**. When a student is identified as having a difficulty which requires interventions and strategies additional to or different from those provided as part of a differentiated curriculum, advice will be given in the form of a student profile, written jointly by the student and the Head of Learning Support. This is an important method of communication and will also include details of special arrangements for tests and examinations.

All **faculty members** need to enable students to access the curriculum by employing appropriate strategies. All teachers are responsible for making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of students encountering obstacles to their learning. The teaching staff will aim to adapt lessons and methods to meet different abilities and learning preferences and offer differentiation by content, task, resources, questioning, pace, homework, and/or class grouping.

The **Head of Learning Support** will publish suggested strategies for identified students and provide staff advice and training when required so that staff are able to develop expertise in recognising and meeting the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties. S/he will also coach and mentor identified students and train peer tutors as appropriate.

The Head of Learning Support will collect appropriate evidence for applications for examination access arrangements and work with the IB DP Coordinator to submit the applications.

Pastoral staff including Toon Parents, Tutors, College Counsellors, will liaise with subject teachers and the Head of Learning Support.

In the case of medical issues, the **School Doctor** keeps a confidential record of students' medical conditions and only communicates to teaching staff, when necessary, such information which is

required to enable staff to adjust their teaching or co-curricular activities in order to accommodate those students' needs.

Parents and **students** must indicate on the admissions form any specific difficulties which affect a student's learning. Confidentiality of information will be respected. Copies of reports from external agencies such as Educational or Clinical Psychologists and other specialists will be stored securely. Students must give written permission on a Data Protection form for the College to share relevant information with the International Baccalaureate Examination Boards in line with IB regulations in order to apply for examination access arrangements, for example allowing extra time, scribes and/or readers. UWCD will take reasonable steps within its resources to provide appropriate support to such students, to enhance their daily learning experiences. These arrangements must be the student's normal way of working.

If parents have obtained specialist advice, for example from an Educational Psychologist, doctor or psychiatrist, they are asked to provide the College with a copy of the specialist's report which must have been completed within the 12 months before coming to this College.

Students should play an active part in overcoming obstacles to their learning by using the agreed strategies and suggesting their own. All students are expected to respect differences including alternative ways of learning.

Having English as an Additional Language is not a specific learning difficulty but may present obstacles to learning. Language Support will be dealt with in a separate Policy document (UWCD Language Policy).

Referral process

There are multiple routes: students can refer themselves directly, or on advice from the school psychologist, mentors, house parents, subject teachers and/or peers.

If a member of staff wishes to refer a student for a preliminary discussion about Learning Support, they should fill in a referral form available in the shared Learning Support drive to indicate the areas of difficulty and strategies tried so far.

During the first discussion, the Learning Support Coordinator will investigate the difficulties further and suggest strategies for the student and possibly the classroom. The Learning Support Coordinator will judge whether a full assessment is required, and make further appointments if this is the case. Students would read and sign a GDPR form giving informed consent to the assessments and how their data is stored. If the assessments are carried out, the Learning Support coordinator will complete a) a full confidential report which comprises part of the

documentary evidence for the application for IB examination access arrangements, and b) a student profile with student and classroom strategies to be shared with relevant members of staff, which is also the second piece of evidence, the school based record of the student's normal way of working.

Legal requirements

The Republic of Armenia declared universal inclusive education as a guarantee of the right to education for every child. The inclusive education regulations are aimed at ensuring the accessibility, opportunity, equal participation in and quality of education of every child.

In the Republic of Armenia, the legal framework for inclusive education is primarily governed by the following key legislation:

- A. RA Law on General Education: It emphasizes the right of every child to education, aiming to ensure equal participation and quality education for all students, including those with special educational needs.
- B. RA Law on Education: This law establishes the state educational standards and outlines the structure of the education system in Armenia. It ensures that education is accessible to all children and sets the foundation for inclusive practices within educational institutions.
- C. RA Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities: Adopted in 1993, this law addresses the rights and social inclusion of individuals with disabilities, including provisions related to education. It aims to integrate people with disabilities into society and ensure their full participation in all aspects of public life.
- D. RA Law on Vocational Education: This law declares universal inclusive education as a guarantee of every student's right to education and work-based learning, further supporting the integration of students with special educational needs into the vocational education system.

In order to comply with legal requirements for inclusive education, the School has structured processes and policies in place to ensure that students with special educational needs are provided with appropriate support and services starting from the admission process of the School throughout the student's time being at the School.

The School has a Head of Learning Support who oversees and coordinates provision for students with Specific Learning Difficulties and Special Educational Needs.

The School provides differentiated teaching methods, and a range of support depending on student need and available resources to meet the special needs of each student. The school is not able to provide 1:1 in-class support assistants or full time 1:1 learning coaching.

Specialist assessments can be conducted by the Head of Learning Support to identify access arrangements for external examinations for students with special educational needs. These assessments help in identifying if the current support is effective or if adjustments are needed.

The School is in touch with parents regarding their child's progress through regular communication, including parent teacher meetings, written reports, and progress reports.

The School ensures that the campus (residences, canteen, classrooms, restrooms, entrances, etc.) are accessible to students with physical disabilities, in line with legal accessibility requirements (e.g., elevators, wheelchair ramps, accessible toilets).