



Vernus International School

INCLUSION POLICY

AY: 2023 - 2024

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| Date of Policy | August 2021 |
| Date of last review | August 2023 |
| Date of next review | August 2024 |
| Lead Member of Staff | Principal, Head of Inclusion & Wellbeing |



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Policy

Inclusive education is not a project or an initiative and does not sit solely with individuals who fulfil individual roles within our school.

'Every staff member is responsible for ensuring Inclusion takes place at every level across the school. It is the progressive development of attitudes, behaviors, systems and beliefs that enable inclusive education to become a norm that underpins school culture and is reflected in the everyday life of the school community.' (Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, p53)

1. Principles

1.1 Rationale

At Vernus International School we value children as individuals and recognize the diversity of our students.

A Student of Determination may find it significantly harder to learn or to take part in activities compared to students of the same age. These students may require additional support or provision for them to access the same curriculum.

All members of staff are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible support and outcomes for all students, regardless of need, ability, or aspiration.

We promote a holistic approach and follow a social model rather than a medical model and believe all children deserve the opportunity to access an extensive, balanced, and differentiated academic and social curriculum. Alongside adapting the curriculum to cater to all needs, we strive to provide a nurturing environment that develops the well-being of each student.

The guiding principles for inclusion are:

- Every teacher is a teacher of students with SEND. Teaching students with SEND is a whole-school responsibility, requiring a whole-school response.
- Classrooms offer a safe, stimulating, and supportive learning environment that allows access and challenge for all.
- Teaching and learning are approached with an active awareness of learning difficulties, learning differences, and learning styles.
- Recognition of the importance of emotional well and focusing on the development of self-esteem and confidence as a fundamental contributor to achievement.
- Language and literacy are vital to successful learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- Supporting students during phases of significant transition.
- To create a community of inclusion that encompasses the needs of all students. This policy takes account of the Inclusive Education Policy Framework Policy (2017).

The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework Policy has been developed to support the UAE's commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as well as federal and local legislation that calls for the inclusion of all learners, regardless of ability, in the education sector. The Dubai Inclusive Education Framework Policy (2017) states that a Special Education Need and Disability is:



"A need which occurs when a student identified with an impairment requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential disability from occurring and to ensure that the student can access education on an equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same aged peers."

PURPOSE:

Vernus International School is an inclusive school offering all students with mild to moderate special education needs equal access to a high-quality education. Our school recognizes that, in an inclusive educational environment, all students should be enabled to access the curriculum and learn. This policy aims to put in place provision for all students who need extra support for learning. This may be because they have a special educational need or a medical condition that may have an impact on them accessing the curriculum. Most of the provision will be coordinated through the Flexible Learning Center led by the SEND.

This policy ensures that with appropriately trained learning support specialists and with differentiated mainstream instruction, students with special learning needs can achieve at the optimal level of which they are capable. Application: What is important for SEN learners to be able to do with their learning 1-5 years from now skills, projects, ways of thinking.

Integration: What connections should SEN learners make with their lessons in everyday life, other disciplines, ideas, and people?

Human Dimension: How have SEN learners learned to see themselves differently? How have SEN learners learned to see others differently?

Caring: How have SEN learners' values, attitudes, and beliefs changed about their learning?

Learning How to Learn: How have SEN learners become better learners who are self-directed and accountable?

1.2 Aims of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Policy

- To address the individual needs of all students with a SEND.
- To identify students with SEND as early as possible through admission procedures, observation, and diagnostic tests.
- To ensure that students with SEND have equal access to an extensive and balanced curriculum that suits their learning style and needs.
- To work with the Executive Committee in formulating an accessible curriculum for all students.
- To collaborate with class teachers to ensure that students with SEND have their lessons appropriately differentiated to enable students to overcome any barriers to learning.
- To provide information and support to class teachers about students with SEND on their difficulties and recommend strategies for their educational provision, sharing examples of good practice.
- To successfully track and monitor the progress of all students with SEND to ensure each student makes expected progress.
- To ensure that parents are involved in their child's learning and gain an understanding of their SEND.
- To involve students in the development and review of their own learning journey and 'Individual Education Plans' (IEP).



- To liaise with outside agencies when specialist support is required.
- To support staff in embedding inclusive strategies within the classroom.
- Mandate an Inclusion Support Team to oversee SEND provision and exemplary practices across the school.

2. Legislation

2.1 This policy aims to ensure that Vernus International School is compliant with:

- The UAE Federal Law 29 (2006) concerning the 'Rights of People with Special Educational Needs.
- The UAE Federal Law 2 (2015) against 'Discrimination and Hatred'.

2.2 The school admission policy adheres to the stimulations of:

- The Dubai Inclusive Education Framework Policy (2017);
- The UAE Federal Law 29 (2006) concerning the 'Rights of People with Special Educational Needs;
- The UAE Federal Law 2 (2015) concerning the 'Protection of the Right of a Persons of Disabilities in the Emirate of Dubai;
- UAE Executive Council Resolution No. 2 of 2017 Regulating Private Schools in the Emirate of Dubai.

Definition of Special Educational Needs

3.1 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- A student with a SEND may find it significantly harder to learn or to take part in activities compared to students of the same age. These students may require additional support or provision for them access the same curriculum.
- Special educational provision means provision, which is additional to, or otherwise differentiated from, the educational provision made generally for children of the same age. The aim of the provision is to ensure the student can access education on an equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same aged peers.

A student may be identified as having a learning difficulty if he/she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.
- Has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities provided in comparison to children of the same age.

The UAE School Inspection Framework defines a Special Educational Need as "Educational needs that are different from those of the majority of students, and which arise from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder."

3.2 Disability

A Disability is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This is all that is needed.



3.3 Discrimination

The UAE Federal Law 29 (2006) defines discrimination as "Any segregation, exclusion or restriction due to special needs leading to the damage or denial of recognition of any rights granted by the prevailing legislation in the country or its practice or enjoyment on an equal footing."

3.4 Barriers to Learning

Attitudes, beliefs, practices, physical or technological obstacles, or the lack of support, that result in a student's exclusion from, or in their less-than-full participation as a valued equal in, the common learning environment in mainstream schools and classrooms.

3.5 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive.

This is evident through student engagement and participation in an education program within a common learning environment with the benefit of targeted support that enables the reduction and removal of barriers that may lead to exclusion.

Inclusive education is not a project or an initiative but rather the progressive development of attitudes, behaviors, systems and beliefs that enable inclusive education to become a norm that underpins school culture and is reflected in the everyday life of the school community.

3.6 Impairment

A medically identified condition or long-term limitation of a person's physical, mental, cognitive, communicative, and sensory function.

3.7 Common Learning Environment

An educational setting where students from different backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in an inclusive environment.

Common learning environments are used for the majority of the students' regular instruction hours and may include classrooms, libraries, gym, performance theatres, music rooms, cafeterias, playgrounds and the local community.

A common learning environment is not a place where students who experience SEND learn in isolation from their peers. Effective common learning environments:

- Enable each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with peers in the chosen educational setting;
- Provide a positive climate, promote a sense of belonging and ensure student progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional and academic goals;
- Are responsive to individual learning needs by providing sufficient levels of support and applying student-centered teaching practices and principles.

3.8 Equity

It is the extent to which individuals can take advantage of education and training in terms of opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes.



Equity is not the same as equality.

It assumes that learners have different needs that require different types of support in order to develop their full learning potential. Equity therefore requires differential treatment that takes account of student diversity and reduces the gaps between the outcomes achieved by the most advantaged and the least advantaged social groups.

Equity in education for students with special educational needs and disabilities occurs when schools ensure access to a learning experience that promotes a sense of belonging and enables appropriately challenging levels of academic and social engagement.

4. Categories of Need

The following is based upon the United Arab Emirates unified categorization of disability.

It provides schools with an important structure to support the identification of students of determination and VIS follows this within their identification and categorization of Students of Determination.

The 4 categories are as follows:

- 4.1 Cognition and learning (Intellectual disability, Specific learning disorders, Multiple disabilities and Developmental delay) (younger than five years of age)
- 4.2 Communication and Interaction (Communication disorders, Autism spectrum disorders)
- 4.3 Social, emotional and mental health (Attention Deficit Hyper Activity disorder, Psycho - emotional disorders)
- 4.4 Physical, sensory and medical (Sensory impairment, Deaf-blind disability, Physical disability and Chronic or acute medical conditions)

Classification of Stages of SEN and the levels of support expected:

Kindergarten Stage

Due to the developmental stages of children in KG their learning needs are supported by a system of monitoring and observing the learning patterns of all children over their first two years at the school. In this the school follows best international practice in SEN which delays formal intervention until after this initial educational phase. The SEN team will support and advise class teachers on strategies and approaches to maximize learning. Baseline assessments are conducted in a range of basic skills and records of these are compared and tracked over the first two years.

Wave 1 – Classroom teacher response to a student's learning need. Teachers should differentiate their lessons by using a student's provision map/learner profile or other formal record of the student's needs which should be accessible to all teaching staff. Effective inclusion of all children in high quality lessons where teachers differentiate according to individual student's needs as determined by each student's learner profile and anecdotal on-going assessments. Examples of sources of information: Teacher plans; provision maps; parent meetings; student goals; volunteer support.



Wave 2 – Where Wave 1 is not working or that the learning need is more severe. Therefore, more support is required, and this could take the form of withdrawal in groups or a Junior Teacher in the classroom working with a group of students. This will be a provision that goes beyond the 'normal' classroom. This may also possibly involve some external assessment. Children are expected to catch up with their peers as a result of specific in-class interventions such as withdrawal groups supported by a support teacher or teaching assistant. Examples of sources of information are provision maps; IEPs; ILP; learner profiles; teacher plans; provision maps; acceleration; enrichment; and withdrawal groups.

Wave 3 – Specific targeted support for individual students whose needs are not met by Wave 1 or Wave 2 interventions. This would probably involve external assessments from educational psychologists and associated therapists. A high level of support would be needed, possibly a one-to-one learning support assistant (LSA). Withdrawal from lessons for extra literacy and numeracy lessons would be necessary. The curriculum could not be accessed without this level of support. Examples of sources of information: are individual support plans; regular reviews; specialist assessments; screenings; associated resourcing; and target success trackers.

Eligibility Determination in the ELL Program

The screening of the students for the ELL Program shall be based on Evidence from CAT 4, MAP, Internal assessment (Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment) Parents' observation, assessment of the class teacher, assessment of the SEN teacher, assessment of the Head of inclusion or Wellbeing, evidence from students' portfolios.

ELL Support Team

The ELL Support Team would comprise Middle Management and Inclusion Professionals across the school.

Level of Support and Instructions

1. Additional support in mainstream classes with Classroom Teacher consultation
2. Group interventions outside of the class
3. Targeted support of class work and class learning activities

Procedure for ELL Support System

Step (1) Pre-referral from ELL Support Team (ELLST)

Step (2) Referral, Evaluation, and Eligibility Determination

The ELLST would decide based on the following evidence whether the child is eligible for ELL services or not. Evidence from CAT 4, MAP, Internal assessment (Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment) Parents' observation, assessment of class teacher, assessment of SEN teacher, assessment of Head of Inclusion or Wellbeing, and evidence from students' portfolios.

Step (3) Seeking Parental Consent for Pull-Out

Commented [FBI]: Teacher observation



The ELLST will ensure the parental consent for level three pull-out instructions of ELLs to proceed with targeted instructions.

Step (4) Developing Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)

The most important elements of the ELL program are the targeted goals and objectives to uplift students' capacity to effectively communicate in the English language. The accommodations and modifications in the teaching methods, learning materials or learning environment will be specified in ELP.

Step (5) Implementing ILP

The ELLST would ensure the implementation of ELP to achieve the learning objectives for ELLs.

Step (6) Monitoring, Reviewing, and Revising ELP goals and objectives.

The ELLST will monitor the implementation of ELP to ensure the learning objectives and the level of learning activities remain aligned with each other. Moreover, they are implemented effectively. The ELLST will review term wise.

Gifted and Talented

Identification of Gifted and Talented students must be based on ability and not achievement. Some children may underachieve for a variety of reasons such as peer pressure, behavioral issues, special educational needs, or reluctance to learn. All staff needs to be aware of this and look for 'hidden talents'. Both qualitative and quantitative information can be used for identification purposes.

Gifted & Talented students shall be identified using a variety of criteria, including elements of the following:

Triangulation of scores on standardized and internal assessments:

1. CAT4 scores with the below classification:

| SAS | Descriptor | Stanine | National Percent Rank | Comments |
|---------|------------|---------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 127-141 | Very High | 9 | 97-100 | Gifted and Talented |
| 119-126 | High | 8 | 90-96 | Potential Gifted and Talented |

2. MAP results (95 percentile or above) if CAT4 SAS is 127 - 141

3. Internal Assessment results

- Teacher Nomination and observation (using Nomination Form)
- Parent Nomination (using Nomination Form)
- Identification by a previous teacher, previous school, external agency, or organization.
- Observation to identify some of the below characteristics of giftedness:



1. Gifted students are often perfectionists and idealistic.
2. Gifted students may experience heightened sensitivity to their expectations and those of others.
3. Gifted students are asynchronous. Some gifted students are "mappers" (sequential learners), while others are "leapers" (spatial learners).
4. Gifted students may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know half the curriculum before the school year begins.
5. Gifted children are problem solvers. Gifted students often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with concrete study and test-taking skills.

Gifted students who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A".

5. Staff

5.1 Inclusion Support Team

The Inclusion Support Team (IST) is a working party comprised of Fariha Rasheed, Bushra Rasheed, LSAs & external therapists.

The IST may also include teachers, parents, and teaching assistants. The IST will work in close collaboration with all classroom teachers and other educational staff to promote and implement inclusive education across the school by removing barriers to learning and ensuring an inclusive culture.

5.2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - Head of Inclusion

The Head of Inclusion is responsible for the day-to-day operation, strategic planning and oversight of SEND across the school.

5.3 Inclusion Learning Support Assistant - LSA (1:1 Support)

A 1:1 Inclusion Learning Support Assistant LSA is an individual employed for the purpose of specialized or concentrated assistance with one individual student.

The role involves contributing to the education of the student within and outside of the classrooms and working alongside the enrichment team to identify and plan, to ensure the student is fully immersed in school life.

The LSA will support access to class-based learning, conducting 1:1 intervention and small group sessions under the guidance of the Head of Wellbeing & Inclusion & SOD teacher, offering support about classroom and behavior management, as well as social integration and training.

5.4 Staff Development

- Attendance at all planning meetings providing information about students and advising on inclusive strategies for the classroom.
- Information on the Assessment database about individual students, including IEP targets.



- Continued professional development (CPD) to address specific areas of SEND.
- After-school workshop sessions for classroom teachers as part of the school training program, and as a forum for sharing good practice.
- All stakeholders recognize the learning potential of all students.

6. Accessibility

6.1 Equality

We are fully committed to avoiding discrimination and promoting equality for all students. We seek to clearly and unambiguously ensure that students with medical conditions have full access to the curriculum, including Physical Education and school trips. Staff members will liaise with parents, teaching staff, and outside agencies to remove barriers to the student's learning.

6.2 School Site

Our school building is complete with lifts, accessible toilets, and self-cleaning facilities for personal care. Each building is wheelchair accessible. We endeavor to ensure that people of determination, be they students, staff, parents or visitors have full access to the range of services and activities provided.

7. Admissions

VIS welcomes applications from students of determination and those with specific learning difficulties. In order for us to support every student appropriately, students are tested on entry and a member of the Response to Intervention Team is involved once a SEND is flagged by parents and staff.

Applicants must declare any disabilities or specific learning disability at the time of the application to ensure the school can be fully equipped to provide appropriate support.

8. Assessment Access

Assessment Access Arrangements

Examples of adaptations that may be considered include:

- Extra time- granted 25% extra time; in exceptional circumstances, this may be increased to 50% extra time.
- Reader- to read the instructions of the paper, the questions, and the candidates' answers.
- Scribe- writes down, or word processes, a candidate dictated answers to the questions. The candidate may use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check enabled instead.
- Laptop- word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled.
- Prompter- keeps the student focused on the need to answer a question and then move on to the next question.
- Modifier paper- modifications include increased font and diagram size, alternate colored paper, and modified language paper.



- Supervised Rest Breaks- the timing of the examination can be stopped and restarted when the candidate is ready to continue. If the candidate needs to leave the examination room, an invigilator must accompany the candidate. The timing of these breaks depends on the nature of the candidate's needs/condition.

9. Identification and Support

Early identification of student needs is key to effective inclusion, provision, and support of all students. All members of staff are accountable for the identification of barriers to learning for students in their care. The Inclusion department offers support in screening and observing students to support the students and teacher. Members of the Inclusion Team work closely with all departments and the admissions team to ensure barriers to learning are identified as early as possible, parents also play a key role in working alongside the school throughout the identification process.

10. Individual Education Plan (IEP)

If a student is unable to access the mainstream curriculum and receives wave 3 support from a Learning Support Assistant along with having a formal diagnosis, then an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Learning Plan (ILP) will be put in place.

Within the IEP, a student will have academic, social/emotional, and/or physical/behavior/communication targets which will be set by the Class teacher and the SEND coordinator. These targets will be reviewed with the student's parents alongside the class teacher and any outside agencies working with the student such as Educational Psychologists and or therapists.

In combination, the multi-disciplinary team will agree on the next set of targets put forward and will work as a team to achieve these. All students who are placed on an IEP will still have full access to mainstream curriculum however it may be modified to ensure the student can access, progress, and succeed at his/her level.

11. LSA Hiring Process

LSAs will be hired as per below mentioned criteria:

1. Qualified LSAs will be hired with the parent's consent.
2. The head of Inclusion will be fully involved in the hiring process.
3. Based on the child's individual needs, LSAs will be selected
4. Parents cannot terminate LSAs without bringing them to the Head of Wellbeing & Inclusion's notice.
5. Parents will pay a decided salary every month to LSAs not later than the 5th of every month.