



**Island Academy International
An IB World School**



Inclusion (SEN) Policy

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Special Education Needs Policy

Philosophy

Island Academy recognizes that every student, regardless of circumstances, has the ability to learn and to be a life learner. IA's focus is to challenge and inspire all its students, and to foster compassion, self-esteem and global community.

Island Academy recognizes and supports the principle that the IBDP program, and education across IA's rigorous curriculum at all grade levels K--13, should be accessible to as broad a student body as possible, within our capabilities and resources.

IA's school motto "Unity through Diversity" is reflective of this inclusive policy.

Rights and responsibilities

All members of the school community — including students, parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff — have the right to participate in an inclusive, respectful, and supportive learning environment. They also have the responsibility to promote equity, celebrate diversity, prevent discrimination, and actively contribute to a culture of inclusion where every learner is valued and given the opportunity to succeed.

Profile

Island Academy is a culturally, socially, economically and racially diverse school in Antigua and Barbuda, and also demonstrates a wide range of learning strengths and challenges in its student complement.

Island Academy offers national, regional and global examinations, and qualifications for its students. Additionally, over 40% of IA students join the school on some kind of financial bursary, despite school fees being far below other regional and global IBDP educational institutions.

Island Academy staff is international and diverse, and dedicated to creating an open and inclusive learning environment.

Definition of SEN

IA students with special education needs may include conditions such as:

- ADD/ADHD
- Autism
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Dyscalculia
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Gifted and talented, or especially able
- Hearing impairment or deafness
- Physical disabilities
- Speech, language and communication challenges
- Visual impairment
- Permanent, or temporary challenges

Diversity of Learning

Island Academy supports the following IB principles in diversity of learning practice:

A9 Support access for students to the IBDP, and its philosophy.

B1:5 Develop and implement policies and procedures that support the programs.

B2:8 Provide support for students with learning and/or special educational needs, and support for their teachers.

C1:6 Incorporate differentiation for students' learning needs and styles in collaborative planning and reflection.

C3:10 Differentiate instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.

It is further the goal and expectation that all students will experience a positive learning environment based upon affirming identity and building self-esteem; scaffolding strategies including modeling, tapping into prior knowledge, visual aids, structured discussions, open-ended questioning and regularly trying new approaches; and extended learning opportunities.

SEN provision and admissions

At Island Academy, we endeavour to provide an inclusive environment. The first priority of the school is the safety and well-being of the students. When going through the admissions process for students with additional needs, we will assess the suitability of the school environment to cater for these needs.

Unfortunately, our resources at Island Academy are limited, and we do not have a specific SEN department or SEN Teacher or SENCO. Therefore cannot cater to all additional needs in a manner which is safe for all students. Therefore, if we conclude that we do not have the facilities to cater to a student, we will state this at the admissions stage.

Some additional needs can be catered for in the mainstream classroom, but for those who require an additional member of staff or further specialist resources, we may not be able to accommodate.

Academic, behavioral and counselor records are considered in this process. The HOS may require further information or testing if s/he thinks this is necessary. The HOS may also refer parents to seek additional remedial or other out-of-school education to best support the student.

Differentiated Instruction

Instruction, content, student projects and work, as well as assessments, may be modified or adapted to a classroom's best ability and resources in order to meet the learning needs of all students K-IB2. IA and its teachers recognize that all students are different and learn differently, and this should be included in a productive learning environment.

Differentiation could include resources both inside and outside of the classroom, based on the learning and emotional needs of a student.

As acknowledged in the 2010 publication, *Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programme*, "research has found that certain individuals or groups of children may benefit from adaptations to general teaching approaches, but in general pupils with SEN do not

need qualitatively different pedagogy” (International Baccalaureate). At times, to maximize learning, students may be withdrawn to work in small groups or one--on--one situations in order to close significant achievement gaps.

IB Diploma Program

All DP students’ academic plans are considered on a case-by-case basis. Where our practice is to encourage all students to enroll in the full diploma program, we recognize that students’ individual learning needs may preclude this from being the best way forward. Therefore, we work with our SEN students to design a program of study that allows them access to the maximum educational benefit possible, while being mindful not to overburden them when it would not be conducive to their academic or emotional strengths. This sometimes results in SEN students becoming Diploma Course candidates. With regards to their IB exit exams, IA works with students and their families to ensure that proper documentation about their SEN is available so that appropriate testing accommodations through the IB can be requested, commensurate with their SEN.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Island Academy does its best to accommodate IEP’s from established and recognized private or public health agencies. Teachers are made aware of any IEP’s, and are consulted to determine to what extent the requirements can be met without additional support. Depending on the level of need, and as IA’s resources are limited, parents may be advised to seek the advice of a specialist or a private or public health agency.

Tracking Documentation

Student strengths are supported and celebrated by documenting learning progress, school interventions, and the learning support procedures that are in place. School documentation is available to support school meetings with students, parents, specialists, school evaluation visits, and any collaborative approaches to meeting learning diversity. Developing a positive classroom climate conducive to supporting the learning of all students requires that students are appropriately challenged by their learning, that expectations of them are high but realistic, where students belong to the community and feel cared for, trusted, understood, and valued. Students need to be listened to, have their opinions sought, and be provided with opportunities to succeed. It is important that all students have the opportunity to develop the attributes of the Learner Profile, and to understand themselves as learners.

Accommodation for Assessment

Ongoing assessment will be differentiated at the teacher’s discretion and in agreement with the HOS. For IB external and internal assessments, the IB Organization authorizes the school, under certain conditions, to proceed to “Special Arrangements” regarding testing. In this case, a professional assessment, not older than two years old, must be provided to the school and to the IB Organization. No special arrangement will be done without these documents, and only the IB Organization is authorized to allow “Special Arrangements”. When granted, these arrangements may include:

- Modification to exam papers;
- Extension to deadlines;
- Assistance with practical work;
- Additional time;
- Rest periods;
- Information and communication technology;
- Scribe and transcription.

