

## LWIS HAZMIEH INCLUSION/SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

### INCLUSION

“Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all learners 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.” (Learning diversity and the IB Programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate Programmes, 2010:3)

In concurrence with the IB guidelines, inclusion, at LWIS HAZMIEH, refers to the process and act of recognizing and valuing individual differences and then consciously planning for these differences. Individual differences are the lighthouse that guides the school in its planning and decision-making, while being mindful of the standards of the curriculum and the individual differences, not only of the learners, but also of those working in direct contact with them.

### DIVERSITY

“In IB World Schools, all learners in the IB programmes should have meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. IB programme principles and practices call for schools to be organized in ways that value learner diversity and respect individual learning differences. Valuing diversity and difference is a key aspect of becoming more internationally minded and is an important goal of all IB programmes.” (From principles into practice: Learning diversity and inclusion, 27-28.)

LWIS HAZMIEH welcomes diversity, staff and learners from all backgrounds, without discrimination of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, social and economic background, religious beliefs, and practices. However, with such a claim, comes a great responsibility, a responsibility to stay aware and observant that all members of the community feel safe, valuable, and are treated with utmost respect and acceptance by everyone, without having to lose their own identity.

To this end, LWIS HAZMIEH administration prepares their staff at the beginning of every year for their new learners. From interviews with parents and their children, placement test results, (psycho-educational evaluation reports, previous IEPs for learners with SEN) etc., background history is gathered about learners in addition to any other relevant information which is all later shared with respective staff to support the learner at the entry level.

All departments work in different ways to celebrate diversity in and outside the classroom, implicitly and explicitly. The school's philosophy includes an open-door policy and a “talk about it” mindset – meaning – it is open to talking about differences and resolving them to promote communication and acceptance, recognizing that diversity will raise questions about other people's behaviors and practices, and answering these questions will only build bridges and connections between people while maintaining their identity.

“we measure success one happy learner at a time”

## DIFFERENTIATION

In teaching and learning, or planning school activities, field trips, or other activities, LWIS HAZMIEH staff takes into consideration the diversity of its members. Differentiation is a philosophy of life where one recognizes that every person is different in background, personal beliefs, abilities, and goals, among many other things; and believes that these differences are enriching. In order to communicate this belief, not only is differentiation to be applied in the classroom setting, but also in other daily life activities. For example, on mother-tongue day, parents of learners from different countries are invited to share information about their culture with the community. On LWIS HAZMIEH's International Day, cultures that are celebrated are usually selected based on the cultures of learners enrolled in school. Learners also share information about their backgrounds, and read books from their country of origin. The library contains a selection of books from different cultures.

The school celebrates religious holidays such as St. Barbara's Day, Prophet's birthday, Adha, Christmas and Easter and other events such as the Chinese New Year.

## LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

### PHILOSOPHY

LWIS HAZMIEH is committed to promoting a safe and supportive learning environment in order for learners with special educational needs to thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

At LWIS HAZMIEH, we value and respect all learners equally and aim to ensure that all learners have an equal opportunity to engage in the curriculum. We seek to offer our learners with special educational needs a broad, balanced and relevant education and enable them to experience educational success and be fully included in their school community. We recognize that some learners will need additional support during part of their school education to ensure access to the whole curriculum.

The purpose of the LWIS HAZMIEH Special Educational Needs Policy is to recognize and articulate the school's responsibility in identifying, and providing support for learners who have special educational needs which cannot be met within the parameters of the taught curriculum.

We believe that:

- Each learner belongs to the classroom community and needs to feel cared for, trusted, understood, valued and safe. We believe that learners should have the opportunity to feel successful (*Meeting learner learning diversity in the classroom*, IBO, p2).
- All learners can learn. All learners have a right to a holistic, inclusive education in a caring and stimulating environment.
- Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.
- We place great emphasis on the responsibilities of all teachers to be aware of and provide for learners with special educational needs.
- We believe all learners should be responsible for their own learning by taking an active role in identifying, monitoring, and meeting their own learning needs and abilities.
- We view a learner's education as a partnership between the learner, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the school and teachers, and the community.

"we measure success one happy learner at a time"

### **IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES**

Special Educational Needs (SEN) refers to learners who show documented need of support or challenge beyond the standard curriculum which calls for a special educational provision to be made for them. As for potential learners with SEN, LWIS HAZMIEH has a referral process in place.

Identification of a learner with a learning need can occur at any age or stage of development. Special Educational Needs may become apparent as a learner progresses through the school. When a classroom teacher suspects that a learner may need additional support, the procedure for referral is as follows:

1. Class teacher is to observe the learner in various settings and while working on various tasks. Assessments and work of the learners, as well as “average” work for the class to compare need to be collected. Teacher is to document any strategies that have been tried and whether or not they have been successful. The teacher is to fill in a referral form supplied by the Counseling Department.
2. Teacher is to send the form and accompanying documents to the Counselor and a copy of the form to the SEN Coordinator.
3. The Counselor and SENCO will conduct assessments/observations and will compile all the information.
4. The Counselor and SENCO will then make recommendations to the Principal of any teaching interventions, support, or external referrals which may be needed.
5. The counselor/SENCO will communicate with the referring teacher, and other teachers as appropriate.
6. A parent meeting will be held to share the areas of concern and the proposed plan of action.

Special educational needs learners at LWIS HAZMIEH include, but are not limited to learners with:

- learning difficulties
- attention difficulties
- physical and medical challenges
- communication and speech difficulties

### **ADMISSION OF LEARNERS WITH SEN**

LWIS HAZMIEH welcomes and accepts all learners who, in the school’s judgment, can benefit from its programs and services and whose needs can be met by the school based on the resources and services available.

The school shall accept as eligible for admission learners with mild learning support needs. The school shall also consider, on a case by case basis, the admission of learners who require moderate support. The school shall, however, only admit learners for whom it is able to provide suitable resources and support.

In cases where the school determines that it is necessary to provide extra assistance to enable a child to access the school’s programs, it may require the parents to fund some or all of the additional associated costs.

Prior to an admissions decision being made, the school shall consult with parents regarding the type and level of support that their child might need. The final decision on admission; however, rests with the school.

If a learner is applying for admission to LWIS HAZMIEH and they have already been identified as having special educational needs, any results of prior testing and/ or existing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need to be provided to the Admissions Office with the application. Applications will not be processed until all supporting documentation has been submitted and the school can make an informed decision as to whether or not it can meet the learner’s needs. If parents do not provide documentation in regard to the learner’s special educational needs and it later transpires that the learner had been diagnosed with a condition that would

“we measure success one happy learner at a time”

require SEN support, the school will reassess whether or not the learner's needs can be met. After the review of all documents, learners with SEN will sit for an entry test in English, Math & Arabic (for Lebanese learners). They will be supported by a teacher during the entry test to ensure that they are working to their full potential. When needed, a team approach might apply (presence of counselor, OT, or/and SLT).

The placement of learners with special educational needs is based on a group decision made by the school team and the parents. The Principal and SEN Coordinator will assist parents in determining the best support strategies for the learner, taking into account the learner's specific additional learning and support needs, and parent's input on the matter. The school will also provide information and may refer parents to other professionals outside of school that may help support the development of the learner. All conditions and details are clearly stated in the learner's admission letter.

### **MEETING LEARNER'S NEEDS WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

The focus of the SEN Department is to support learners with special educational needs and assist with the educational planning and monitoring of the learner's progress. The SEN Department also provides training for teachers to best support learners with SEN through offering differentiated lessons, altering resources, etc. The ultimate aim of the SEN Department is to help learners lead a more independent life both in school and their social environment.

Every learner has his or her own uniquely designed program, the IEP. It is the IEP that best describes the child and the types of accommodations, modifications, and specialized instruction needed for success.

Learners eligible for special education are provided the following as determined by the IEP team:

- Access to the general education curriculum
- Case management services to coordinate service delivery
- Inclusion in the general education classroom
- Collaboration and consultation with general education staff and community agencies
- Specialized instructional and behavioral support from specialists
- Assistive technology services
- Related and support services as deemed appropriate by the IEP team. Related services currently available at LWIS HAZMIEH are speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, psychomotor therapy and counseling and are provided to learners who require additional support.

Learners with documented special educational needs are placed in the school, and provided with any of the following support options:

#### EY-Grade 5

- Mainstream class with direct support
- Mainstream class with pull-out assistance

#### Grades 6-12

- Mainstream class with direct support
- Mainstream class with pull-out assistance
- A special education class with partial integration ( currently, integration ranges between 1-8 periods weekly)

"we measure success one happy learner at a time"

LWIS HAZMIEH's special education services include the provision of in class accommodations and modifications (classroom environment, instructional, assignments, test taking and grading) to enable learners to reach their potential. The support enables learners to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. When it is determined that a learner would benefit from additional support outside of the classroom and resources are available, pullout services are provided to meet academic, social, or behavioral needs.

Learners with SEN receive special education services and are supported within the general education classroom with the implementation of individualized accommodations and modifications to address learner's needs; literacy and mathematics are key instructional areas of support. Most learners with SEN will follow the same curriculum as their peers. In certain cases, learners will be withdrawn from the mainstream classroom to focus on the skills development required to access the curriculum. Learners will also be given in-class support in order to ensure the skills they have learned are implemented, and to assist them in accessing the curriculum in the classroom. Learners in EY-Grade 7 may receive resource room intervention services where direct, specialized instruction is offered individually or in pairs (scheduled against French /3 sessions per week). Specific IEP goals are usually implemented by the resource room teacher with support from the SENCO. Related services for PYP learners are offered at a rate of two 45 minute sessions per week and are scheduled against the following sessions: speech and language therapy against homeroom sessions targeting literacy, occupational therapy & psychomotor therapy against PE and at times against homeroom sessions targeting writing. Their specific goals are included in the IEP. As for learners placed in a special education class with partial integration, the twice per week sessions are scheduled as an integral part of their educational program and the goals are included in the IEP.

In the classroom, provisions for learners with special educational needs will be made by class teachers to ensure access to the whole curriculum. The SEN Department assists classroom teachers in addressing the educational needs of learners with SEN.

Regarding the matrix of support available at LWIS HAZMIEH, there is always a possibility for some learners to be able to work independently with transitional or low level support; this is especially true for learners with mild learning difficulties. The level of support needed may vary, depending on the interaction between the school's demand and the individual's strengths and needs. All faculty involved with a learner with special educational needs will provide input to determine the support needed, if any, in each area of the curriculum.

The whole school works consciously on supporting learners with special educational needs physically, emotionally, and socially. The school also works toward having and preparing the whole community toward tolerance and compassion.

When planning adaptations to teaching and assessment for learners with SEN, the following principles are to be respected:

1. Where normal assessment conditions would put SEN learners at a disadvantage, reasonable adjustments, including the use of Technology, must be given to allow the learner to demonstrate his/her ability.
2. The special adjustments put in place to allow learners to demonstrate their true ability must not put SEN learners at an advantage.
3. Any grade awarded to a SEN learner in any subject must not be a misleading description of the learner's level of attainment based on the course objectives. Schools may differentiate conditions in relation to the

"we measure success one happy learner at a time"

interim objectives to meet the needs of the learner, however, at the end of the year, the same assessment criteria must be applied to all learners within the subject, regardless of whether they have special educational needs.

4. Where special arrangements have been made for assessment, they must correspond to school policy and reflect the conditions available to the learners in the classroom. Special assessment arrangements must be recorded and made available to concerned parties upon request.

Teachers track learner progress to make educational decisions. Documentation of services received will be provided for learners with SEN. Progress will be reported at least three times per year. Progress reports will be maintained in learner files. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are written for learners who are identified for special education services. These plans will be revised annually, are confidential, and are shared with other school staff on an as needed basis.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COLLABORATION

LWIS HAZMIEH staff are carefully selected based on their philosophies, their strengths, and their willingness to learn and grow. Through this selection process, the leadership team is aware that differentiation extends to teachers and other staff members and not only to learners. Staff are supported according to their needs and their abilities, light is shed and investments are made in their strengths, while recognizing their needed points of growth.

Staff are supported by their supervisors and given professional development as needed. They are also encouraged to support each other and work as a team.

All teachers receive training to promote an understanding of the components of their respective programs. Teachers and support staff receive staff development on strategies to meet special educational needs in the classroom as well as in the general school environment.

All teachers (including SEN teachers) regularly meet horizontally and vertically to collaborate on curriculum and assessment, to reflect on learner learning, and to plan for differentiation.

The SEN Department Team and Program Coordinators will, where required, provide in-service training to support teachers within the classroom. The SEN Coordinator is responsible for keeping up to date with current SEN methods and practices.

SEN staff are responsible for:

- Preparing IEPs in collaboration with other teachers and parents
- Planning and implementing intervention strategies and classroom accommodations with other teachers to achieve IEP goals
- Writing and monitoring lesson plans for small groups or one-on-one intervention sessions
- Supporting an inclusive learning environment inside the school
- Attending parent-teacher interviews as requested
- Contacting parents on behalf of the school whenever necessary
- Observing and monitoring learner performance in different learning areas
- Providing feedback on learner's improvement and performance evaluation during parent-teacher meetings and on the interim and end-of-term reports
- Conducting formal and informal assessments when needed

"we measure success one happy learner at a time"

- Evaluating the IEP based on learner's achievement and performance at the end of each term

In order to provide the best possible support for learners with special educational needs, the administration:

- Collaborates with the SENCO on the process of admitting learners who may need learning support.
- Acquires, and shares with the appropriate teachers, any learner records from previous schools and any medical references of the learners in need.
- Arranges time for SEN teacher to assess learners' needs and organize possible support options.
- Provides information to parents about the school's procedure and policy for learners with special needs

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

It is expected that parents of current learners identified with special needs will agree to opt for support sessions in order to receive additional learning support. If that does not happen, the school cannot guarantee that the child will have full and appropriate access to the curriculum and alternative arrangements will be recommended.

Any adjustments made to teaching and learning and any other support the school provides are discussed in advance with parents and learners and their wishes are considered.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

This policy has been created using IB support materials. It is an ongoing process that will be systematically reviewed, evaluated and modified as needed by the SEN staff, coordinators and administration. The committee will be made up of the principal, IB PYP coordinator, the SENCOs, the school counselor, and other representatives from the SEN Department. The purpose of the committee will be to review the current document, revise as needed, and plan how to communicate current practices to staff, parents and when appropriate to learners.

*The compilation of this policy by the LWIS HAZMIEH Inclusion/SEN Committee was inspired by the review of different SEN policies posted on the OCC (currently called PRC) and on authorized IB schools' websites. The review process was also based on some IB publications including, but not restricted to: "Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom", "Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes", & "Teaching Students with Particular Special Educational and Learning Needs-A Resource for Schools".*

"we measure success one happy learner at a time"