

ELCHK Lutheran Academy

Inclusive Learning Policy

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Introduction	3
The philosophy of the school inclusion policy	3
The aim of this policy	3
The references of the policy	3
Aims and Objectives of the policy	4
Roles and responsibilities	4
Role of Inclusive Learning Coordinator (ILC)	4
Role of Learning Support Teacher	5
Role of Subject Teachers	5
Collaboration with other functional teams	6
Communication of the policy	6
Review of the policy	6
Identifying students that require inclusive access to learning	7
Admission	7
Assessment and Identification for students	7
Early Identification and Intervention (EII)	7
Learning Achievement Measurement Kit (LAMK)	8
Referral and Assessment	8
The Inclusive Learning Team	8
A Gradual Approach to Inclusive Learning Support	9
Tiered Support	9
Tier 1 - Early identification and quality teaching in regular classrooms	9
Tier 2 - Additional interventions	9
Tier 3 - Intensive interventions	9
Individual Education Plan (IEP)	9
Approaches to Teaching and Learning	11
Differentiated strategies	11
Universal Design for Learning	11
Storage and management of student information	11
Assessments	12
Internal assessments	12
Inclusive assessment arrangements for external assessments	12

Introduction

ELCHK Lutheran Academy, a through-train school where diversity is embraced and celebrated, is committed to offering support for their students with learning support requirements, to ensure the development of a whole school approach to inclusion and to catering for the diversity of its learners inline with the statutory requirements laid out by the Education Bureau (EDB) and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

The philosophy of the school inclusion policy

The philosophy of the school inclusion policy is to ensure that all students have access to learning by taking into account diverse learning needs. Inclusion entails a responsive environment and a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving. It aims to provide “education for all” by taking into account the diverse needs of students and removing barriers to learning, ensuring all students are able to access the curriculums and recognising diversity across the school community, in areas such as creating optimal learning environments and celebrating multilingualism. The school implements the strength-based approach to ensure that all opportunities to demonstrate learning are rewarded and all students can experience success as a key component of their learning.

The aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to establish a whole-school approach and protocol that enables all staff to collaborate for the benefit of every student. In addition, the aim of the policy is to establish what action the school needs to take, but not to categorise the student. We strive to identify and remove barriers that may be preventing students from accessing and engaging with their learning whilst aiming to meet their different educational needs and guide them to reach their full potential.

The references of the policy

The policy has been written with reference to the following guidelines and documents by the members of the Inclusive Learning Team who have been liaising with the school’s Senior Leadership Team and all staff/stakeholders in its completion.

- Operation Guide on The Whole School Approach to Integrated Education May 2014 EDB, The HKSAR Government;
- Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes IBO August 2010;
- Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom IBO May 2013;
- IB Programme standards and practices May 2020;

- DP assessment handbook procedures 2019
- Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes 2020

Aims and Objectives of the policy

- To identify and provide support for students who require inclusive access for learning;
- To plan, develop, implement and review a “Whole School Approach” in order to provide and manage effective support;
- To provide guidelines for all staff working with students with learning support requirements;

Roles and responsibilities

The Inclusive Learning Team is composed of the Inclusive Learning Coordinator and Learning Support Teachers specialized in offering support to students with learning support requirements. The roles and responsibilities for teachers and other staff working with students will differ according to the student’s support tier.

Role of Inclusive Learning Coordinator (ILC)

The ILC plays a leading role in coordinating the planning, development, implementation and review of the integrated educational support strategy in schools, in order to enhance its effectiveness and benefit students with diverse learning needs. The ILC is required to lead the Inclusive Learning Team:

- To strategically plan, implement and monitor, review and assess various support measures and resources regarding learning support with the involvement of senior leadership team, including this policy;
- To promote early identification and support of students with learning support requirements across different professionals, e.g. teachers in collaboration with educational psychologist, speech therapist etc.;
- To develop and deploy annual plans, support plans and accommodation strategies on teaching and assessments with “Whole-school approach”;

- To provide relevant training opportunities based on the identified needs, records should be maintained accordingly;
- To lead co-workers to adopt effective support strategies through co-planning and collaborative teaching, in order to facilitate the diverse learning needs of students ;
- To promote home-school collaboration to enhance support students with diverse learning needs;
- To establish and maintain contact with external organizations and relevant professional networks (such as professionals, community resources, EDB, parents);

Role of Learning Support Teacher

- To develop an understanding of the specific needs of the students they work with;
- To provide support to students to help them become independent learners, with the collaboration of other teaching staff;
- To devise complementary learning activities and prepare resources;
- To establish a supportive relationship with the students concerned;
- To develop students' self esteem;
- To encourage acceptance and integration of the student within the classroom;
- To allow different forms of homework or assignment, alternative means of presentation that can demonstrate their ATL skills and assessment objectives for students who have learning support requirements and requires different level of adjustment;
- To maintain records of intervention and keep good communication with parents and teachers of students with diverse learning needs.

Role of Subject Teachers

Catering to the learner diversity concerns the whole-school, with every teacher being responsible for every student in his or her class. The expectations of class teachers, subject teachers and Heads of Year are:

- To be aware of the referral process for students with learning difficulties and make the ILT aware of students' potential learning barriers in a timely manner;
- To continuously observe, understand and assess the learning needs of students;
- To work collaboratively with ILT in the identification, planning and provision of learning support;

Collaboration with other functional teams

The whole school approach of the inclusion policy is implemented with the involvement of a variety of functional teams under the Student Affairs Department, such as social workers, Pastoral Care and Career Counselling to communicate and coordinate the provision of support to students with learning support requirements. For example, the school recognises that students at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. The school nurse will regularly update staff about how to cater for the needs of students with medical needs, provide teaching and support staff with students' medical information and specific advice about students with particular learning needs or medical conditions.

Communication of the policy

- This policy will be made available to all teaching and non-teaching staff of the school. Updates will be announced and made available to them through staff meetings. New staff will also be informed about the policy in the induction sessions;
- Both printed and electronic copies of this policy and related documents are made available to parents, in order to keep parents informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the educational needs of their child.
- Parents will be invited to parent seminars and focus groups to learn more about the policy and their rights to access the support provided by the school. They are welcome to provide feedback about the policy.

Review of the policy

The Inclusive Learning Coordinator will coordinate the review of the Inclusion Learning Policy bi-annually. Meetings will be held to identify the areas for improvements based on the feedback from various stakeholders, including the Deputy principal, Heads of School, Programme Coordinators, Head of Student Affairs, teachers and parents. Documents and records, such as outcomes of Students Support Plans, Annual Plans will be included as supporting evidence in the evaluation and review process. Stakeholders will be informed about the amendments made to the policy.

Identifying students that require inclusive access to learning

We aim to optimise the learning process in order to enable students with learning needs to achieve the highest possible levels of proficiency academically and pastorally. We adopt the 3-Tier Support Model to facilitate students' learning. We will endeavour to:

- Enable these students to participate in the full curriculum at their class level;
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these students;
- Enable these students to monitor their own learning and become independent learners;
- Involve parents in supporting their children;
- Collaborate with colleagues in order to maximise learning and minimize difficulties;
- Establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning;

Admission

All students applying to enter ELCHK Lutheran Academy will, at the time of admission, be screened for the possibility of any educational needs, for the sake of planning and deploying resources to strategically support students with known learning-support requirements. The Inclusive Learning Team will be consulted when concerns are raised. However, information obtained from screening and observation are for reference only; all students to be accepted for enrolment at Lutheran Academy must meet the admission requirements. After obtaining written consent from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student, the team will liaise with parents, teachers, case workers/support staff of students' previous school to obtain records of diagnostic assessment and training, in order to have a comprehensive view of the students' profile. This will enable the school to provide adequate and relevant support and to ensure a smooth transition.

Assessment and Identification for students

➤ Early Identification and Intervention (EII)

All teachers of Year 1 students are required to fill in the Observation Checklist for Teachers (in October) for each of their students. Students with concerns will be brought into a discussion and warrant further observation and investigation by the teachers and members of the Inclusive Learning Team. For students with prominent features of diverse learning needs, a follow up and referral will be made to the designated personnel (eg. educational psychologist) for assessment and evaluation.

➤ Learning Achievement Measurement Kit (LAMK)

Students who are observed to have difficulties in overcoming academic challenges may be invited to take the LAMK developed by the Education Bureau, a set of norm-referenced achievement tests in Chinese, English and Mathematics. Support and interventions (including referral and documentation) will then be provided.

➤ Referral and Assessment

A referral will be made to the Inclusive Learning Team when at least one of the following Dimensions of Schooling are present:

- Speech and Language;
- Motor Coordination, Physical and Sensory Processing;
- Social Communication;
- Emotional and Social Well Being.

➤ The Inclusive Learning Team

The Inclusive Learning Team will then proceed in the following sequence:

- The Inclusive Learning Team will collect information across all subjects;
- Information is evaluated;
- Student observations and profiling will be conducted by the Inclusive Learning Team.

Recommendations will then be made about whether the student needs:

- No additional support;
- In-class teacher differentiation;
- Short-term intervention(s);
- Ongoing provision (in-class support/withdrawal);

- Assessment screening for specific students carried out with the input of teachers and parents;
- If screening shows possible signs that students require inclusive learning arrangements, the team will contact parents and send a referral letter to suggest that their child should be referred to an Educational Psychologist for assessment.

A Gradual Approach to Inclusive Learning Support

Tiered Support

Our school adopts a 3-Tier Support Model to cater for students' individual learning needs in a comprehensive manner.

Tier 1 - Early identification and quality teaching in regular classrooms

In Tier 1, all students are taught using evidence-based teaching methods. Students with learning difficulties respond to the methods differently from others. A Homeroom / Subject Teacher or a parent would therefore have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of the student. General accommodation strategies and quality teaching are applied in regular classrooms as Tier 1 interventions. The Homeroom / Subject teacher will continue to observe the students' progress and make notes of their areas of concern. Meanwhile, they will inform the Inclusive Learning Team to discuss the effectiveness of strategies and any further accommodations or referrals.

Tier 2 - Additional interventions

Students who show persistent difficulties despite Tier 1 support, or are already diagnosed by professionals to have special learning needs, will be provided with "add-on" Tier 2 interventions such as small-group training and pull-out lessons. At the same time, Tier 1 support, i.e. classroom strategies and quality teaching, still plays its role in regular classrooms. Their learning progress would be closely monitored by meetings with the Inclusive Learning Team, Homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and parents.

Tier 3 - Intensive interventions

For students who do not respond well to support on the previous tiers, Tier 3 intensive interventions will be provided. Their conditions will be discussed in meetings among the Inclusive Learning Team, teachers, parents and relevant professionals, for example psychologists, speech therapists and social workers.

with less emphasis on psychological and medical labels. IEPs are integrated with the technologies the student uses as well as the IB learner profile; they align with the school’s teaching and learning approaches and respect confidentiality. It is a collaborative process whereby meetings are student-led and progress is evidence-based.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide quality teaching - Identify students with suspected learning difficulties - Apply classroom strategies if needed - Approach Inclusive Learning Team for discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue Tier 1 support - Keep consistency with training groups, e.g. adopting rules taught in training groups into regular classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue Tier 1 & 2 support
Inclusive Learning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggest strategies to teachers - Meetings with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide group training - Contact outside agencies for training groups - Provide in-class and pull-out support - Collaborate with teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue Tier 2 support - Refer students to professionals - Set up meetings with teachers, professionals and parents
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be notified about students’ progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be notified about students’ progress - Be invited to attend training/sharing sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be notified about students’ progress - Be invited to attend training/ sharing sessions - Join meetings and collaborate at home

			- Give recommendations in meetings
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Approaches to Teaching and Learning

In line with the IB's commitment to inclusive education, the approach to learning is grounded in the belief that learning in a way that suits the individual is fundamental for creating active, lifelong learners. Additionally, the approach to teaching is deliberately broad and this gives teachers the flexibility to choose specific strategies which meet learning needs, enabling every student to develop and pursue appropriate goals. Teachers apply the strategies of differentiated instruction and universal design to learning for curriculum development to accommodate diverse learning needs.

Differentiated strategies

Differentiated instruction is the process of identifying with each learner to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate personal learning goals. This differentiated instruction includes three main elements:

- Content (What will students learn and how?);
- Process (What activities will help students make sense of knowledge and skills?) and
- Product (How will each student provide evidence of knowledge, understanding and ability?).

By giving students multiple means of engagement and expression, we ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn.

Universal Design for Learning

The school adopted the approach of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for curriculum development. It is a framework that serves as a blueprint for creating challenging instructional goals, methods, materials and assessments to accurately assess learner progress for all students with equal opportunities to learn. It takes into account:

- Diverse recognition networks to provide multiple means of representation;
- Diverse and strategic networks to provide various means of action and expression;
- Diverse and effective networks to provide multiple means of engagement.

Storage and management of student information

A comprehensive register of all referred Primary and Secondary students that require inclusive access learning needs and those with an assessment and diagnosis is kept on a password-protected database system. Teachers and staff concerned are able to access the records on a need-to-know basis.

- These registers are living documents that are updated regularly. The registers include details of the specific needs of the student and relevant recommendations from the assessment reports. Besides, a One Page Profile provides an overview of information regarding particular students, their learning and behaviour (their responses to profile questions) and a link to Individual Education Plans.
- Records will be kept by the learning support teachers and any other teachers concerned; parents will also be able to access these and contribute to them.
- In addition to the records in electronic format, printed copies of records, official assessment reports and results, are kept in secure cabinets located in the office of the Inclusive Learning Team. The practice of handling students' information should be in line with the school policy on Information Management and Privacy Policy, and the guidelines suggested by the local authority.

Assessments

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process and entails evidence gathered constantly throughout the teaching and learning process. It can inform students about themselves, giving them the chance for self-reflection and active engagement in their own learning. It also informs teachers and creates opportunities to remove barriers to learning and assessment.

Internal assessments

Internal assessment is ongoing, diverse and relevant to the learner, in order to actively inform and involve learners and focus on learner progress.

- The school is accessible in terms of design, content and medium to give every student the opportunity to succeed. Being flexible for differentiated assessment with different entry and exit points provides multiple opportunities in varied media for learners to demonstrate skills and express themselves.
- Assistive technologies are also used to consolidate, assist or enable students during internal assessments to enhance inclusive access arrangements. This can reduce the barriers and optimise support by applying intercultural understanding, global engagement and multilingualism for all learners.

Inclusive assessment arrangements for external assessments

- Inclusive assessment arrangements for external assessments are arranged by the Inclusive Learning Coordinator in consultation with the Inclusive Learning Team and IB coordinator based on the procedures recommended by the IB. For inclusive assessment access requirements that require authorization from IB, students should submit relevant evidence to the IB for authorization.
- Application needs to be made at least a year prior to the examination.
A medical or assessment report needs to have been done no earlier than the previous academic year before the start of the candidate's study unless with justifiable reasons.
- The IB Coordinator, Heads of School, and the Inclusive Learning Team collaborate to propose inclusive assessment accommodations for the students.
- Relevant documents related to the candidate's past assessment accommodation needs will be collected and reviewed.
- The request for inclusive assessment arrangements will be then forwarded to the respective organisation when the school registers the students for the examination accommodations . Relevant supporting documents will also be forwarded with written consent from the parents/ legal guardian of the applicant.
- The school will notify the applicant and his/her parent or legal guardian about the arrangements upon the approval from the respective organisation .
- Near the date of the external assessments, the school will prepare and finalize the inclusive assessment arrangements for the student.