

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION SEND POLICY



HABITAT SCHOOL
AL JURF, AJMAN

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Members of the committee

- Mr. Wasim Yousuf Bhat (Dean)
- Mr. Bala Reddy Ambati (Principal)
- Mr. Suresh Sukumar (Vice Principal)
- Mr. Hamza Kollath (Administrative Officer)
- Ms. Sasneem Sanoop (Head of the Counselling Department)

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Vision

The school envisages learning as a communitarian process of imbibing education from the natural, academic, social and technological ecosystems created around the institution of school.

Mission

We strive to provide a new model of education for the expatriate children in the UAE in a culturally inclusive, technologically effective and ecologically sensitive way in a cosmopolitan environment.

Philosophy, Vision and Mission for Special Education in the UAE

Philosophy for Special Education

Each student is unique in his/her own way and needs to be provided with a safe, caring and stimulating environment to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially. Educators demonstrate a commitment to teach all students and provide them with a safe and supportive environment to develop to their maximum potential based on their individual strengths and challenges.

Vision for Special Education

The UAE's vision is to provide educational programs and related services to students with special needs and gifts and talents in public and private schools in the UAE that reflect the best international standards and practices to prepare them to be productive members of society.

Mission for Special Education

Use all available resources to plan, implement, and monitor the provision of special education programs and related services for students with special needs and gifts and talents and ensure that they receive an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) based on their strengths and need to enhance their social competence and enable them to maximize their contributions to their communities.

Philosophy of Inclusive Education

The provision of support and equal access to educational programs and services for students with special needs and gifts and talents are the priorities of the educational policy in the United Arab Emirates and reflect the philosophy of inclusive education. Inclusive education means that all students have the right to be educated to the extent possible with their age-appropriate peers who do not necessarily have disabilities in the general education setting of their neighborhood school with support provided. Inclusive education is not intended to limit the participation of students with special needs to regular education programs and services. Rather, inclusive education means that students with special needs have the opportunity to participate in educational programs and services in the least restrictive environment that is commensurate with their individual strengths and needs. In many cases, the least restrictive environment is the regular education classroom, though not all the time. Here it must be noted that students may be eligible to receive special education programs and services and may receive those services and remain enrolled in the regular education classroom.

Specific Objectives

- To welcome Student of Determination (SEND) and meet their needs in a positive manner so they achieve their best.
- To ensure that the students with special needs are identified as early as possible and are fully integrated into the classroom.
- To provide an inclusive education for all students with special needs and use our best endeavors to remove barriers to learning by providing high quality teaching differentiated for individual pupils.
- To promote the all-round development and self esteem of children by creating a warm and nurturing environment where all children feel valued and are encouraged to reach their full potential.
- To implement different teaching and learning strategies to maximize achievement.
- To ensure that all staff including non-teaching staff , are provided with support and opportunities to develop their professional knowledge to work with the SEND.
- To maintain appropriate records and profiles of SEND and other disadvantaged groups.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM IN SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP MEMBERS

- PRINCIPAL
- SUPERVISORS
- HODs
- SPECIALIST PROFESSIONALS
- PSYCHOLOGIST
- SOCIAL WORKERS
- SPECIAL EDUCATOR
- SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST
- SCHOOL DOCTOR
- NURSE

SEND CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

Special Education Categories The following categories of disabilities are recognized the by UAE, Ministry of Education as categories of disabilities that qualify a student to receive special education programs and related services, if it can be demonstrated that the disability adversely affects the child's academic performance:

Specific Learning Disabilities. A specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations and/or mathematical reasoning, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of cognitive disability, of emotional disability, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Physical and health related disability. This means physical and health problems which are chronic or severe in a manner that they lead to poor and limited functionality and adversely affect the educational performance of the student such as: (asthma, attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, diabetes, heart disease, epilepsy, leukemia, cerebral palsy, renal failure, HIV, and head injuries etc.).

Visual impairment means impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term visual impairment includes both partially sighted and blindness.

Hearing Impairment Including Deafness. Hearing impairment including deafness means an impairment that, with or without amplification, adversely affects educational performance; may be permanent or fluctuating; may be so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.

Speech and Language Disorders. Speech and language disorders means having a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Autism Spectrum Disorders. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), also known as Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDDs), cause severe and pervasive impairment in thinking, feeling, language, and the ability to relate to others. These disorders are usually first diagnosed in early childhood and range from a severe form, called Autistic Disorder, through Pervasive Development Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), to a much milder form, Asperger's Disorder. They also include two rare disorders, Rett's Disorder and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. An emotional and behavioral disorder means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: (a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances, (d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression, and (e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

Intellectual Disabilities. Intellectual disabilities, formerly called "mental retardation" means having significantly below average general intellectual functioning, existing along with deficits in adaptive behavior which are manifested during the developmental period and adversely affect a child's educational performance.

Gifted and Talented. Definition for Gifted and Talented Gifted and Talented refers to having outstanding ability, or a great deal of willingness in one or more areas of intelligence, or creativity, or academic achievement or special talents and abilities such as oratory, poetry, drawing, handicrafts, sports, drama, or leadership capacity. More often the performance of the talented or gifted student is so exceptional or advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs in the general education classrooms with support from special education teachers and resource room teachers. The Ministry of Education in the UAE provides various services to Gifted and Talented students such as: enrichment programs inside the general education classes or resource rooms (either in a subject in the curriculum, or subject not included in the curriculum). Additional services include assigning students individual projects and studies, specialized educational tours, attending lectures, debates, educational seminars, participating in educational competitions, providing students with programs to solve problems, programs of leadership, communication and computer skills, and other such enrichment programs are also provided.

Exclusionary Clause. The term disability and or placement in special education does not apply to students who are experiencing learning problems that are primarily the result of the following circumstances:

- environmental factors
- cultural factors including not being a native Arabic speaker
- economic disadvantage
- or students who have experienced academic failure. If any of the above circumstances are present, then a student should be referred to the School Support Team for intervention and support services. The major categories of disabilities which may qualify a student for special education programs and services are not limited to the aforementioned, but also includes other disabilities such as the following:

- Multiple Disabilities, and
- Developmental Delay

* ELL(English Language Learners) : Particular care is given to students those whose mother tongue or commonly used language is not English.

SEND SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

- **FORMALLY DIAGNOSED STUDENTS**
IEP Psychological/Medical services
- **LEARNING SUPPORT STUDENTS**
- Learning Support Plan Psychological Services (without formal diagnosis)
- **GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**
ALP
- **ESL**
Learning Support Plan

SEND PROCEDURE

When a student who is not enrolled in any special education program experiences learning or behavior difficulties, or has sensory, medical or physical needs, the student may be referred by a parent, school personnel or community organization for a comprehensive evaluation to determine his eligibility for special education programs and services.

STEP 1: Pre Referral

STEP 2: Referral, Evaluation and Eligibility Determination

STEP 3: Develop IEP or ALP

STEP 4: Implement IEP or ALP

STEP 5: Monitor, Review and Revise IEP or ALP

STEP 6: Certificates of Grade Completion

PRE REFERRAL

- The student support team will brief the SEND categories and teachers' role in identifying the SEND students at the beginning of academic year.
- The written referral by class teachers, subject teachers and parents will be received by the Student Support Team.
- Then the student support team meets and reviews referrals received to the team members.
- The student support team conducts a review of students' academic and performance history, medical history, and conducts a classroom observation in the area of concern. SST members make recommendations for pre-referral interventions intended to improve the student's academic performance.
- The SST members monitor the student's progress for a maximum of four weeks and review data weekly for discussion.
- If the student's progress is adequate, interventions may be discontinued when no longer needed.

REFERRAL, EVALUATION AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

The Student Support Team members who conduct the comprehensive evaluation include the following:

- special education teacher,
- teacher,
- the guardian,
- the school principal,
- psychologist,
- social worker,

and other specialists who are required according to the condition of the student such as a physician, nurse and the student himself, if appropriate.

Each member of the Student support team conducts a comprehensive assessment to determine the student's strengths, needs and present level of academic and social functioning. Each member must complete an evaluation within 30 days from the date that the referral was received by the SST.

DEVELOP IEP OR ALP. If the Student support team determines that the student is eligible to receive special education programs and services, then following the special education team meeting, an IEP meeting is held, and an IEP is developed. The most important elements of the IEP are the goals and objectives and accommodations, and modifications that are needed to meet the educational needs of the student.

IMPLEMENT IEP OR ALP Special education programs and services are provided to students in accordance with the recommendations of the IEP or ALP. The IEP or ALP should be implemented immediately following written parental approval. Implementation of the IEP or ALP should start as soon as possible but within a 2-week period. There are many factors to consider when placement decisions are being made.

MONITOR, REVIEW AND REVISE IEP OR ALP. The IEP should be reviewed and progress monitored during each regularly scheduled card marking period. However, school personnel or a parent/guardian may request that the team review progress at an earlier date. During the first three months following the special education team members may be reconvened to review the progress. The special education teacher, responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IEP will prepare the IEP Annual Review report at the end of the academic year and make recommendations for the next school year.

Certificates of Grade Completion

Upon completion of a grade level, students with special needs will be given a certificate of completion which also indicates that he has a disability and that he has received special education services.

The certificate provided to the student will indicate the following:

- Category of Disability
- Assistive Technology Needed
- Gifted and Talented (the areas or subjects in which he excelled are mentioned).

Important things to be noticed while certificate preparation:

- The indication of disability should not act as a labelling for the student but it should be mentioned in the certificate when it is going to other schools inside UAE or abroad for ensuring continued support services and to ensure his right of access as stated in article 12 of the Federal Law No. 29/2006.

[Article (12)"]

(The state shall guarantee for the person with special needs equal opportunities for obtaining education in all educational institutions, educational and vocational training, adult education and continuing education as part of regular classes or in special classes, if needed, with providing the curriculum in sign language or in the form of (Braille) and through any other methods as appropriate. Special needs do not constitute in themselves an impediment in seeking affiliation or enrollment or admission to any educational institution, whether public or private).]

- The certificate should include the attained/progressed skills of the student and areas of improvement.
- The certificate should not issue to anyone if there is confidentiality concern.
- The certificate should be issued only to the parents'/ legal guardian and their signature is mandatory to take along with the official seal and signature.
- A covering letter with confidential concerns and terms should be clearly mentioned is needed along with the certificate.
- The covering letter should address the recipients' full address with designation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SEND PROVISION

Duties and Responsibilities of the School Principal

- Accept students with special needs and give them the full opportunity to learn.
- Thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for special education programs.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of gifted and talented students and students with disabilities and how to benefit from special education services.
- Create an appropriate educational and school environment that ensures implementation of the special education programs in coordination with the relevant authorities.
- Facilitate the process of acceptance and integration of students with special needs in accordance with the recommendations of the special education team.
- Monitor the programs in place as well as the teachers by visiting them in classrooms to check their work, activities and involvement.
- Encourage professional and personal development programs for employees with special needs and monitor their training and work.

- Coordinate with the special education instructor to inspect the school's needs for the professional staff working with people having special needs, and address the educational district in this regard.
- Cooperate with the Department of Special Education in the Ministry and Directorate of Special Education in the educational district as well as participating in educational meetings, courses and activities.
- Strengthen relationship with parents and work to create awareness about programs and services for people with special needs within the school and beyond.
- Report at the end of each semester on special education programs and services existing in the school and document the pros and cons, and submit the same (to the district and the Directorate of Special Education in the Ministry)
- Make sure that requirements of every student with special needs are met.
- Coordinate with the concerned parties within and outside the school with respect to the transition of students with special needs to the different academic levels.
- Organize mechanisms to provide services for students with special needs in resource rooms, and to facilitate the process so that they receive services in these rooms during the school day in coordination with teachers of special education for the resource rooms and subject teachers.

- Undertake work assigned to him in the field of special education services in the school as deemed appropriate by the Directorate of Special Education in the Ministry

Role of the Special Education Teacher

In addition to the core functions of Special Education Teacher in accordance with the regulation of the Ministry of Education, it is supposed that the Special Education Teacher will undertake following important tasks:

- Accept students with special needs and provide them with equal opportunities to learn.
- Participate in the meetings, training courses, workshops and special activities aimed at improving the quality and delivery of special education programs and services.
- Monitor the implementation of special education programs and provide periodic reports on the status of these programs and services.
- Participate as a member of the MET in the educational zone and conduct assessments to determine a student's level of academic performance.
- Collaborate with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home and school partnership.
- Monitor and support all instructions as issued by the Director of Special Education of the Ministry of Education.
- Engage in ongoing professional development to enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of special education.
- Conduct field visits to schools to observe the implementation of inclusive education.
- Prepare and implement vocational programs at inclusive schools, or at schools that have students with special needs.

- Coordinate with the subject teachers.
- Collaborate with other professions inside the school such as other subject teachers, school administrators and in the community to facilitate the implementation of special education programs.
- Prepare comprehensive progress reports semi-annually including what has been accomplished during the semester.
- Collaborate with staff at organizations and educational institutions to identify programs and services for Gifted and Talented students.
- Perform any other tasks assigned by the Director of Special Education and the zone.

Role of Subject Teacher in the Regular Education Classroom.

In addition to his main task of teaching, he will, however, undertake the following if a student with special needs is present in his classroom:

- Accept students with special needs and provide them with the full opportunities to learn.
- Cooperate with the special education teacher in providing special education services to the students with special needs.
- Collaborate with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home and school partnership.
- Participate in the effective implementation of IEP and ALP.
- Encourage others to accept the idea of including people with special needs in regular classes. - Engage in ongoing professional development to enhance knowledge and skills in the field of special education.

Role of Subject Teacher in the Special Education Classrooms

- ❑ Accept students with special needs and provide them with the full opportunities to learn.
- ❑ Cooperate with the special education teacher in the implementation of the recommendations of the individual educational plan.
- ❑ Collaborate with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home and school partnership.
- ❑ Modify teaching strategies and materials and evaluation methods as necessary to the needs of students according to the IEP.
- ❑ Participate in ongoing professional development.

Role of Special Education Teacher (category of Gifted and Talented Students)

The special education teacher for the Gifted and Talented will develop and implement enrichment programs and services for students with special gifts and talents. Moreover, this teacher will undertake the following tasks:

- ❑ Assist in the identification of students with gifts and talents.
- ❑ Prepare an ALP for the gifted and talented students as needed, in cooperation with other school personnel.
- ❑ Implement teaching strategies to promote the development of the creativity of all students.
- ❑ Organize programs and special activities for gifted and talented students in accordance with the approved programs of the Director of Special Education.
- ❑ Nominate gifted and talented students to participate in indoor and outdoor programs and activities.
- ❑ Application of best practices in the area of talent and excellence.
- ❑ Implement programs to help gifted and talented students develop the abilities for scientific research and its methods.
- ❑ Provide opportunities and educational experiences for students to develop motivation for independent learning.

- ❑ Cooperate with subject teachers in order to design enrichment programs for the gifted and talented students.
- ❑ Develop and implement awareness programs for the school, parents and community of the methods and ways of identifying and developing the skills of gifted and talented students.
- ❑ Collaborate with community organizations and individuals to identify and provide services to the talented students.
- ❑ Collaborate with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home and school partnership.
- ❑ Engage in ongoing professional development
- ❑ Role of Counsellors (Psychologist & Social Worker)
- ❑ To contribute to a member of student support team
- ❑ To work with teachers when identifying SEN students while creating clear channels for communication between parents, teachers and outside agencies.
- ❑ To contribute in the process of identification of SEN students
- ❑ To help teachers for selecting appropriate accommodation and adaptations in teaching
- ❑ To monitor student progress
- ❑ To contribute in the execution of IEP and ALP
- ❑ To spread awareness about inclusion
- ❑ To keep proper records

Roles of Peers of Students with Special Needs

Peers are encouraged to exchange ideas and information, and provide help to the students with special needs in the learning process. This interaction will lead to acceptance of all students by each other, and contribute to the process of identifying the factors that support inclusion of the student in the school community.

Role of Parents of Students with Special Needs. Parents should share relevant information about their student with teachers and other school staff that will help promote the student's growth and inclusion in the school. Role of Student with Special Needs The student with special needs is obliged to follow the program

TRANSITION

Transitional services include activities designed to prepare the student with special needs to move from one stage, or from one environment to another.

- Parents and school personnel are expected to maintain communication to discuss transitions for students between educational levels and programs at least on an annual basis during IEP review or MET meetings.
- If a student with special needs who is enrolled in grades 7th through 9th does not consistently meet the annual revised goals and objectives as set forth in the IEP, then other educational alternatives including vocational training should be considered to meet his academic and social needs.
- However, a student with special needs should not be transferred from a school to community-based or adult education programs prior to the beginning of the 7th grade unless special circumstances exist which must be reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education, Special Education department.

GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION

- Promotion to the next grade level commensurate with the student's age level is automatic for students with special needs.
- If the goals and objectives set forth for the student in the IEP are not achieved with satisfactory progress, then the goals and objectives should be revised during the review process.
- It is not permitted to retain or fail students with special needs in a grade.
- If a student with special needs is not making adequate progress, then perhaps the goals and objectives set forth in his IEP far exceed his present level of academic performance and may need to be adjusted.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE FOR SEND

Students with SEND and other disadvantaged groups are given admission in the school based on the nature of the concern of the students and the provisions available at school to support the child.

- **Admission procedure for students who are formally identified as SEND and other disadvantaged groups**

The registrar receives all necessary documents (any medical, educational or psychological assessment report, any relevant document from previous school, including other documents required for admission procedure), for a student's file and then present it to SEND Support Team (SST) for review.

The students' intake assessment and testing is then scheduled with the counsellor/special educator by the Registrar.

The counsellor/special educator also speaks briefly with the parents after the

The counsellor/special educator makes a recommendation for placement to section head and Principal, for approval, which depends on the capacity of the school to meet the students' needs.

Registrar completes formalities and informs the class teacher regarding the placement; the SST is also informed by the Admission's office when a student is placed into a specific classroom.

The SST, section head and respective teacher confer before the start date of the student in order to discuss any particulars in their file.

If a student's file includes an IEP or other similar plan from a previous school, SST will review the document(s) and implement as many strategies as possible, while developing an IEP based on the documents provided. If there is no previous plan, the SST assesses and identifies the academic challenges and puts strategies in place in order to help them be as successful as possible at Habitat school.

- **Admission of students who are not formally identified as SEND**

During the time of admission, if the registrar observes significant behavioral or learning concerns with a student, the SST is notified. An informal assessment of the child is done by the SST and parents are met. The SST team Principal and then decides on the status of admission based on the report. The school will decide on what the best level of support is for each individual case and every effort will be made to admit students who can benefit from the services offered at school.

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT POLICY

Learning Support Assistant (LSA) is recommended only for those SEND who require rigorous and continuous one to one support. The LSA will be hired by the parents but need to be approved by the school Principal, SST and should also fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Education (MOE), to ensure the competence in managing the individual's needs and supporting his/her learning.

EXAMINATION DEPARTMENT AND SOD

- Receive a copy of the list of SEND who requires specific examination provisions and exemptions.
- Provide a copy of the list to the invigilator and to ensure it is implemented.
- Modified assessment papers to be given to SEND (if required) only on the recommendation of the special educator and it is encouraged only till grade four. Question papers can be read out and extra time can be given to complete the paper.
- Provide seating arrangements conducive to the SEND.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN SCHOOL

The school tries to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils by

A) Setting suitable learning challenges so that pupils experience:

- Success in their own learning;
- A flexibility of approach; and
- Suitably challenging work.

B) Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs by:

- Setting and communicating high expectations and opportunities for achievement For all; Planning and delivering lessons that reflect a range of learning and teaching styles, and a recognition of individual pupils' needs; Setting appropriate learning objectives and assessment targets;
- Creating effective learning environments;
- Promoting and securing pupil motivation and concentration;
- Providing equality of opportunity through approaches to classroom management and delivery of subject content; and Using appropriate tools and language for assessment and tracking.

C) Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils by:

- Making provision for pupils to participate effectively in the curriculum; and
- Planning for SEND and providing access to learning for all pupils.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES RELATED TO SEND PROGRAMME

- ❑ Create a disability friendly mindset in school (staff and students) - Widen the SEND awareness
- ❑ Implement proper identification procedure
- ❑ Make a thorough follow up to monitor the progress of SEND students
- ❑ Impart the accommodation/Adaptation methods to teachers
- ❑ Enhance systematic documentation
- ❑ Occasional self-evaluation

This policy is linked with all the other policies of the School.