

# Special Education Needs Policy

September 2022

## **Vision**

Inspiring kind and joyful learning communities who use innovative thinking to build a mindful and sustainable world.

## **Mission**

Verita ensures that kindness is the centre of everything we do. Deeply committed to international and intercultural understanding, Verita provides an academically engaging, inquiry-based educational approach.

Our responsibility is to whole-heartedly assist our students to develop the social-emotional and academic skills necessary to live meaningful, fulfilled, and happy lives.

## **Preamble:**

Verita International School is an institution which aligns with the CIS Code of Ethics and the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The CIS Code of Ethics highlights that we, as a school, are expected to:

- Fulfil the promises stated in their guiding statements, policies, contracts and promotional materials.
- Strive for excellence.
- Nurture a culture of care in which the education, safety and well-being of students and others are paramount.
- Comply with applicable laws and regulations.
- Respect the dignity and equality of all individuals, groups and cultures.
- Promote global citizenship.

As a school which aligns with the UNCRC, we make an effort on upholding the 45 articles of the convention in our school; please refer to the UNCRC articles [here](#).



## **The IB Diploma Programme Principles**

Our aim is to maintain our focus on a more diverse and inclusive IB community by enabling access for all to an IB education. The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) at Verita International School supports the principle of inclusion, so that students with special educational needs can demonstrate their ability under conditions that are as fair as possible. Students with 'special education needs' are defined as those who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum requirements, but who have individual learning challenges that require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement.

### *Admission of candidates with diagnosed Special Educational Needs*

- When any child applies for admission to Verita International School, the school will require the child's full educational history, including all previous evaluations to include: psychological (clinical), neurological, and medical assessment if applicable.
- Verita International School will be in direct contact with the child's previous schools of attendance in order to complete the full admissions process. All documentation from previous schools must be received before the application will be processed and considered.
- If the child's application deems to require special learning support, it will then be reviewed by the School Support Team (SST) to determine if the school will be able to fully support the child.
- If the child requires special learning support beyond the means of what the school can offer, the SST can suggest various support options available for the child at the full expense of the parents.
  - These can include having a shadow teacher (for students on the autistic spectrum) and physical supports
  - With this parent paid support in place, admissions will still be evaluated on a case by case basis.
- If the school is unable to meet the needs of the child's special requirements, then admission will be denied.
- Probationary period: If any child after the first month of observation as a student at the school is deemed to require any special services, the school reserves the right to request appropriate developmental testing and diagnosis in order to determine if the school can effectively support the child. If the school is unable to, the child will be denied continued admission to the school.
- At any time Verita International School reserves the right to require an evaluation of a current student whose special learning needs are brought to the attention of the Students Support Team (SST). The SST will make recommendations and determine if Verita International School can continue to support the learning of the child.



### *Roles and Responsibilities*

The Student Support Team focuses on implementing professional practices, evaluating, and selecting high probability interventions, strategies and creating an action plan to support children with special learning needs.

It is a function of the general education program and not of special education

Team members: School Leadership, School Counselor and SENCO

School Leadership	<p>Dean oversees the whole school operations.</p> <p>Principals of Secondary and Primary oversee teaching/ learning, facilities, human resources, etc.</p> <p>The principal of Primary- the principal of primary oversees the teaching and learning and the well-being of all students and teachers in the primary division. The principal of Secondary- the principal of secondary oversees the teaching and learning and the well-being of all students and teachers in the secondary division.</p>
School Counsellor	<p>Verita has a full-time school-based psychologist. The psychologist/ school counsellor may be able to work with the student on a one-to-one basis and assist the student in developing academically, socially or emotionally. This could include psychotherapeutic interventions with the student in order to acknowledge, process, accept and include or overcome one's emotional difficulties. The counsellor may also further refer the student to external agencies such as psychiatrists, neurologists and psychotherapists.</p>
SENCO	<p>On a daily basis, the SENCO is responsible for coordinating support for students with special educational needs.</p> <p>This may include coordinating with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Leadership</li> <li>• Counsellor</li> <li>• School Nurse</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Coordinators</li> <li>• Shadow</li> <li>• Other medical agencies (language/ speech therapist, psychiatrist, general physician, etc.).</li> </ul> <p>In order to identify and support the special learning needs of the student.</p> <p>The SENCO will evaluate the admission file as needed.</p>



Classroom Shadow	The shadow is in working with the student in a classroom setting to support the educational and psychological needs of a student with Special Educational Needs to learn and cope with the academic, social, and emotional challenges that might appear in the day-to-day classroom experience. The classroom shadow is coordinated by the SENCO.
Learning Support	This is a team approach led by the SENCO, the Student Support Team and ELL staff to support the needs of the student population.
Other agencies	May assist with diagnoses, individualized learning plans, learning resources, etc.

*Definition of Special Education :*

- Special education is tailored to meet the needs of students with special learning difficulties.
- The service and support one child receives can be very different from what another child receives.
- It's all about individualization.
- What is important is giving the child the resources they need to make progress in school.
- There is no "one size fits all" approach to special education. It's tailored to meet each student's needs.
- Special education refers to a range of services that can be provided in different ways and in different settings.

*Categories of special needs:*

- *A specific learning difficulty/ disability most often affects skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning and mathematical thinking (operations). In addition, it may also include severe communication, cognition, and sensory difficulties/ disabilities or other health impairment, which affects educational performance. But does not include specific social-emotional issues or traumas that would require psychological counselling or therapy; SENCO would refer this student to the school counsellor for counselling and or/ a therapy referral.*

Here at Verita International School, we distinguish between 3 broad categories of special educational needs:

1. *Communication and interaction:* This includes students with speech and language delay, impairments or disorders, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia, hearing impairment, and those who demonstrate features along the autistic spectrum.
2. *Cognition and Learning:* This includes students who, as a result of physical or mental challenges, demonstrate features of moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties. This includes students who may display emotional difficulties as well, such as being isolated, disruptive or disturbing, or those who are either hyperactive or lack concentration.



3. *Sensory and or physical needs*: This includes students with sensory, multi-sensory and physical difficulties.

Examples of specific health and learning impairments can include:

*\*This list is not exhaustive and only consists of some of the more common learning needs.*

Communication and interaction Specific learning difficulties	Cognition and Learning Neurological disorders	<i>Sensory and or physical needs</i> Other health/learning/social impairments
Common learning differences in this category include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dyslexia (reading + writing speaking+spelling)</li> <li>• Dyscalculia (doing math problems, understanding time, remembering math facts)</li> <li>• Dyspraxia ( hand-eye coordination, balance, fine motor skills)</li> <li>• Auditory processing disorder</li> <li>• Visual processing issues</li> <li>• Gifted students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An autistic spectrum disorder</li> <li>• ADD/ ADHD (attention deficit disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder)</li> <li>• Cerebral palsy</li> <li>• General Learning differences ( memory, attention, comprehension)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health/ psychiatric difficulties</li> <li>• Sensory and/or physical need</li> <li>• Other diagnoses according to the (Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-V and ICD-11)</li> </ul>

#### Special needs coordinator (SENCO)

The SEN Coordinator works collaboratively with classroom teachers, administration, parents and students to create interventions designed specifically to meet individual student needs. The Coordinator will help classroom teachers make appropriate accommodations for students with mild learning disabilities or other special needs. The program's goal is to maximize each student's potential and equip them with the skills and strategies for academic success. Educational goals are developed for each student in the program and revisited during the year through written reports and parent conferences.



The SENCO can support students by:

Utilizing instructional strategies and materials that support a diversity of learning styles

- The SENCO will evaluate the admission file as needed
- Providing accommodations during class time and assessments;
- Allowing extended time for assessments;
- Assisting students in goal setting and planning;
- Modifying summative assessments together with student's teachers;
- Modifying student's schedule to reduce stress and promote success;
- Allowing use of technology to support learning needs in class;
- Facilitating collaboration with other teachers;
- Communicating regularly with parents, teachers and students to build awareness;
- Assisting parents with arrangements for testing or other support outside of school, such as speech and language therapists, neurological or clinical evaluations, educational evaluations;
- Provide support services such as a shadow teacher;
- Creation and development of Individual learning plans (ILP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

An IEP is a planning, teaching and reviewing tool that underpins the process of planning intervention of the individual pupil. The IEP most commonly is based on a clinical diagnosis or an evaluation, and it is a blueprint of the child's special education experience in school.

The IEP includes the following information:

- Diagnosis/ Summary of recent Formal Evaluation;
- The child's strengths and areas to be improved;
- Learning characteristics and necessities;
- The child's present level of performance and annual goals;
- Academic Goals;
- Social, Emotional and Behavioral goals;
- Accommodations and modifications;
- Special education support and services to help the student reach those goals inside and outside of school: counselling, therapy, shadow, support teacher.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

An ILP is a collaboratively written document that outlines a student's current ability and identifies specific goals for future attainment.



The ILP includes the following information:

- Areas of concern;
- Academic Achievement, functional performance and learning characteristics;
- Areas of focus
- Environmental and instructional accommodations
- Parent's feedback

Practices and procedures developed to remove barriers to learning.

- Assistive technology: such as providing a laptop to help a student with a writing difficulty to take notes in class or a text-to-speech-software;
- Accommodations: such as seating a student near a teacher, allowing the student to give oral reports instead of writing essays;

Modifications:

- Classroom Accommodations: such as more time to complete a task, more breaks, curriculum adaptation, allowing the reduced length of assignment;
- Instructional accommodations: such as providing clear and simple instructions, one instruction at a time, sequentially,
- Accommodations on standardized test
- Resources: such as headphones, sensory tools,
- Support teacher or shadow teacher

If a student is found to have special educational needs, different means of action may be offered:

#### Types of the special assessment in the IB Diploma Programme

**Additional time:** May be authorized for written examinations and for certain activities connected to internal assessment. Usually, 25% more time is allowed for the candidate.

**Rest periods:** A candidate may be allowed supervised rest time, during which the candidate is not allowed to work on the examination.

**Information and communication technology:** Candidates may be allowed to use a computer to respond to a written exam. Only technology allowed by the IB may be used in any one particular written exam.

**Scribes:** A scribe is a person who writes down the dictated response of a candidate for external and/or internal assessments/exams if the candidate is unable to provide a response by hand or by computer.

**Readers:** A reader may read the examination paper and the candidate's response out loud. The reader must not explain or help in responding to the question/exam.

**Communicators:** For hearing impaired students a communicator is able to convey information through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language and may be used during examinations.



**Prompters:** For candidates with neurological or cognitive disabilities resulting in a severe attention problem, prompters can ensure that a candidate is paying attention to the examination.

**Modifications to examination papers:** For candidates with visual or hearing issues, modifications can be made to examination papers (braille, special print etc.).

**Audio recordings of examination papers:** The IB may provide an examination paper on a CD but is a limited service and only for exams with no visual material (illustrations, diagrams, tables or sketch maps).

**Audio recordings of responses to examination papers:** If a candidate is unable to make a handwritten or word-processed response to an exam question (and a scribe is not a viable alternative), a candidate may be allowed to give an audio recorded response to an exam question.

**Transcription:** Transcription is justified when a candidate with a specific learning issue, or a physical disability, has very poor handwriting skills and cannot use a computer. Transcription is not available to candidates with poor handwriting for whom some form of special need cannot be diagnosed.

**Alternative venues for examinations:** The IB may authorize a candidate to take an exam at home or in hospital if the candidate is too ill to attend school, but only if medical advice supports this decision.

**Extensions to deadlines:** In cases of illness or accident that prevents a candidate from completing work in time for the coordinator to submit the work to the extended time may be authorized.

**Assistance with practical work:** For candidates with a physical disability the IB may authorize the candidate to have assistance with practical work (often confined to the requirements of internal assessment). The IB coordinator and student counsellors at Verita must be contacted if any adverse situation should arise during the course of the education. That way the IB coordinator will be able to contact the IB for guidance.

To be reviewed August 2023 to consider the following:

- be accessible to the whole school community.
- be linked with the school's language and assessment policies.
- articulate practices and procedures developed to remove barriers to learning.

*Created and Reviewed by: Damian Ward/Verita Founder and Advisory Board*  
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*Approved by Richard Joannides*  
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