

Special Education Needs Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

The Ras Al Khaimah American Academy (RAK AA) Special education is an integral part of the total educational innovativeness. We are committed to offer an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all students whatever their needs, abilities or aspirations. We believe children have a common entitlement to a broad, balanced and differentiated academic and social curriculum. We aim to stimulate a sense of community and belonging. Generally, we believe that students with special educational needs should be educated within their own year group. And to serve this purpose, this policy is created and enforced as a means of enlarging the capacity of the system to serve the exceptional educational needs of our students.

The particular function of special education in our school is to identify children with unusual and exceptional needs and to aid in the effective fulfillment of those needs.

It is our primary goal to help build accommodative learning opportunities for children with exceptionalities in regular educational programs. In the implementation of this goal, special education can serve as a support system, and special educators, ESL/AL support team assist regular school teachers in managing the education of children with exceptionalities.

II. PHILOSOPHY

At Ras Al Khaimah American Academy, we value children as individuals and recognize the diversity and uniqueness of our students. We are fully cognizant of the following learning pathways:

- Teaching and learning is approached with active awareness of learning difficulties and learning differences.
- Classrooms should offer a safe, supportive base where students can take up the challenge of learning.
- There is a focus on the development of self-esteem, as a fundamental contributor to achievement.
- Language and literacy is vital to successful learning and emotional well-being.
- Transition is significant in the lives of children.

Guided by this, we are dedicated to:

- Guide and nurture individual development;
- Promote loyalty, pride, spirit, belonging and caring;
- Pursue academic excellence.
- Systematically review the curriculum regularly to meet the needs of our students in the ever changing world;

- Address the individual needs of all students including special needs, gifted and talented and English language learners; recognizing that different teaching methodologies are essential for effective learning to take place for all students.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Children with exceptionalities are those whose characteristics range from profoundly and severely disabled to those who are richly endowed with talents and/or intellectual giftedness. Children with exceptionalities require career education experiences which will develop to the fullest extent possible their wide range of abilities, needs, and interests.

Children have special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.
- Has a disability which either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age.
- Has outstanding ability or aptitude in one or more areas of creative or academic achievement. A student demonstrates performance which is distinct from their peers.

Note: A child must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty because the language or form of language of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

Children are defined as gifted and talented in areas of:

- physical ability – either in games, athletics, dance, PE
- creative/artistic talent – poetry or stories, drama, art/display, music
- mechanical ingenuity
- interpersonal skills, such as leadership
- high intelligence in math, problem solving or thinking skills

Exceptionally able children -These children are performing well above their chronological age

Special educational provision means educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of the child's age.

IV. POLICY

A. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

A.1 Aims

This Special Education Needs (SEN) policy is created with the following aims:

- To identify children with SEN as early as possible through observation, diagnostic tests and admission procedures.
- To ensure that SEN students have equal access to a broad, balanced curriculum.
- To work with school leaders in formulating an accessible curriculum for all students.
- To collaborate with homeroom and class teachers to ensure those SEN students' lessons are modified and differentiated.
- To provide information to class teachers about SEN students, their difficulties and recommend strategies for their educational provision, sharing examples of good practice.
- To use Individual Education Plans to break down learning into specific targets.
- To continually monitor the progress of all students with SEN.
- To advise on areas of under-achievement by monitoring referral patterns.
- To ensure that parents are involved in their child's learning and gain an understanding of their Special Educational Needs.
- To liaise with outside agencies when appropriate.
- To support staff to build appropriate in-class strategies.

A.2 School Procedures for Identification, Assessment and Support

Admission

Once a student has been accepted into the school and where test scores indicate that learning support may be appropriate, further diagnostic testing is conducted to identify specific areas of need.

Elementary School

Early years assessment observations may be carried out by members of the SEN support team, Early years Curriculum Coordinator and observation reports are reviewed by the HOSS before being passed on to the School Principal. Generally these children are young for testing but a qualitative judgement can be made through observations. If there appears to be any SEN issues, then discussions between the SEN support team, Principal, Head of Section and parents should take place. Any information relating to the child's special circumstances or conditions, which may affect learning, should be noted.

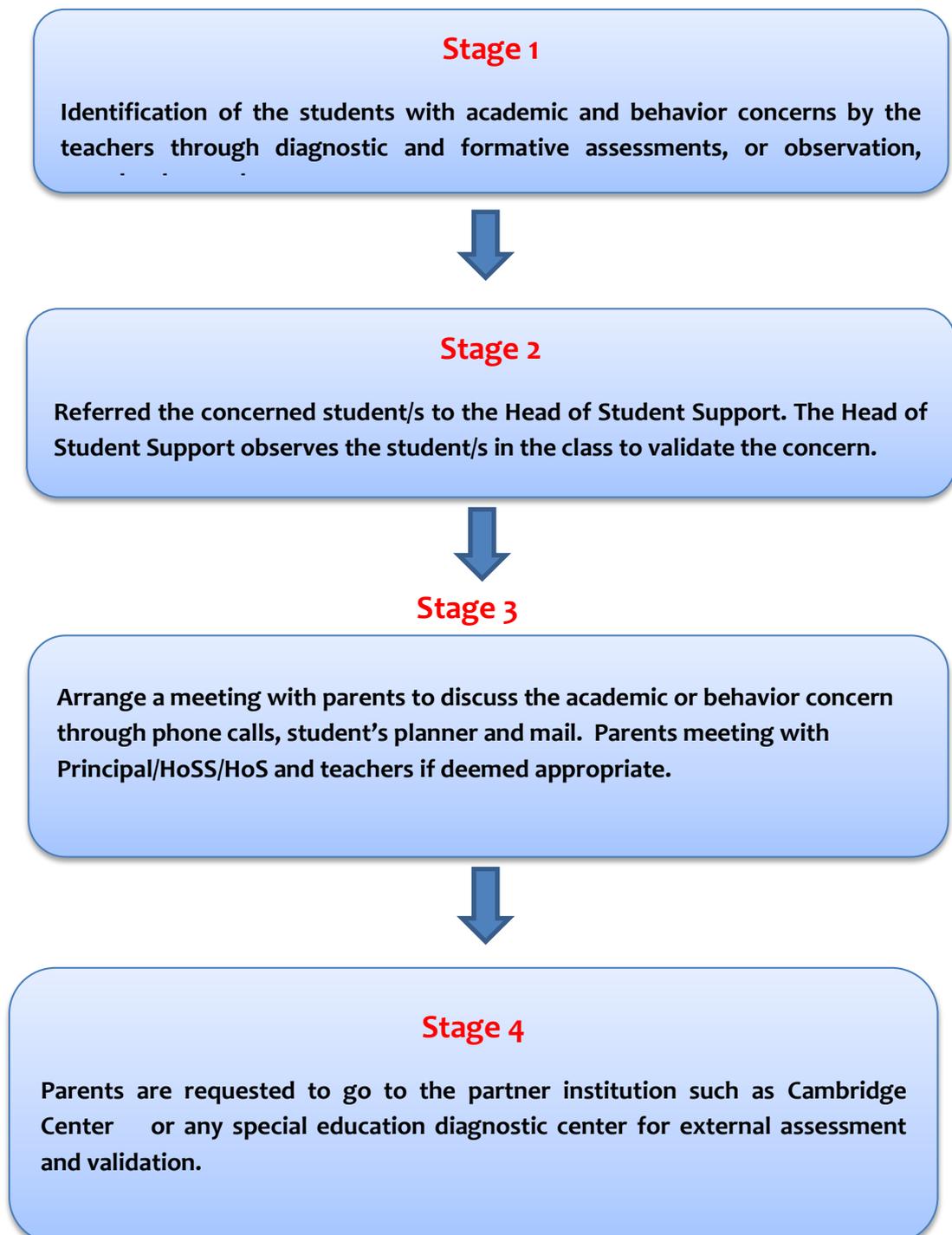
Middle and High School

Diagnostics tests scores are the basis for the assessment of the learning difficulty for middle and high school. These are administered by the subject teachers and reports are passed on to the HoDs and Vice Principal. If the scores indicate that learning support is required, a discussion will take place between the SEN support team, HoDs and Principal to determine if the child's needs can be met by the school prior to being offered a place. These scores are then used for the IEP. This assessment will be conducted at the beginning and end of each academic year for the duration of the student's life in the school so that progress can be evidenced and cross checked with progress data from subject areas.

Referral forms are available for classroom/subject teachers to complete. The teachers have 2 weeks to 4 weeks to test and gather information on the child. This information will be analyzed to determine if and what support is appropriate. Parents will be invited to discuss the findings and the support that the school is able to offer. SEN support team in coordination with the Principal and HoDs will continue to support and monitor the child to ensure that the correct level of support is offered as the child progresses through the school. If there is a proposal to alter the level of support, parents will be advised and invited to discuss.

Stages of Referrals are outlined below:

Stages of SEND Referral



Support Procedures

Students may be supported through:

1. For Elementary School, one support teacher will be responsible for a year group. Teachers will attend one planning session/week to liaise with classroom teachers about the students they are supporting, and receive any recent information. Any meetings with parents should be joint. Deploying additional staffing to support curricular and social activities through a child-centered approach where there is a need which cannot be met by existing staffing. Group sizes will be flexible enough to meet the needs of the students, to a maximum of 10% of the year group. Timetables will be arranged by the Head of Elementary Section in coordination with the Vice Principal and the ESL/AL Support team. Teachers will determine targets for students in collaboration with class teachers and produce IEPs. Monthly report will be made available to all staff and if necessary, meetings will be held every week where student progress, support and referrals are discussed.

2. For Secondary School, support will be given through any of the following:

2.1. Integrated Studies – for 2 periods per week for non-Islamic students. SEN students will be gathered into one set (max size 10) for support.

2.2. Numeracy - students will be supported through the provision of an extra Math lesson after school in Gr.6-12 (max size 10).

2.3 English/Literacy support for students will be provided based on the time tables made by the Head of Section in coordination with the respective HOD and Principal.

2.4. In-class support – where possible this support will be available for lower ability groups especially in core areas.

2.5. Differentiated Examinations – students who meet the criteria set by the Assessment team will be given the same paper however as it will be differentiated 40% of the questions can be answered by all. At exam time, the ESL/AL support team will mostly be used to support these students as readers, and scribes.

2.6. Specific interventions aimed at areas of low achievement of students, e.g. essay writing, reading for meaning, organizational skills.

2.7. Students who receive any kind of individual provision will be highlighted on the Mograsy Assessment Database and parents will be informed. Assessment database will not receive additional provision but will be entitled to access arrangements. They will not require an IEP.

Assistive technology such as using text to speech is being used during external Assessment e.g. MAP and CAT 4 to help SN students

Buddy system is also introduced to some SN students to encourage, motivate and develop their social and organizational skills.

Cambridge Centre

We have a collaboration with the Cambridge Centre who are based on-site to support SEN students.

All diagnostic reports are shared with parents and cases are referred to MOE as need arises.

Individual Education Plans

These are written by the Head of Student Support with additional support from the classroom teacher, parent, and student. IEPs are the responsibility of all staff, not just support teachers. They consist of SMART targets to help the child to achieve academic, physical, and emotional success. There should be no more than 4 targets overall. IEPs will be reviewed termly. IEP targets may include independence skills, or social and relationship skills. In these cases, a qualitative judgement would be made after consulting class teachers.

Staff Development

Information is available to staff as follows:

1. Attendance at planning meetings, giving information about students and advising on differentiated activities for the classroom.
2. Information on the MograSYS Assessment database about individual students, including IEP targets.
3. In - service training sessions to address specific areas of SEN during start of year Orientation and at specific times throughout the academic year.
4. After-school workshop sessions for classroom teachers as part of school training programme, and as a forum for sharing good practice.

5. Externally led courses by MOE are attended by the SEN Team. Good practice is cascaded post any courses.

Parents

Working collaboratively with parents is fundamental in ensuring that best outcomes for children are achieved. Parents may find it difficult to accept that their child has a learning difficulty and will need support, advice and guidance to access external agencies to progress psychological and/or medical assessments for their child.

Addendum: SEN SUPPORT in Distance Learning 2019-2020, AY 2020-21

The role of the SEN leader and her team is pivotal in ensuring that the SEN students will get the full benefits and assistance in acquiring skills and knowledge in the distance learning environment.

The following measures are undertaken to support our SEN students:

- Using the Microsoft teams, the SEN leader created her own teams for SEN students to closely monitor and support their learning needs as they attended the mainstream class.
- A regular support time is allotted every day to ensure that students received support particularly in understanding their assignments, projects and daily class task.
- Liaising with the mainstream subject teachers is regularly done and strong collaboration is made to ensure that an appropriate and differentiated work is provided to SEN students.
- Actively communicate with parents and guardians to support them in using technology for their children so that they actively engage in e- learning activity.
- A follow-up chat with SEN students is done to check their understanding of the lesson. Likewise, their attendance is also monitored and if they are not yet present in their lesson, the SEN team is doing a follow-up call.
- For this academic year, 2020-21, online/ distance learning will be provided to the identified SEND students to ensure their safety and wellbeing and at the same time they will be given an equal opportunity to maximize their learning potentials. Their academic progress will be closely monitored.

Updated: 22-09-2020

Updated: March 17,2020

Reviewed June 11, 2019

Reviewed and Updated June 12,2019