

Ras Al Khaimah American Academy				
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SEN Inclusion Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

The Ras Al Khaimah American Academy (RAK AA) Special education is an integral part of the total educational innovativeness. The school commits itself to offer an inclusive curriculum to ensure that all students of varied abilities, needs, goals and aspirations will make progress through differentiated instruction and assessment. Furthermore, we create a safe and caring environment where everyone will feel a sense of belonging. We believe that students with special educational needs should be educated within their own year group. Thus, this policy is created and will be enforced to deepen our understanding on how we can best serve the educational needs of our exceptional students.

The 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.

The Ras Al Khaimah American Academy (RAKAA) Inclusion Policy will cater to the diverse needs of students who are needing additional learning support or some help to enhance their emotional and social needs These students are as follows:

- Underachieving students or students 'at risk'
- Students whose learning English as an additional/second language (AL/ESL)
- Students with specific learning disability such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, sensory processing needs, etc.
- Students with medical condition such as seizure disorder, hearing impairment, etc.
- Students with physical disability
- Students with behavior and emotional/social needs
- Students who need challenges to achieve their full potentials (Gifted and talented)

The school aims to provide accommodations and differentiated learning opportunities to our exceptional students in regular educational program. In the implementation of this goal,

special education can serve as a support system, and special educators, ESL/AL support team assist regular schoolteachers in managing the education of children with exceptionalities.

II. PHILOSOPHY

At Ras Al Khaimah American Academy (RAKAA), we value the uniqueness and diversity of each student. We are fully cognizant of the following learning pathways:

- Teaching and learning are approached with active awareness of learning difficulties and learning differences.
- Classroom atmospheres are expected to be safe, supportive, and friendly environment where students are motivated to take the challenges of learning.
- Emphasis of teaching is to develop not only the academic potentials of the students but also to enhance their self-esteem.
- Literacy and Language are essential to achieve successful learning and healthy 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.
- Review the curriculum regularly and systematically to meet the needs of our students.
- 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 places for all students.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

This policy acknowledges the definitions of SEND as indicated in the [UAE Inspection Framework 2015-16](#). This section explains the terms being used for students who need learning or pastoral support.

- **SEND** refers to Special Education Needs and Disability. It is a need that arises based on the disability that requires special services in addition to what the school normally offers. They are also referred as students of determination (SoD).
- **Students with exceptionalities** are those students characterized by profound intellectual disabilities, severely physical disabilities and those who are endowed with exceptional talents and intellectual giftedness which requires a specialized career and educational program to address their needs.
- **Students with learning difficulty have the following characteristics:**
 - Have greater difficulty in learning as compared with other students of the same age.
 - Have 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.
 - Have a below average intellectual functioning which is reflected in his inability to cope up with the curriculum due to slow maturation, low learning capacity and inadequate social adjustment.
- **Students with EAL/ESL.** A student whose language or form of language at home is different from which she will be taught is not regarded as learning difficulty. However, this student may need support or intervention that can enhance his/her English language skills. Thus, differentiation or modification of classroom activities and assessments can be provided to give them an opportunity to have full access to the curriculum.

- **Students with specific learning difficulties.** These special educational needs cover a wide variety of conditions of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia (reading), dysgraphia (writing and spelling) dyscalculia (using numbers) and dyspraxia (fine and gross motor skills).
- **Students with sensory processing needs** are those students with hearing impairment or visual impairment.
- **Students with communication and interaction needs** are those students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) which is characterized by difficulties in communication, social interaction, flexible thinking, and imagination.
- **Students with behavioral, social, and emotional needs.** These are students who have attention deficit disorder (ADD), behavior disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and eating problems.
- **Students with physical disability** are those students who have disabilities based on congenital conditions such as cerebral palsy, Winchester syndrome, hemophilia, cystic fibromatosis, or accidental injury. These students may have minimal learning needs, or they may also have serious special education needs.
- **Students with medical or health related condition.** These are students whose medical condition or health related condition may be associated with special needs such as diabetes, asthma, seizure, epilepsy. This can be temporary or a long -term illness.
- **Students with speech and language disorders.** Students who have expressive language disorder find it difficult to express themselves orally. There are also students who have receptive language disorder which makes it difficult for them to understand the oral language and listening. Students who have global language disorder have both

expressive and receptive problem, thus affecting the understanding and use of the language.

- **Students who might find the subject difficult but not necessarily having SEN.** It may be due to the varying degree of maturation and speed of processing new information especially during transition period (e.g., from elementary to middle or from middle to high school).
- **Gifted and Talented Students.** These students have outstanding abilities or aptitude in various areas and who are performing excellently above their chronological age. They are showing exceptional skills and talents in the areas of:
 - physical ability – either in games, athletics, dance, PE
 - creativity and artistic talent in music, art, drama, and poetry
 - mechanical ingenuity
 - interpersonal skills, such as leadership
 - high intelligence in math, problem solving or thinking skills
- **Special educational provision** is an additional or different educational provision provided to exceptional children.

IV. POLICY

1. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

1.1 Aims

This Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion 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 formulate 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 create Individual Education Plans where learning is break down into specific targets.
- To continually monitor the progress of all students with SEN.
- To advise or assist the teacher in devising plan for students who are at risk or underachieving.
- To ensure that parents engage in their child's learning and gain an understanding of their Special Educational Needs.
- To consult with outside agencies when appropriate.
- To support staff to build appropriate in-class strategies.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

1.2.1 The School Board has the responsibility to:

- ❖ Ensure that the school is compliant with all the UAE regulations and requirements
- ❖ Appoint one School Board member to be the Governor of the Inclusion education
- ❖ Ensure that the appointed Governor will have a meeting at least once termly with the Head of SEN for monitoring of the continuous compliance

1.2.2 The Principal has the responsibility to:

- ❖ Ensure the successful implementation of the SEN Inclusion Policy
- ❖ Ensure that the school policy is adhered strictly in reference to the students with special needs
- ❖ Lead in offering support to the students and their families

- ❖ Commit oneself in ensuring that all students will experience improvement and success in their learning regardless of their disability or learning problems
- ❖ Ensure that a highly qualified Special Needs Coordinator/ Head is employed for the smooth implementation of the program of the department and provide support and training to fulfill the requirement of the position
- ❖ Support the continuous professional development /training of all staff to ensure that inclusion of SEND students is done effectively.

1.2.3 The Senior Leadership Team has the responsibility to:

- ❖ Provide support to the Principal and SEN Head for the successful implementation of the Inclusion Policy, inclusive provisions for all learners and professional development/ training of all staff
- ❖ Include the Head of SEN in the leadership team to ensure that the inclusion agenda is communicated across all stakeholders.

1.2.4 The Head of SEN Inclusion has the responsibility to:

- ❖ Ensure that all staff are aware of the additional learning needs and special learning of the students
- ❖ Support all staff by providing strategies such as professional development (CPD) students observation, assessment, intervention, inclusive and pull-out support, and parents consultation
- ❖ Ensure that the team provides the right level of support to the students and teachers
- ❖ Supervise the identification of students who require additional English Language support because of English as their second language. He/she will work closely with the Head of ESL and other teaching and support

staff to ensure that students are supported adequately and can access the curriculum

- ❖ Ensure assessment for access arrangement is done with all the necessary adjustments are made for students

1.2.5 The Teachers have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Be accountable with the progress and development of the students in the class including those students who has support from the Learning Assistant support (LSA)
- ❖ Work collaboratively and coordinately with subject teachers for the daily provision of students within their lesson.
- ❖ Ensure that all efforts were made and exhausted before referring them to the SEN/SoD department although the department is always available for advice and support if needed. Professional guidance maybe provided by the Inclusion department to better support the needs of SEN students.
- ❖ Ensure that students with SEND and ALN/ESL have access to varied activities.

The Inclusion department, SLT and other teaching and support staff will collaborate closely with each other, with parents, with students and with external /partner agencies to support the individual needs of the students.

1.2.6 The Learning Support Assistants (LSA) and/or Teaching Assistants (TA) have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Help the students in their daily learning needs as guided by the classroom/subject teachers in their support work. The LSA will be under the direct supervision and guidance of the Head of SEND.

1.2.7 The School Counselor has the responsibility to:

- ❖ Assist students, staff, and other stakeholders in personal, social, emotional and behavior issues

1.2.8 The Medical Staff have the responsibility to:

- ❖ Work closely with children, staff, and parents to ensure better communication and support

1.3 School Procedures for Identification, Assessment and Support

Admission

When student has been accepted into the school and based on the result of the admission test that he/she needs learning support, further diagnostic and/or assessment test is provided to address specific areas of educational need.

Elementary School

Early years assessment observations may be conducted 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. Since, the students are still young for testing, qualitative judgment can be done through observation. If there appears to be any SEN issues, then discussions between the SEN support team, Principal, Head of Section, and parents should take place. Students with exceptional circumstances or conditions that can affect their learning should be noted.

Middle and High School

For the assessment of the learning difficulty for middle and high school, scores in the diagnostic tests, formative assessments and summative assessments are considered. The teachers will give the report 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.

Referrals

Teachers are given referral forms to complete at the beginning of the academic year. The teachers have 2 weeks to 4 weeks to assess 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, HoS 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 on the next page:

Stages of SEND Referral

Stage 1

Identification of the students with academic and behavior concerns by the teachers through diagnostic and formative assessments, or observation, anecdotal records, etc.



Stage 2

Referred the concerned student/s to the Head of Student Support. The Head of Student Support observes the student/s in the class to validate the concern.



Stage 3

Arrange a meeting with parents to discuss the academic or behaviour concern through phone calls, student's planner, and mail. Parents meeting with Principal/HoSS/HoS and teachers if deemed appropriate.



Stage 4

Parents are requested to go to the partner institution such as Cambridge Center or any special education diagnostic center for external assessment and validation.

Support Procedures

Students may be supported through:

1. For Elementary School, one SEN support teacher will be responsible for three grade levels (based on the availability of the SEN teachers). There are TAs and some identified SEN students have LSAs to support their learning needs. SEN Teachers will attend one planning session/week to consult with classroom teachers about the students they are supporting and receive any recent information. Any meetings with parents should be joint. Additional staff can be deployed to support extra-curricular activities just in case the need for support cannot be met by existing staff. Group sizes will be flexible enough to meet the needs of the students, to a maximum of 10% of the year group. Support sessions will be reflected in the timetables arranged by the Head of KG and Elementary Section in coordination with the Vice Principal and the ESL/AL Support team. Homeroom and classroom teachers in collaboration with the Head of SEN will determine targets and produce IEPs. Termly report will be made available with the concerned staff and IEP meetings will be conducted with the parents and teachers, social worker, head of SEN, principal and psychologist as needed.

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

2.1. Integrated Studies – for two 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 timetables made by the Head of Section in coordination with the respective HOD and Principal.

2.4. In-class support or pull-out support is available to support lower ability students in core subject 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 SEN/ESL support team will mostly be used to support these students as readers, and scribes.

2.6. Differentiated instructions and specific interventions are provided for low-achieving students in writing essay exams, reading for meaning and organizational skills.

2.7. Students who receive any 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 SEN students.

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

Cambridge Centre

We have a collaboration with the Cambridge Centre which are based on-site to support SEN students. They provide inclusive therapy and support to some SEN students who were enrolled in their ABA.

The assessment reports are shared with parents by the Cambridge Center and the school was also provided with a copy of the report.

Individual Education Plans

These are written by the Head of Student Support with additional support from the classroom teacher, parent, and student. IEPs consist of SMART targets that will help the student to achieve academic, behavior, physical and emotional success. All teachers concerned and SEN teacher will work collaboratively to support the student. There should be no more than 4 targets overall. IEPs will be reviewed termly/annually. IEP targets may include independence

skills, or social and relationship skill in which qualitative judgment can be done in consultation with the teachers concerned.

Staff Development

Information is available to staff as follows:

1. Teachers concerned are provided with information about students including IEPs with accommodation and differentiation strategies.
2. ESL students' information is available in the Mograsy Assessment database which includes IEP targets and progress report.
3. In - service training sessions to address specific areas of SEN during start of year Orientation/Induction and at specific times throughout the academic year.
4. After-school workshop sessions for classroom teachers as part of school training program, 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

Collaborating 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.

B. GIFTED AND TALENTED POLICY

B.1 Aims:

The Gifted and Talented Policy has the following aims:

- To identify and nominate gifted and/or talented students and to ensure that the school is harnessing their exceptional abilities.
- To provide support through various challenging learning activities the giftedness and special talents of our students.
- To ensure that all students are provided with learning opportunities that suit their needs.
- To provide teaching which makes learning challenging and enjoyable.
- To provide higher order thinking and questioning skills.
- To employ a wide variety of methods of recognition of potential.
- To recognize under-achievement and to seek to remove it.
- To stimulate children through extra-curricular activities where possible.
- To ensure that the curriculum is created that can cater to the needs of the exceptional students.
- To conduct regular training to all staff and provide them with up-to-date information about exceptional abilities.
- To regularly update the list of Gifted and Talented students and monitor their progress and achievements.

B.2 School Procedures for Identification, Assessment and Support

Identification

- A variety of identification tools will be utilized to identify gifted and/or students, such as observations, assessment, and diagnostic tests as well as standardized tests and may include input from teachers, parents, peers, students, and professional consultants.

- SHK Hamdan Foundation for Gifted and Talented assess students identified as G&T in Arabic, English and Math. Parents' permission is sought prior to testing. Parents are informed with the result as well as additional courses that the students can take which are offered by SHK Hamdan Excellence Center.
- The HoSS is the nominated coordinator for the school's Gifted and Talented Program. Continuous professional training will be attended by the coordinator to further enhance her skills in identifying and supporting the students with talents and giftedness.
- A collaborative meeting among the gifted and talented coordinator, parents, and teachers will be conducted to support and determine appropriate programs and strategies that would best address the individual needs of the gifted and talented students.

Support

The school will provide enrichment programs, mentoring, flexible extension, and varied learning activities in all classes as part of their differentiated instruction to the gifted and talented students. This should be reflected in the lesson planning wherein teachers provide activities that require higher order of critical thinking. Teachers play a vital role in challenging and motivating the gifted students to be able to maximize their full potentials.

- Information about gifted and talented student programs and activities beyond the school, will also be researched and disseminated to families.
- Enrichment and acquisition of resources that will support and challenge all learning in the classroom.

- Professional development for staff will be conducted termly or annually depending on the TNA (training needs analysis) that will support them in properly identifying and responding to the student's giftedness and to ensure that they will be equipped with the necessary information to cater to the needs of these students.

Coordinating and Monitoring

This program can be supported by the following people through regular reviews:

1. Principal/Vice Principal
2. Head of Student Support
3. Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator/ Specific Teachers
4. Homeroom/classroom teachers
5. Parents

Partnership with Parents

- A strong collaboration between parents and teachers will be established to address the needs of the gifted and talented students.

Evaluation and Development

- This policy will be reviewed annually in accordance with the School Improvement Plan (SIP). There will be an updated register of gifted and talented students yearly based on the nomination of the teachers. Likewise, their progress will be monitored.

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 the academic year, 2020-21, online/ distance learning is 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 is closely monitored.

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