



# Zhuhai International School Special Educational Needs Policy 2017-2018

## ZIS SEN Policy

*This policy document was written through the collaborative efforts of the Learning Services team, IB coordinators, teachers and administrators with feedback from parents.*

As ZIS is an IB World school, this policy is based on the recommendations outlined in *The IB Guide to Inclusive Education: a resource for whole school development*, provided by the IBO. Furthermore, the guides that outline our programmes (PYP, MYP, and DP) were also actively consulted. Finally, the evaluation visit for all three IB programmes in the spring of 2017 provided additional recommendations regarding the restructuring of this document.

### Who we are

Zhuhai International School (ZIS) educates students aged 3-18 from around the world. Founded in 2007, it has maintained a family-oriented atmosphere. While a sizeable portion of our students have spent much of their childhood in the country, they hold passports from other nations. Students enter ZIS with a range of needs related to language, learning and the social-emotional aspects of transition and change.

ZIS is an inclusive learning community. It is the school's commitment to educate all children to the maximum extent appropriate in the regular classroom setting within the means of the school's facilities and budget. ZIS feels strongly that "it is the responsibility of all educators, supported by the community, to develop optimal learning environments." (Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes, 7) Furthermore, ZIS agrees that, "all students in the school community **fully participate** in an IB education" (5).

The ZIS Special Education Needs (SEN) policy aims to reflect the school's mission statement:

At ZIS we strive to develop dynamic and principled global citizens who have the skills and attitudes to enable them to become compassionate, life-long learners who will contribute positively to the future of our world.

## **POLICY AIMS:**

1. Outline SEN goals
2. Describe inclusion at ZIS
3. Outline role of Learning Services (LS)
4. Summarize SEN practices
5. Outline support provided to students at ZIS
6. Summarize role of admissions regarding SEN
7. List resources available to ZIS community
8. Outline Policy Review cycle

## **SEN GOALS**

- Continue a collaborative, team approach in making education accessible to all ZIS students
- Develop differentiated instruction appropriate to each child's specific learning needs
- Develop and create a caring culture of inclusion
- Inform all stakeholders regarding the individual needs of our students
- Communicate effectively with parents/guardians regarding the needs of their children
- Carefully document needs, practices and plans for students through IEPs as needed
- Identify factors that affect student learning and how best to respond to them
- Differentiate and match teaching approaches to student learning needs
- Offer support to staff as they respond to student needs
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians in the best interest of the student
- Use outside resources when extra provision or assessment is needed

## **INCLUSION AT ZIS**

Inclusion is an important part of our educational practice and philosophy. We aim to support a variety of student needs. This includes:

- Specific learning disability
- Gifted and talented
- English as an additional language (EAL)
- Social-emotional needs

An inclusive classroom at ZIS should be a place where students feel valued, are actively engaged in learning, and feel safe and secure. In order to achieve this aim, teachers provide:

- open and respectful communication with their students
- opportunities for students to advocate for their needs

- a variety of materials and equipment to meet the different learning styles and needs of their students
- flexible and cooperative groups in which students can work
- instructions and assessments differentiated for their students
- support for students in their classrooms with appropriate activities and guidance
- an emotionally and physically safe environment to learn in
- clear and consistent routines to follow
- clear, high expectations for themselves and their students
- accommodations to help students with mild to moderate learning needs to access the regular curriculum
- modifications to the curriculum for those students with significant learning difficulties and who require more intensive support

Inclusion at ZIS does not:

- force students through a curriculum that does not match their individual academic needs
- place students with significant learning and/or severe physical disabilities in classrooms without adequate support

In order to support all teaching staff regarding inclusion, its value and its implementation, sessions on inclusion and SEN are delivered during staff induction and Wednesday afternoon workshops as well as through professional development (both internal and external) geared towards supporting SEN provision.

## **ROLE of LEARNING SERVICES (LS)**

At ZIS, the Learning Services department acts as the central point for all students requiring extra support. As a team, LS teachers provide the help needed in and out of the classroom, manage documentation, communicate with parents and connect students with outside support if necessary. The primary goal of LS is to ensure that the needs of all learners are identified and provided for. Services provided may include observation and assessment, programme differentiation, in-class support, specialized teaching, information and advice for teachers and parents/guardians and referrals to outside specialists.

The specific expertise available through the LS department allow for a broad range of support. LS teachers hold qualifications in:

- Special Educational Needs
- Teaching English as a second language
- Occupational therapy

### **Referral Process**

A student receives LS support based on:

- Information given by parents during the admissions process through documentation and reports from the previous school
- Existing documentation put into place while the child attended ZIS
- After careful teacher observation, coupled with documentation outlining strategies tried and resources used

- Consideration of success with internal assessments and external assessments (MAP)
- Consultation and formal assessment done through experts such as Dr. Rick Cheng

Once a referral has been made, LS teachers and classroom teachers work collaboratively to determine the best course of action for the individual child, based on the resources available.

For greater detail with regards to the day to day running of Learning Services, please see the document, ZIS Learning Services Procedures.

## **SUPPORT PROVIDED**

Structured, purposeful inquiry is the main approach to all our teaching and learning. An inclusive classroom is an important part of our practice here at ZIS. Whenever possible, support is provided to allow students to be a part of the regular classroom however, our facilities and human resources do limit the support we can provide.

Our most prominent need is English language support. Most of our students have acquired English as a second, third or subsequent language. Many of the practices in place reflect the needs of this group of students and drive much of the work done in LS.

Specifically, support is provided in the following manner:

<b>Whole School</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers build up relationships with their students in order to get to know them as individuals, allowing them to better understand their strengths, needs and interests</li> <li>• Teachers support students as they deal with the transitions and change inherent in an international school, making careful note of social and emotional difficulties or changes</li> <li>• LS develops an IEP and ILP for those students requiring specialized support</li> <li>• Teachers learn about and access the information provided in a student’s IEP and ILP if one has been prepared (found on the school server)</li> <li>• Teachers provide differentiated instruction through the adaptation of content, process and product to best suit the needs of the individuals in their classroom</li> <li>• An LS teacher may work with the student in their classroom as they participate in regular classes</li> <li>• Students may be pulled out from the classroom individually or in a small group, to work on specific skills with an LS teacher</li> <li>• Classroom teachers and the Learning Services teachers, teach all students together</li> <li>• Small pullout groups of students work with the Learning Services teacher</li> <li>• Teachers incorporate provisions tailored to help students with mild to moderate learning needs to access the regular curriculum</li> <li>• Modifications to the curriculum are provided for those students with significant learning difficulties and who require intensive support</li> <li>• Students identified as having specific learning needs beyond the scope of the schools provisions are identified and further testing is offered to parents via Dr. Rick Cheng</li> </ul>

<b>Early Years</b>	<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>
<p>Each EY classroom has one foreign teacher and one Chinese teacher. This allows for ease of access to our biggest non-English population as well as promoting our host culture and language.</p> <p>One Learning Services teacher is designated to work specifically with our youngest children. This LS teacher works in conjunction with all EY teachers to provide support. In EY, the primary need is language. The current LS teacher is bilingual in English and Chinese.</p> <p>Pull-out support is uncommon at this age level. Most support is provided in the classroom through the foreign teacher, Chinese teacher and LS teacher.</p> <p>Students who may require extra support beyond the process mentioned above are carefully monitored as they mature in order to determine if the issue is a result of age, language or something that requires more specific support.</p> <p>Grade-level meetings give classroom teachers and specialist teachers a chance to share observations, strategies and outcomes about their students to allow for a unified approach.</p>	<p>Each Primary classroom has one foreign teacher and one Chinese teacher. As well as promoting our host culture and language this teacher allows for greater differentiation and easier grouping of students based on needs.</p> <p>One Learning Services teacher is designated to work specifically with 2 year groups (years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6). This LS teacher works in conjunction with the Primary teachers to provide support. As in EY, the primary need is language although support is also given for numeracy and identified learning needs.</p> <p>The main LS office is available for students who want to talk to someone if in need of a chance to discuss their concerns, be they social, emotional, academic</p> <p>Pull-out support is common at this age level. Most individual support provided by the LS teacher occurs during identified literacy and numeracy times. Most support is provided in the LS classroom.</p> <p>At the start of each year, students are assessed on their Reading level through DRA and their writing competency. This allows teachers to track progress as well as identify new students who may need more help with literacy.</p> <p>Push-in support occurs throughout the day, specifically during UOI. LS teachers work with individuals in the classroom or with</p>	<p>In the secondary school, students have up to 8 different subject teachers. In order to provide support across the disciplines, teachers are asked to make note of concerns via a digital platform. These concerns can be behavioural, linguistic, academic or social-emotional.</p> <p>One and a half Learning Services teachers are designated to work specifically with secondary students. These LS teacher work in conjunction with the subject teachers to provide push-in support. As in the primary school, the main need is often language proficiency however, a number of students require support to deal with the stresses of secondary and post-secondary decisions.</p> <p>The main LS office is available for students who want to talk to someone if in need of a chance to discuss their concerns, be they social, emotional, academic or other</p> <p>Pull-out support is uncommon at this age level however it does occur in specifically if it is a language need that requires a more targeted approach when the student first arrives. Students requiring on-going one-on-one support will need to be evaluated externally in order to ascertain if ZIS is able to meet the students' needs. A determination is made based on that assessment.</p> <p>Grade-level meetings allow subject teachers to share observations, strategies and outcomes about their students to allow for a unified approach. This is when observations</p>

	<p>small groups of students in order to allow for easier differentiation.</p> <p>Grade-level meetings allow classroom teachers and specialist teachers to share observations, strategies and outcomes about their students to allow for a unified approach.</p> <p>Students who may require extra support beyond the process mentioned above are carefully monitored. It is during this part of a child's education that a formal evaluation is most likely to occur. This is done only with parent permission through an outside source trained to offer formal evaluation.</p>	<p>made on One Note are visited in a more systematic manner.</p> <p><b>MYP Specific:</b> MYP students are placed in English classes according to their language proficiency, allowing for better support at their level. In accordance with the MYP framework, students are placed in either a Language Acquisition class (and are put in Phase 1-6 according to level of proficiency) or in a Language and Literature class. In MYP year 3 and 5, MYP students are also placed into one of two possible math classes, based on their ability to allow for more specialized instruction.</p> <p>In order to provide the necessary support needed to complete <i>eAssessment</i> during the final year of the MYP, LS and the MYP coordinator aim to submit the appropriate documentation to the IBO to request the provisions a student may need to successfully complete these assessments. These modifications may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra time to complete on-screen assessments or timed assessments</li> <li>• A scribe</li> <li>• A quieter environment for assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>DP Specific:</b> Students are advised based on their learning needs regarding subject choices as well as given a choice of how fully to follow the DP. At times, students are guided toward certificates vs the full diploma programme.</p>
--	--	---

		<p>In order to provide the necessary support needed to complete DP examinations and course work, LS and the DP coordinator aim to submit the appropriate documentation to the IBO early enough to request the provisions a student may need to successfully complete these assessments. These modifications may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra time to complete timed assessments or formal written exams</li> <li>• A scribe</li> <li>• Access to a computer</li> <li>• Translation dictionaries for relevant exams</li> <li>• A quieter environment for assessment or examinations</li> </ul>
--	--	--

**Limitations**

ZIS is not equipped to provide access to those with physical mobility disabilities as the facilities do not have ramps and/or elevators to allow students to reach beyond the first floor of the building. The entrances and exits are not wheelchair accessible. Students with severe visual impairment would not be able to navigate our facilities safely or easily. Our staff is neither trained nor equipped to support cases of severe learning disabilities. While we have access to outside assessments, we are not always able to support the students identified as needing more extensive support.

Due to the size of our student body and trends in enrolment, it is unlikely that the facilities or the human resources available will allow for much development or change in the support we offer. Budgetary constraints make major future investments in this area unlikely.

**Confidentiality**

All information will be kept confidential and will only be shared amongst the student’s team of teachers, support staff and school administration with the purpose of sharing to assist the student in learning to the best of their ability. It is the professional obligation of all ZIS staff to protect confidential information.

Confidential records will only be shared with other schools or outside agencies with the written consent of the student’s parents/guardians/guardians.





## ROLE of ADMISSIONS

In order to ensure that ZIS can adequately provide for students, the school's admissions office follows specific procedures.

This summary presents how special needs are identified before a student is offered admission:

<b>Whole School</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents/guardians inquire through the office about our school</li> <li>• An admissions package is sent home</li> <li>• A school tour is offered. This allows the admissions officer to begin to learn about the family and their situation.</li> <li>• Parents are asked to submit documentation from the child(ren)'s prior school (if old enough) to provide background educational information</li> <li>• Parents are interviewed by the admissions officer to offer a chance to learn more about the child(ren) and background</li> </ul>		
<b>Early Years</b>	<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>
<p>A trial day is set up to allow teachers to observe the child. Observations are shared with the head office.</p> <p>Acceptance letter sent home to parents within a week of trial day to invite student to join.</p>	<p>A trial day is set up to allow teachers to observe the child.</p> <p>Acceptance letter sent home to parents within a week of trial day to invite student to join.</p> <p>Student assessed in Reading using DRA.</p>	<p>Student is invited in for formal assessment of math and literacy to determine level. <i>Students in years 11-13 are not accepted if their English proficiency is not at a level that allows them to access the curriculum.</i></p> <p>Students are interviewed by the Head of Learning Services to allow for a chance to observe the student socially as well as determine ability to communicate orally in English.</p> <p>Acceptance letter sent home to parents within a week of trial day to invite student to join This letter lists conditions of acceptance specifically related to English proficiency.</p>

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE

As ZIS is a small community school, housed in facilities that cannot meet the needs of all applicants, we rely on outside resources to assist us with the more complex situations that can arise. The following table lists those resources and their roles.

Resource	Description	Role
Dr. Rick Cheng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An <i>Occupational Therapist</i> at the Pro Ed Centre in Auckland, New Zealand</li> <li>Former professor of psychology at the Beijing Normal University in Zhuhai</li> <li>Delivers seminars to teachers, students and parents regarding student health and wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizes assessment of students flagged as needing more support by teachers or parents during his visits to Zhuhai (2-3 times a year)</li> <li>Organizes parent meetings for those requesting further guidance, support or information regarding their child(ren)'s needs</li> <li>Provides remote support through WeChat and email to both parents and the Head of Learning Services</li> </ul> <p><i>Due to the nature and stigma attached to formal assessment in China, this resource is invaluable as parents are very reluctant to have this done here. Dr. Cheng understands the culture (he is from Zhuhai) and the best approach to ease parent concerns.</i></p>
Community Volunteers from different nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within our various cultural communities, support is available in the mother-tongue of our students outside of the English and Chinese speaking communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students and parents have access to different forms of support through people of their own nationality. These individuals offer cultural and linguistic understanding as community members grapple with challenges.</li> </ul>
Experts within the parent community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-working parents who are experts in various fields related to special needs, counselling or psychology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These parents are often willing to offer guidance to LS or even to individual students and parents needing professional support outside the realm of the school's resources. This is especially true for social-emotional support.</li> </ul>

## POLICY REVIEW

This policy document will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is both current and relevant to the changing needs and dynamics of the school. After each review, the policy document will be shared with staff through Staff Orientation as well as division meetings devoted specifically to SEN and special needs at ZIS.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The following documents provide additional guidance about ZIS policy and procedures that link directly to SEN policy and practices:

- ZIS Language Policy
- ZIS Assessment Policy
- ZIS Admissions Policy

- LS Procedures

## **Glossary of Terms**

**Inclusion** – Ensuring the classroom is a place in which all students can access learning, regardless of their individual needs

**Individual Education Program (IEP)**–describes the student’s learning difficulties, how the student learns, how the student best demonstrates that learning and what teachers and service providers will do to help the student learn more effectively; the plan is reviewed regularly by all involved parties; a legally necessary document in some countries and cities

**Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**–describes specific learning targets for students that scaffold their learning; acknowledges student’s strengths and interests; regularly reviewed by all involved parties

**Learning Difficulty** -have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age or have a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided in ZIS for students of the same age. A student must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or medium of communication of the home is different from the language in which he or she is or will be taught.

**Severe special needs** – Academic, physical or emotional needs requiring specific training, equipment or facilities in order to fully support the child. Currently, ZIS does not enrol students with severe special needs.

**Special Education Needs (SEN)** -having a learning difficulty that calls for an additional educational provision to be made

**Specific learning disability** – This includes but is not limited to: dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD, autism spectrum (higher functioning), etc.

## **Bibliography**

“Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes.” International Baccalaureate Organization, Jan. 2016.

“Learning Diversity Policy.” Sreenidhi International School, 2015.

“Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom.” International Baccalaureate Organization, May 2013.

Nanjing International School. “Nanjing Learning Support Handbook.” 2016.

Pelletier, Kristen, et al. “The Next Frontier: Inclusion in International Schools: A Practical Guide for School Leaders.” International School of Brussels, 2010.

“Student Support Services Parent Handbook.” Leipzig International School, 2017.

“The International School of Azerbaijan: Whole School Learning Support Policy.” The International School of Azerbaijan, 2010.

“The IB Guide to Inclusive Education: a Resource for Whole School Development.” International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015.