

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) POLICY
VALENCIA HIGH SCHOOL (IB WORLD SCHOOL 1433)

PHILOSOPHY

The teachers and administrators of Valencia High School believe that the wide variety of backgrounds, learning styles, interests, and abilities represented by our student population both supports a rich learning environment and challenges us to differentiate our teaching to meet the needs of all of our students and to provide a positive, safe learning environment for all students. We believe that, with good teaching, all students can learn. Every student should be supported in learning the skills that are necessary for success as adults. Accordingly, we endeavor to provide learner-centered IB instruction wherein all students receive the necessary resources, guidance, accommodations, and differentiated instruction needed for personal success.

The IB Program at Valencia High School supports the policy of the International Baccalaureate regarding students with special needs:

The IB believes that all candidates must be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard examination conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage and prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of access arrangements may be authorized. Candidates may need access arrangements due to learning support requirements such as:

- *specific learning difficulties*
- *communication and speech difficulties*
- *autism spectrum disorders*
- *social, emotional and behavioral challenges*
- *physical and sensory challenges*
- *medical and mental health difficulties, including temporary medical conditions*
- *additional language learning.*

However, access arrangements are not restricted to students with identified challenges. They should be provided to any student who requires support and where the need can be justified.

(Diploma Program Assessment Procedures—2020)

FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS

Our policy regarding special education is primarily directed by federal laws, the laws of the State of California, and the policies of our County Office of Education and the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District. We offer high-quality educational programs and services to students with mental and physical impairments, and we are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn. Per public law, these students will receive their education in the least restrictive environment possible. Students with mental or physical impairments and/or learning disabilities will be in mainstream classes for most or all of their school day with supplementary aids and services when necessary. These students may fall under one or two sections of the state or federal education code: section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which covers students with physical impairments, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which covers students with mental impairments and/or learning disabilities. Valencia High School special education teachers, counselors, classroom teachers, and teacher aides follow established procedures to provide the services necessary so that these students can have access to an education that best serves their needs.

Our school practice to comply with state law and district regulations and to meet the needs of our students is reviewed continuously by our school psychologist, counselors, and special education teachers. Special needs students are identified in the following areas: Resource Specialist Program (RSP), Special Day Class (SDC), and Speech and Language. RSP students spend less than 50% of their academic day in special education classes, while SDC students spend more than 50% of their academic day in special education classes. RSP includes students who are designated as “monitor only.” These students are enrolled in all mainstream education classes, but receive special education support services. Speech and language students meet with a speech and language therapist on campus two days week to work on their specific speech and language needs.

The school psychologist, counselors, and our special education teachers work closely with students’ parents and our mainstream education teachers to serve the needs of these students and to develop plans (either 504 plans or Individual Education Plans [IEPs]) for curriculum and accommodations that will help these students meet high standards of achievement.

SEN POLICY GOALS

The purpose of this document is to provide stakeholders with information about the arrangements available for candidates with special needs during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations. Specific goals of the SEN Policy include the following:

- Adhere to national, state, and local laws regarding special education
- Ensure that the special needs of our students are identified early, assessed, and provided for

- Clarify the expectations of all stakeholders
- Identify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders
- Assist all students in accessing all elements of the school curriculum and assessment policy

SEN POLICY TERMINOLOGY

Taken directly from *Access and inclusion policy* (IBO, November 2018).

Access arrangements (also referred to as inclusive access arrangements)

Access arrangements are changes introduced to teaching, learning and assessment to remove or reduce barriers. They do not change what the student is expected to learn and do not lower expectations, but instead provide the optimal support to address challenges and to enable the student to work around them. At a fundamental level, they address equal access and fairness to learning and teaching and in addition, validity and meaningfulness to assessment.

Access requirements:

A candidate with access requirements is one who requires access arrangements in teaching, learning and assessment.

Additional language learners:

Candidates whose medium of instruction and assessment is not their first or best language.

Exceptional circumstances:

Circumstances that are not commonly within the experience of other candidates with assessment access requirements. The IB reserves the right to determine which circumstances qualify as “exceptional” and therefore justify a particular inclusive assessment arrangement.

Invigilator:

A person, or persons, responsible for supervising an examination. Also referred to as a “proctor” or a “supervisor”. The invigilator of an IB examination may or may not be the coordinator.

Learning support requirements:

Support and/or access required to enable some students, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, to reach their full potential in learning and assessment. Not all students who have access requirements will need learning support. Students with identified challenges (such as: autism/Asperger's syndrome; learning challenges; speech, communication, physical and sensory challenges; social, emotional and behavioral difficulties; medical and mental health challenges) may have learning support requirements. Also, additional language learners may receive learning support to bridge and develop their language. However, learning support is not restricted to students with identified challenges and must be provided to any student who requires support.

Reasonable adjustments:

Changes or additional conditions to the assessment process which may not be standard and not covered in the list of inclusive access arrangements. They are unique to a student based on their requirements.

Standard score:

A score, which allows for comparisons, that is based on a scale with a constant statistical mean and standard deviation. Publishers of psychological tests report standard scores with a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15.

Technical language (cognitive academic language proficiency):

This refers to terminology specific to the subject being tested. It may be the target of the assessment and must be known by the candidate to understand fully the subject. Refer to *Developing academic literacy in IB programmes* (August 2014) which refers to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

Temporary medical conditions:

Medical conditions including debilitating injuries and mental health challenges with onset or occurrence during the course of study of the IB program and up to three months before the IB examinations.

Additional or extra time:

A specific percentage of examination time authorized to a candidate with access requirements that is more than the standard duration of time allocated to the examination in IB assessments and other tasks in classwork.

Usual way of working:

The access arrangements established for a specific student during learning and teaching in school. These arrangements are put in place in response to the student's needs and are used in classroom activities, and for class tests and examinations.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRINCIPLES

Taken directly from *Access and inclusion policy* (IBO, November 2018).

MAINTAINING STANDARDS

- 1.1 The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates.
- 1.2 The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment.
- 1.3 The inclusive access arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the aptitude to meet all assessment requirements leading to the completion of the program.
- 1.4 In the case of internal assessments, marks must always be awarded based on the candidate's work in accordance with the assessment criteria. Under no circumstances must teachers consider other factors such as the candidate's challenges or difficulties.
- 1.5 A subject result means the candidate has met the objectives of that subject, ie they have been able to demonstrate what was being assessed. This means there is no need to grant an exception for the assessment because the student was capable of completing it. Therefore, a request for exemption, which would still yield a subject result, must only be submitted after careful consideration and only where inclusive access arrangements and reasonable adjustments cannot be applied. The IB will use its discretion and only grant exemptions as a very last resort and in exceptional cases. No exemption can be granted for language subjects; all students, including those with specific learning challenges, are required to study two languages without any exception.

REFLECTING USUAL WAYS OF WORKING

- 1.6 Inclusive access arrangements are pre-examination measures to allow a candidate to access the assessment that reflects their experience during learning. As such they cannot be requested retroactively

- 1.7 Inclusive access arrangements for a candidate must be well planned and put in place throughout the course of learning and teaching including classroom work and formative assessments.
- 1.8 Schools must plan inclusive access arrangements for their candidates based on the IB criteria as stated in this policy and teachers' observations of the candidate in the classroom during classwork and tests. If the school intends to plan inclusive access arrangements for a candidate that are not in line with the eligibility criteria stated in this policy, they must first consult the IB.
- 1.9 The inclusive access arrangements requested for a candidate must be his or her usual way of working during his or her course of study. In almost all instances, if the inclusive access arrangements planned by the school do not follow the eligibility criteria stated in this policy, and have not been previously discussed with the IB (see Section 1.8), they cannot be authorized by the IB even if they have been the candidate's usual way of working. Only in very exceptional and unusual cases will the IB authorize a request for inclusive access arrangements that are not the usual way of working and that have been put in place to support the candidate only in the last six months of study or thereafter, just prior to the examinations.
- 1.10 The IB aims to authorize inclusive access arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school.

CONSISTENCY FOR ALL CANDIDATES

- 1.11 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international-mindedness. Therefore, the inclusive access arrangements policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with access requirements, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practices in different countries.
- 1.12 The IB will ensure that, wherever possible, arrangements for candidates with a similar type of access requirement are the same. Due to the cultural differences that occur in the recognition of learning support requirements and the nature of access arrangements granted in schools, there may be some compromise that may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.
- 1.13 Each request for inclusive access arrangements will be judged on its own merit. Previous authorization of arrangements, either by the IB or another awarding body, will not influence the decision on whether to authorize the arrangements that have been requested by the coordinator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1.14 The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee (who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential).

MAINTAINING INTEGRITY OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 1.15 If a school does not meet the conditions specified by the IB when administering inclusive access arrangements, the candidate will not be awarded a grade in the subject and level concerned.
- 1.16 A school must not communicate with an examiner about a candidate's learning support requirements.
- 1.17 All examinations must be invigilated according to the regulations governing the conduct of examinations for the relevant program.
- 1.18 The person invigilating the candidate's examination must not be a relative of the candidate, or any other person with whom there may be an apparent or perceived conflict of interest.

EXCEPTIONAL ISSUES

- 1.19 Any issues that arise from the nature of the inclusive access arrangements, or any unforeseen difficulties encountered by the candidate during the examinations, should be reported to IB Answers as soon as possible.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the School:

- The school will work with the District and the County Department of Education to ensure the program is in compliance with federal and state laws regarding students with special educational needs.
- The school will provide guidance to students with special educational needs to help them make informed decisions concerning application to and participation in our program.
- The school will provide resources for the implementation and continuation of the SEN Policy.

- Counselors and special education teachers will provide teachers with all IEPs and 504 plan documentation.

Responsibilities of the IB Coordinator:

- The IB coordinator will apply to IB for students' inclusive assessment arrangements.
- The IB coordinator will work with faculty to support students with special educational needs.
- The IB coordinator will provide inclusive assessment arrangements as needed and approved by IB.

Responsibilities of the Faculty:

- The classroom teacher will comply with all federal and state laws regarding special educational needs.
- The classroom teacher will identify struggling learners and refer them to the IB counselor or coordinator when appropriate.
- The classroom teacher will provide differentiated instruction as outlined by a student's IEP or 504 Plan.

Responsibilities of the Parent:

- Parents will communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's special educational needs.
- Parents will communicate with the school regarding any changes in their child's special educational needs.
- Parents will provide documentation needed for IB inclusive assessment arrangement requests.

Responsibilities of the Student:

- Students will be an active participant in classes and meetings.
- Students will be proactive in asking for assistance from teachers, counselors, and administrators.