

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 eligible for inclusive assessment arrangements are those with individual needs such as:*

- *learning disabilities*
- *specific learning difficulties*
- *communication and speech difficulties*
- *autism spectrum disorders*
- *social, emotional and behaviour challenges*
- *multiple disabilities and/or physical, sensory, medical or mental health issues.*

*Any reasonable adjustments for a particular candidate pertaining to his or her unique needs will be considered.*

(IBO Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Program—2015)

**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 *Candidates with assessment access requirements* (IBO, updated July 2014).

### **Assessment component:**

Each subject and level for the Diploma Programme is divided into assessment components, for example, paper 1, paper 2 and internal assessment. Some components are comprised of discrete tasks that are undertaken separately. These separate tasks within a component are referred to in this document as a “part” of an assessment component.

### **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.

### **Inclusive assessment arrangements:**

Changed or additional conditions during the assessment process for a candidate with assessment access requirements. These enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment more fairly and are not intended to compensate for any lack of ability.

### **Assessment access requirements:**

A candidate with assessment access requirements is one who requires access arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment.

### **Learning support requirements:**

Support and/or access required to enable some candidates, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, reach their full potential in learning and assessment.

Candidates who require inclusive assessment arrangements may have learning support requirements due to one or more of the following:

Autism spectrum/Asperger's syndrome  
Learning disabilities  
Medical conditions  
Mental health issues  
Multiple disabilities  
Physical and/or sensory challenges  
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties  
Specific learning difficulties  
Speech and/or communication difficulties

**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:**

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.

## **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRINCIPLES**

Taken directly from *Candidates with assessment access requirements* (IBO, updated July 2014).

- 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, regardless of whether or not they have learning support requirements.
- 1.2 Inclusive assessment arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's long-term challenge(s) when demonstrating his or her level of attainment. The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.
- 1.3 The inclusive assessment arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the aptitude to meet all assessment requirements leading to the award of the diploma or course results.
- 1.4 If inclusive assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate during the course of their study of the Diploma Programme or practice examinations, the school may provide the arrangements. If the arrangements are required for assessment, this document lists the arrangements that do not require prior authorization from the IB. For all other arrangements, prior authorization from the

IB Assessment centre is mandatory. Similarly, if a Diploma Programme candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, action, service (CAS), IB Answers must be consulted.

- 1.5 The IB aims to authorize inclusive assessment 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. Coordinators are required to provide information on the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom.
- 1.6 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international-mindedness. Therefore, the inclusive assessment arrangements policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with assessment access requirements, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practice in different countries.
- 1.7 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 which may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.
- 1.8 Each request for inclusive assessment 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.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 The IB does not flag or annotate in any way the results of a candidate for whom inclusive assessment arrangements have been authorized.
- 1.11 If a school does not meet the conditions specified by the IB when administering inclusive assessment arrangements or makes arrangements without authorization, the candidate may not be awarded a grade in the subject and level concerned.
- 1.12 If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) arises from an identified learning support requirement, inclusive assessment arrangements may be authorized. (For subjects in groups 3 to 6, all candidates are allowed to use a translating dictionary in the written examinations.)

- 1.13 If inclusive assessment arrangements are authorized for internal assessment, the IB may require the candidate's work to be submitted to the IB Assessment centre for review.
- 1.14 A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's condition or adverse circumstance. Similarly, in the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work. If appropriate, the IB will ensure that reasonable adjustments are applied.
- 1.15 The list of inclusive assessment arrangements available is revised regularly. The IB will consider alternative arrangements proposed by a coordinator, provided those arrangements could be made available to all candidates with similar requirements.
- 1.16 According to the document General regulations: Diploma Programme, a Diploma Programme candidate may participate in three examination sessions to be awarded the diploma. At the discretion of the IB, a candidate with learning support requirements may be allowed additional sessions.
- 1.17 If the nature of a candidate's challenge and/or the authorized inclusive assessment arrangement might disturb other candidates during an examination, the candidate must take the examination in a separate room and be supervised according to the regulations governing the conduct of Diploma Programme examinations.
- 1.18 Written examinations must be invigilated according to the regulations governing the conduct of Diploma Programme examinations. 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.
- 1.19 Any issues that arise from the nature of the inclusive assessment arrangements, or any unforeseen difficulties encountered by the candidate, 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.