

Mirdif American School Inclusion Policy

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2017

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References:

General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public & Private Schools), UAE Ministry of Education, Special Education Department DSIB School Inspection Supplement 2017/18

Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework 2017

Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools 2019

Advocating For Inclusive Education: A Guide for Parents 2021

Response to Intervention <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>

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Glossary

Inclusion at MAS At Mirdif American School (MAS), we embrace diversity and respect all individuals regardless of their abilities, nationalities, beliefs and values. Inclusion is seen as an advantage for MAS community that will contribute to the academic, social, emotional and psychological development of **ALL** students. At MAS, “Inclusive education is not a project or initiative.” (KHDA 2017)

Mirdif American School promotes an inclusive learning environment and our teachers are determined in removing barriers to learning by providing high quality teaching which is differentiated for all students. KHDA (2017) defines barriers as, “Attitudes, beliefs, practices, physical or technological obstacles, or the lack of support, that result in a student’s exclusion from, or in their less-than-full participation as a valued equal in, the common learning environment in mainstream schools and classrooms.” We strive to engage students in an enjoyable learning experience making sure it is taking place at the students’ levels of performance. We endeavor to create and foster a supportive and understanding community where all stakeholders are recognized as valuable members and individual differences are cherished, recognized and met. The aim of the Inclusion Department is to enable, “every teacher to play a key role in facilitating the educational inclusion of students of determination.” (KHDA 2019 pg.11)

MAS’s Inclusion Team Responsibilities The MAS’s inclusion team is committed to early identification and support of students of determination.

Principal and Inclusion Champion- accept students of determination and give them the full opportunity to learn; establish the vision and direction for inclusion; hold the overall responsibility for educational program and inclusion within the school through review and planning; provide rigorous monitoring; provide plentiful opportunities for support and professional development to teachers; work closely with the Leader of Provision and assign responsibility; ensure that recruitment prioritizes inclusive practices.

Inclusion Champion and Leader of Provision - promotes a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of all students; works collaboratively and models best practices amongst classroom and subject teachers, learning support and teaching assistants, external specialists and parents to optimize the potential for student success; guides and supports classroom and subject teachers in order to enable all students to be purposefully included in the school and classroom; provides motivation and support required for improvement over time; works collaboratively with all stakeholders to promote student learning, development, and well-being; facilitates collaborative meetings to promote knowledge, development and growth of inclusive practices.

Learning Support Teachers- collaborate (documented weekly classroom visits accompanied by followup teacher discussions) with teachers and LSAs to support, advise, define appropriate activities, model, and plan for best practice differentiation to remove barriers to learning; develop plans of action, IEPs, schemes of work, and differentiated materials to support such students' progress within the curriculum; to maintain and update progress shown through assessment and data collection; teach students of determination either individually or in small groups, inside the classroom or in SOD classroom; be involved in identifying all levels of need, planning and reviewing appropriate and effective interventions.

EAL Teachers- administer an evaluation for non-English speaking and limited proficiency students and assessments for program placement to students; provide instruction to each EAL student appropriate to his/her level as determined by daily and formal assessments; confer with classroom teachers regarding each student's progress and give strategies for differentiation and help in the classroom.

School Counselor- works closely with special education and classroom/subject education teachers and staff members to ensure that the needs of each student are being met, generates and monitors Individual Educational Plans (IEP) for students of determination whose needs are primarily social and emotional.

Classroom/Subject Teachers- meet the needs of all students in the classroom; work collaboratively with the inclusion department team to create opportunities for the academic, social, emotional and psychological development of all students; responsible for the modification, implementation, and outcomes of the students' educational programs.

Learning Support Assistants- work in collaboration with SOD teachers and classroom/subject teachers to ensure that students of determination are successfully included in the classroom; provide individual support to a specific student; promote access to targeted support outside of the classroom; work on differentiated activities with groups of students; liaise with the learning support teacher and leader of provision for students of determination, developing social/emotional skills, work with teachers to monitor the progress of students, and support intervention or therapy sessions.

Inclusion Programs at MAS Differentiation Support by Classroom/Subject Teachers
Differentiation takes place through content, process or instruction. Classroom/subject teachers will modify the school curriculum when needed with a support from SOD/EAL teachers and Leader of Provision to implement individualized program based on students' needs.

Push in support- LSAs, SOD/EAL teachers provide in class support for students of determination. The amount of support time is decided based on student needs. The aim is to reduce support as the student gains independence and makes good progress.

Pull out support- The support is provided by SOD Teachers, EAL teachers or Counselor. This support could be once or five times weekly dependent on student needs. All interventions are linked to the class program, unless the student is below expectations, above expectations or has a specific learning difficulty.

Gifted and talented programs- enrichment programs inside the general education classes or resource rooms (either in a subject in the curriculum, or subject not included in the curriculum). Additional services include assigning students individual projects and studies, specialized educational tours, attending lectures, debates, educational seminars, participating in educational competitions, providing students with programs to solve problems, programs of leadership, communication and computer skills, and other such enrichment programs are also provided.

Speech and Language therapy- the treatment of speech and communication disorders depends provided by external specialist. The therapy can take place at the school premises during the school hours or outside of the school after the school hours.

Occupational Therapy – the therapists work with individuals to help them to develop, recover, or maintain basic motor functions and reasoning abilities. The therapy can take place at the school premises during the school hours or outside of the school after the school hours.

Definition of Special Educational Needs- Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework 2017

Special Educational Needs and Disability are defined as “A need which occurs when a student identified with an impairment requires the school to make specific modifications or provide specific supports to prevent, remove or reduce any potential disability from occurring and to ensure that the student can access education on an equitable basis and within a common learning environment with same-aged peers.”

Categories for Disabilities/Special Educational Needs –

- UAE Revised Categorization Framework for Students of Determination (2022-2023)

1. Cognition and Learning

- Intellectual Disability
- Specific learning disorders
- Multiple Disabilities
- Developmental delay (younger than 5 years)

2. Communication and Interaction

- Communication Disorders
 - Expressive language disorder
 - Receptive language disorder
 - Global Language Delay
- Autism Spectrum Disorder

3. Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Psycho-emotional Disorders

4. Physical, Sensory and Medical

- Sensory Impairment
- Deaf-Blind Disability
- Physical Disability
- Chronic or Acute Medical

English as an Additional Language An English as an additional language learner is a student who is learning the English language in addition to the first language. The Mirdif American

School English as an Additional Language (EAL) program is designed to eliminate the barriers to learning due to lack of language proficiency to enable them to participate successfully in the social and academic environment of the English-speaking community.

Definition of Gifted and Talented by UAE Ministry of Education Definition for Gifted and Talented refers to having outstanding ability, or a great deal of willingness in one or more areas of intelligence, or creativity, or academic achievement or special talents and abilities such as oratory, poetry, drawing, handicrafts, sports, drama, or School for All - 21 leadership capacity. More often the performance of the talented or gifted student is so exceptional or advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs in the general education classrooms with support from SEN support services.

Identification, Assessment and Referral Process

Admission Process

MAS is fully inclusive to learners of all needs and abilities; however, the school reserves the right to offer conditional acceptance dependent upon full cooperation and transparency from parents. This is to ensure MAS has all the resources and family support necessary to promote the success of all learners.

The admission team is aware of signs that could be indicative of additional needs and disabilities and if the student is exhibiting some of those signs, a member of the student support team, usually the SENCO is requested to join the admission procedures. The SENCO conducts a short interview, observation and in-classroom observations of the student applying for admission to assess any areas of need. Parents or the SENCO may also complete checklist/screening forms for a range of needs including ADHD, ASD, etc. According to the KHDA policy manual, “students who experience Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have the same right as all other students to be admitted to a preferred school where they are able to engage and participate in a quality learning experiences alongside same aged peers.”

If the student support team member suspects that the new admission may exhibit any common barriers to learning, it may be suggested to parent that their child be accepted to the MAS program based on conditional acceptance while the stakeholders assess and observe the student to obtain the most valid picture of any barriers to learning to apply appropriate learning support. Alternately, the family is welcome to obtain a diagnostic assessment from a medical agency or center before completing the admission process, though admission is not conditional upon submission of medical diagnosis. Students will not be refused based on their observed

barriers to learning or reported classroom experience only, but rather all factors will be taken into account such as equipment, technological aids, support staff, adequate facilities and class size. MAS will work to ensure that students of determination with previously enrolled siblings, will receive sibling priority as per KHDA requirements.

Parents of new students that have been formerly identified as students of determination are requested to provide previous reports, IEPs, diagnostic assessment reports and summary report from external services such as Speech and Language Therapists or Educational Psychologists. Transparency between all stakeholders who have worked with the student are essential to successful planning for their time at Mirdif American School.

Students who experience Common Barrier to Learning will be provided with the support, accommodations and curricular differentiation required to enable equitable access to educational opportunities. Appropriate priority will be given to the development of each student's potential, including meaningful participation in the learning process, with peers in the common learning environment which is defined by KHDA (2019) as an environment where "education is designed to facilitate learning by individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives."

Re-registration of Former Students

At the end of each year, parents of MAS students are required to sign 'Parent Agreement Form', accepting the conditions for re-registration of the student. Conditions are student specific and depend on the progress and behavior of the child with the consideration of parent and teacher input (e.g. re- assessment and more support at home, a full time or part time LSA provision, EAL support, learning support).

Response to Intervention

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child

outcome data. For RTI implementation to work effectively, the following essential components must be implemented with fidelity and in a rigorous manner:

High-quality, scientifically based classroom instruction. All students receive high-quality, research-based instruction in the general education classroom.

Ongoing student assessment. Universal screening and progress monitoring provide information about a student's learning rate and level of achievement, both individually and in comparison, with the peer group. These data are then used when determining which students need closer monitoring or intervention. Throughout the RTI process, student progress is monitored frequently to examine student achievement and gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. Decisions made regarding students' instructional needs are based on multiple data points taken in context over time.

Tiered instruction. A multi-tier approach is used to efficiently differentiate instruction for all students. The model incorporates increasing intensities of instruction offering specific, research based interventions matched to student needs. MAP assessment and iReady assessment data are specifically used to tier multi-level learning opportunities for all learners at MAS.

Parent involvement. Schools implementing RTI provide parents information about their child's progress, the instruction and interventions used, the staff who are delivering the instruction, and the academic or behavioral goals for their child.

Referral Process

Step 1-Teacher and/or parents have concerns. The teacher will inform grade level team leader/subject leader. The GLTL/SL makes sure high-quality teaching was provided. MTSS team notified to schedule initial meeting.

Step 2-Teacher fills the pre referral form and sends to the SOD department and MTSS representative.

Step 3- The SENCO or grade level head will schedule an MTSS meeting (documentation/evidence of a concern are presented). The team will collaborate to provide the teacher with differentiation/intervention strategies to implement and then set a schedule for follow up. Grade level heads will monitor ongoing classroom interventions.

Step 4- Parents are informed. The teacher will have 3-6 weeks to reflect on the

strategies/interventions suggested during the meeting in the written form (pre referral form). If the differentiation worked, continue with teaching and differentiation strategies being used. If not, move to step 5.

Step 5- The MTSS will fill out the official referral form. Parents are informed and request consent for SOD baseline assessment. Data is collected (the SOD, EAL teacher or/and counselor or external specialist when needed will assess a student).

Step 7- Findings are reported to the parents and an IEP is written. Additional learning support (LSA) may be considered

Step 8- The student gets required support, on-going review of progress is in place.

Identification Process for Gifted and Talented Students

Students with gifts and talents perform at or show the potential for performing at high levels of accomplishment in one or more areas when compared to others of the same age and experience. These areas include leadership in specific academic fields as well as intellectual, creative and/or artistic domains.

Criteria for identifying G&T students at MAS

1. Examination results (should be between 95-100% in three or more subjects).

MAP-student must earn a 95 percentile on the reading or math MAP assessment to be identified as giGed in those content areas. Students may be identified as gifted in Math and/or Reading on any of the 3 administrations during the school year 2. Student portfolio 3. High IQ and standardized achievement test results 4. Characteristics Instrument for Screening Students (CISS)- A TAG student must exhibit at least 5 of

these characteristics and it should be recorded by the teacher over a two-week period.

MAS's Graduated Approach to Learning and Special Educational Needs Support

English Language Support Tiers

Emerging/Tier 1 - Monitoring list Students are identified through MAP assessment and placed on the monitoring list (15th-25th percentile). The classroom teachers will promote language and vocabulary development throughout the day in instruction across subject areas. These students receive 45 minutes sessions two times a week with push-in support using specific differentiated strategies to support development of language skills. The length of time for this step is from the start of the school year until the next MAP testing. During this period or at the end of this period, students showing significant progress are moved to Tier 2.

Developing/Tier 2 Students are identified through MAP assessment based on their language and reading scores (25th-50th percentile), observation, interviews with the classroom teachers, students, summative assessments, Easy CBM assessments. These students receive pull-out support from an English language specialist teacher three times a week for 45 minutes. These services are provided in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. The length of time for this step is from eight weeks until the next MAP test. At this level of intervention, students are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

Beginner/Tier 3 Students are identified through MAP based on their scores (1st-5th percentile), summative assessments, classroom teachers and students, San Diego Quick Assessment, etc. At this level, intensive pull-out support is provided one week for 45 minutes. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are referred to the special education department.

Learning Support Tiers

Tier 1 - Monitoring List All students receive high quality instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that all students are identified through MAP assessment and placed on the monitoring list based on their scores (15th-25th percentile). Instruction/differentiated instruction during the school day in the regular classroom. The length of time for this step is from the start of the school year until the end of this period, students showing significant progress are returned to the regular classroom Tier 2.

Tier 2 Students are identified through MAP assessment based on their scores (25th-50th percentile), observation with the classroom teachers, students, summative assessments, Easy CBM assessments. The students are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs based on levels of performance and rates of progress. Instruction varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention and level of training of the professionals providing intervention (around 30 minutes daily). These services and interventions are provided in small group settings in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. The length of time for this step goes from eight weeks until the next MAP test. Students who show too little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for more intensive interventions as part of Tier 3.

Tier 3 Students are identified through MAP based on their scores (1st-5th percentile), summative assessments, assessment, observation, interviews with the classroom teachers and students. At this level, students receive intensive interventions that target the students' skills deficits and/or primary barriers to learning. Intensity varies size, frequency and duration of intervention and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention (around 45 minutes daily). These services and interventions are provided in small group settings and/or intensive instruction in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. Students who don't achieve the desired level of response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for special education services.

SOD Tiers

Tier 1 part time LSA A student continues to make insufficient progress despite the strategies the teacher has used. The teacher will refer the child to the SEN Department and Student Study Team (SST) will be called. SST looks for evidence of inadequate progress and decides on strategies which are additional to, or different from those already provided in the classroom to help the child to make progress. The students receive supplemental instruction during

day in the regular classroom. The student will require accommodations and/or modifications in some areas. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed by the SEN teacher for the student. The student will be supported by the classroom teacher, SEN teacher and Learning Support Assistant 50 % of the time. Each year the IEP Committee will make recommendations that will continue, change, revise or terminate the student's special education program. New students will have IEPs developed in order to reduce their primary barriers to learning. Progress towards IEP goals

reviewed and reported to parents/guardians in December, March and June.

Tier 2 part time LSA+SEND teacher monitoring The students who are moved from the full-time support are in a stage which in MAS is recognized as Tier 5. The student will be supported by the classroom teacher, SEN teacher

and Learning Support Assistant 50 % of the time. Each year the IEP Committee will make recommendations that will change, revise or terminate the student's special education program. New SEND students will have IEPs developed to reduce their primary barriers to learning. Progress towards IEP goals will be reviewed and reported to parents in December, March and June.

Tier 3 full time LSA Students have complex needs, requiring full time one to one support provided by a Learning Support Assistant to help them develop their skills and address their specific learning difficulties. Each year the IEP Committee will make recommendations that will continue, change, revise or terminate the student's special education program. New students will have IEPs developed in order to reduce their primary barriers to learning. Progress towards IEP goals

reviewed and reported to parents/guardians in December, March and June. Learning Support Assistant is

apposchool.

Private LSAs MAS understands that students may already be working with external Learning Support Assistantparents/guardians may wish to continue these services inside the classroom. These parents/guardians can see their private support assistant by providing relevant documentation (e.g. -educational and employment experieSEND)

Working with Parents

Parents are constantly updated on their child's progress, daily happenings, challenges, concerns. LSAs also do student progress towards long term goals in the weekly IE documentation log. Parents are invited to take part iformation discussions through formal and informal meetings, once the IEPS are completed follow-up meetings for IEP Review. The IEP cannot be implemented without parent consent.

Working with External Agencies

External specialists such as educational psychologists and speech therapists are required to appropriately sharelevant MAS staff for the benefit of the student. Relevant feedback based on their areas of specialization may mainstream educational environment. External agencies working in MAS are requested to sign a contract indicof data, and abiding by rules and practices of MAS.

Glossary Additional needs- Children with additional needs may face challenges across a number of areas iphysical health, mental health or ability to learn, or they may face difficulties when trying to do things other child

Disability- A social condition that occurs when an individual with a long term limitation, experiences attitudinal, environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community. A disability is the result oindividual's interaction with society and is not an attribute of the person.

Impairment - a medically identified condition or a long-term limitation of a person's physical, mental, cognitive, and/or sensory functions. Impairments become disabilities, when the person experiences attitudinal, environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community.

SOD – Students of Determination

SOD Teacher- Special Educational Needs Teacher

IEP- Individual Educational Plan

ILP-Individual Learning Plan

LSA-Learning Support Assistant

EAL- English as an Additional Language

ADHD-Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder

ASD-Autism Spectrum Disorder

MTSS- Multi Tiered Student Study Team The purpose of a Student Study Team is to provide a confidential, safe space for teachers and specialist educators to discuss students who are experiencing problems in their learning and learning plan (or modify an existing one) in order to support these students' learning. The MTSS provides support to the student and the teacher. MTSS might be composed of:

- GLTL/SL/Principal/Vice Principal
- SENCO
- School Counselor
- SOD teacher
- EAL teacher
- Teachers who work directly with the student
- A speech and language therapist (or other professionals who work with the student – including consultants)
- GLTL - Grade Level Team Leader
- SL - Subject Leader
- HOD – Head of department