



PaRK IS Policies

LEARNING DIVERSITY POLICY

PaRK INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

PaRK IS | Learning Diversity Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PaRK IS Vision and Mission	2
Introducing Learning Diversity and Inclusion	2
Special Educational Needs	3
Definition	3
Inclusion and Differentiation	3
Roles and Responsibilities	4
Well-Being Department responsibilities (Learning Support Center)	4
Subject Teacher and Tutor responsibilities	4
Parents Responsibilities	5
Students Responsibilities	5
SEN Students at PaRK IS	5
Identification and Intervention Procedures	5
Learning Diversity in Action	6
Autonomous Learning Time (ALT)	6
Specific subject support	6
Intervention Programs	6
Academic Action Plans	7
English Language Development	7
In-Class Support	7
Assessment	7

1. PaRK IS Vision and Mission

At PaRK International School (PaRK IS) we teach children the skills and give them the tools to become bilingual, curious, autonomous and agile learners while achieving their personal best in a fast moving World. The mission of PaRK IS is to educate and inspire students and provide them the skills to be happy and succeed in their individual chosen path.

We work to:

- Educate our children in an international environment, achieving fluency in reading, writing, comprehension and speaking in both Portuguese and English
- Cultivate an environment in which children/students are happy and acquire a passion for learning; where each student is monitored individually and has the opportunity to create his/her own educational path
- Facilitate a high quality programme appropriate to the age and developmental stage of each child, offering a rigorous but dynamic teaching approach
- Implement innovative and up-to-date academic, artistic, sports and technology programmes
- Safely utilise the latest technology in order to encourage its integration as an educational tool
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving;
- Adapt to a changing world to prepare students to confront challenges and seize opportunities
- Promote "learning to learn" and the art of thinking needed for continuous learning throughout life
- Promote excellence and the capacity of each student to give their best
- Teach students to learn how to properly communicate in various ways
- Build a safe and welcoming environment for students and families
- Cultivate pride in the collective experience of the PaRK IS community
- Promote a good sporting attitude, knowing how to win and lose with dignity and respect while also taken care of health.
- Create persons of integrity, who respect the diversity of others while also having an active role in society
- Encourage autonomy and responsibility in all aspects of the student's life
- Promote collaboration and interactivity between families, peers and between the educational community
- Promote fellowship programmes to involve children in worldwide social problems and have an active role in trying to make ours a better world
- Have partner companies that best serve today's youth

2. Introducing Learning Diversity and Inclusion

“Over the past two decades, education for all students with disabilities has moved from segregation and special schools to inclusive education that embraces diversity and differences. Today, inclusive education is supported by the United Nations as a matter of human rights and social justice.”

“Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organizational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community.” (IB - LD Programs)

Everyone at PaRK International School is committed to providing the conditions and opportunities to enable any child with different learning needs to be included fully in all aspects of school life. This document supports the school mission.

Learning diversity' refers to the infinite variety of life experiences and attributes a child brings to their formal learning at school. Educators seek to meet the needs of all learners, so that every student experiences success. That diversity could be in many different areas such as: reading, writing, language and communication, mathematics, behaviour, social and emotional learning (SEL), mental health and psychological well-being, physical and medical illness, previous experiences, cultures and backgrounds.

PaRK IS acts in prevention, identifying in early stages these differences and putting in action specific support plans to these students in order to minimize the barriers and bring equity to learning. Each student that needs differentiation in any time of their academic path has the right to receive it and be included in the elaboration of their plan.

3. Special Educational Needs

Definition

This refers to students “with individual learning needs, who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, and who require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement” (Candidates with special assessment needs, 2009).

Special educational needs at PaRK IS include but are not limited to:

- Learning difficulties;
- Emotional, social and behavioral difficulties;
- Medical conditions;
- Speech difficulties;
- Visual/aural impairments;

Inclusion and Differentiation

“Differentiation is inclusion in practice, Inclusion and differentiation are most successful in the contexts of learning communities where there is a culture of collaboration that encourages and supports problem solving” (Special educational needs in IB programmes, 2010).

During high school it is crucial that every student gains the confidence and strong foundations for their adult life, as well as the love for learning.

At PaRK IS we believe that every student is unique, has a different rhythm, different motivations and different learning needs, which we must respect. Teachers adapt the work in class to the students' interests, abilities and different levels while establishing real goals that will help children actively construct their knowledge always in pursuit of academic excellence. This individualised learning is crucial to succeed in the future and to enhance every child's learning experience.

Ongoing Training for Teachers

Being able to differentiate, to plan accordingly to the students needs, and give positive reinforcement is all part of a teacher's work. But when a teacher does everything and the student is struggling? Part of our function as an Inclusion Team is to prepare the best we can our teachers. Before school starts we have a whole week of training and throughout the year we find new areas of training, and prepare it with our team or external specialists. Being able to do class observations, discussion with teachers and attending teachers meetings is another way to keep the communication and try different strategies, when the ones we put in place are not working. Every Teacher has a Personal Development Plan that is discussed with senior leadership and takes internal and external training as part of that.

Confidentiality

Our team follows the RGPD new law for protection data. The student psychological file is stored in our department inside a locker. Every information that needs to be shared with the team, receives the family authorization, and the team only shares what is relevant for the progress of classes.

Portuguese Requirements

Our school has Pedagogical Autonomy, that means that after several inspections from the ministry of education we have their confidence to decide internally about assessment rules and grades. We can also decide about assessment arrangements. The IB policy is very aligned with our Portuguese Law, so we feel very comfortable with our PaRK IS IB Policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Well-Being Department responsibilities (Learning Support Center)

PaRK IS has a Learning Support Center who's responsible for:

- Analysis and referral of students with special educational needs;
- Promote psycho-pedagogical training activities for the educational community;
- Collaborate with the coordinators of different school levels in the implementation of Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and the development of strategies to promote the academic success of students;
- Advise and guide parents/guardians and educators to promote action strategies of education;
- Articulation with specialists to support students outside the school (psychologists, speech therapists, child psychiatrists).
- Possibly act as an Academic Mentor.

Subject Teacher and Tutor responsibilities

- Being alert to the possibility that some students may have specific learning difficulties and bringing their concerns to the attention of the Learning Support Center, following the school's identification procedures;
- Collaborating with the Learning Support Center in the development of an IEP and identifying appropriate accommodations to support learning;
- Implementing the accommodations stated in the IEP and ILP;
- Respecting each student as a person;
- Orienting students towards developing self-discipline;
- Respecting the confidentiality of information related to the students and their respective families;

- Meeting with parents to outline the support that has been practiced at school and the progress made by the student.
- Possibly act as an Academic Mentor.

Parents Responsibilities

PaRK IS parents are responsible for:

- Providing documentation to validate learning difficulties or, in the absence of these reports, parents may be asked to take the child to a specialist;
- Discussing their child's progress with the classroom tutor and school psychologist;
- Being a role model at home by modeling their own involvement in different learning areas.
- Encouraging their children to always try their best;
- Respecting the rules and regulations of the school;
- Communicating with students tutors whenever necessary;
- Alerting the teachers of any situations or incidents that involve your children.

Students Responsibilities

PaRK IS students are responsible for:

- Following the PaRK IS learner profile
- Establishing and monitoring personal goals to achieve each year
- Being aware of his/hers accommodations and monitoring them with teachers

5. SEN Students at PaRK IS

Admissions

PaRK IS does not discriminate in any way regarding entry. PaRK IS welcomes students with diagnosed or suspected special educational needs as long as we consider that we can give the support needed for the student to succeed.

1. Parents fill in the form about student specificities
2. CAT4 test (Cognitive Abilities Test) to assess cognitive abilities
3. Interview with Head of Section
4. Interview with a Psychologist when required
5. Language assessments (English and Portuguese)
6. If the student is identified with SEN
 - a) Parents of children with special educational needs or physical or mental disabilities discuss their child's requirements with our Well-Being Department
 - b) Parents should provide a copy of the assessment where a SEN is identified.
 - c) Parents should provide contacts from the existing support team.
6. Well-Being department writes a short comment about the student and if the school has the conditions to accept the applicant.

Identification and Intervention Procedures

The identification of a student with special needs can occur at any time of their schooling process. These needs may become clearer as the student progresses through school. When a teacher suspects that a student may need additional support, the procedure for the referral is as follows:

1. Teachers must fill in the [Learning Diversity Referral Form](#) for struggling students;
2. Well-Being department do some classroom and breaktime observations;
3. Well-Being department elaborate a short report, and share it with the teacher who did the referral.
 - a. With goals and timeline for the student ILP (Individual Learning Plan)
 - b. Well-Being department should meet with Head Of Year and parents to discuss possible accommodations and the need of an external Psycho-Pedagogical assessment;
4. After having the assessment report the Well-Being Department writes an IEP (Individual Educational Plan) where the accommodations and special supports are stated and explained;
5. The Well-Being Department should schedule a meeting with parents and tutor to show the IEP and discuss it. This document needs to be signed;
6. The Well-Being Department should inform all student's teachers of the accommodations he/she will have from that moment onwards. This document should include class accommodations as well as assessment accommodations. All teachers will have access to the ILPs on Google Drive so they can plan accordingly. The IEPs are kept in a confidential space on the Google Drive available if needed.
7. IEPs should be revised every year for class accommodations.
8. After 3 years, the SEN assessment is done again.
9. ILPs must be assessed when finished.

Identification procedures apply to the whole school with referral forms being available within the Student Support Referral Procedure Documentation on the school's drive.

6. Learning Diversity in Action

Autonomous Learning Time (ALT)

At PaRK IS students have moments of Autonomous Learning (ALT), where they study by themselves and gain in-depth knowledge of subject contents, while producing intellectual material under the guidance of the subject teachers. During said time teachers will be available to help students that need individual support.

Specific subject support

At school we offer our students support for a specific subject they might be struggling with. Largely this support is given in-class, but students that need it can have one-to-one support meetings with their teachers on request.

Intervention Programs

At school there is a Well-Being Department that gives support to students who are struggling academically or socially. Support comes to those who ask for it or that are referred by teachers and parents.

Students can get support in organizational skills, monitor their work, have study methods sessions and sessions to provide strategies to deal with emotional barriers that might be affecting their motivation, focus and academic achievement.

Also the Well-Being Department has intervention programs with specific students that need help improving their attitude and/or need help with social adaptation (bullying groups, social skills groups..)

Academic Mentoring

Students that have been identified as under-achieving and/or under-attaining are identified through our data tracking and supported through the creation of an Academic Action Plan. They are assigned an Academic Mentor to support them through this programme.

Academic Action Plans

An Academic Action Plan (AAP) is done to all students who have any failing grades (E or below in Grades 7,8 and the first term of Grade 9 and D or below in term two of Grade 9 and the whole of Grade 10) These plans are individual and every subject teacher needs to give concrete objectives to the student, teachers need to think about their goals for the student and need to develop achievable goals so that students understand what they need to be working on. AAPs also have a psychological aspect, where the Well-Being Department thinks about all the barriers that the student might be facing to achieve what is asked of him/her.

AAPs should be created/completed/adapted at the end of each Grade Round.

English Language Development

Not all students develop the second language at the same pace and in the same way. In addition the school receives new students every year, coming from very different backgrounds.

For this reason, it has become increasingly urgent to create a joint action between ELD and the Learning Diversity department, so that efforts can be united and support immersion programs in the language can be created in order to guarantee the success of our students.

There are small groups per level and the option of individual support.

In-Class Support

Providing in class support by the Well-Being Department or external technicians if needed, working together with the class teacher.

Assessment

PaRK IS wants to give every student the opportunity to fully show their capacities on their assessments. Therefore when the school community feels that a student is in need of special requirements for his/hers assessments, the process of deciding suitable accommodations should be carried out. These accommodations should reflect the students usual way of working, meaning that when she/he gets to the examinations the accommodations feel like a normal way of working. We try to have the most similar accommodations to the ones in IGCSE and IB exams to prepare the students for what they will face during the formal process of exams.

Below is a list of accommodations provided by the IGCSE:

1. Colour naming
2. Coloured overlays
3. Computer Reader
4. Exemptions

5. Extra time
6. Human Reader
7. Practical Assistant
8. Prompter
9. Reading Aloud (candidate)
10. Reading Pens
11. Scribe
12. Supervised rest breaks
13. Supplementary aids
14. Transcript
15. Voice-activated software
16. Word Processor

Modified Question Papers:

1. Braille paper
2. Coloured paper
3. A4 18 point bold
4. 18 point bold enlarged to A3
5. A3 unmodified
6. Simplified carrier language
7. Tactile diagrams
8. Live speaker (Transcript of listening CDs)

Below is a list of accommodations provided by the IB:

1. **Additional time** – usually 25% more time is allowed for the candidate, which gives them 15 extra minutes for every hour of exam time;
2. **Rest periods** – supervised rest time maybe allowed, during which time the candidate is not allowed to work on their exam;
3. **Information and communication technology** – a computer could be used to type the answers to the exam instead of hand writing the answers. The student cannot use any software that would give the candidate an unfair advantage during the exam. Voice-activated technology or augmentative speech equipment can be requested when this has been the candidate's normal way of working in the school;
4. **Scribes** – a person who writes down dictated answers from the candidate;
5. **Readers** – a person who reads the questions aloud to the candidate and can also read back answers the candidate has provided. The reader cannot explain a question or give advice on how to answer the question;
6. **Communicators** – a person who is able to convey information to a candidate with a hearing impairment, through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language;
7. **Prompters** – a person who ensures that a candidate is paying attention to the examination. This would normally be authorized for candidates diagnosed as having a neurological or cognitive disability resulting from a severe attention problem;
8. **Modifications to examination papers** – normally made for candidates with hearing or visual issues, such as providing an exam in Braille, enlarged print, printing on colored paper, modifications to the visual complexity of the exam or modifications to the language of the exam paper;

9. **Audio recordings on examination papers** – the IB may provide an exam paper on a CD. This is a limited service and is not available for exams with illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketch maps;
10. **Audio recordings of responses to examination papers** – The candidate dictates answers into an appropriate recording technology. This is used when a scribe is not available and cannot be used for examinations in Groups 1 and 2 or with examinations that require the candidate to produce visual material such as an illustration, table, diagram or sketch map;
11. **Transcriptions** – A candidate’s response to an assessment component is submitted in a form other than the candidate’s own handwriting. Transcription is justified when a candidate with a specific learning issue, or a physical disability, has very poor handwriting skills and cannot use a computer. Transcription is not available to candidates with poor handwriting for whom some form of special need cannot be diagnosed;
12. **Alternative venues for examinations** – if a candidate is too ill to attend school, but on medical advice is able to take the examinations at home or in hospital, authorization may be given for the examination to be taken at an alternative venue. In principle, the examination should be taken at the same time as other candidates in the group. A qualified invigilator must be present;
13. **Extensions to deadlines** – this arrangement applies to cases of illness or accident when a candidate is genuinely prevented from completing work in time for the coordinator to submit the work to the examiner. Holy Heart of Mary High School IB Special Needs Policy;
14. **Assistance with practical work** – if a candidate has a physical disability, assistance with practical work can be requested. This arrangement is normally confined to the requirements of internal assessment (for example, practical work in experimental science or geography fieldwork). It is particularly suited to situations where there is a concern for a candidate’s health or safety;
15. **Exemptions from assessments** – exemptions are not normally granted for any assessment component of the Diploma Program. However, if an assessment component or part demands a physiological function that a candidate is not able to perform, an exemption may be authorized.

In order to have exams accommodations, the school collects strong evidence (usually external assessment) to sustain that decision. School should work in prevention and intervention should happen before the exams.

PaRK IS students should benefit from these accommodations before the exam period and be familiar with all the procedures.

Last date revised: June, 2021
by DPL and IAP
Next review date: June 2022