



PaRK IS Policies

LEARNING DIVERSITY POLICY

PaRK INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

PaRK IS | Learning Diversity Policy

2023 |24

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PaRK IS Vision and Mission	1
Introducing Learning Diversity, Inclusion and Equity	1
<u>Learning Diversity</u>	2
Definition	2
Inclusion and Differentiation	2
Roles and Responsibilities	3
Well-Being Department responsibilities (Learning Support Centre)	3
Subject Teacher and Tutor responsibilities	3
Parents responsibilities	4
Students responsibilities	4
<u>LD</u>	4
Identification and Intervention Procedures	4
Learning Diversity in Action	5
Autonomous Learning Time (ALT)	5
Specific subject support	6
Intervention Programmes	6
Academic Action Plans	6
English Language Development	8
In Class Support	8
Assessment	8

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, providing them with 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, listening 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, promoting equity
- 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 constant 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 different contexts
- 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 taking care of their health
- Create upright people, 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 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
- Create partnerships with companies that best serve today's youth

2. Introducing Learning Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

"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 organisational 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 Programmes)

Everyone at PaRK IS is committed to providing the conditions and opportunities to enable any child with different learning needs to be fully included in all aspects of school life. All staff members should be equally committed to promote equality and diversity to all members of PaRK IS community. 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 wellbeing, physical and medical illness, and 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 minimise 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. Learning Diversity/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).

Learning Diversity (LD) at PaRK IS includes but is not limited to:

- Learning difficulties
- Emotional, social, and behavioural difficulties
- Medical conditions
- Speech difficulties
- Visual/oral/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 to give positive reinforcement is all part of a teacher's work. But what should be done when a teacher does everything, and the student continues to struggle? Part of our role as an Inclusion Team is to prepare our teachers the best we can. Before school starts, we have several training sessions and, throughout the year, we find new needs, and prepare sessions with our team or with external specialists. Doing lesson observations, discussing with teachers and attending teachers' meetings are other ways to keep communication flow between teachers and the Well-Being Department and to try different strategies, when the ones we put in place are not working or are not enough. Every teacher has a Professional Development Plan that is discussed with Senior Leadership and takes internal and external training accordingly..

Confidentiality

Our team follows the RGPD new law for protection data. The student psychological file is stored in the Well-Being Department under locked conditions. Any information that needs to be shared with the team is authorised by the family, and the team only shares what is relevant for the progress of learning.

Portuguese Requirements

Our school has Pedagogical Autonomy, which means that after several inspections from the Ministry of Education we have their confidence to internally decide about assessment rules and grades. We can also decide about assessment arrangements. The IB Policy is aligned with our Portuguese Law.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Well-Being Department responsibilities (Learning Support Centre)

PaRK IS has a Learning Support Centre that is 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 in the development of strategies to promote the academic success of students
- Implementation of Relatório Técnico-Pedagógico (RTP) according to the Portuguese Law nº 54 for Junior School when necessary
- Advise and guide Parents/Guardians and educators to promote active strategies regarding a student's education
- Articulate with external specialists to support students (psychologists, speech therapists, child psychiatrists)
- Act as an Academic Mentor if required

Subject Teacher and Tutor responsibilities

- Being alert to the possibility that a student may have specific learning difficulties and bringing their concerns to the attention of the Learning Support Centre, following the school's identification procedures
- Collaborating with the Learning Support Centre in the development of an IEP and identifying appropriate accommodations to support learning
- Implement accommodations identified in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Respect each student as a person
- Guide students towards developing self-discipline
- Respecting the confidentiality of information related to the student and their respective family
- Meet with parents to outline the support that has been implemented at school and the student progress
- Act as an Academic Mentor if required

Parents Responsibilities

PaRK IS parents are responsible for:

- Providing documentation to validate learning difficulties or, in the absence of these reports, Parent/Guardian may be asked to consult with a specialist
- Discussing their child's progress with the classroom tutor and a member of the Well-Being Department
- Being a role model at home by modelling 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 their child's' tutors whenever necessary
- Alerting the teachers of any situations or incidents that involve their child

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/her accommodations and monitoring them with teachers
- Following the School Rules
- Being a productive and active part of the school community

5. Learning Diversity Students at PaRK IS

Admissions

PaRK IS does not discriminate in any way student entry. PaRK IS welcomes students with diagnosed or suspected Learning Diversity, as long as we consider that we can give the support needed for the student to succeed following our academic offer.

1. Parent/Guardian complete the form about student specificities
2. CAT4 test (Cognitive Abilities Test) is used to assess cognitive abilities from Grade 5

3. Interview with the Head of Section and/or a member of the Well-Being Department
4. Language assessments (English and Portuguese) when necessary to identify the language profile
5. If the student is identified with LD:
 - a) Parent/Guardian must discuss their child's requirements with the Well-Being Department
 - b) Parent/Guardian must provide a copy of all medical assessments where a LD is identified
 - c) Parent/Guardian should provide contacts from the existing support team
7. The Well-Being Department writes a short comment about the student declaring if the school has the conditions to accept the applicant

Identification and Intervention Procedures

The identification of a student with LD can occur at any moment during the school 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. Teacher must create a concern in the Well-Being Manager in iSAMS for students of concern
2. The Well-Being Department carries out classroom and breaktime observations
3. The Well-Being Department replies in iSAMS with the action taken and feedback
4. The Well-Being Department will relay concerns to the Parent/Guardian throughout this process
5. If necessary, the student might be referred for external assessment
6. After having the assessment report, the Well-Being Department creates an IEP (Individual Educational Plan), in which the accommodations and special supports are stated and explained
7. The Well-Being Department shares the IEP with the student, Parent/Guardian and tutor for further discussion and finalization. Once finalized, it is signed by the Parent/Guardian, the Head of Well-Being, and the case manager (a member of the Well-Being Department)
8. The Well-being Department informs the student's teachers of the accommodations he/she will have from that moment onwards. This document includes class accommodations and assessment accommodations. The student's teachers have access to the IEP's on Google Drive to ensure they can plan accordingly. The IEPs are kept in a confidential space on Google Drive, available only to Faculty members that require access
9. IEPs are revised every year for class and exams accommodations
10. After 3 years, the assessment is repeated
11. IEPs are continually assessed and adapted/modified when required with Parent/Guardian authorization

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 in Grade 1-5 have moments of Autonomous Learning Time (ALT), where they study by themselves and gain in-depth knowledge of subject content, while producing intellectual material under the guidance of the subject teacher. During these moments, teachers are 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. Normally, this support is given in-class, during breaks, or after school. Students that require one-to-one support meetings with their teachers can be provided upon request for limited time.

Intervention Programmes

At school, the Well-Being Department 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/or Parent/Guardian.

Students can receive support to improve organisational skills and to monitor their work, as well as have sessions on study methods and other sessions to provide strategies to deal with emotional barriers that might be affecting their motivation, focus and academic achievement.

The Well-Being Department has intervention programmes for students that need help improving their attitude and/or social adaptation (Maths Programme, Spelling Programme, Creative Writing, Vocational Programme, Solution Teams to deal with cases of bullying, social skills groups, Reading Programme etc.).

Academic Mentoring

Students that have been identified as under-achieving and/or under-attaining in various subjects are identified through data tracking and supported through the creation of an Academic Action Plan (AAP). They are assigned an Academic Mentor (if needed) to support them through this programme.

Academic Action Plans

Early Learning and Junior School:

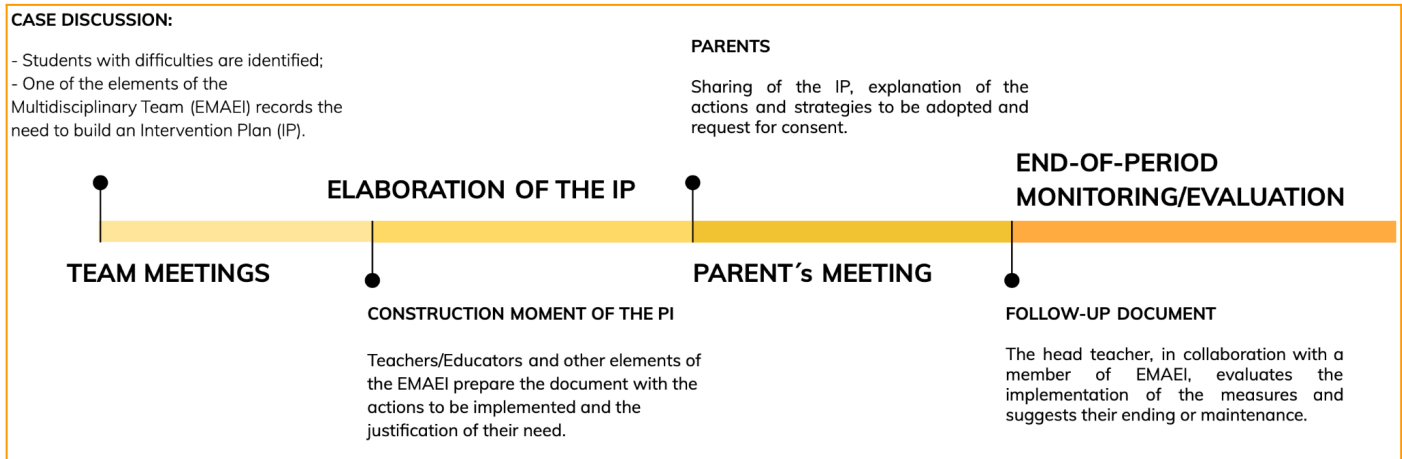
The educational team at Junior School and Early Learning School follows the procedures established by Portuguese law for Inclusive Education (Decreto-lei nº 54/2018 de 6 de julho).

The determination of support measures for learning and inclusion is done according to a pyramid model (similar to the American model of *Response to Intervention*).

At the base of the pyramid are the **universal measures**, applicable to all students whenever difficulties are detected that could compromise academic success and/or student well-being. Therefore, during grade-level case discussion meetings, educators/teachers identify students who they feel are slightly below expectations and deserve special attention in terms of pedagogical differentiation. These concerns are communicated to parents, and the school (Multidisciplinary Team for Inclusive Education Support - named *EMAEI* team) develops an *Intervention Plan*, which outlines the measures to be implemented. These measures may include *curriculum accommodations*, *targeted academic or behavioural interventions*, and *promotion of prosocial behaviour*, that include various initiatives from the Well-being department.

After the plan is developed, the school meets with parents again, seeking to involve them in the entire process. Over time, the team is responsible for monitoring the process, and at the end of the academic period or whenever necessary, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures is conducted. If the actions are proving to be effective, they will be maintained. However, if they are deemed inadequate or insufficient, the multidisciplinary team that accompanies the case will reformulate them.

Identification and implementation process of universal measures:



For students whose difficulties place them at a higher risk of failure, either because the universal measures are not sufficient to meet their needs or because more severe difficulties have been observed in the classroom, **selective measures** are determined. These measures are considered to address the students weaknesses in a more intensive, specific, and individualised way. Their implementation involves identifying the need for these measures with parents and the multidisciplinary team's preparation of a report named *Relatório Técnico-Pedagógico* (RTP). Under the selective measures, students may benefit from: *non-significant curriculum adaptations* (changes in the sequencing or prioritisation of curriculum content); *psycho-pedagogical support* (usually indirectly, through coordination with professionals working individually with students); *anticipation and reinforcement of learning* (mainly during moments of Autonomous Learning Time with the homeroom teacher, support teacher, or psychologist); and/or *tutorial support* (with a psychologist or a designated member of the school team). Adaptations in the assessment process, such as reading instructions or taking the test in a separate room, can also be provided. Typically, students with diagnoses related to neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., specific learning disorders, autism spectrum disorders, language development disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders) are found within this tier of measures.

Additional measures are the highest tier of measures, these are only applied in exceptional cases for children whose difficulties require highly differentiated and individualised responses. In these cases, an individualised education plan (named *Plano Educativo Individual - PEI*) is developed, which defines measures such as: *significant curriculum adaptations* (specific to the case and aimed to develop predominantly functional skills); *the development of structured teaching methodologies and strategies*; and/or *the development of personal and social autonomy skills*. The development of the PEI also includes the definition of selective measures.

Senior School:

An Academic Action Plan (AAP) is created for a student who has a failing grade (E or below in Grades 6, 7, and 8; D or below in Grades 9 and 10; 3 or below in Grades 11 and 12). These plans are individualised, and each subject teacher defines concrete objectives for the student, identifying specific and achievable goals to be developed. AAPs also have a psychological aspect, in which the Well-Being Department considers all the barriers that the student might be facing to achieve what is asked of him/her.

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

English Language Development

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

For this reason, there is a joint collaboration between the English Language Development Programme guided by the Literacy Coordinator and Head of English with the Well-Being Department. This united and supportive immersion programme in English ensures a successful outcome for our students.

In Class Support

PaRK IS provides in class support by members of the Wel-Being Department or by external technicians, when required, 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/her assessments, the process of deciding suitable accommodations should be carried out. These accommodations reflect the student's way of working in their daily school life, meaning that when it is time to sit the examination, he/she feels comfortable with the accommodations. We strive to provide students with the most similar accommodations they are entitled to receive in IGCSE and IB exams, to prepare them for what they will experience during the formal process of exams.

A list of accommodations provided by the IGCSE is as follows:

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)

A list of accommodations provided by the IB is as follows:

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 periods 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. **Scribe** – a person who writes down dictated answers from the candidate
5. **Reader** – 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. **Communicator** – 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. **Prompter** – a person who ensures that a candidate is paying attention to the examination. This would normally be authorised 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 coloured 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, authorisation 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.
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 IB Diploma Programme. However, if an assessment component or part demands a physiological function that a candidate is not able to perform, an exemption may be authorised.

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

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

Last date revised: July 2023

Next review date: July 2024

Reviewed: Well-Being Department, Head of School



An **inspired** school

Embracing **Individuality**. Preparing **Leaders**.