



MATIJA GUBEC INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Inclusive Education Policy



Last Reviewed and Updated: September 2018



'Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.' (Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom, International Baccalaureate, 2013)

The importance of acknowledging and celebrating differences among people is clearly indicated in the IB Mission Statement which emphasizes the importance of encouraging "students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right":

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Matija Gubec International School Mission Statement

Matija Gubec International School empowers students to reach their full potential in a supportive and challenging learning environment, preparing them for an active role as confident, caring, respectful and internationally-minded lifelong learners who are ready to make a positive contribution as global citizens in a changing world.

IB Standards and Practices

The following IB Standards and Practices define the requirements regarding inclusive education:

Section A: Philosophy

A9. The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy.

Section B: Organization

B1.5 The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programmes.

MYP requirements

b. The school has developed and implements an inclusion/special educational needs policy that is consistent with IB expectations and with the school's admissions policy.

B2.8. The school provides support for its students with learning needs and support for their teachers.

Section C: Curriculum

C1.6. Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles.

C2.8. The written curriculum provides opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.

C3.6. Teaching and learning addresses human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.

C3.10. Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.

C3.14. Teaching and learning fosters a stimulating learning environment based on understanding and respect.

C3.15. Teaching and learning encourages students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education where:

(Learning diversity and inclusion in the IB Programmes, 2016, p.5).

- education for all is considered a human right
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student
- every educator is an educator of all students
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities
- all learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
- full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
- assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
- multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right and a resource
- all students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens
- all students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are taken into account
- all students in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect
- diversity is understood to include all members of a community
- all students experience success as a key component of learning.

Purpose of the Inclusive Education Policy

IB students come from different parts of the world, and different cultural and academic backgrounds. In the Republic of Croatia, children, depending on their needs and resources, can be educated in a:

- mainstream class in a mainstream school
- special class in a mainstream school
- special school.

We believe that a child with special educational needs should be educated in a supportive environment (i.e. mainstream class) with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs would not affect satisfying needs of other children.

In this policy we will focus on students with special educational needs that can be educated in mainstream classes, since for others we cannot provide appropriate support to satisfy their needs. Having that in mind, the aim of our school regarding the students with special educational needs in mainstream classes is to provide equal access to all of them regardless of their individual abilities, differences and needs. In order to achieve it we place a great emphasis on school staff's responsibility to be aware of students' strengths and difficulties and provide them with the support appropriate to their needs. In order to improve the quality of our school we have to develop a supportive learning environment in which each child will be able to satisfy their needs and feel successful. In such environment children can build their self-esteem. We believe that the child-parent-school collaboration is very important in order for every child to get the most out of education.

Students with special educational needs are, among all, students like any other and they have a lot of talents, interests that are very important to maintain and highlight – they can help in building their self-esteem and are a good tool in preventing behavioural and socio-emotional problems.

Policy Alignment

Matija Gubec International School inclusive education policy aligns with the IB and school's values and policies as outlined below:

... to the IB Learner Profile

- **Reflective and Open-minded** – students closely consider their own learning and experiences, while understanding others, they better understand their abilities and use this knowledge to advocate for themselves and their individual needs

- **Inquirers and Thinkers** – by learning in a different way students have more opportunity to showcase their abilities while following their natural curiosity
- **Risk-takers, Caring and Principled** – students of varied abilities express themselves openly without negative judgment
- **Communicators** – by expressing their ideas in a variety of modes of communication, the special education student's individual differences become less obvious, or possibly celebrated as the idea of "difference" shifts to a positive light
- **Knowledgeable** – they are provided with the opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across multiple disciplines

... to the school's Mission Statement

Our mission statement 'empowers students to reach their full potential in a supportive and challenging learning environment' through carefully constructed differentiated teaching strategies designed to maximize students' potential.

...to the school's Language Policy

Our inclusive education policy aligns with our language policy in that we require all students to enrol in a language acquisition course unless their Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifies otherwise. An IEP would only suggest otherwise if such a plan were in the best interests of the student under recommendation by relevant specialists.

...to the school's Assessment Policy

All students regardless their learner status are assessed against the MYP criteria as described in the school's assessment policy. However, for students with special academic needs the testing accommodations and modifications in their IEPs are adhered to when assessing their learning along with the modified task clarifications, adjustment to time span for the assessment and use of scaffolding materials.

...to the school's Academic Honesty Policy

All students regardless their learner status are expected to be principled and complete all assignments with academic integrity.

Definitions

Student with special educational needs – any student that due to cognitive, physical, social or emotional reasons has learning difficulties (much greater than their peers) and that because of these needs has a special educational support. Students with special educational needs can be talented and gifted as well, and they deserve special support too.

Special needs can be:

- visual impairments (including blindness)
- hearing impairments (including deafness)
- speech and language impairments and specific learning difficulties (e.g. reading and writing difficulties – dyslexia, dysgraphia)
- physical impairments and diseases
- intellectual difficulties
- behavioural difficulties - organically caused
- concentration difficulties (e.g. ADD, ADHD)
- emotional and social difficulties (e.g. anxiety disorder, lack of social skills and difficulties in communication with peers)
- autism spectrum disorders.

These special education needs could mean that a child has difficulties with:

- reading, writing and working with numbers
- text comprehension and paraphrasing
- learning
- proper behaviour
- establishing relationships (relating to both peers and adults)
- expressing their feelings and recognizing feelings of others.

Inclusion – “process that aims to increase access to and engagement in learning process for all students, by identifying and removing barriers” (*Special educational needs in IB programmes*). The majority of them, with the right skills training, strategies and support can be successfully included in the mainstream education.

Differentiation – the differentiation is the “process of identifying the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals” (*Special educational needs in IB programmes*) – developing appropriate curriculum, especially for those who learn slowly (but also for gifted ones) in order to meet different and individual needs of each student.

Pedagogical leadership team:

The pedagogical leadership team is expected to:

- provide training for staff and faculty to successfully implement and support the SEN and differentiated instruction
- raise staff awareness of the needs of students identified as students with special educational needs
- ensure that the program and the staff are compliance with national laws regarding students with disabilities
- prepare IEPs in collaboration with classroom teachers and parents
- plan and implement intervention strategies and classroom accommodations with other teachers to achieve IEP goals
- write and monitor lesson plans for small groups or one-on-one intervention sessions
- support an inclusive learning environment inside the school
- attend parent-teacher interviews as requested
- contact parents on behalf of the school whenever necessary
- observe and monitor student performance in different learning areas
- provide feedback on student's improvement and performance evaluation during parent-teacher meetings
- evaluate the IEP based on student's achievement and performance at the end of each semester.

Teachers:

Teachers are expected to:

- comply with all national laws and regulations regarding special education needs
- participate in required training when it is available
- encourage students to self-assess and/or reflect on their learning
- identify struggling learners and refer the student to the Head of school or the IB coordinator as required
- provide differentiated instruction as described in the student's IEP
- maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing special educational needs services.

Parents:

Parents are expected to:

- play an active role in their child's education
- communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's

- special educational needs
- communicate to the school all information regarding any changes in these needs
- make a request for required studies and services from the school or from external specialists in a proactive manner

Identification process

- 1) With regard to admission, Matija Gubec International School requires applicants to disclose their child's known educational needs, medical conditions or special requirements. Parents are also required to provide documentation that may help to explain their child's needs. Admission Team and counsellors analyse the application documents and interview parents during the enrolment process. Counsellors help with the integration of new students with learning support requirements.
- 2) Homeroom and subject teachers identify learning difficulties/strengths as early as possible in September or after student's arrival to school or throughout the school year. Individual cases are discussed in staff meeting at the end of September and during the school year.
- 3) Parents are informed.
- 4) Students are assessed by school counsellors (pedagogue, psychologist, social pedagogue).
- 5) When a student identified as having learning difficulties is found to need interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum, according to Croatian legislation and policies in primary schools, *Committee for the identification of child's psycho-physical condition* makes a detailed assessment of child's difficulties and needs in order to give a recommendation to the City Office for Education regarding the future education. Some students may need school assistant in order to fulfil their full potentials. *Committee for the identification of child's psycho-physical condition* gives a recommendation if a child needs an assistant. Process of getting an assistant goes through the City Office for Education and Ministry of Science and Education. Members of the *Committee for the identification of child's psycho-physical condition* are the school counsellor (pedagogue, psychologist and social pedagogue), homeroom teacher and school doctor.
- 6) During this identification process parents might be asked to seek external and clinical assessment of the child.
- 7) When the process is over, the City Office for Education issues a document about appropriate form of education.

- 8) Teachers along with social pedagogue design an *Individual Educational Programme* for a student with special educational needs. Individual Educational Programme, that is appropriate to student's needs, is very important in order to support personal, social-emotional and educational development and prevent inappropriate behaviour that impact their learning and socialization in school.
- 9) Teachers and social pedagogue are responsible for implementing the IEP as well as monitoring and assessing students' development on the basis of inclusive assessment arrangements and keeping in touch with their parents.
- 10) The staff consults regularly on the success of teaching approaches in line with policy and assessment results of the student.
- 11) The final assessment of student development at the end of the school year and preliminary plans for the next school year.

Individual Educational Programme

Where students have identified special educational needs, the MYP curriculum can be modified, but the aim is, wherever possible, to ensure that the student continues to follow the minimum requirements of the MYP in each of the eight subject groups. The student's learning should continue to be framed by the full range of MYP subject objectives and approaches to learning.

Individual Educational Programme

In order to design the IEP it is necessary to take these steps:

- consider what the student requires
- assess the particular student's needs and resources – address the needs, interests and capacities
- set the goals to be met
- set the approaches, methods and strategies that are suited to student's needs and that enable the student to accomplish tasks and feel successful
- recognize the resources that may be child-supportive in meeting the goals that are set
- affirm identity of a learner through “promoting class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners” (*Special educational needs in IB programmes*) in order to build self-esteem
- understand the child's needs and behaviours and help them achieve better relationships with others and feel successful in every way.

The school's language policy requires all students to enrol in a language acquisition course unless their Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifies otherwise. The most common accommodation is for the student to be released from Language Acquisition in order to receive extra time and/or support for their individual programme.

In the case of students who need a differentiated learning programme due to their advanced abilities in a particular subject, it will almost always be the case that the teacher can accommodate this within the usual range of open-ended learning activities and assessment tasks. Extracurricular activities that our school offers provide additional intellectual challenge and developmental opportunity outside the classroom for gifted students.

Differentiation

Matija Gubec International School faculty employ inclusive teaching techniques and design learning experiences that allow all students, including those who have special educational needs, to meet the rigorous standards of the IB Middle Years Programme. Students are provided with opportunities to achieve these goals by participating in carefully constructed differentiated teaching strategies designed to maximize students' potential and also allow the student to demonstrate learning in different ways.

Differentiation has been defined as 'an approach to teaching that attempts to ensure that all students learn well, despite their many differences' or as 'the process by which differences between learners are accommodated so that all students in a group have the best possible chance of learning'. Teachers differentiate content and resources, process and products.

The four principles pertaining to special educational needs in the PYP and MYP concern the importance of:

1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem

- promoting a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners
- by valuing and using the diversity of cultural perspectives to enhance learning
- by liaising with parents to establish understanding of how best to collaborate to achieve shared goals

2. Valuing prior knowledge

New learning and understanding is constructed on previous experiences. If new information cannot be understood, it cannot be linked to prior knowledge and become part of deeper learning. Therefore, teachers should:

- explicitly activate learners' prior understanding
- use their knowledge of learners' prior understanding to differentiate tasks and activities

- record information in learning profiles that will support planning for future differentiation
- consider the time and the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning a unit of work or lesson.

3. Scaffolding

Breaking down content and skills into manageable parts is a common way to assist all students, including those who have special needs, to be successful. Teachers add temporary supports at the beginning of a challenging learning activity so that it is possible for the student to succeed. These supports, are gradually removed to allow students to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop a metacognitive approach while maintaining confidence in their learning. Utilizing the gradual release of responsibility model allows students to become increasingly independent and more engaged. Scaffolding strategies are:

- the use of graphic organizers to develop a piece of written research
- visual aids
- demonstrations
- dramatization
- small, structured collaborative groups
- teacher language
- use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas and initial plans
- using templates for particular tasks, with quite a large amount of detail where key terms and phrases are given in a graphic organizer.

4. Extending learning

As learners progress through the years, they are required to read and write increasingly sophisticated texts in the content areas of the curriculum. The academic language of such texts reflects:

- the complexity and abstraction of the concepts that learners are required to understand extended academic language
- the increasingly sophisticated grammatical constructions
- the use of assistive technology and software.

Gifted students

Teachers are those who observe and notice if a student shows exceptional abilities in a specific area. The school use appropriate educational provisions and strategies to cater for gifted students - open-ended learning activities and extracurricular activities to ensure additional intellectual challenge and developmental opportunity for gifted students.

Assessment

Assessment is vital for evaluating teaching and learning. Assessment allows for self-reflection and peer review, which supports all learners in gaining independence and becoming advocates for their own learning. Throughout the MYP unit plans, teachers monitor student understanding with formative assessment tasks. Each task guides the teacher to effectively assess mastery of each individual skill. Teachers analyse student progress and reflect on best practices to move towards mastery. All students are assessed against the MYP criteria as described in the school's assessment policy. However, for students with special academic needs the testing accommodations and modifications in their IEPs are adhered to when assessing their learning along with the modified task clarifications, adjustment to time span for the assessment and use of scaffolding materials.

Support

We believe that each student needs an individual approach and it is very important that students get support that is time appropriate and suited to their needs in order to prevent problems and help them feel successful and confident in their knowledge and skills. Classroom support for all students with special education needs and abilities may include:

- **Direct student support** (individually or in a group) – curriculum modifications, enrichment activities, small group instructions or one-on-one support, help classes, extra classes, classroom accommodations, additional professional support within the school (psychologist, pedagogue and social pedagogue)
- **Indirect student support** - through teacher and/or parent support, individually or in a group
- **External support** when student (or parent) has social and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties that require additional clinical assessment and/or provision of specialist therapies. If student is already involved in other health services, school professional might request information from their professionals.
- **Teacher support** - individually or in a group
- **Parent support** - individually or in a group
- **In-class support teacher** – assists with students with learning support requirements, reduces teacher-to-students ratio and allows for more teacher and student interaction

It is very important to maintain a balance between the allocation of necessary care support and the child's right to acquire personal independence skills.

In-class support teacher

Support teacher will liaise with the subject teachers and will address the needs of the student in terms of how best to support the student in class. This will primarily mean collaborating with the subject teachers to differentiate learning, modify tasks and assessment, and provide one-to-one or small group teaching support where needed within the class. While in the class, the support teacher is also available to support other students in the class from time to time, since it is important to help students to be independent or integrated into group work.

Professional documentation and confidentiality

All information regarding the progress and performance of students with special educational needs will be kept in the student's file by the school's counsellors. Access to this file will be on "important to know" basis only. Only teachers who work directly with the student, school counsellors, MYP coordinator and Principal will have access to this file.

Communication of the Inclusive Education Policy

The Inclusive Education Policy is listed with the other school policies on the School's website.

Policy review protocol

The Inclusive Education Policy will be reviewed and updated bi-annually in order to reflect the current needs of the school population and to ensure consistency with the IB expectations. The development of our inclusive education policy has been and continues to be a collaborative process involving the pedagogical leadership team and all the teachers.

- Written, September 2013
- Last Reviewed and Updated, September 2018

References

- 1/ **MYP: From principles into practice.** Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014 (updated 2017)
- 2/ **Programme standards and practices.** Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2014 (updated 2016)
- 3/ **Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes.** Geneva: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016
- 4/ **Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom.** Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2013
- 5/ **Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes.** Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2010
- 6/ **What is an IB education.** Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2013 (updated 2017)
- 7/ Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskome i srednjoškolskome odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju (Narodne novine, br. 24/2015.)
- 8/ Pravilnik o utvrđivanju psihofizičkoga stanja djeteta, učenika te sastavu stručnih povjerenstava (Narodne novine, br. 67/2014.)
- 9/ Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi (Narodne novine br., 87/2008., 86/2009., 92/2010., ispr. – 105/2010., 90/2011., 16/2012., 86/2012. – pročišćeni tekst i 94/2013., 152/2014.)