



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

The policy is annually reviewed and revised – current version December 2022

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) 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 programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

Pierce - The American College of Greece Mission Statement

“The mission of Pierce is to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens. “Non ministrari sed ministrare” (“Not to be served but to serve”) defines our institutional character and our aspiration for our students.”

Pierce-The American College of Greece is required to comply with the *Greek Law 3699/2008*, as amended by the *Greek Laws 4823/2021* and *897/2021*, for testing students with special educational needs. Pierce also complies with the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) for the IB Diploma Program students as specified in the *Access and Inclusion Policy (IBO 2022)*, in the *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures (IBO 2022)*, in the *Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom (IBO 2019)*, in the *Universal Design for Learning (IBO 2016)*, in the *Access and Inclusion Planning during the COVID-19 pandemic: Alternatives to face to face psychological testing (IBO 2020)* and *Access and Inclusion Planning during the COVID-19 pandemic: Mental Health challenges (IBO 2020)*. There are no exclusions in the Pierce IBDP admissions policy for students with special needs.

Introduction

At Pierce-The American College of Greece, all students are equally valued and an inclusive educational programme is delivered whereby students with special educational needs (SEN) learn alongside their peers to promote mutual understanding and respect. The provision of a differentiated learning environment is therefore pivotal in ensuring that the different learning needs of all students are effectively supported.

With this in mind, this policy aims to:

- Define what is considered SEN and inclusion.
- Define and outline strategies for supporting students with SEN.
- Outline school procedures for identifying and supporting students with SEN.
- Outline how teaching staff are supported in identifying and supporting students with SEN.

This policy has been developed with reference to the IBO publication “Access and Inclusion” (IBO, 2022).

Policy Review Process + School Parts Responsible

This policy will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders, based on the following timeline:

January-February: IB DP Coordinator, Lyceum Director, School’s Psychologist and Head of School review policy.

March-May: Suggested changes discussed and agreed with IB DP Faculty members.

June-July: Changes finalized and confirmed.

September: Updated policy implemented and shared.

Definitions / Purpose / Principles

What is access and inclusion?

“Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.” (Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, 2016). Access refers to providing equitable educational opportunities in learning, teaching, evaluation/assessment and all other aspects of school life to all students by making space and provision for the characteristics that each person brings.

What are access arrangements?

Access arrangements are changes or alterations introduced to learning, teaching and assessment to remove or reduce barriers. They do not change what the student is expected to learn and do not lower expectations, but instead provide the optimal support to address a range of barriers and enable the student to work around them. At a fundamental level, they address fairness and equal access to learning and teaching, and in addition, ensure validity and meaningfulness of assessment.

Who is supported by this policy?

This policy is intended to cover the entire range of diversity of IB students. It addresses provision of support where required due to issues and challenges. These may be related (but not restricted) to difficulties due to barriers of language, ability, emotional and mental wellness, economic deprivation, gender and sexual identity, ethnicity, medical issues, impairments and/or other long-term challenges.

Purpose?

This policy aims to articulate the role of access and inclusion during learning and teaching, as well as for all IB assessments. The purpose of this policy is to support the practice of access and inclusion in IB schools to enable all students to participate fully in learning, teaching and assessment (formative and summative) by reducing and removing barriers using appropriate and well-planned access arrangements. This policy follows the whole-school approach to inclusion, where all educators are involved in access and inclusion, and it is not only the work of the learning support teacher/team. It is intended for all school leaders, programme coordinators and IB educators.

This policy is to be used along with the guidance on access and inclusion in the relevant Assessment procedures that advises schools on the process of requesting authorization of access arrangements from the IB.

Application to IB assessments?

Standard assessment conditions may put some students at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment. Access arrangements may be applied in these circumstances if it is observed that they could remove and reduce barriers for the student.

In principle, access arrangements for assessments should reflect the student experiences in learning. This policy states that the access arrangements that can and should be applied in learning and teaching for all IB programmes should align with acceptable arrangements in the assessment context. This policy provides a list of access arrangements that can be used for IB assessments in the DP.

The underpinning principle of the application of the policy is that assessment is a part of learning and teaching and therefore access arrangements must not only apply to students during summative IB assessments but also be available throughout the course of study (this includes all classroom work and formative assessments that are part of everyday learning and teaching).

Barriers?

Barriers are all the obstacles that may prevent or disadvantage a student from participating or effectively engaging in their learning and teaching and assessment. While learners may experience any number of fleeting or transient barriers that may disturb their learning for a few days (such as an emotional barrier due to an altercation with peers, or a medical issue), access and inclusion needs to be considered when it is observed that a learner is facing a long-term challenge (such as barriers in the areas of reading, hearing or mental health).

Access arrangements should remove or reduce barriers that impact the educational journey of a student.

Summary of the requirements of Greek educational law for students in the Pierce non-IB program

A. Oral examination **requirements** for students:

Upon official request, students are entitled to sit an oral examination when it has been determined that a written examination is not sufficient or accurate for them. The right for an oral examination is granted to students that have been evaluated with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and/or serious difficulties in math, reading and spelling. In the event a student prefers to answer in writing, the answers are graded and added to the final grade. A medical report granting an oral examination must be issued by one of the *National Centers for Diagnosis and Support of Students with Learning Disabilities (Hellenic K.E.D.A.S.Y.)* or by one of the accredited pedagogical medical centers of the Hellenic Ministry of Education. The report must state the specific learning difficulty and the time allotted for the student's next examination.

Students on the autistic spectrum may also be examined orally or through a written exam. A written medical report by the *National Centers for the Diagnosis and Support of Learning Disabilities (Hellenic K.E.D.A.S.Y.)* or by the accredited pedagogical medical center of the Hellenic Ministry of Education is required. In the report there must be reference to the learning difficulty of the student, specify the oral or written method of examination, and the time allotted for the student's next examination. The official request for exam modification must be submitted to Pierce accompanied by the official report. All requests and medical reports must be submitted to the Pierce Deputy Director at any day of each academic year.

B. Oral examination **procedures** for students:

Pierce students who have been granted the oral examination for the final exams will be tested on the same topics as other students. This exam is conducted before a faculty committee established for this purpose by the Pierce Lyceum Director. This faculty committee is presided by the Pierce Lyceum Director or the Deputy Director and is composed of two faculty members. The faculty members are teachers of the subject being examined or in a similar subject. The two grades the student is awarded by the two examiners are then averaged in order to create a Grade Point Average (GPA) for the course. The exam is held in a different classroom and the duration of the examination may be extended upon the decision of the faculty committee. The written exams are collected with the written exams of the rest of the students and sent to the grade center for grading. During the school term, the teacher of the respective course will orally invigilate any daily quizzes or in-class exams as requested.

C. The Deputy Director of Lyceum distributes a list with students of the 10th grade (A' Lyceum) with special educational needs to the IB Coordinator's Office, via email. The list is accompanied by all necessary documentation for each case. These students in entrance examinations for the IB DP are supported with extra time.

Types of Access Arrangements in the IB DP

Additional time: May be authorized for written examinations and for certain activities connected to internal assessment. Usually 25% more time is allowed for the candidate.

Rest periods: A candidate may be allowed supervised rest time, during which the candidate is not allowed to work on the examination.

Information and communication technology: Candidates may be allowed to use a computer to respond to a written exam. Only technology allowed by the IB may be used in any one particular written exam.

Scribes: A scribe is a person who writes down the dictated response of a candidate for external and/or internal assessments/exams if the candidate is unable to provide a response by hand or by computer.

Readers: A reader may read the examination paper and the candidate's response out loud. The reader must not explain or help in responding to the question/exam.

Communicators: For hearing impaired students a communicator is able to convey information through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language and may be used during examinations.

Prompters: For candidates with neurological or cognitive disabilities resulting in a severe attention problem, prompters can ensure that a candidate is paying attention to the examination.

Modifications to examination papers: For candidates with visual or hearing issues, modifications can be made to examination papers (braille, special print etc.).

Audio recordings of examination papers: The IB may provide an examination paper on a CD but is a limited service and only for exams with no visual material (illustrations, diagrams, tables or sketch maps).

Audio recordings of responses to examination papers: If a candidate is unable to make a handwritten or word processed response to an exam question (and a scribe is not a viable alternative), a candidate may be allowed to give an audio recorded response to an exam question.

Transcription: 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.

Alternative venues for examinations: The IB may authorize a candidate to take an exam at home or in hospital if the candidate is too ill to attend school, but only if medical advice supports this decision.

Extensions to deadlines: In cases of illness or accident that prevents a candidate from completing work in time for the coordinator to submit the work to the extended time may be authorized.

Assistance with practical work: For candidates with a physical disability the IB may authorize the candidate to have assistance with practical work (often confined to the requirements of internal assessment).

Identifying and Supporting Students with SEN

The diagnostic procedure for identifying and supporting students with a special educational need at Pierce-The American College of Greece, is as follows:

1. Prospective students sit the IB course entrance exams and interview (admissions examinations). A student with a special educational need is given extra time (30 minutes for a two-hour examination, 15 minutes for a one-hour examination), given that the school has been officially notified by student's parents or from previous school unit.
2. Subject teacher(s) identify issue during school year and inform the parents.
3. The IB DP Coordinator give advice to parents and guide them through the process of arranging a meeting with an external educational psychologist.

To ensure that students' assessment needs are met, the IB Coordinator - in consultation with the school tutor – must contact parents/guardians in writing to suggest that their child may benefit from being assessed by an educational psychologist. An assessment by an educational psychologist is required for students to receive special dispensation from the IBO in terms of having access to extra time, a computer, a reader or a scribe during examinations. The assessment report from the educational psychologist must be made available to IB Diploma Coordinator. All documentation must be kept by the IB Diploma Coordinator, with access given to the Head of School. If parents/guardians wish to proceed with an assessment, the school will assist in arranging meetings between students, their parents and the educational psychologist. All costs incurred due to an assessment by an educational psychologist must to be covered by the student's parents/guardians.

The IB Diploma Coordinator must provide guidance to teachers on how to support students with SEN. Teachers must utilize approaches to teaching and learning that are differentiated to cater for students' different learning needs. The IB Diploma Coordinator must ensure that the assessment needs of the student are accommodated for in accordance with the guidelines stated in the IBO's "Access and inclusion policy" [IBO, 2022]. This may include sending a "Request for inclusive assessment arrangements" to the IBO via the IBIS website. Teachers will have to assist the request by providing in-class evidence and report on student's performance before and after the utilization of differentiated teaching and learning approaches. The IB DP Coordinator must inform all Faculty members of the outcome of such requests.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school

- The school will collaborate with the health and social service to assure that the program provided for student with special needs is in compliance with national laws and IBO rules and regulations;
- give the student and parents all the information to make conscious decisions;
- oversee the academy's work for students with special educational needs;
- provide training for staff and faculty to successfully implement and support SEN and differentiated instruction.

Tutor

Tutor is responsible for:

- overseeing of the day-to-day education program and the and support subject teachers in devising strategies;
- ensuring that an agreed, consistent approach is adopted;
- liaising with families so that they are aware of the strategies that are being used and are involved as partners in the process.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- teaching students with special educational needs in the classroom implementing appropriate strategies and required tools;
- making themselves aware of the policy and the procedures for supporting students with special educational needs;
- giving feedback to parents/carers of students with special educational needs;
- inform student's tutor and the IB DP Coordinators about struggling learners;
- participate in required training when it is available.

The IB DP Coordinator

The IB DP Coordinator shall:

- comply with all national laws and IBO rules and regulations, regarding SEN;
- apply to the IBO for students' accommodations in different assessment types and circumstances;
- work collaboratively with tutors, teachers and parents to support students with SEN;
- at enrollment, advise parents of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement;
- maintain discretion and confidence in providing SEN services.

Parents

- Parents will play an active role in their child's education.
- Parents will have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the school district policy.
- Parents will communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's special education needs.
- Parents will communicate with the school regarding any changes in their child's special education needs.
- Parents will make request for needed child studies and services from the school.
- Parents will provide documentation needed for IBO accommodation requests.

Students

- Students will be proactive in asking for assistance from the school administrators, faculty, and staff.
- Students will be an active participant in classes and meetings.
- Students will follow all Pierce-The American College of Greece school and IB DP policies and procedures.

The IBDP and its requirements are recognized in Greece through a national statute; this recognition includes the terms and conditions of assessment in the IBDP.

IBO regulations for IBDP students:

Pierce provides support for learners with special educational needs in the IBDP as specified in the *Access and Inclusion Policy (IBO 2018)*, in the *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures (IBO 2020)*, in the *Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom (IBO 2019)* and in the *Universal Design for Learning (IBO 2016)* documents. The wide range of learning profiles of IBDP students is considered a source of enrichment for the program. In the student-centered classroom environment, faculty will provide individualized learning activities to help each student set high but realistic goals building self-esteem.

Faculty provide a variety of instructional and assessment methods in the classroom to accommodate for students' specific learning needs and styles. Faculty are provided with resources enabling them to differentiate their teaching to optimize the learning experience and well-being of the students. The school psychologist is consulted by faculty to develop differentiated teaching methods for the special needs students and is available to collaborate with teachers and students on developing further resources.

Students are identified as gifted and talented when their abilities, talents, and potential for academic accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced they require special provisions in the classroom to meet their educational needs. Inclusion is defined as an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Access arrangements do not change what the student is expected to learn and do not lower expectations, but instead provide the optimal support to address challenges and to enable the student to work around them. At a fundamental level, they address equal access and fairness to learning and teaching and, in addition, validity and meaningfulness to assessment. A candidate with access requirements is one who requires access arrangements in teaching, learning and assessment. The purpose of access arrangements is to remove or reduce barriers that students may face in teaching, learning and assessment. When the school recognizes that a student has access requirements, this policy is used in conjunction with teacher observations to plan the necessary access arrangements for the student. This IB policy is based on the principle of optimal support, which means that the access arrangements must be accurately planned to remove or reduce barriers; they must neither be more nor less than what the student requires. The access arrangements for a student must be used for learning and teaching; this means that they must be used during classroom instruction, classwork and related activities and tests. Access arrangements are also continuously monitored to ensure that they remain the optimal support for that student.

References:

Greek Law 3699/2008 (last access: 28/09/2022)

https://www.kodiko.gr/nomologia/document_navigation/142858/nomos-3699-2008

Greek Law 4823/2021 (last access: 28/09/2022)

<https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/739038/nomos-4823-2021>

Greek Law 897/2021 (last access: 28/09/2022)

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2020/%CE%A6%CE%95%CE%9A%20B%20897%208-3-2021%20YA%20%CE%95%CE%BE%CE%AD%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B7%20%CF%85%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%88%CE%B7%CF%86%CE%AF%CF%89%CE%BD%20%CE%BC%CE%B5%20%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%B7%CF%81%CE%AF%CE%B1%20%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82%20%CE%B5%CE%BA%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4.%20%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%AC%CE%B3%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%82.pdf>

Access and Inclusion Policy, *International Baccalaureate Organization*, (November 2022).

Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures, *International Baccalaureate Organization*, (September 2022).

Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom, *International Baccalaureate Organization*, (December 2019).

Universal Design for Learning, *International Baccalaureate Organization*, (December 2016).

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