



Policy 48: Students with Special Educational Needs

2023 – 2024

Policy 48: Students with Special Educational Needs

Corresponding to Article (53) of the Organising Regulations

DEFINITION(S):

For the purposes of this policy, **Special Educational Needs (“SEN”)** is the generic term for any disability, disorder, difficulty, impairment, exceptional needs (rare cases) or other additional needs that may be caused by mental, behavioural, physical, emotional or cognitive factors and which may affect a student’s learning and his or her educational performance. These students require additional educational support beyond that provided in general classrooms in order to achieve the greatest benefit from the curriculum.

Gifted and talented students have exceptional abilities and talents either academically or in a specific field. These are students whose outstanding abilities make them capable of high performance, but are not labelled as Special Education Needs. Their needs require specific consideration within regular mainstream educational programs. Their current attainment or perceived potential places them significantly ahead of the majority of their peers in one or more of the following areas:

- Intellectual ability.
- Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science or mathematics).
- Social maturity and leadership.
- Mechanical/technical/technological ingenuity.
- Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation).
- Psychomotor ability (e.g. sport).

Special education is the additional provision of support designed to meet students’ learning differences and needs, such as special planning and specific teaching techniques, procedures and assessments, and tailored programs and materials, to ensure that such students (including gifted and talented students) reach their full potential, achieve a greater level of personal independence, accessibility to the curriculum, and succeed in School and beyond.

These categories are not intended to specifically identify all medically diagnosed conditions and syndromes that may have an impact on the student’s needs and educational program, but they reflect the main categories defined by the Ministry guidance “School for All: General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public and Private Schools) of 2010” and also the Council’s “Special Education Policy and Procedures Handbook”.

PURPOSE(S):

- To increase the capacity of Private Schools to include and offer places to students with mild to moderate Special Education Needs and those who are gifted and talented.
- To ensure that students with mild to moderate Special Education Needs and those who are gifted and talented are able to reach their full potential within a well-designed and supportive educational environment.

POLICY:

Special educational needs of the students shall not constitute, themselves, a hindrance to the application or enrolment in any Private School. Special Education Needs students should be treated without discrimination and similarly to their peers. Everyone shall be given equal educational opportunities.

Students who require special education shall not be denied access to a full education program that meets their learning needs. Schools should admit, without prejudice, students with mild to moderate special education needs, and shall further provide them with equal educational opportunities as compared to their peers.

Private Schools in the Emirate shall admit and accommodate students with special needs (mild to moderate). The School shall provide high quality services to meet their different needs and involve them as much as possible with others in daily School activities. Each student with such mild or moderate delays or disabilities is expected to be admitted to the School and to be treated with due respect and utmost care by the entire School community.

Admission of Students with Special Education Needs

The School's admission policy shall follow the School's obligations as defined in Federal Law No. (29) of 2006 Regarding the Rights of Persons with Special Needs, and in the Council's regulations and policies. Students with mild and moderate special needs shall be admitted as per their age group and grade sequence. Schools may charge Parents/Guardians additional fees for the provision of extra support, provided that such fees may not exceed 50% of the approved School tuition fees for other students.

The School's Special Education Needs Policy

All Schools shall develop a policy for supporting mild to moderate Special Education Needs students and those who are gifted and talented. In its own policy formulation, Schools shall take account of the following key principles as minimum requirements:

- Schools shall adopt an integrated and welcoming approach to students with mild to moderate Special Education Needs through their admissions and provision of suitable curricula and activities.
- Schools shall develop integrated individualised programs, which do not deny access to Special Education Needs students.
- Special Education Needs students should be able to:
 - Participate in the School's general education system to the greatest extent possible.
 - Have full access to the curriculum.
 - Achieve learning standards set for all students and modify them to suit the learning needs of students with mild to moderate Special Education Needs through their individualised plans and programs.
 - Interact with other students, and develop interdependent relationships so that they can take part in the community successfully as adults.

- Have academic support services available if they experience difficulties in their education program.
- Participate as much as possible in extra-curricular activities.
- Schools shall have on staff a qualified Special Education Needs Coordinator, who shall be responsible for managing all aspects of services for Special Education Needs and gifted and talented students, as well as a dedicated team of qualified staff to support the Special Education Needs Coordinator in meeting the needs of these students in a timely and effective manner.
- The School's Special Education Needs Coordinator is expected to meet with the Parents/Guardians of Special Education Needs students prior to the beginning of each new school year and no later than within the first month of the student's academic year to make arrangement to properly accommodate the students' needs and ensure their success.
- Schools shall place Special Education Needs students in a class with students of their own age and grade sequence.
- Schools will develop an Individual Education Plan for Special Education Needs students if they experience difficulties in accessing or being able to learn the curriculum. The Individual Education Plan is used mainly by the teachers and students to guide instructional practice, including modifications of the program and adaptations of the environment or aspects of instruction and assessment. These must be tailored to the individual student's needs to enable optimal learning success.
- Schools will develop an Advanced Learning Plan ("ALP") for gifted and talented students who are exceptionally exceeding academic expectations in their academic program. The ALP is to identify ways in which teachers can enrich the student's learning in order to achieve according to their potential.
- It is not permitted to retain students with special needs in a year level. If a student with special needs is not making the expected progress, this would mean that the goals and objectives set forth in his/her Individual Education Plan need to be adjusted.
- Schools should encourage and welcome the involvement of Parents/Guardians of students with Special Education Needs in School affairs, as described in Policy (56).
- Meeting the needs of Special Education Needs students and those who are gifted and talented the shared responsibility for the whole School.

Further Information and Guidelines

For further details and guidelines, please refer to the Ministry guidance "School for All: General Rules for the Provision of Special Education Programs and Services (Public and Private Schools) of 2010" and the Council's Special Education Policy and Procedures handbook.


ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Owners and Board of Trustees will:

- Monitor their School's Admission Policy and the services provided to Special Education Needs students to determine the extent to which the School complies with this policy.
- Ensure that any non-compliance is addressed in the School Development Plan.

Principals will:

- Evaluate their current practice in admitting and providing services for mild and moderate Special Education Needs students, and monitor same to ensure that their School complies with this policy.
- Make appropriate modifications to the Individual Education Plan, and differentiate and adapt the curriculum where required to meet students' needs.
- Ensure that student progress reports to Parents/Guardians identify clearly that modifications and services being provided to a student who has a mild to moderate Special Education Needs, or who is gifted and talented.
- Recruit teachers and support staff who are trained and skilled in dealing with Special Education Needs students.
- Be a part of the support staff, and carefully monitor and assess the responses to learning difficulties identified in a student's Individual Education Plan.

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