

IBDP Policy: Inclusion and Special Needs at Torsbergsgymnasiet

Dec 2020
Next review Dec 2022

PHILOSOPHY

As an IB school we have a responsibility to deal with and manage learning diversities in the classroom and create access to the curriculum and academic standards for all our students, regardless of their individual abilities. We have a responsibility to cater to students with special educational needs through special assessment access. We achieve this with support in the classroom by optimizing both teaching and learning.

Our IB Diploma Programme is formed in accordance with both Sweden's national laws concerning the inclusion of all students in education, as well as the IB Assessment Procedures, and we strive for coherence between the two school systems such that all students, regardless of intellectual, sociocultural, and emotional situation, may fully benefit from the education at the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ACCESS AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Special Educational Needs (SEN) applies to students who have difficulties - physically, academically or psychologically - meeting the standard curriculum requirements. These students need special assessment and supporting them includes a varied approach to learning as well as teaching, e.g. support of a special needs teacher or the use of technical devices.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

Torsbergsgymnasiet has elevators to all floors, fully accessible, classrooms and toilets. There are also visual enhancement tools as well as classrooms suited for students with a hearing impediment. Flexible dietary needs are also met.

PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

Torsbergsgymnasiet has a school support team (Elevhälsövårdsteam/EHT) consisting of, amongst others, two counsellors, a nurse and a school physician. All students have access to these resources. They can get in touch with them on their own or with the help and support of their mentors within the IB programme.

There are always two form teachers assigned to each class (one male and one female if possible) and these are also the mentors of the students in the class, being responsible for the pastoral care of half the student group each. They meet once a term individually with their students and once a term the meeting also includes legal guardians. This means four meetings during the academic year; two mentor meetings and two with legal guardians included. Teachers can be reached through TEAMS (IT communication) as well as on their work phones. Thus, by keeping a close eye on their students, the form teachers are responsible for fostering the well-being of the students in their class. Students stay with the same classmates throughout their time at IBDP Torsbergsgymnasiet, which creates a secure, comfortable environment. Each class meets for a class meeting on a weekly basis, both for information from the teachers as well as for listening to new ideas or complaints from the students.

There is also a working student buddy system, which the IBDP Y2 students are mainly responsible for (part of their Group Service). This ensures that mixed groups are created, containing students from all three years (prep class, Y1 and Y2). These groups socialize on a regular basis and are meant to create bonds between the students in order to create a sense of security.

In bi-weekly meetings the IB teachers discuss their students; this includes updates on particular students and their special needs. These updates can concern anything from learning difficulties to students' health issues. Everything that can affect the students' well-being is of interest. We work closely with the school counsellors, school nurse and the special needs teachers with regular updates when needed. Torsbergsgymnasiet also has a Drug Policy document that is signed by both students and their legal guardians in September of their first academic year.

ACADEMIC NEEDS

Students' academic needs vary, whether they are high achievers or academically challenged. The IB teachers regularly evaluate the needs and goals of their students in close cooperation with their students and their legal guardians. Once the student turns 18 the student needs to give their consent for their legal guardian to be involved in the process.

High achievers are encouraged to stretch their limits, and the rigour of the IBDP is well suited for this. Subject (level) choices, focus on individual work, can provide the student with the challenges required for thriving.

Students who are in need of learning support receive help adjusted to their individual needs. The teachers teach bearing in mind varied approaches to teaching and also encourage the students to study using different learning styles. Dyslexic students work with special needs teachers, are granted additional time for written exams. The peer coaching system (linked to Individual Service / CAS) offers support when doing homework. Weekly sessions for extra Maths and language help are available for all students. This includes instruction and guidance in the use of subject specific computer programmes (e.g. Rosetta Stone).

GENERAL SUPPORT

The student-teacher, parent-student-teacher conferences once a term, bi-weekly staff meetings, together with an online failing warning system twice a year (with legal guardian access before the student turns 18, due to legal reasons), allow for close communication between the school, students and legal guardians.

EXAMINATIONS

The Swedish national system as well as the IBDP provide appropriate support and regulations for special assessment needs including both technical and personal support. This means that, if the standard IB examination would put a student at a disadvantage, forms of access arrangements are used. The assessment arrangements are in keeping with the student's needs. It is the Diploma Programme Coordinator's (DPC) duty to make sure that properly tailored assessment arrangements are put in use. Due to this, medical or psychological evaluation must be carried out in time for the IBDP at Torsbergsgymnasiet to be able to make adjustments needed for the student in question. During exams the student can be seated appropriately or use ear-plugs according to their needs without authorization from the IB. Other needs will be met after the DPC having contacted the IB Special Needs section.

Appendix 1

The national system and an outline of our routines:

For the school's national programme policy on special needs, please see:

<https://halsingland.sharepoint.com/sites/torsbergsgymnasiet/personalrum/Delade%20dokument/Forms/AllItems.aspx?originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9oYWxzZW5nbGFuZC5zaGFyZXBvaW50LmNvbS86Zjovcy90b3JzYmVyZ3NneW1uYXNpZXQvcGVyc29uYWxydW0vRXI4ZDJQeEI5NjFDZ3VUTFNUNFVbllCTnNfU2VDVC1NSkloWFllQmdFS1VjQT9ydGltZT1oNTZDN05pSzJFZw&id=%2Fsites%2Ftorsbergsgymnasiet%2Fpersonalrum%2FDelade%20dokument%2FBlanketter%20och%20policydokument%2FPlan%20mot%20diskriminering%20och%20kr%C3%A4nkande%20behandling%201920%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Ftorsbergsgymnasiet%2Fpersonalrum%2FDelade%20dokument%2FBlanketter%20och%20policydokument>

<https://halsingland.sharepoint.com/sites/torsbergsgymnasiet/personalrum/Delade%20dokument/Forms/AllItems.aspx?originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9oYWxzZW5nbGFuZC5zaGFyZXBvaW50LmNvbS86Zjovcy90b3JzYmVyZ3NneW1uYXNpZXQvcGVyc29uYWxydW0vRXI4ZDJQeEI5NjFDZ3VUTFNUNFVbllCTnNfU2VDVC1NSkloWFllQmdFS1VjQT9ydGltZT1ZT21mUTltSzJFZw&id=%2Fsites%2Ftorsbergsgymnasiet%2Fpersonalrum%2FDelade%20dokument%2FBlanketter%20och%20policydokument%2FPlan%20elevh%C3%A4lsa%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Ftorsbergsgymnasiet%2Fpersonalrum%2FDelade%20dokument%2FBlanketter%20och%20policydokument>

Screening

Students of the entire school, both IB and Swedish national programmes, are screened in the beginning of their first year, and needs reports from their previous schools are shared. The screening covers Swedish reading comprehension, English reading comprehension as well as mathematical ability. All students who are considered in need of a specialist teacher are given an offer to work with them. Access is thus opened to personnel and technical resources at a more focussed level. Students who are confident when using language and mathematical skills are more likely to be calculated risk-takers, exploring new ideas either individually or together with their peers.

A study strategy course held by IB staff is compulsory for all IB students in first term of their preparatory year. It remains available for those who need a brush-up in the diploma years through form teachers as well as the DPC.

The students in year one are screened by the school nurse and called to an interview.

Routines

Mentoring system and parent meetings

Every student within the IB programme has a mentor throughout his/her three years at Torsbergsgymnasiet. The mentor liaises regularly with the student's teachers and parents, and monitors the student's academic progress as well as his/her life situation. Should the need arise, the mentor arranges access to a psychologist, a nurse, a medical Doctor and/or counsellors (aka the School Health Team). Individual Education Plans are formulated in consultation with these specialists, and approved by the Head of School.

Special education teachers

Torsbergsgymnasiet employs two special education teachers dedicated to meeting the wide variety of learning difficulties of our student clientele. Flexibility and functionality provide the fundamentals for individualized strategies. The special needs education staff provide pedagogical coaching and support for our teaching staff, as well as running small learning groups for students. Student participation is voluntary.

Study strategies: course & the IB team

In addition to the aforementioned study strategy course and an active ATL focus, all instruction is planned and executed with a care taken to the varying needs and learning styles students have. Beyond normal course times and resources, students are offered special assistance and access to technical aids, predominantly for improving maths and language.

Assessment

Toward the end of the first diploma year, a full year before examinations, the teachers impinge upon writing and reading skills used in exams. After consultation with the student and legal guardians, the coordinator determines whether to make a formal request for special examination accommodations (D2). This request requires supporting documentation of needs. Approval for any requested accommodation is made by the IBO.

It is important to note that any accommodation in examination procedure is meant only to compensate for the disadvantages stemming from learning difficulties that would prevent a student from indicating fairly his/her abilities in the examined subject.

Flow-chart description of the above process:

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Screening

Needs reports:

Teachers (subject & special needs): from former school to our special needs teacher who furthers it to teachers who need to know the information

Swedish reading comprehension to the student's mentor and English reading comprehension as well as Mathematical ability

The school nurse screens for health issues.

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Initial summary

The student's mentor meets with the student and his/her legal guardian/s (if under 18) and interviews them, lets them air concerns and also sums up the total of the initial screening (Sep during the preparatory year).

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Continued monitoring

The IB staff meet every two weeks and discuss, amongst other things, students and their personal situation / school results.

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Student strategies

A student learning strategy course is held by IB staff (both separately and implemented in subject lessons) during the student's first months. It is revised, for those who need it, every autumn term.

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Concerns

Should problems arise, where student/legal guardian has expressed concern to mentor / staff or where staff expresses concern about a student and her/ his classroom strategies the stages are as follows:

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Gathering of information

Mentor, student, guardians meet to address the issue/s of concern. The IBDP Coordinator is informed, indeed involved if deemed necessary.

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Documentation

The coordinator may then gather information from staff and documents the problem/s at hand, actions taken, evaluation date.

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Strategies

The coordinator meets with the teachers involved in order to discuss pedagogical strategies.

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The Student Health Team

Should the above prove to be inadequate The Student Health Team (Elevhälsövårdsteamet / EHT) will be informed and decide what actions need to be taken. The coordinator gathers the feedback information and forwards it to those involved.

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Head of School

If further action is required the Head of School calls for a meeting with EHT and coordinator. Student and legal guardian are also present.

Decisions made at this meeting will be relayed, by the coordinator, to the involved teachers

Revised by

Margaretta Eriksson, DPC

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