Harare International School

"Where together we thrive and reach for excellence"

Learning Support Services (LSS) Policy

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Acknowledgement:

The contents of this HIS LSS Policy document are informed, guided by and include suggestions from the following documents:-

- IB Resource: General Regulations: Diploma Programme. (April, 2014)
- IB Resource: Candidates with assessment access requirements(Middle Years Programme) 2015
- IB Resource: *Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes.* (January 2016)
- IB Resource: *Teaching students with particular special educational and learning needs- a resource for school.* (August 2014)
- IB Resource: *The IB Guide to Inclusive Education: A Resource For Whole School Development(accessed 26 October 2017).*
- *The Next Frontier: Inclusion in International Schools: A Practical Guide for School Leaders* (Kristen Pelletier, Kevin Bartlett, William Powell, Ochan Kusuma Powell, September 2014)

Introduction

In alignment with our Vision, Mission and Philosophy, Harare International School (HIS) provides all students with a challenging, inquiry-based education in order to:

- Ensure that all students have the opportunity to pursue academic excellence and thrive
- Promote the development, growth and actualization of the whole child
- Celebrate diversity and differences
- Encourage lifelong learning
- Enable students to become responsible world citizens

Philosophy of LSS

HIS aspires to an inclusive approach to teaching and learning for all students. HIS also acknowledges that some students with exceptional needs will require extra support to achieve success. Supporting the diverse needs and providing appropriate instruction for all learners is the responsibility of all teachers.

In keeping with the philosophy of the *least restrictive environment*, HIS strives to create an optimal learning environment for students with exceptional needs by increasing access and opportunities for such students to access and engage with the curriculum. This involves a continuous process of identifying and removing barriers to learning.

Guided by a common understanding of learning support services, HIS provides an appropriate education for all students, including non-native English speakers and students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. However, HIS is not able to provide a comprehensive range of special services for all disabilities and learning challenges. In cases where a student is admitted and requires additional learning support services, based on qualitative and quantitative data available, the school may require parents to privately obtain assistance beyond what is covered by HIS.

HIS recognises that students who are highly capable (Gifted / Talented) will be accommodated within the school's regular programme through differentiated instruction and extracurricular activities. Moreover, the Learning Support Department may provide enrichment and extension activities for specific individuals and/or small groups.

Definitions

Learning Support: HIS defines learning support as any planned instruction or activity which is added to the prescribed curriculum in order to contribute to an individual student's well-being, attendance at school, access to and engagement with the curriculum, learning, progress, and achievement.

Exceptional Needs: HIS defines students with exceptional needs as those who cannot access or engage with the curriculum owing to the presence of learning or behaviour challenges. Exceptional students are also those who are more able,

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talented or identified as gifted. Twice exceptional refers to a student who may be gifted or talented with co-occurring learning or behaviour challenges.

Modifications: HIS defines modifications as changes to the curriculum.

Accommodations: HIS defines accommodations as to how a student can access and present information.

PYP: IB Primary Years Programme

MYP: IB Middle Years Programme

DP: IB Diploma Programme

Purpose of the Learning Support Services Policy

The purpose of the HIS LSS policy is as follows:-

- To acknowledge the diversity of the student population in terms of a continuum of learning needs: at least 10% of any given school population is normally deemed to have exceptional learning needs (NFI, 2014).
- To communicate guidelines for service provision for students requiring learning support that are in alignment with the HIS Vision, Mission and Philosophy, as well as with the IB Philosophy and requirements for teaching and learning and assessment access in inclusive classrooms.
- To communicate clear guidelines for procedures and practises to all stakeholders on service provision for students requiring learning support
- To establish clear expectations and responsibilities for all stakeholders and partners in the provision of LSS (See Appendix B)
- To identify useful resources to implement inclusion

Scope of Learning Support at HIS

At HIS, LSS fall under the domain of Student Support Services, which includes counselling services and instruction for English as an Additional Language (EAL) as English is the Language of Instruction at HIS.

LSS – under the stewardship of a Learning Support Specialist these services may be conducted on a 'pull-out' or 'push-in' basis (assistance within the mainstream classroom) as warranted, provided that the school has the available

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resources to support the student. Furthermore, the Learning Support Specialist may also provide consultative support to classroom teachers by way of modifications and accommodations for students who do not require direct learning support intervention.

LSS Beliefs and Guiding Principles

HIS acknowledges the *Next Frontier Inclusion (NFI) (2014)* document for providing guidance and information in the articulation of our own beliefs and actions related to learning support services.

Belief	Actions to Support Beliefs
Each student is a valued and unique individual	Teachers ● Find out the learning needs and requirements of each student in learning support ● Acknowledge that each student learns in his/her own way
Each student has his/her own challenges and needs	Teachers ● use multiple methods of assessments to come to know students well and holistically ● Teachers use a balanced model of learning support based on student needs ● Teachers will seek best practises for learning support for each student based on his/her learning profile ● Teachers collaboratively formulate an intervention plan for each student ● Teachers will provide clear communication both verbally and written to ensure common understanding with regard to student need and progress
Positive self esteem is essential for student well-being and learning	Stakeholders ● are respectful when talking to students and about them ● keep expectations high and offer respectful, age and developmentally appropriate learning tasks ● use strength as the foundation of learning ● celebrate accomplishments publicly and privately

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	• acknowledge that students are active participants and contributors to their own learning
Education is essential to establishing strong inclusive communities	Teachers • enter and exit students in alignment with stated procedures and practices(see Appendix C and D) • will model continuous learning in our own growth and development • use positive presuppositions in all of our work and actively seek to address any misperceptions about students
Every student has a right to privacy	• Stakeholders will follow established protocols in managing student confidentiality (refer to current HIS Staff Handbook)
Awareness and self knowledge are essential for success in life	Teachers • are strong advocates for students • teach students acceptance, metacognition, and self advocacy • understand and accept multicultural perspective in relation to exceptional needs whilst balancing advocacy for students learning • teach students how to manage behaviour and monitor their stress levels • teach social skills within the context of daily interactions consciously supporting students in developing emotional intelligence
Collaboration is essential to ensuring the quality of the student's learning	• Teachers will strive to build • Working partnership with colleagues and families • Teachers will strive to build working partnership with colleagues and families • Stakeholders will work as a multidisciplinary team • Teachers will engage students in collaborative learning

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Process

The first point of reference for student admission to HIS is always the school's admissions policy (Appendix A), including students with identified exceptional needs. On the other hand, we recognize that the admission of students with exceptional needs can be complex and requires thoughtful professional judgement and collaboration and needs to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis. Additional guidelines on eligibility and admission to LSS are contained in Appendix C and Appendix D

Criteria for Eligibility and Student Placement in LSS

PYP

All students will need to meet the eligibility requirements to receive formal learning support services at HIS. Eligibility requires a formal identification / diagnosis of the areas of exceptional needs. Assessment for eligibility is typically done in the form of a full educational psychological evaluation. However, there may be instances when an occupational or speech therapy report could be used as the basis for eligibility. A Response to Intervention (RTI) based approach may also be used prior to suggesting an identification process up to Grade 2.

MYP / DP

For MYP and DP programmes, students require an Educational Psychological report to enable them to qualify for internal(HIS) accommodations.

In order for a student to continue to receive LSS services in middle school, he/ she must have an updated Educational Psychology assessment. An updated assessment is defined as one obtained at least eighteen months before entry into sixth grade. If a student does not have an updated report on file, he/she will not be considered for services until one is available, regardless of past services rendered in elementary school. Because learning profiles can change, an updated report is necessary to ensure a student's current needs are identified and met.

HIS does not have the facilities to do formal standardised assessments and testing, but does have the capacity to refer students to the appropriate professionals. It should be noted that a range of assessments are accepted as students enter the school, provided they have stated norm references and have been administered by qualified practitioners. These evaluations are summarised and interpreted by the learning support team and translated into an Individual

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Intervention Plan. Some further guidelines for learning support admissions based on NFI (2014) guidelines are contained in Appendix F.

HIS teachers and parents may also identify students who are experiencing challenges with grade level benchmarks when the standard differentiation instruction in the classroom does not produce the desired progress. This process is led by the Counselor for further investigation and / or evaluations for the presence of learning difficulties.

From EC1- Gr 2 students are referred and given support on baseline data at the grade level for small group or for IIP intervention.

All stakeholders including parents must make decisions about the eligibility for learning support collaboratively. The Counselor leads this process with support from the appropriate principal. The decision about the model and level of support required is the responsibility of the Learning Support Specialist. Each student's programme is designed to meet his/her needs by emphasizing strengths, provision for the necessary remediation and supporting curriculum access (Appendix C).

Assessment Accommodations

Students may access accommodations for standardised testing in accordance with the IB accommodations regulations and those specific to standardised testing regulations(e.g. MAP, SAT, ISA). The IB coordinators and the counselors will facilitate these.

Reporting On Progress

HIS values a robust home-school partnership for LSS. With this in mind, reviewing and communicating on student progress is an essential component of LSS. The following reporting procedures and practises are in place: -

- Collaborative compilation of the Individual Intervention Plan (IIP)
- Continuous feedback to the student by the Learning Support Specialist
- At least one student review meeting with all stakeholders per semester

Additionally for each division the following practises are in place.

- **PYP**
    - ○ Written progress reports twice per annum
    - ○ Contributions to the student's portfolio from LSS as per PYP portfolio essential agreements

- **MYP**
    - ○ Evaluation of IIP twice per annum
    - ○ Student of Concern meetings with teachers
    - ○ Regular feedback to both student and parent by the LSS teacher
    - ○ LSS teacher meets subject teachers on regular basis to discuss student progress
    - ○ Student Support Team (Counselor, Principal, EAL & LSS teacher) meets once per semester to discuss students' progress.

- **DP**
    - ○ Evaluation of IIP twice per annum
    - ○ Student of Concern meetings with teachers once every semester for each grade
    - ○ Regular feedback to both student and parent by the LSS teacher
    - ○ LSS teacher meets subject teachers on regular basis to discuss student progress
    - ○ Student Support Team (Counselor, Principal, EAL & LSS teacher) meets once per semester to discuss students' progress.

Exit Process

A student may be exited from learning support when the learning support team is satisfied that the intervention strategies have met the student's needs. The following criteria are presented as a guideline for exiting a student:

Students:
- Are working to their potential on grade level standard for a sustained period of time of at least half of a school year based on standardised assessments and supporting input from class teachers.
- have a metacognitive understanding of their learning need
- Demonstrate their use of strategies to compensate effectively for their area of exceptional need
- Demonstrate effective self-advocacy skills

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Students may be exited in phases from pull-out to in-class support only after the Learning Support Specialist makes the determination to withdraw formal learning support services. Exiting a student from LSS services is a collaborative-based decision based on supporting evidence and records (Appendix D).

Learning Support Services Policy Review Cycle

This Learning Support Policy will be reviewed in three-year cycles from the date of adoption, using the following guidelines:

- Alignment with the IB Vision, Mission and Philosophy
- Alignment with IB teaching and learning standards
- Alignment with the current HIS Vision, Mission and Philosophy guiding statements
- Reflection and critical analysis of the following by the teaching staff: validity and relevance of specific components of the current learning support policy and practices
- Collaborative input and participation from stakeholders in the review and rewriting process.

References and Resources:

- IB Resource: General Regulations: Diploma Programme. (April, 2014)
- IB Resource: Candidates with assessment access requirements(Middle Years Programme) 2015
- IB Resource: *Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB programmes.* (January 2016)
- IB Resource: *Teaching students with particular special educational and learning needs- a resource for school.* (August 2014)
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Appendix A

HIS Admissions Policy

5001.5. Admission of Students with Learning Differences

At the time of admission, students with known learning disabilities will be screened to determine the extent of their learning differences, and/or previous assessments will be reviewed. [Refer to Policy 6007.5.01.]

Those students with severe learning needs will not be granted admission because of the School's inability to meet the applicant's educational needs and the applicant's potential inability to benefit from the School's educational services.

Admissions involving students with learning disabilities and/or severe physical handicaps will be decided by an Admissions Committee consisting of the Director, the appropriate Principal, the Director of Student Services, and the appropriate Learning Support Services Coordinator. [Refer to Policy 5001.2.;6007.;6007.4.]

Appendix B

Roles and Responsibilities

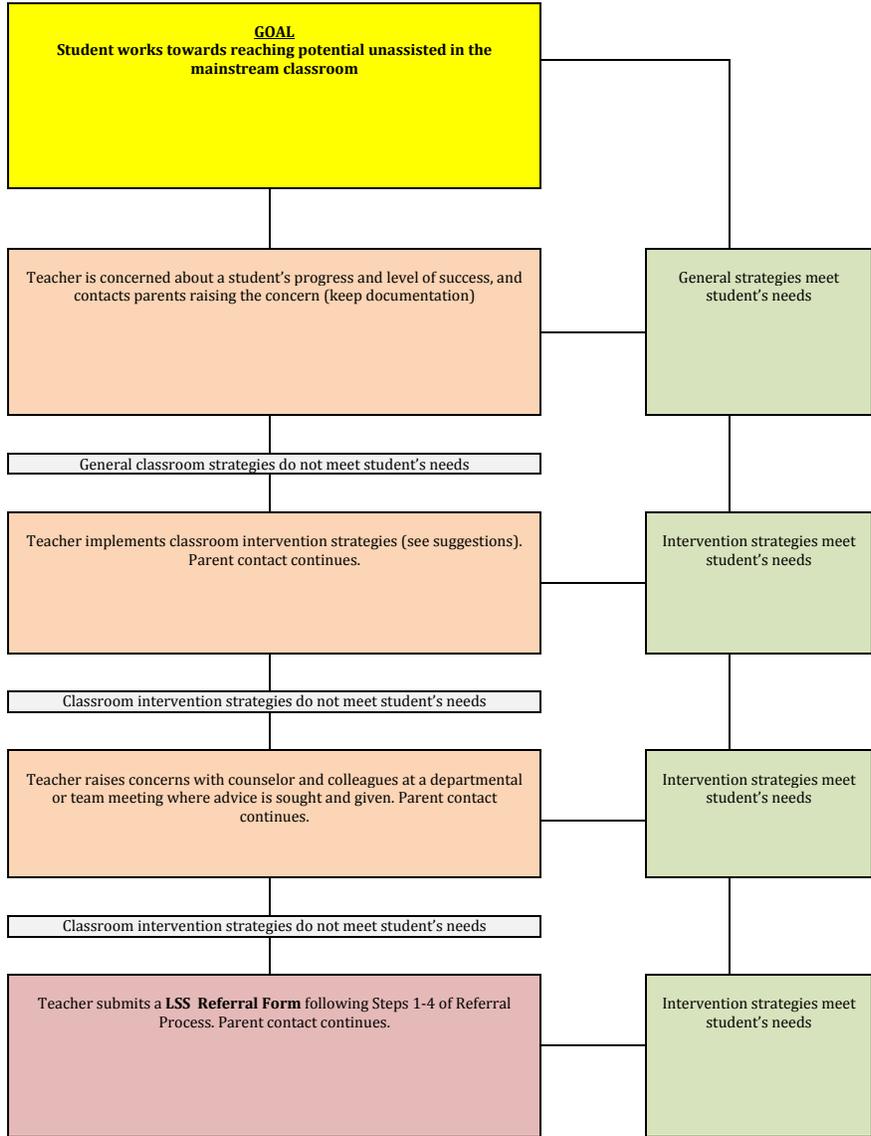| Board	Admissions policy
Director	Recruitment, human / material resources, budget, offer advice
Admissions	Data collection, reports, documents
Principal	Screening, admissions approval, placement, recruitment of specialists, monitoring LSS program, facilitate professional development for LSS specialist
IB Coordinators	Provide advice when needed related to curriculum and course scheduling
Counsellor	Screening, admissions, placements, advisory, student review, student referrals, coordinate learning support
Learning Support Specialist	Review assessment reports, draw up intervention plans, advise on accommodations and modifications, support teachers and parents
Home Room Teachers	Responsibility of students in their charge, who are considered to be outside of normal developmental range and who have exceptional needs in certain areas
Parents	Partners in the learning support services

Appendix C

Possible Classroom Interventions

- *Talked to the student*
- *Reviewed student's cumulative file*
- *Increased communication and /or weekly progress report with parent/guardian/tutor*
- *Modified assignments/ expectations for the short term*
- *Increased time for tests/ to complete tasks*
- *Provided visual/memory aids (e.g., number lines, pictures, graphic organizers)*
- *Helped student organize materials*
- *Implemented individual contract/checklist/behavior plan*
- *Asked student to repeat directions back to insure understanding*
- *Used preferential seating*
- *Increased teacher assistance/ monitoring*
- *Arranged in-school peer tutoring*
- *Ensured positive reinforcement is given (praise, note home)*
- *Increased feedback, (e.g. corrective redirecting)*
- *Consequences (time out, privilege loss)*

NOTE
Possible interventions do not include alterations to the regular curriculum. However, interventions do include the "delivery" of the curriculum.

GOAL
Student works towards reaching potential unassisted in the mainstream classroom

Teacher is concerned about a student's progress and level of success, and contacts parents raising the concern (keep documentation)

General strategies meet student's needs

General classroom strategies do not meet student's needs

Teacher implements classroom intervention strategies (see suggestions). Parent contact continues.

Intervention strategies meet student's needs

Classroom intervention strategies do not meet student's needs

Teacher raises concerns with counselor and colleagues at a departmental or team meeting where advice is sought and given. Parent contact continues.

Intervention strategies meet student's needs

Classroom intervention strategies do not meet student's needs

Teacher submits a **LSS Referral Form** following Steps 1-4 of Referral Process. Parent contact continues.

Intervention strategies meet student's needs

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Appendix D

In addition to possible Classroom interventions a student may be entitled to any one or more of the following possible accommodations:

- *Use of a laptop during exams*
- *Use of spell checkers and or dictionaries*
- *Extra time during assessments*
- *Use of a scribe or reader during assessment*
- *Increased regularity of breaks*
- *Provision of calming down periods*
- *Distraction-free testing*
- *Use of graphic organizer*
- *Use of assistive technologies*
- *Monitoring by LSS personnel*
- *Provision of teaching notes to circumvent copying*
- *Use of tape recorders, dictaphones and voice-activated software.*
- *Increased print size*

NOTE
Possible interventions do not include alterations to the regular curriculum. However, interventions do include the "delivery" of the curriculum.
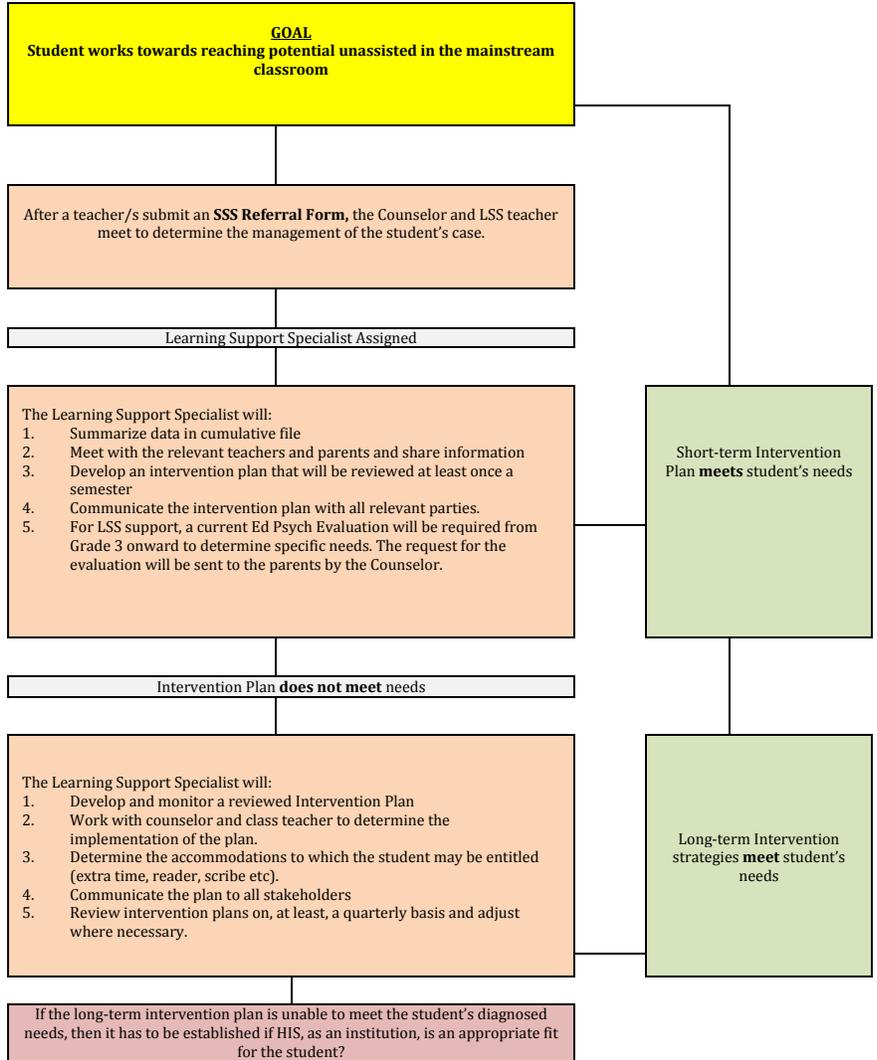
GOAL
Student works towards reaching potential unassisted in the mainstream classroom

After a teacher/s submit an **SSS Referral Form**, the Counselor and LSS teacher meet to determine the management of the student's case.

Learning Support Specialist Assigned

The Learning Support Specialist will:
1. Summarize data in cumulative file
2. Meet with the relevant teachers and parents and share information
3. Develop an intervention plan that will be reviewed at least once a semester
4. Communicate the intervention plan with all relevant parties.
5. For LSS support, a current Ed Psych Evaluation will be required from Grade 3 onward to determine specific needs. The request for the evaluation will be sent to the parents by the Counselor.

Short-term Intervention Plan **meets** student's needs

Intervention Plan **does not meet** needs

The Learning Support Specialist will:
1. Develop and monitor a reviewed Intervention Plan
2. Work with counselor and class teacher to determine the implementation of the plan.
3. Determine the accommodations to which the student may be entitled (extra time, reader, scribe etc).
4. Communicate the plan to all stakeholders
5. Review intervention plans on, at least, a quarterly basis and adjust where necessary.

Long-term Intervention strategies **meet** student's needs

If the long-term intervention plan is unable to meet the student's diagnosed needs, then it has to be established if HIS, as an institution, is an appropriate fit for the student?

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Appendix E

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Harare International School
Student Support Services Referral Form

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Counseling _____   EAL _____   Learning Support _____   Gifted/Talented _____

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CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

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Student's Name: _____ Sex: M/F _____ DOB _____ Grade _____

Teacher/Referred by: _____ Date of Referral: _____
_____

Additional Information – Complete if known or applicable

Parent/Guardian(s): _____ Hm. Phone: _____   Wk. Phone: _____

First Language: _____   Secondary Language(s): _____

Interventions:

___ Conferred with student   ___ Detention   ___ Parent Call   ___ Parent Conference
___ Modified work   ___ Behavior Contract   ___ Progress Report   ___ Other

Is receiving support services?   NO/YES   Learning Support___   EAL___   Other ___

Is student on medication? NO/YES   Name _____ Dose _____

I am referring the above student for the concern(s) checked below:

Family	Social/Emotional	Classroom Concerns	Speech/Language
___ guardians	___ angry	___ classwork	___ listening
___ divorce/separation	___ shyness	___ homework	___ speaking
___ lives w/aunt/uncle	___ fighting	___ test grades	___ reading
___ lives w/grandparent	___ defiance	___ does not complete tasks	___ writing
___ chronically ill family	___ unhappy/depressed	___ inattentiveness	___ spelling
member	___ withdrawn	___ anxious in class	___ comprehension
___ neglect	___ self-esteem	___ often absent/tardy	
___ hygiene	___ peer relationships	___ constantly in motion	
	___ bullying	___ inappropriate responses	
	___ self-harm	___ disruptive	
	___ grief	___ auditory processing	
	___ worried/anxious	___ visual processing	
	___ impulsive	___ math processing	
	___ always tired		
	___ chronic illness		
	___ substance abuse		

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Major Concerns/Comments: Please comment on the reasons for referral.

Child's Background: Do you have any knowledge of the child's previous educational experience (countries lived in, language spoken at home etc.)?

Classwork & Class Participation: What academic classwork is being done, or not done? Does this affect the entire class?

Behavior: Comment on this student's behavior in your class and any other observed behavior during the school day. Does his/her behavior affect your class as a whole?

Attitude: What is the student's attitude toward school in general?

Homework: What is the quality and effort of homework turned in? How much/little parental support do you detect?

Tests, Quizzes, Evaluations: How well does the student prepare for and succeed in taking tests/quizzes?

Which interventions have worked/not worked?
Please explain.

Please return this form to the Counseling Office (PYP , MYP/DP)

Appendix F: Accommodations and Modifications:(Source: *The Next Frontier: Inclusion in International Schools.* A Practical Guide for School Leaders. Bill and Ocean Powell, September 201

Modifications	Accommodations
Student: Only for students with significant learning disabilities or those who may be exceptionally able.	All students, particularly those who are: • Diagnosed with mild - moderate learning disabilities. • EAL • English language delayed • Struggling
Curriculum: Changes made to curriculum to meet the individual of the students	No change to the curriculum; learning outcomes remain the same
Assessment: Criteria of assessment may be changed in order to meet the needs of the students	No change to the criteria of assessment
Grading: Grades may be modified and so indicated on report cards or transcripts.	No change to grading criteria
Examples: **Partial Completion of Requirements:** • Learning 10 words instead of 20 • Learning knowledge-based, concrete facts instead of abstract cause-and-effect relationships of various conflicts in history **Adjustment Made for Leaning Rate**:	**Presentation:** • Material of the same content at a simpler or more complex reading level. • Layout of worksheets, tests, etc. is clear and uncluttered. • Directions are repeated or presented in small steps. • Graphic organizers are utilized as

- Reinforcement of basic operations while the rest of the class learns fractions
- Providing altered reading level text when reading comprehension is being assessed as a standard or benchmark within a unit; typically in an English or Modern Language class.

Alternate Curriculum Goals:
- For social inclusion, a student's grade is weighted to reflect collaboration skills and maintenance of appropriate behavior as opposed to solely academic achievement

Alternate Assessments:
- Assessment tasks reflect changed curricular expectations / learning standards and is graded according to the individual achievement of the modified standard

note taking aids
- Use of audio books instead of print copy
- Key vocabulary terms are highlighted
- Variety of visuals for new vocabulary or concepts used

Responses:

- Alternate versions of tests created to accommodate the student's disability or language level
- Answers marked in book rather than transferring responses to separate paper
- Oral or nonverbal answers such as pointing to the correct answer in place of written work
- Short answer questions replace essay prompts, with the exception of when essay writing is being assessed.

Setting:

- Use of study carrel
- Offer of a quiet environment
- Furnish special lighting
- Provide background music
- Make separate room available

Timing / Schedules:

- Extended time
- Frequent breaks
- Scheduling specific classes / activities for certain times of the day

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