

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Reviewed 2020

Definition

Students are considered to have a learning difficulty if they

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning to access the curriculum than children of the same age
- Have a disability or identified condition that prevents them from accessing educational facilities or activities with the same degree of effectiveness as other students.
- Pupils who struggle with English as a result of being non-native speakers are not considered to fall within the boundaries of special educational needs, but would be supported through EAL (English as an additional language).

Philosophy

At IS Almere we value the ability to provide a personalized approach to learning. We achieve this through the following:

- A proactive teaching and support staff, coordinated by the leadership team
- A communicative and dedicated mentor team, coordinated by the programme coordinators
- A Child psychologist/ Care team coordinator
- An education assistant
- Two anti-bullying coordinators
- A trust person (“vertrouwenspersoon”)

Key Staff

The Mentor

- First person of contact for the students in the mentor group.
- To signal and communicate problems (academic or pastoral) arising with students.
- In less complex matters, to work with parents and students on an action plan to support the student.
- In more complex matters, to work with the programme coordinator, child psychologist, parents and student to support the student concerned.
- To provide a holistic mentor programme. For our MYP1 students we have a tailored mentor programme which we have set up together with “Oke op School”, an organization that gives trainings that focus on the social emotional well-being of students. We also offer a training on healthy screen use to this year group, given by Tactus (an organisation that has a preventive approach to any form of addiction). For MYP 3 we offer a training together with the police, focussed on bullying and sexting, to educate the students about (legal) boundaries. For MYP4 we offer a training together with “Oke op School”, focussed on the group dynamics and creating a positive, safe (working) environment for the students. This training has 4 sessions. We also have a training together with “Cultuur- en Ontspannings Centrum “(COC) for this year group, focussed on gender diversity and identity. The COC believes that education is the key to ensuring that future generations continue to practice the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and respect. For MYP5 we have a training together with Tactus, that is focussed on a preventive approach to alcohol and drug (ab)use. This training has 4 sessions. For this year group, we also provide a mindfulness training, focussed on how to deal with school/ exam stress. This training is also offered to the students of DP. We also provide a training to DP2 students that tells them more about life after the IB and what to expect.

The Child psychologist/ Care Team Coordinator

- To conduct testing or arrange for students to be tested to discern whether they are entitled to SEN provision and to what extent support is required.
- To have regular meetings with external parties discussing specific student care (truancy officer, youth nurse, youth doctor, “Passend Onderwijs” specialists, social worker) in the Care advisory team meetings.
- To coordinate all student care, regarding to external organizations including the truancy officer and internal support of the SEN students, the development of trainings.
- To play an active role in the preventive approach in early identification of possible future SEN students.
- To advise the mentors and teachers as necessary on matters regarding the diagnosis or support of students with Special Educational Needs.
- To prepare recommendations of support in the individual education plans (IEP).
- To meet with parents and offer specialist advice as necessary.
- To prepare documentation for inclusive access arrangements for the MYP and DP exams
- To offer counselling to students.
- To keep the mentor and teachers in the loop of developments of the students in the SEN list.

The anti-bullying coordinator

- To act as point of contact for parents and pupils in the context of the anti-bullying policy.
- To make an active contribution to a socially safe school environment by providing information and organizing preventive activities.
- To act as contact person and policy adviser in the field of social security.
- To coordinate and implement the anti- bullying policy in school.

The trust- person

- To provide care and supervision of the complainant aimed at resolving the complaint.
- To give information about their role and about different forms of undesirable behaviour and organize preventive activities aimed at preventing harassment and unsafety.
- To be accountable and give policy advice to management/ administration of the school focused on the promotion of social security.

The **Programme Coordinator** has the following responsibilities:

- To support and advise (new) mentors.
- To support mentors in helping students with more complex issues.
- To share recommendations of support from the care team coordinator with staff.
- To support staff in the provision of support for students with Special Educational Needs.
- To monitor agreements made with students and parents.

Identification

Students are typically identified as requiring extra support in one of the following ways:

1. Transfer documents from the previous school highlighting a condition during the admissions process
2. Parents identify a condition as a result of testing carried out independently from school

3. Teachers identify a student who meets either of the two criteria in the “definition” section

In the first and second case, the information is found and noted in the student files during a “intake” review or an “annual” review. Any pertinent additional material added to the files is flagged up during the admission’s process.

In the third case, teacher concerns are communicated to the mentor. These are discussed with the child psychologist and/ or parents. Depending on the individual problems and with consent of the parents, a student will then receive extra internal support, or will be referred to an external organisation for testing or long-term support.

Support – Internal

In the first and second case, students are supported as per their diagnosis. **In the third case** the support offered is based upon the testing administered by an external organization.

The mentor arranges for our Child psychologist to meet with the student and assess their needs. The Child psychologist will either refer a student to an external organization, or will arrange recommendations as to how to best support the student in question. To make an informed decision, the student can be discussed in the Care Advisory Team (CAT), which includes a school nurse (health department) and a youth social worker, the truancy officer and Passend Onderwijs. The Mentor will share the appropriate information with them and support them in the application of the advised strategies.

Support – External

In all cases when students are found to have more severe learning difficulties which cannot be supported by the school as it needs intense weekly/daily supervision, a student will be referred to an external organization. The care advisory team (CAT) discusses and identifies the organization that would be best to provide the long term specialized support to the student. The student’s condition is discussed in the Care Advisory Team (CAT), with consent of the parents. If it is concluded that internal support from the school is sufficient, then the Child psychologist will assess, reassess and provide support to the student, teachers and parents. If it is concluded that internal support is insufficient, parents and student will be referred to specialised organisation, to set the right support in place, in alignment with school.

Reviewing progress, evaluating performance

Students supported on long term by the Child psychologist have Individual Educational Plans (IEP) written detailing the support required for a student to best progress in school. The IEP is evaluated at least two times per year and is adjusted in the meantime if necessary.

Internally supported students are under constant supervision. Teachers, mentors and the Programme coordinator communicate frequently through the Mentor Meeting and Year group meetings allowing a responsive approach to Special Educational Needs provision which is effective and appropriate for a school of our size.