



SCHOOL OF EUROPEAN EDUCATION OF HERAKLION

Educational Support Policy for the Secondary Cycle

In the world of learning, everyone should be aware of the different ways each individual student learns, especially teachers. Some students need more help than others and some simply need to be given the opportunity to learn differently. A SEN student could be either a student with dyslexia or autism who needs the extra support in class in one way or another, or a very intelligent student who needs more stimulation; he/ she can also be many more things and our job as SEN Coordinators, as teachers and as a school, is to provide them with the best possible education and help them achieve their goals.

1. Introduction

This document specifies the support offered in the Secondary school cycle at the School of European Education (SEE). It outlines the procedural steps which are in place to ensure the smooth implementation of the Policy on the Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools (2012-05-D-14-en-9) and the Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools- Procedural document (2012-05-D-15-en-11) with clear guidelines for everyone involved.

Educational support in the Secondary school refers to a system of support structures which has been developed by the European School system to assist SEN students, for whom regular classroom differentiation is not sufficient. It may be short- or long-term in length and be general, moderate or intensive in nature.

However, since our SEE is situated in Greece and operates under the Greek government, providing educational support to SEN students is not always a straightforward process and more often than not the Greek System comes into contrast with the European system.

A more detailed description of the educational support system will be provided later in this document.

2. Taking into consideration each student's individual needs.

Our main principle and goal is for each individual student to receive the education he or she is entitled to. It is important to us that no student should feel left out or helpless in a classroom. Therefore, our main priority is for students to know that they are an

equal member of his /her class and are included in every single aspect of the learning process.

2a. Differentiation

Differentiation forms the basis of effective teaching and is essential for all students, including those who may require support. Differentiated teaching is the responsibility of each educator at the SEE and is considered common classroom practice.

Our main aim is for each individual student's needs to be taken into consideration and for all teachers to find common ground and embrace the best possible practice so as to differentiate his or her teaching to the best possible extent.

All SEEH teachers are required to follow a variety of differentiation techniques, taking into consideration the European school guidelines. Furthermore, when possible, teachers are encouraged to participate in seminars or online courses and provide feedback for the rest of the teaching staff. During previous school years, in-service seminars were organized by the school focusing on differentiation techniques illustrated by respected educators in the SEN field and the National Inspector has also attended the school providing advice and methods on successful differentiation techniques.

It is important and is highlighted in every opportunity that students requiring support may have totally different backgrounds or abilities/ difficulties. Such individual may be:

- pupils with different learning styles
- pupils who are studying in a language section which does not correspond to their mother tongue
- pupils who have arrived later into the system and who have followed a different curriculum and/or with possible gaps in their knowledge or skills
- pupils with a mild learning difficulty
- pupils with a diagnosed special educational need
- gifted and talented pupils

2b. Intervention when necessary

Teachers are fully aware that although students in the Secondary Cycle may have been assessed in the Nursery or Primary Cycle and therefore, their special educational needs are known, there is always the chance that a student may need to be re-assessed or for attention to be given to a student whose needs may not have manifested in the past. In both cases, Educational Support Coordinators are informed and the necessary procedure, described later in this document, is carried out.

3. Procedure followed in the beginning of each school year.

The Educational Support Coordinator(s) call a meeting with the teachers of each individual class.

All teachers are informed of the main principles of the ES and are encouraged to contribute to the meeting to the best of their ability.

Students with any form of diagnosis are discussed first and special arrangements (see below) are suggested based on the diagnosis and recommendations given by the specialists who have conducted the reports.

The special arrangements are then discussed at a separate meeting with the Director and Deputy Director of Secondary.

Furthermore, each subject teacher informs the ES Coordinators of any issues he or she may be facing with any other student and in the event of a suspected learning difficulty, the Director is informed and the parents/guardians are also informed immediately after and are given the necessary information/advice on how to continue.

In all other cases, such as a gifted child, advice is given to all teachers and assisting material is provided to them by the ES Coordinators. Once again, both the Director and Deputy Director are informed of the outcome.

4a. Teacher Support

Apart from the discussions aforementioned, teachers are encouraged to contact the ES Coordinator at any other time and several meetings are held each year to monitor each student's progress and to assist teachers in every way possible. Furthermore, all teachers are provided with information on how and where to find recommended and helpful material to assist them in their teaching.

Helpful in-service training seminars are discussed, proposed and requested by the ES Coordinators firstly from the Director and then the appropriate authority.

4b. Home/ School Partnership

Close collaboration between the home and school is in the best interests of all students and assists them in achieving their potential. At enrollment, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school of their child's level of academic attainment and previous educational support provision and/or special educational requirements. This information must be correct, reliable and complete. Parents can also play an active

role in their child's education by regularly attending meetings with their child's teachers and other information sessions.

The school will inform parents if it is believed that their child requires some form of educational support. Parents of children already receiving educational support are regularly informed of their children's progress by both the classroom teacher and the support teacher/coordinator every month, but are also encouraged to contact the Support Coordinators more often should they feel the need to .

The school will also inform parents if a formal assessment is advised or required and commits to keeping all sensitive documents confidential and in a locked area.

In order for all parents to understand and learn about the school's educational policy, the Support Coordinators work closely with the Parents' and Guardians' Association and attend their first annual meeting and any meeting after that should there be a need for it, in order to inform parents about the SEEH's Educational Support Policy and address any issues or answer any queries.

Furthermore, each parent whose child is a SEN student in S4, is invited at the end of the year to attend a private meeting with the Support Coordinators, in order for them to be informed of the entire procedure and updated diagnosis/documentation their child has to have at the end of S5, i e just before the student enters the Baccalaureate Cycle.

4c. The students' point of view

Individual meetings are to be held between each student receiving any form of Educational Support and the Educational Support Coordinators twice a year in order to develop better insight into the process and obtain a different perspective of matters. Thus, the Support Coordinators will have the ability to observe the support procedures in a more efficient way and deal with any pertinent issues effectively.

5. a. Types of Educational Support

- Each student's individual needs are appropriately supported by general, moderate or intensive support and special arrangements (depending on the availability teaching staff).
- Pupils receive support in learning the language of the section into which they are integrated when needed.
- ILPs (Individual Learning Plans) are compiled, reviewed and updated by support teachers (intensive support)
- Given support is monitored, progress and results are registered. Regular meetings are held between support teachers and ES coordinators.

- General Support

General support is provided to pupils who are experiencing difficulties in a particular subject and who need to catch up due to late arrival, illness or are not studying in their mother tongue. They may also require help in acquiring effective learning strategies or study skills. General support can be provided in or outside the classroom, to small groups and is short-term. Depending on the needs of the pupils, groups can be organized vertically, horizontally, within or across sections. A group learning plan (GLP), outlining specific targets and criteria for success, is prepared and evaluated by the support teacher/coordinator in conjunction with the classroom teacher(s). In the case of L2 General Support, the GLP is prepared and evaluated by the L2 teacher(s) involved (regular L2 teacher and L2 support teacher).

In the event that there are up to three students who could benefit from support in order to reach the required level of the class, an individual plan is drawn-up for each one of them in order for their needs to be dealt with even more effectively.

- Moderate Support

Moderate support is an extension of General support and is provided for pupils with a mild learning difficulty or in need of more targeted support due to language issues, concentration problems or other reasons. It is provided for a longer period than General support. Moderate support is provided to small groups of children with similar needs or to individual students outside of the classroom. Depending on the needs of the pupils, small groups can be organized vertically, horizontally, within or across sections. Each pupil has an individual learning plan (ILP), outlining specific learning objectives, as well as criteria for evaluating pupil progress and the success of the support. The ILP is prepared and evaluated by the support teacher/coordinator, in conjunction with the classroom teacher. In the case of L2 Moderate support, the ILP is prepared and evaluated by the L2 teacher(s) involved (regular L2 teacher and L2 support teacher). Pupils receiving Moderate support follow the standard curriculum and are assessed accordingly. In rare cases, methods of assessment may be adapted and special arrangements may be considered appropriate.

- Intensive Support

There are two types of Intensive support: Type A and Type B.

- Intensive Support A

Type A support is provided for students with special educational needs: learning, emotional, behavioural and/or physical. An expert assessment justifying the special individual needs of the pupil must be presented to the school. The expert assessment may be a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report (Please refer to section 6. Greek Legislation/Restrictions

on Formal Educational Assessments). It is the Director of the school who decides on provision of Intensive Support A, after taking into account the proposals of the Support Advisory Group, which has previously reviewed the medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report. Intensive Support A requires an individual learning plan (ILP) which is reviewed annually by the Support Advisory Group.

- **Intensive Support B**

Type B support is provided only in exceptional circumstances and only on a short-term basis. The Director may decide to provide Type B support to a pupil or group of pupils, without diagnosed special educational needs, such as in the form of intensive language support for pupils who may be unable to access the curriculum.

This type of intensive support requires an individual learning plan (ILP) which is reviewed annually by the Class Council.

5. b. Limitations

Although every effort is made to provide the above-mentioned educational support without delay to Secondary school students who require it, there are times when situations beyond our control may arise which prevent us from doing so. Such situations may include:

- unavailability of teachers
- conflicting teacher and/or pupil timetables
- school timetable issues
- financial restrictions
- long waiting times for formal assessment (please refer to section 6)

In such a case, every effort will be made to ensure that the best interests of the pupil(s) are catered to and that adequate educational support is provided as soon as possible.

6. Greek Legislation/ Restrictions on Formal Educational Assessments

In Greece, there are restrictions as to the types of formal educational assessments which are accepted. The authority for formal educational assessments is the official state-run centre, KEDDY - **Centre for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support (KE.D.D.Y.)** - but pupils are also be referred to an approved paediatric or psychiatric facility and the necessary specialist for certification of their special needs, in order for the student's documents to match the required criteria set by the European Schools' General policy.

In the event that a student has not been diagnosed in the past, but has been referred to the KEDDY for whatever reason the process is as follows:

Pupils in the Greek section of the Secondary school who require educational assessments are tested at KEDDY in the Greek language.

Pupils in the English section of the Secondary school who require educational assessments are also referred to KEDDY, at which a special request for testing in the English language is made at the time of the application. Previous assessments from other countries cannot be officially accepted by the school but should be submitted to KEDDY to help expedite the process of evaluation.

At the Secondary cycle of the SEE, assessment is required so that a student may receive Intensive Support A and/or to qualify for special arrangements during examinations. However, the assessment from KEDDY must specifically state the need for some type of intensive support (as in the case of the need for a parallel support educator) or to state the need for some sort of special arrangement(s) during examinations, in order for these to be provided/arranged for by the school (as mentioned previously).

7. Advisory Group

The support advisory group is a school-level multi-professional group which assesses the requests and documentation for Intensive Support and gives its advice to the Director for decision-making. The composition of the group is as follows: the Director or his/her delegate; the class teacher; any other teachers involved; support teacher/coordinator; the pupil's parents/legal representatives (may be accompanied by a specialist); school doctor/psychologist/other specialists (if necessary); the primary teacher (for S1 students); and one or more secondary teachers. Unfortunately, in our school, there is no school psychologist and therefore, unless the parent hires a private one, the advisory group remains incomplete.

8. Special Arrangements

The special arrangements listed below are put at the disposal of students during examinations, tests and other forms of assessment to compensate for a physical or learning disability and to allow the pupil to fulfill his/her potential in the fairest possible way.

However, special arrangements can only be authorized when they are clearly related to the pupil's diagnosed needs by means of a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report

justifying these special arrangements. (Please refer to section 6. Greek Legislation/Restrictions on Formal Educational Assessments)

The implementation of special arrangements is decided on an individual basis by the school management, following discussion with parents and teachers.

Any special arrangements taken are recorded in the student's file.

The arrangements listed below can be authorised by the school (up to and including S5):

- a) Separate room for the test/examination/assessment.
- b) Change of seating arrangements.
- c) Taking of medication and/or refreshment in the case of a medical condition, for example, diabetes.
- d) An assistant to provide physical care for a pupil to ensure his or her well-being and safety. This assistant may not be a relative of the pupil or the teacher of the subject that is being examined.
- e) The use of a specific learning aid which is normally used in class, for example, a magnifying glass; a hearing aid; coloured overlay; a low vision aid; coloured lenses.
- f) For colour-blind pupils, colours can be substituted with words on the test/examination paper or a reader can name the colours for the pupil.
- g) Use of a spell checker because of severe dyslexia. This request has to be confirmed by the school.
- h) Modifications to the format of the assessment.
- i) Additional time can be granted to pupils whose working pace is affected by their condition. For each hour of examination, a maximum of 10 minutes can be granted. For 90-minute assessments, an additional 15 minutes can be granted.
- j) Use of a computer or laptop or a typewriter to replace handwriting for pupils diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia or any other disorder affecting written expression. The school ensures that any computer/laptop being used is cleared of stored information and the spell check function and is not connected to the Internet. It should be noted that in examinations, other than language examinations, content/skills and not language errors, are assessed.
- k) The use of a simple arithmetic calculator, whenever no calculator at all would be allowed.
- l) A scribe to transcribe word for word the pupil's dictated answers and to read back the pupil's answers where necessary. In this case, additional time of 10 minutes per hour is allowed.
- m) An audio recording of answers where a scribe is not available.
- n) A reader to read both the assessment paper and to read back the answers. In this case, the additional time of 10 minutes per hour is allowed.

- o) A communicator to provide assistance to a hearing-impaired pupil through sign language or lip speaking.
- p) A prompter to assist a pupil with severe concentration difficulties or neurological disability in paying attention to the assessment tasks.
- q) Written instructions for hearing-impaired pupils.
- r) Written answers for oral examinations by a candidate who has severe difficulties in oral expression.

9. Extraordinary Arrangements

The list above is not intended to be exhaustive. Where a student's needs cannot be met by any of these arrangements, the school may make further appropriate arrangements. These arrangements will be made only if the school is able to find solutions locally and are clearly related to the pupil's diagnosed needs by means of a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report justifying these special arrangements. (Please refer to section 6. Greek Legislation/Restrictions on Formal Educational Assessments)

In exceptional cases, a request may be made by the legal representatives of a pupil for him/her to be moved up to one year above. Such a move must be in the interest of both the pupil's academic and social development and must be carefully considered. As such, the student's teachers will be consulted and a psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report may be requested. In any case, the final decision will be made by the National Inspector.

10. Conclusion –Targets

As Educators, we have a responsibility to keep working hard and continue looking for innovative methods to assist and progress our teaching. When it comes to SEN students, there is an ocean of methods and techniques out there for us to use; we just have to make them accessible.

Our goal as SEEH, is to provide the teachers of our school with as many support materials and SEN seminars as possible, covering as much ground as we can.

As Support Coordinators, we will propose specifically targeted seminars asked for by the teaching staff and will continue trying to find ways to assist our teachers and students in the learning process.

Trying to find common ground between the Greek Educational Support System and the European one has proven to be a great challenge. As a school, we come across many difficulties and barriers which we try our best to overcome. Our students and their progress have always been and will continue to be our main

priority, always bearing in mind that they are growing individuals, as well as students.

We will do our work always taking into consideration that we all learn differently and that, in one way or another, we are all SEN students, we work together as a team and as teachers; we plan, provide and assess each student according to his or her individual needs.

The procedure and the legislation we have to follow and abide by have been outlined in this document; our willingness and determination to help our students is impossible to be confined in such few pages, but what sums up our SEN Policy more than anything is our uncompromising duty to help each and every single one of our students feel equal in the classroom and have an equal chance to learn, no matter what the circumstances are.

*The Educational Support Team**

References:

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SCHOLA EUROPAEA. Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools- Procedural document (2012-05-D-15-en-11). <https://www.eursec.eu/Documents/2012-05-D-15-en-11.pdf>

Notes:

** This report was first conducted and later updated in the school year 2016-2017 by Margarita Makrakis and Konstantinos Kakoulakis. It was revised in October 2018 by Margarita Makrakis and Pascale Denier. It is also the product of collaboration between the Primary Educational Support Coordinators, Maria Iatraki and Charoula Chroniaris and the above- mentioned Secondary Cycle Coordinators, as well as previous ones i e Pascale Denier and Maria Kasmirli.*