

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 student learns, especially teachers. Some students need more help than others, and some need to be allowed to learn differently. A student requiring educational support could be either a student with dyslexia or autism who needs extra support in class in one way or another or a brilliant student who needs more stimulation; they can also be many more things, and our job as Educational Support 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 of Heraklion (SEEH). It outlines the procedural steps 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-10) and the Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools—Procedural document (2012-05-D-15-en-12) with clear guidelines for everyone involved.

Educational support in Secondary school refers to a system of support structures developed by the European School system to assist students for whom regular classroom differentiation is insufficient. It may be short—or long-term, general, moderate, or intensive.

However, since our SEEH is situated in Greece and operates under the Greek government, providing educational support to SEN students is not always straightforward, and the Greek System often contrasts with the European system.

Nevertheless, the school management, the teachers, and the support coordinators work hard to assist each pupil in every way possible.

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.

Integration and Inclusion are vital principles in our school. Every student has their way of learning and behaving, and a school should accommodate their needs.

Our main goal is for each student to receive the education they are 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 equal members of their class and are included in every aspect of the learning process.

That being said, all teachers must maintain a good learning environment and help their students meet the requirements of each level. When this is difficult, alternative solutions are needed, and close collaboration with the Educational Support Coordinator and Management is necessary to ensure that the student's best interest is met.

2a. Differentiation

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

Our main aim is to consider each student's needs and for all teachers to find common ground and embrace the best possible practice to differentiate their teaching to the best possible extent.

Educational Support Coordinators participate in in-situ or online service seminars organised by the Educational Support Department of European Schools to be fully briefed on European School policies, changes, and opportunities.

Considering the European school guidelines, All SEEH teachers must follow various differentiation techniques. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to participate in seminars or online courses and provide feedback for the rest of the teaching staff when possible. During previous school years, the school organised in-service seminars 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 essential and highlighted at every opportunity that students requiring support may have different backgrounds, abilities/ difficulties. Such individuals 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 with possible gaps in their knowledge or skills
- pupils with a mild learning difficulty
- pupils with a diagnosed particular educational need
- gifted and talented pupils

**Due to the war between Ukraine and Russia, we have accepted students in the English section who need support and help to integrate. Educational Support arranges possible support lessons and guidance, and class teachers also closely monitor their overall performance to help them integrate and perform to the best of their ability.*

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 at the beginning of each school year.

The Educational Support Coordinators prepare a calendar for the year, outlining the actions needed per calendar month. During the year, more actions may be added depending on the circumstances (e.g., switching to online learning, students needing further support, etc.).

3a Informing of teachers – collaboration among staff

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

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

Students with any 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 Coordinator(s) of any issues they may face with other students. In the event of a suspected learning difficulty, the Director is told, and the parents/guardians are notified immediately afterwards. They 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 the ES Coordinator(s) provide them with assisting material/resources when requested. Once again, the Director and Deputy Director are informed of the outcome.

4a. Teacher Support

Besides the discussions above, teachers are encouraged to contact the ES Coordinator at any other time. Several meetings are held yearly to monitor each student's progress and 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.

The ES coordinators discuss, propose, and request helpful in-service training seminars, first from the Director and then from the appropriate authority when deemed necessary.

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, the parent is responsible for informing the school of their child's level of academic attainment, previous educational support provision, and unique 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 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 the class teacher and the support teacher/coordinator every month. Still, they are also encouraged to contact the Support Coordinators more often should they feel the need to do so.

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

To help all parents 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 it be needed. They inform parents about the SEEH's Educational Support Policy and address any issues or answer any queries upon request.

Furthermore, each parent/guardian whose child is a student in S4 who needs to apply for Special Arrangements for the Bac Cycle is invited at the end of the year to attend a private meeting with the Support Coordinator(s) to be informed of the entire procedure and updated diagnosis/documentation their child has to have at the beginning of S5, i.e., the year before the student enters the Baccalaureate Cycle.

4 c. Smooth transitions

Students with any form of diagnosis or specific need transitioning from Primary to Secondary are closely monitored. The Deputies from each cycle and the Educational Support Coordinators collaborate to ensure a smooth transition. Subject teachers report anything worrying. All S1 students have been involved in a series of transition activities in P5 to adapt more quickly. Teachers help new students/ students from other schools through group projects and assignments or tasks, and other students are helped through team games and social interactions to feel like they are part of the school community.

4 d. The student's point of view

Individual meetings will be held twice a year between each student receiving any form of educational support and the educational support coordinator (s) to develop better insight into the process and obtain a different perspective on matters. Thus, the Support Coordinator(s) will be able to observe the support procedures more efficiently and deal with any pertinent issues effectively. This briefing can also be done with parents/guardians present.

5. a. Types of Educational Support

- Each student's needs are appropriately supported by general, moderate or intensive support and special arrangements (depending on the availability of teaching staff).

- Pupils receive support in learning the language of the section in 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 experiencing difficulties in a particular subject and needing to catch up due to late arrival, illness, or 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 organised 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 class 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).

Students could benefit from support to reach the required class level, so an individual plan is drawn up for each of them if their needs vary greatly to achieve maximum progress. It is up to the individual teacher and Educational Support Coordinator to assess each student's needs, lacking knowledge or skills, to choose the best way to help them. Often, individual, differentiated material and one-to-one explanatory sessions are held.

Moderate Support

Moderate support is an extension of general support. It is provided for pupils with mild learning difficulties or who need more targeted support due to language issues, concentration problems, or other reasons. It is provided for a more extended period than General support. Moderate support is offered to small groups of children with similar needs or individual students outside the classroom. Depending on the needs of the pupils, small groups can be organised vertically, horizontally, within or across sections. Each pupil has an individual learning plan (ILP) outlining specific learning objectives and criteria for evaluating pupil progress and the success of the support. The ILP is prepared and assessed by the support teacher/coordinator and the classroom teacher. In the case

of L2 Moderate support, the ILP is ready to be 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, assessment methods may be adapted, and special arrangements may be considered appropriate. If the pupils have similar needs, group plans are created, and each student is given differentiated material to work on.

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, including learning, emotional, behavioural, and physical. An expert assessment justifying the unique individual needs of the pupil must be presented to the school. The expert assessment may be a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and multidisciplinary report (Please refer to section 6. Greek Legislation/Restrictions on Formal Educational Assessments). The school's director decides on the provision of Intensive Support A after considering the proposals of the Support Advisory Group, which has previously reviewed the medical/psychological/psycho-educational and multidisciplinary report. Intensive Support A requires an individual learning plan (ILP), which is reviewed annually by the Support Advisory Group.

- o Following Greek legislation, the Deputy Director requests (parallel) support students for each student whose diagnosis meets the criteria and states the need for a support teacher. The student is then assigned a teacher in core subjects at the beginning of the year. Should a parent/guardian feel the need to help their child further, they can hire a private support teacher to assist their child in all lessons (for example, in PE or Art, where there is no support teacher in the Greek system).

- o Each support teacher conducts and submits a plan and report based on the European school system and another for the Greek system.

- Intensive Support B

Type B support is provided only in exceptional circumstances and only on a short-term basis. The Director may provide Type B support to a pupil or group of pupils without diagnosed special educational needs, such as intensive language support for pupils who cannot access the curriculum.

This type of intensive support requires an individual learning plan (ILP), which the Class Council reviews annually. Intensive Support B has not been offered in the SEEH until the time of this report.

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 that prevent us from doing so. Such situations may include:

- unavailability of teachers
- conflicting teacher and 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.

In any event, the School ensures that students in S6 and S7 are given every help necessary to reach their full potential.

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, KEDASY - Interdisciplinary Evaluation, Counselling and Support Centers. Still, pupils are also referred to an approved paediatric or psychiatric facility and the necessary specialist to certify their unique needs in order for the student's documents to match the criteria set by the European Schools' General policy.

If a student has not been diagnosed in the past but has been referred to the KEDASY for whatever reason, the process is as follows:

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

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

Assessment is required at the Secondary cycle of the SEEH so that a student may receive Intensive Support A and/or qualify for special arrangements during examinations. However, the assessment from KEDASY must specifically state the need for some intensive support (as in the case of the need for a parallel support educator, i.e., a co-teacher) or some sort of special arrangement(s) during examinations in order for the school to provide/arrange for these (as mentioned previously).

7. Advisory Group

The support advisory group is a school-level multi-professional group that assesses the requests and documentation for intensive support and advises the director on decision-making. The composition of the group is as follows: the Director or their 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 if needed); and one or more secondary teachers.

Efforts have been made, and our school has had psychologists in the Primary and secondary cycles over the past few years and will continue to do so.

8. Special Arrangements

The special arrangements listed below are made available to students during examinations, tests, and other forms of assessment to compensate for a physical or learning disability and allow the pupil to fulfil their potential in the fairest possible way.

However, special arrangements can only be authorised when they relate to the pupil's diagnosed needs through a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and multidisciplinary report justifying these special arrangements. (Please refer to section 6. Greek Legislation/Restrictions on Formal Educational Assessments)

The school management decides individually whether to implement special arrangements, following a discussion with parents and teachers.

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

The below list of arrangements may be authorised by the school, up to and including S5:

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a) Separate room for the test/examination/assessment, with the exclusion of ART and MUSIC assessments, which must happen in the appropriate room (ART and MUSIC room); a separate room will not necessarily be an individual room where the pupil will be alone/isolated, but a room different from the official examination room gathering all the candidates sitting the same examination of the day.

b) Change of seating arrangements;

c) Taking of medication and refreshment in the case of a medical condition, for example, diabetes;

d) An assistant will provide physical care for pupils to ensure their 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 commonly used in class, such as a magnifying glass, a hearing aid, an FM hearing system, a coloured overlay, a low vision aid, and 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) Approved devices/software/applications to be used in assessment;

h) Modifications to the format of the assessment paper: size of paper and font, contrast, alignment, line spacing and printed pages. A paper and digital Braille version of the exams may also be made available;

i) Additional time can be granted to pupils whose working pace is affected by their condition.

A maximum of 25% extra time can be granted for examinations; This measure applies to all harmonised tests. For examinations taking place in the classroom, other measures may be considered/envisaged, such as shortened assignments for the class and extra time for pupils with special arrangements or shortened assignments for pupils with special arrangements but ensuring the assessment of the same/all competences,

j) Use of approved applications/software for spell checker because of dyslexia. This request has to be confirmed by the school;

k) Disregard of spelling mistakes in language subjects in case of severe dyslexia; when a spellchecker is not granted;

l) For deaf or hard of hearing pupils, questions and instructions during oral exams are given in writing, exercises using audio files or videos are replaced by written exercises, or pupils receive a script of audio file or video;

m) Written answers for oral examinations by a candidate who has severe difficulties in oral expression;

n) Use of a computer, laptop, tablet or any approved device and the corresponding approved software to replace handwriting for pupils diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, or any other disorder affecting written expression.

The school ensures that any computer/ laptop/device being used is cleared of stored information and the spell check function or other software and is not connected to the Internet.

It should be noted that content/skills, not language errors, are assessed in examinations other than language examinations. Pupils may use their own devices, providing that the school has the means to verify the abovementioned conditions;

o) A communicator to assist a deaf or hard of hearing pupil through sign language or lip speaking.

Arrangements that may be replaced by technology. The pupil must be familiar with the technology before using it in assessment situations.

p) Approved speech-to-text and text-to-speech software/device or a scribe to transcribe word for word the pupil's dictated answers and to read back the pupil's answers where necessary;

q) An audio recording of answers where a scribe is not available;

r) Approved text-to-speech software/device or a reader to read both the assessment paper and to read back the answers. In this case, the additional time 25% may be granted;

s) Approved software or a prompter to assist a pupil with severe concentration difficulties or neurological disability in paying attention to the assessment tasks;

t) The schools may propose the inclusion of specific software and devices that aim to allow equal access and opportunities;

u) A list of devices and software approved at the system level is made available to the Schools and families.

Extraordinary Arrangements

The list above is not exhaustive. Where any of these arrangements cannot meet a pupil's needs, teachers and parents may request further appropriate arrangements. The same procedure applies to the arrangements listed above.

In exceptional cases, requested by the pupil's legal representatives and supported by the teachers, by a medical/psychological/psycho-pedagogical or multidisciplinary report, a pupil can be moved up to one year above (e.g. P2 to P3). This must be in the interest of both the pupil's academic and social development. A temporary move can be made under the Intensive Support Agreement following the existing procedure. At the end of the school year, the Class Council decides the final move and the Agreement could be terminated.

This move is not allowed from S5 to S6.

Special Arrangements in S6 & S7

Procedure

Usually, Special Arrangements in years S6 and S7 will be allowed only when similar arrangements have been used in a previous year or previous years. This does not apply to newly enrolled pupils in S6 or when new information has come to light that justifies granting Special Arrangements.

A written request for Special Arrangements in S6 and S7 can be made to the EdSup Coordinator by either a teacher or by the pupil's legal representatives or the pupil if not a minor. A teacher can initiate the process, but the request must be entered by the pupil's legal representatives. Special arrangements can also be granted to pupils who do not receive educational support.

The application must state precisely on which specialist's diagnosis the request is based. The application must also state precisely which special arrangements are being requested.

An up-to-date – dating back not more than two years – medical/psychological/psychoeducational and/or a multidisciplinary report (see 4.4.2 for details) justifying the need for special arrangements is required. The pupil's legal representative must provide the relevant documents.

In order to avoid possible conflict of interests, the expert assessing pupils will be neither an employee of the European School nor a relative of the pupil.

Each application for Special Arrangements will be treated on its own merit.

Requests for Special Arrangements for the Baccalaureate must be made by the 15th of October of the year preceding entry into the Baccalaureate cycle, i.e. S5.

The schools must inform the Central Office by the 30th of October about the Special Arrangements -requested for S6 and S7.

Solely in exceptional unforeseeable situations and duly attested (serious illness, accident, newly enrolled pupils, etc.), a teacher or the pupil's legal representatives may submit the request for Special Arrangements after the deadline indicated above. The request must be accompanied by full documentation setting out the grounds on which it is based. The decision on these late requests can be made by the Inspectors responsible for educational support or, in their absence, by the Head of the European Baccalaureate.

The document Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations for the European Baccalaureate outlines a detailed procedure for requesting Special Arrangements for the Bac Cycle.

10. Students leaving the school

Reasons for leaving the European School and seeking alternative solutions vary. However, when it comes to students who feel they cannot meet the requirements of each class or who are struggling to follow the curricula, discussions are held among class teachers, the educational support coordinator, and the Directors so that the students can make the decision that is in their best interest. The Directors ensure a smooth transition to other schools if and when necessary.

11. Conclusion –Targets

As educators, we are responsible for working hard and looking for innovative methods to assist and improve our teaching. For any student who learns differently, there is an ocean of methods and techniques for us to use; we must make them accessible.

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

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

Finding common ground between the Greek Educational Support System and the European one has proven to be a significant challenge. As a school, we encounter 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 and students.

We will do our work always, considering that we all learn differently and that, in one way or another, we all need additional guidance; we work together as a team and as teachers; we plan, provide and assess each student according to their

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individual needs. Despite the limitations we face as a small Accredited school, many of the teaching staff have remained there for many years and know the students well. The small number of students in each class is also to their advantage when dealing with each student's individual needs. New staff members are guided and mentored and get to know students quickly with little delay. Such facts assist the learning process and provide a welcoming learning environment for our students.

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 to such few pages, but what sums up our Educational Policy more than anything is our uncompromising duty to help every single one of our students feels equal in the classroom and has an equal chance to learn, no matter what the circumstances are.

References:

SCHOLA EUROPAEA. Policy on the Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools (2012-05-D-14-en-10).

SCHOLA EUROPAEA. Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools- Procedural document (2012-05-D-15-en-14).

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Notes:

* Margarita Makrakis and Konstantinos Kakoulakis first conducted and updated this report in the school year 2016-2017, revised again in 2021 and last revised in September 2023 by Margarita Makrakis. 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 Pascale Denier and Maria Kasmirli.