



Learning Support Policy Waterford Kamhlaba UWC

Learning Support policy – Waterford Kamhlaba UWCSA

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1. **Introduction:**

The Learning Support department is involved with the entire school community to ensure that every student's individual needs are met, where possible. We recognize that each student is unique in their learning and will require meaningful and impartial access to the curriculum.

The Learning Support department works alongside every pastoral and academic support system, to provide for the needs of students requiring learning support.

2. **Our Philosophy and Vision:**

We believe that a student's learning needs and barriers to learning should never be viewed as a limitation with regard to a student's potential, but should be utilised as a positive resource by all role players in the student's environment. By identifying a student's strengths; practicing differentiation in and outside the classroom; scaffolding the student's learning and differentiating the student's curriculum, we aim to cater for the needs of every student.

Through the practice of inclusion, we are able to provide equal curriculum access to a diverse student community, who has different individual needs, challenges and goals. It is of tremendous importance, that inclusion practices benefit the individual in need of the learning support, as well as the classroom community in which this individual finds themselves.

Some students do experience educational and behavioural needs of such a unique nature, that they do not benefit sufficiently from strategies applied in the mainstream classroom. These students are reliant upon all possible mechanisms of support that can be offered and activated by the Learning Support department, working hand in hand with the Waterford Kamhlaba school community as a whole.

We view the implementation of outstanding inclusion practices as key to making the inclusion of all students and their learning needs, a reality. This would involve the affirmation of the student's identity and building their self-esteem; valuing the student's prior knowledge; scaffolding their new learning and extending their learning opportunities (IBDP Special educational needs within the IB programs 2010 p. 5, 6, 7).

As the Waterford Kamhlaba community, we strive to assist our students

in any way possible, to become successful inquirers, thinkers, confident communicators, highly principled people, open-minded students, compassionate persons, risk-takers and well balanced, reflective human beings.

3. **Aims of the Learning Support department:**

- To provide a service where students can freely ask for assistance.
- To provide a service where staff and parents can ask for guidance and advice.
- To work directly with students who are experiencing barriers to learning and are in need of support.
- To communicate directly with parents and keep them informed, either in face to face meetings where possible, or via emails, telephonic communication and online meetings.
- To guide parents through the identification, assessment and support provision processes as well as inform them of their child's progress.
- To operate a whole school approach by assisting staff with effective differentiation strategies, the implementation and integration of inclusion class practices, and catering to the needs of individual students.
- To provide a holistic service where staff collaborates with parents to enable us to work as a team towards a common goal. During these sessions, parents are assisted with strategies and healthy parental practices to improve the learning experiences of their children as well as remove/minimise the effects of learning barriers.

4. **Aims of the Learning Support policy:**

The Learning Support policy aims to be a functional document which can be practically implemented, to enable the Learning Support department and all role players in the Waterford Kamhlaba school community, to provide access to successful learning experiences to all students; while taking into consideration, the student's barriers to learning, as well as the extent to which learning support can be offered.

5. **Learning Support coordinator:**

Ms. Retha Cook

5.1 **Learning Support coordinator's responsibilities:**

- Day to day operation of the college's Learning Support policy;
- Maintenance of the Learning Support register;
- Identification of barriers to learning that students are experiencing;
- Managing provision for students with barriers to learning;

- Keeping tutors and teachers informed;
- Liaising with parents of students and keeping minutes of these meetings;
- Referring students to Mathematics and English departments to be included in extra help sessions;
- Communicating best practice guidance to staff;
- Attend all Academic, Pastoral and Staff meetings and utilise these meetings to coordinate matters pertaining to the Learning Support department;
- Providing relevant information for authorisation of learning support arrangements and accommodations in exams;
- Advise on the purchasing of aids and materials to meet the needs of specific individuals or groups of students;
- Carry out observations and basic academic assessments of individuals;
- Track pupils' progress using support plans/action plans and individual support plans (ISP's) as well as classroom records and school reports.

5.2 **Rooms available:**

Learning Support office

6. **Learning Support coordination team members:**

Learning Support coordinator

Head of Language B and Language Acquisition

Deputy Principal: Academic

Phase coordinators

Heads of departments

Head of residences

6.1 **Extended coordination team members:**

Deputy Principal: Pastoral

School nurse

Tutors

Heads of residences

Counsellors

7. Collaborative planning and reflection:

Collaborative planning and reflection, take place during the following meetings:

- Cycle meetings
- Meetings with the Deputy Principal: Academic
- Department meetings
- Staff meetings
- Academic council meetings and sub-committee meetings
- Pastoral council meetings
- Individual meetings with teachers
- Weekly Monday morning staff meetings
- Scheduled meetings with parents
- Scheduled meetings with students

8. Lines of responsibilities:

- The Learning Support coordinator arranges/instigates most meetings with students in need of Learning support, as well as the partners involved.
- Extra English and ESL provision is coordinated by the Head of Language A.
- Additional Mathematics provision is coordinated by the Head of the Mathematics department.
- The dissemination of information on inclusion, access and differentiation as well as the implementation of inclusive practices into teaching and learning, is taken care of by the Deputy Principal: Academic, Phase coordinators and Heads of departments.
- The integration of inclusive practices into the Pastoral system will be taken care of by the Deputy Principal: Pastoral, the Heads and deputy heads of residences, as well as the school counsellors and nurses.

9. Admissions in relation to Learning Support:

Entry into Waterford Kamhlaba is highly competitive, particularly at the IB Diploma level. Yet Waterford wishes to allow any student who is completing the IGCSE programme and who has a reasonable chance of achieving a full IB Diploma the opportunity to complete their secondary education at Waterford.

Waterford Kamhlaba will accommodate students with barriers to learning, **providing that it can offer the support required and provided the student is able to meet the requirements of the academic curriculum and self- manage in a way that enables his or her learning** (*please see 17.6 'Provision for learner diversity at Waterford Kamhlaba, page 15*).

The diversity of the student body is a vital part of the identity and success of the school. We seek to maintain the right balance of students in order that the school can fulfil its objective of being the leading school in Eswatini, and a

highly reputable pan African institution as well as a member of the UWC movement. (IBDP)

Upon admission, parents are obliged to declare their children's learning disabilities, any barriers to learning, as well as whether they have been assessed by an Educational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, or other professional such as an Occupational therapist or Speech and Language therapist. In the event that a student has been assessed, a copy of the assessment report has to accompany the student's admissions application.

10. Identification:

Students can be identified on admission to Waterford as a result of parental communication and admission forms.

Students currently enrolled at the college can be identified as being in need of Learning Support as a result of:

- Self-referral;
- Referrals from subject teachers and tutors;
- Referrals from parents,
- Referrals from UWC national committees or sponsors;
- Reports from external agencies.

10.1 Identification process:

Subject teachers concerned with the student completes an online Learning Support referral form, which is available on the Learning Support Google classroom. This form provides a large scope for the indication of more in depth information pertaining to concentration, participation, observations and the highlighting of specific issues and barriers to learning.

If differentiated strategies in the mainstream classroom have been implemented, but are insufficient to meet the needs of the referred student, then the student needs to be assessed by the Learning Support coordinator.

10.2 Informing parents:

Parents will be informed when their children are receiving Learning Support and when there is a need for a scholastic assessment.

11. Assessments:

11.1 Assessment results:

Once the assessment is completed, the information gained is used to

construct Learning and Assessment protocols, as well as an ISP (Individual Support Plan) or action/formal support plan where necessary, to support the student and advise the subject teachers, residential staff and tutors of mechanisms which need to be activated, to support the student efficiently.

11.2 **Scholastic assessment provision:**

The following quantitative and qualitative tests/evaluations are being used:

- WRAT 4 test battery, for the assessment of: Reading, Sentence comprehension, Spelling and Mathematics;
- Edinburgh Reading Test 4;
- Vernon Graded Word Spelling Test – 3rd edition;
- Writing speed test – Robyn Hedderly;
- Executive Skills Functioning questionnaire - Peg Dawson and Richard Guare
- Screening test – Specific Learning Difficulties;
- Dyscalculia test
- CEFR test for additional language learners.
- Evaluation of:
- Books and projects containing completed work;
- Past exam/test papers;
- The Learning Support referral form containing information from subject teachers;
- Reports from residential staff/Tutors; termly and year-end school reports

11.3 **The main aims of the assessment procedure is to:**

- Evaluate achievement-ability discrepancies to identify specific learning disabilities.
- Determine a minimal level of proficiency needed to perform in certain educational settings.

- Assess an individual's academic progress over time.
- Identify those who need to be evaluated more thoroughly by an Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or other Professional service;
- Shape a holistic picture of the student who is being assessed.
- To compare a student's performance at certain time intervals.

12. **Levels of support:**

Students are placed in bands on the Learning Support register, according to levels of need and seriousness. The motivation behind this is to ensure that every student's specific needs are being met, as the learning and teaching needs of a highly dyslexic student will be different to that of a student who only needs assistance with study skills.

12.1 **Band 1:**

Band 1 students are students who:

- Face barriers to learning of a serious nature.
- Experience specific learning disabilities, e.g. Dyslexia, Dysgraphia or other barriers to learning, e.g. ADHD.
- Are in need of constant support in most subjects from most teachers, as their barriers to learning permeate all of their schooling.
- Require accommodations without which they are unable to cope or progress successfully in the school curriculum.
- Are in need of classroom and inclusive access arrangements.
- Are placed on an ISP or action/ formal support plan.
- Require close monitoring from the Learning Support Coordinator.

12.2 **Band 2:**

Band 2 students are students who:

- Experience barriers to learning of a milder nature e.g. Reading, Spelling, Comprehension difficulties, or gaps within their learning.
- Do not have a specific learning disability and is able to benefit from differentiated classroom teaching.
- Benefits from an aid/intervention program where necessary, as well as support from teachers and the Learning Support Coordinator.
- Benefits from an action/formal support plan which mainly contains classroom accommodations and strategies to ensure differentiated and inclusive teaching and learning.

- Do have access to inclusive access arrangements, where the need arises.

12.3 **Band 3:**

Band 3 students are students who:

- Experience a barrier to learning within a specific subject e.g. Mathematics, Biology and/or Study skills.
- Requires classroom accommodations with regards to a particular subject or skill he/she has difficulty with;
- Benefits from additional sessions with the specific subject teacher;
- Benefits from collaborating with the Learning Support Coordinator to plan a time management schedule and revise effective Study skills strategies.
- May require inclusive access arrangements in a particular subject.

13. **Entry and exit of Learning Support:**

Although the levels of support, function by means of bands, students are evaluated on a case-to-case basis.

Students will be excited from the Learning Support register when they are achieving at the appropriate level required, or are demonstrating skills that display the absence of learning barriers.

14. **Record keeping:**

All Psycho-Educational reports are uploaded on the school's internal internet system, called ADAM. This system has a section allocated to matters pertaining to Learning Support.

To ensure confidentiality, only the Principal, Deputy Principals: Academic and Pastoral, Phase coordinators, the school counsellors and Learning Support coordinator, have access to the reports on ADAM. Teachers request the assistance of the Phase coordinators to gain access to Learning Support documents available on ADAM.

Learning and assessment protocols as well as additional guidelines and support plans where applicable, are available on the Learning Support Google classroom, but only to those teachers who are working with that specific student.

15. **ISP and student action/support plans:**

The ISP (Individual Support Plan) contains the following:

- Dates of previous tests and evaluations;
- Student's barriers to learning and strengths;
- Student's present level of performance;
- Action points;
- Person/s responsible for offering support e.g. Teacher/parent/peer;
- Goals;
- Time frame for goals to be achieved;
- Learning and assessment protocols;
- Accommodations;
- Other aspects to keep in mind.

The action/formal support plans contain the following:

- Learning and assessment protocols;
- Classroom and exam/test accommodations and access arrangements;
- Student's barriers to learning;
- Action points where necessary.

16. **Support plans:**

The ISP and student action/formal support plans, are pliable and fluid documents. Reviews and amendments are made at least once a term. The results of termly reports, feedback from parents, students, teachers, tutors and residential staff have a large impact on the compilation of support plans, and necessitate immediate amendments to ensure the effectiveness of the document.

17. **Classroom accommodations and exam access arrangements:**

What are classroom accommodations?

Classroom accommodations are the mechanisms/adaptations put into place in the environment, curriculum format, teaching/learning methods or equipment which allows a student with barriers to learning to gain access to content, learn effectively and complete tasks. Accommodations enable students with barriers to learning to pursue a regular course of study.

What are exam access arrangements?

Access arrangements are pre-exam arrangements, made to external exam boards, on behalf of a candidate with particular needs.

The purpose is to remove any unnecessary barriers to the standard assessment, without compromising the standards being tested, in order for the

candidate to receive recognition for his or her attainment.

The access arrangement **may never give a student an advantage in relation to other students.**

17.1 External examination boards – Important information:

- Exam access arrangements, are subject to IGCSE and IBDP regulations, and are authorised at the discretion of the IGCSE and IBDP examination boards.

- **Candidates applying for exam accommodations have to meet the standard eligibility criteria for the requested arrangements.**

Please see the following documents for regulations:

Cambridge Handbook 2023 (International) Regulations and guidance for administering Cambridge exams – 2023

IB Access and Inclusion policy - 2022

- **Note that internal accommodations provided by the school are not a guarantee that the IGCSE and IBDP examination boards will grant the same.**
- **Exam accommodations requested must be a student's usual way of working in classroom tasks and tests.**

17.2 Supporting documentation:

- To submit requests for exam access arrangements, supporting documentation is required.
- This can be in the form of a psycho-educational/psychological/medical report.
- Psycho-educational/psychological report results have to be in the form of **standard scores**.
- The report should state specifically the nature of the learning support requirement and the tests/techniques used to arrive at the identification.

17.3 Visits to an Educational Psychologist/Other professional:

Very important:

Once a student is enrolled at Waterford Kamhlaba, the Learning Support Coordinator or Phase Coordinator and/or Counselling team has to be informed of a student, or the student's parent's intention, to take the student for an assessment. **An assessment report should not be a surprise to the school.** There has to be communication with the above mentioned coordinators and/or counsellors prior to such an undertaking.

Please also note: The implementation of recommendations with regards to classroom accommodations and exam access arrangements, even on the production of an Educational Psychological/Psychiatric/Clinical Psychological/Occupational therapy/Physiotherapy/Medical practitioner/Other Professional service report, will be dependent on the recommendation of the Learning Support Coordinator, the Counselling team and the relevant Phase Coordinator of the school.

17.4 Educational evidence:

It is mandatory for the school to provide **Educational evidence** in addition to the Psycho-educational report, when submitting an inclusive access arrangement to the relevant exam center.

- The Educational evidence has to contain the following information:
- Details of assessments conducted and outcomes on which recommendations are based.
- Evidence of treatments and periods of treatments.
- Evidence of school providing those specific accommodations and access arrangements.
- Teacher comments.

17.5 Application for exam access arrangements:

- Applications should be made through either the Learning Support Coordinator or the School Counsellor, at least 12 months prior to the final exam.
- All applications for access arrangements will be completed by the IBDP and IGCSE Phase coordinators in consultation with the Learning Support coordinator and School counsellors.
- Students applying for exam access arrangements need to commit to a program as stipulated by the Learning Support/Counselling department.

17.5 Provision for learner diversity at Waterford Kamhlaba

The following strategies, accommodations and access arrangements are applied when and where necessary, and are based on a student's individual needs, as well as the needs and requirements of their specific subjects, fellow students and classroom/boarding environments.

Barriers to learning	Classroom teaching strategies and accommodations	Exam accommodations/access arrangements
Attention Deficit Disorder	- Previously discussed prompts. - Regular breaks. - Behaviour plan. Allow use of stress balls. - Appropriate seating arrangements. - Keeping pace, tasks and activities varied. - Encourage use of planners/diaries. - Reinforcement of positive behaviour. - Opportunities created for movement where possible.	- Taking an exam in a separate room. - Regular breaks. - Clarification of test directions by invigilator or designated reader. - The use of a scribe/reader - The permitted use of noise buffers/headsets. - Additional time – 10%, 25%, 50%. - The use of a laptop, word processor with spell checker, speech recognition software/reading software and calculators – (students are responsible for providing own software).
Autism	- Classroom assistance for students with autism is very limited. - Behaviour, socializing and communication skills guidance. - Visual timetables and checklists. - Preview changes in routine. - Provide safe places and people. - Trustworthy classroom buddy.	- Reading pens without in-build dictionary/thesaurus or data-storage facility can be used in IGCSE and IB exams. - Access to modified papers, e.g. changes to print
Dyspraxia	(Please note, we don't have access to local OT's and PT's). - Speech to text technology - Use of laptop - Guidance with regards to executive functioning skills.	

Dysgraphia	- Utilize laptop for all written tasks. - Minimize spell checks.	
Dyslexia	- Class buddy. - Use of laptop with speech recognition/reading software; reading pens (see exam accommodations). (Students are responsible for providing own software). - Lesson plans to be provided to student in advance.	
Severe dyslexia	Classroom support for students with severe Dyslexia is limited.	
Language difficulties	- Assistance from the English Language department, Pre-orientation language program and EE reading program.	
Other learning disabilities	- Please contact the Learning Support Coordinator at retha.cook@waterford.sz	
Physical disabilities (exam access arrangements are still valid unless otherwise stated)		
Speech	- We do not have a resident speech therapist at our school or in close proximity to the school. We will not be able to accommodate someone who requires speech therapy.	
Hearing impairment	- Severe hearing impairment/deafness - We do not have access to someone who can provide visible communication modes e.g. sign language, finger-spelling, Cued speech. - We are not able to accommodate deaf students. - Slightly hearing impaired: - Where the hearing impairment is only slight, seating arrangements will be carefully considered, as well as the influence of background noises. Students will be required to wear a hearing aid with Bluetooth connectivity.	

Physical disabilities (exam access arrangements are still valid unless otherwise stated)

<i>Visual impairment</i>	- <u>Students wearing glasses:</u> - Seating arrangements that take lighting into account.
	- Layout changes to the environment where possible. - Access to modified papers e.g. Colour, print, contrast. - Colour naming for students who are colour blind. - <u>Students with severe visual impairment/blindness:</u> - <i>We are not be able to cater for someone who has a severe visual impairment/blindness.</i>

18. Policy review date:

The policy will be reviewed in June 2025

Signed by CMG:

