

SEN policy – UWC Waterford Kamhlaba

1. Introduction:

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) department is involved with the entire school community to ensure that every student's individual needs are met. We recognise that each student is unique in their learning and will require meaningful and impartial access to the curriculum.

The Special Educational Needs department works alongside Counselling, English Language Acquisition Support and Mathematics support, to provide for the needs of SEN students.

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 regards 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 unique learning style; practising 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.

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 SEN 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 programmes 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 SEN 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 and telephonic communication.
- To guide parents through the identification, assessment and support provision processes as well as to inform them of their child's progress.
- To operate a whole school approach to SEN by assisting staff with effective differentiation strategies, the implementation and integration of inclusion class practices and catering for 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 the learning barriers.

4. Aims of the SEN policy:

The SEN policy aims to be a functional document which can be practically implemented, to enable the SEN department and all role players in the Waterford Kamhlaba school community, to provide access to successful learning experiences to all students regardless of their abilities or barriers to learning.

5. SEN coordinator (SENCo):

Ms Retha Cook

5.1 SENCo responsibilities:

- Day to day operation of the College's SEN policy;
- Maintenance of the SEN 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;
- Liaising with external agencies;
- 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 SEN department;
- Providing relevant information for authorisation of special needs 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 IEP's and classroom accommodation records.

5.2 Rooms available:

SEN office

6. SEN Coordination Team members:

SEN Co-ordinator

Head of Language B and Language Acquisition

Deputy Principal: Academic

Phase Co-ordinators

Heads of departments

Heads of Residences

6.1 Extended Coordination Team members:

Deputy Principal: Pastoral

School nurse

Tutors

Heads of Residences

Counsellor

7. Collaborative planning and reflection:

7.1 Cycle meetings - every 6 weeks:

Participants: During the cycle meetings the Principal, all teachers of that particular phase, as well as members of the SEN coordination team and extended coordination team are present. This is due to the fact that we cannot view a student in isolation to his/her environment, in our case, boarding facilities.

Objective: The accommodations, strategies, goals and progress of the students who have IEP's, are then outlined and reflected upon. Possible solutions are discussed and brainstormed as a team.

Teachers also use this opportunity to add new students of concern to the SEN register.

Duration: 3 hours

7.2 Weekly meetings with the Deputy Principal: Academic:

Participants: SENCO and Deputy Principal: Academic.

Objective: To discuss developments within the SEN department as well as concerns with regards to specific SEN students, especially those who need special accommodations and arrangements that require teaching and learning aids.

This meeting is also used to reflect upon inclusive strategies applied in the different departments and enables the participants to identify the needs of specific phases, from Form 1 to IB2.

Duration: 40 minutes

7.3 Department meetings – twice a term:

Participants: Head of department, subject teachers of that particular department and the SENCo.

Objective: The SENCo visits the meetings of different departments when invited to do so, or when the need arises for concerns to be raised and best practice guidance to be provided. Possible solutions are discussed and brainstormed as a team.

Duration: 1 – 2 hours

7.4 Staff meetings – twice a term:

Participants: All school staff of all departments are present.

Objective: The SENCo utilises Staff meetings to address staff or hold a presentation with regards to

any changes or practices within the functioning of the SEN department. Helpful and outstanding practices and strategies for special needs students are then discussed and brainstormed.

Duration: 2 – 3 hours

7.5 Academic council meetings – twice a term:

Participants: Principal, Deputy Principals: Academic and Pastoral, Heads of departments and SENCo.

Objective: The SENCo utilises the Academic council meetings to air matters pertaining to the academic needs of SEN students and makes recommendations with regards to any amendments that need to be made that affect a student's academic wellbeing. Possible solutions are discussed and brainstormed as a team.

Duration: 2 hours

7.6 Pastoral council meetings – twice a term:

Participants: Principal, Deputy Principals: Academic and Pastoral, Director of Residences, Phase coordinators, School Nurse, Life skills teachers, School Counsellor and SENCo.

Objective: The SENCo addresses issues with regards to SEN students of concern, to monitor and reflect upon their progress pertaining to hostel life, health care and counselling. Possible solutions are discussed and brainstormed as a team.

Duration: 2 – 3 hours.

7.7 Individual meetings with teachers:

Participants: SENCo and subject teacher

Objective: Where and when necessary meetings are arranged with individual teachers to provide guidance and clarity.

Duration: 40 minutes

7.8 Weekly Monday morning staff meetings:

Participants : All teaching, administration, hostel and departmental staff.

Objective: Urgent matters pertaining to SEN students and the functioning of the SEN department are highlighted and announced.

Duration: 30 minutes.

7.9 Scheduled meetings with parents:

Participants: SENCo, Student, Parents, Phase coordinator, Subject teachers and Counsellor if necessary.

Objective: To discuss support/action plan or IEP with parents.

Duration: 1 – 2 hours.

8. Lines of responsibilities:

- The SENCo arranges/instigates most meetings with SEN students and partners.
- Extra English and ESL provision is coordinated by the Head of Language B and Language acquisition.
- Additional Mathematics provision is coordinated by the Head of the Mathematics department.
- The dispersion of information on inclusion, access and differentiation as well as the implementation of inclusive practices, 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 Counsellor.

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 welcomes students with Special Educational Needs, providing that it can offer the support required.

The diversity, including learning 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 Swaziland, and a highly reputable “pan African” institution as well as a member of the UWC movement. (IBDP)

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 SEN 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:

Each subject teacher concerned with the student completes a Special Needs referral form. 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 SENCo.

10.2 Informing parents:

The student's parents will then be informed of the student's needs for an assessment. Once the parents have granted their permission, the SENCo can continue with the assessment process.

11. Assessments:

11.1 Assessment results:

Once the assessments have been completed, this information is then compiled into an assessment report. The information gained is used to construct an IEP or action/support plan to support the student and advise the subject teachers, hostel staff and tutors of mechanisms that need to be activated, to support the student efficiently.

11.2 Identification assessment provision:

The following quantitative and qualitative assessments 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;
- Screening test – Specific Learning Difficulties;
- Dyscalculia assessment;
- Evaluation of books and projects containing completed work;
- Evaluation of past exam/test papers;
- The SEN referral form containing information from subject teachers;
- Reports from Hostel 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 SEN 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. Autism, 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 IEP.
- Require close monitoring from the SENCo.

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 SENCo.

- Benefits from an action/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. Maths, 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 SENCo 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 exited from the SEN register when they have reached their full potential and are achieving at the appropriate level required, or are demonstrating skills that display the absence of learning barriers.

14. Record keeping:

All SENCo assessment reports, Psycho-Educational reports and written communication and accounts of meetings held with parents, as well as IEP's and action plans, are loaded up on the school's internal internet system, called ADAM. This system has a section allocated to matters pertaining to SEN.

To ensure confidentiality, only the Principal, Deputy Principals: Academic and Pastoral, Phase coordinators, the school Counsellor and SENCo, have access to this information. Teachers request the assistance of the Phase coordinators to gain access to the above documents.

IEP's, action/support plans and classroom/exam accommodations are emailed to all teachers and tutors working with the specific student, at the beginning of each term.

15. IEP and student action/ support plans:

The IEP contains the following:

- The student's present level of performance;
- Measured Improvements;
- Areas of concern;
- Student's challenges and strengths;
- Action points;
- Person/s responsible for offering support e.g. Teacher/parent/peer;
- Goals;
- Time frame for goals to be achieved – re-evaluation;

- Modifications and accommodations;
- Other aspects to keep in mind.

The action/support plans contain the following:

- Classroom and exam/test accommodations;
- Aspects to keep in mind;
- Action points where necessary.

16. Education plans:

The IEP and student action/support plans, are very 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 hostel staff have a large impact on the compilation of education plans and necessitate immediate amendments to ensure the effectiveness of the document.

17. Policy review date:

The policy will be reviewed in February 2018.

Signed by CMG:

Date:

Approved by CMG: 2015-02-23
Amended policy approved by CMG: 2017-03-15