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## Introduction:

Meeting all learners' needs have ever since been a challenge for educational institutes worldwide. Educationists have always placed the development and provision of superior education services on top of their priorities, yet missing links remain.

Children who face considerably greater difficulty than others, in grasping concepts and learning new things, or in participating in any kind of academic or non-academic activities are considered to be in need of Special Education.

“The term “special educational needs” is defined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 as, “a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition...”

**Source:** Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs Post Primary Guidelines (2007)

## Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to:

- Communicate to all stakeholders of Roots Millennium Schools – administrators, teachers, students and parents the meaning of an inclusive educational environment for all learners as required by IBO.
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practice in the context of the Middle Years Programme at Roots Millennium schools.
- Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders of Roots Millennium Schools.
- Promote a class and school environment that welcomes and embraces the diversity of learners.
- Introduce the teaching methodology of scaffolding as a good practice by IB.
- Keep ‘inclusion’ among its top priorities and provide services that make the learning process equally comprehensible for children with special education needs

Its primary mandate is to facilitate students in releasing their full potential and in reaching their maximum intellect through taking preventive measures to diffuse all possible barriers to learning. The framework of this document has been designed specially to provide professional and practical guidance to educators which would help them enrich classrooms and make learning equally joyful for all students

## Inclusion in an IB context

IB programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right. ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org))

In the publication *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes* (2010), the IB states, “Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. This can only be successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is the learner profile in action, an outcome of dynamic learning communities.” *IB Programme standards and practices* documents the practices required by schools to demonstrate their support for learning diversity.

## Roots Millennium School Mission Statement:

Roots Millennium Schools aims to be a global school committed to meeting the needs and ambitions of a diverse range of students by providing challenging academic programs underpinned by globally accredited qualifications, social diversity, innovation, academic excellence and entrepreneurial centered achievement.

## Special Education at RMS:

As an IB MYP candidate school, Roots Millennium Schools invite all kinds of learners to join in. The school assesses all students with Special Education Needs and identifies the extent of learning difficulty each student faces. Special provisions are then arranged to accommodate the learner and to ease out the difficulty he/she faces.

A strict code of conduct is followed for students with Special Education Needs, which greatly emphasizes on inclusion of such students in all kinds of curricular and co-curricular activities and to refrain from any kind of discrimination that would affect the learners psychologically, socially or intellectually. Similarly, strict action is taken against candidates who involve in bullying such students or disturb the environment.

We provide special help to eligible children with disabilities. This help is called special education and related services. Special needs education at RMS is the practice of educating students with special needs in a way that addresses their individual differences and needs.

Ideally, this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings. These interventions are designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and their community, than may be available if the student were only given access to a typical classroom education.

Common special needs include learning disabilities, communication disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Students with these kinds of special needs are likely to benefit from additional educational services such as different approaches to teaching, the use of technology, a specifically adapted teaching area, or a resource room.

RMS caters special education needs and has designed specific programmes for students with special needs. Remedial education is designed for any students, with or without special needs; the defining trait is simply that they have reached a point of under preparedness, regardless of why. RMS special education program is customized to address each individual student's unique needs. We provide a continuum of services, in which students with special needs receives varying degrees of support based on their individual needs.

Our Special education programs are individualized so that they address the unique combination of needs in a given student. Students with special needs are assessed to determine their specific strengths and weaknesses. Placement, resources, and goals are determined on the basis of the student's needs. We use different approaches to providing special education services to students.

We provide individualized education, addressing specific needs. Different instructional techniques are used for some students with special educational needs. Special transport arrangements, including escorts and safety harnesses are available for children with disabilities attending school. We provide oral instruction for students with reading disabilities, present tests and reading materials in an oral format so the assessment is not unduly influenced by lack of reading ability, provides learning disabled students with frequent progress checks, gives immediate feedback to learning disabled students as they need to see quickly the relationship between what was taught and what was learned and making activities concise and short, whenever possible as long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustrating for a learning disabled child. Learning disabled students need and should get lots of specific praise. Instead of just saying, "You did well," or "I like your work," our Millennium teachers make sure to provide specific praising comments that link the activity directly with the recognition. And when necessary, we plan to repeat instructions or offer information in both written and verbal formats. Again, it is vitally necessary that learning disabled children utilize as many of their sensory modalities as possible. Millennium Schools encourages cooperative learning activities when possible. We invite students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal and create an atmosphere in which a true "community of learners" is facilitated and enhanced.

### **Differentiation for SEN Students:**

Students normally come with one or more out of the eight different kinds of intelligence, namely linguistic, spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic.

Same is the case with students having special education needs. When one specific type of intelligence or skill is disabled for a student, a substitute skill or intelligence type evolves. Teachers dealing with SEN students will be responsible for identifying multiple intelligences in such students and shall design differentiated tasks accordingly.

The SEN Committee will ensure inclusion and implementation of “Differentiated Learning” in the school curricula and will regular monitor its effectiveness and efficacy.

All SEN students enrolled in the school will have the opportunity to learn through personalized lessons, catering their individual needs and demands. Moreover, the school not will introduce differentiation in assessments but will also employ **assistive technology** using screen readers, visual screens, voice recorders and much more to facilitate SEN students in learning.

The school has a well-defined Admission and Review Committee that is responsible for ARP (Admission and Review Process) to ensure every SEN student is thoroughly assessed in order to provide provisions that address all SEN needs holistically. The panel consists of academically and professionally diverse personnel including the academic director, the director for outreach and programmes, a doctor, a psychologist and seasoned teachers.

Although the school addresses maximum SEN needs, if a student is identified with any unusual or exceptional Special education need, the committee puts him/her on the waiting list, ensuring confirmed admittance to school once the provisions are ready.

#### Required documentation for admission:

The ARP Committee ensures every student is assessed through a variety of assessment tools to identify and investigate the legitimacy +of the Special Education Need and the degree of urgency to which provisions are required. Assessment tools include written tests, oral tests, interviews, physical examination by a practicing GP (General Practitioner), games, group tasks and a lot more depending on the student’s aptitude and intellect.

If a student fails to pass in the first attempt, the school gives sufficient time to the parents, along with ample support, to re-prepare the student for a second interview/second assessment. Should the child fail in the second assessment, he/she is with refused admission or admitted to a grade level most suitable to his/her learning needs.

The parent/guardian of a student with Special Education Needs must provide the school with valid and recent medical/educational records of the candidate, attested by reliable authorities, which legitimately prove that the candidate requires special education provisions. A character certificate from the last school attended, along with report cards/annual results of the last class attended must be submitted by every parent in addition to the medical reports.

## **Kinds of Students with Special Education Needs:**

Researchers have identified three distinct kinds of learners based on Special Education Needs.

### **1. Emotionally/Behaviourally challenged students**

Such students are not in control of their emotions and face emotional/behavioural outbursts due to hormonal/neurological imbalances.

### **2. Socially challenged students**

Socially challenged students face immense difficulties in collaboration and communication. They do not gel in the normal group easily and often involve in destructive activities that lead to group deformation or disputes. Examples include ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

### **3. Academically challenged students**

Academically challenged students face barriers such as retention problems, memory problems, linguistic barriers and much more which obstruct the learning process, making learning more difficult for them as compared to others.

### **4. Physically challenged students**

Such students face difficulty in participating in the learning process due to physical challenges involved in seeing, sensing, hearing or moving. They usually require support materials such as brails, wheel chairs, larger printed texts etc.

## **Responsibilities of the School:**

The school will develop a Special Education Needs (SEN) committee comprising of members from the top of the educational hierarchy, who will continually review and revise the policy whenever and wherever required. The committee will be responsible for:

### **1. Physical Assessment**

A complete yet comprehensive medical assessment of the student will be carried out to identify and authenticate the presence of any disability in the candidate and to investigate its nature and complexity. It will be the duty of the school to share valid and authentic results with the administration, the teachers and the parents of the respective student and collaboratively agree on provision of supportive measures.

### **2. Academic Assessment**

Students who are identified as academically challenged will be assessed accordingly. Aids may include question papers with larger texts, students recording their answers on a tape recorder, a helper

writing answers for the student as he/she dictates the answer, lesser difficult assessments, specially designed assessments, extra coaching classes, counselling/mentoring sessions and much more.

### 3. Provision of Support

Once a student has been assessed for a specific kind of disability and the parents, along with the teaching faculty, have been taken on board, it will be the sole responsibility of the school to make all possible arrangements to overcome the disability/challenge as much as possible.

### 4. Monitoring/Gauging Recovery:

Once a relevant action plan has been laid out to help a particular student overcome a disability or challenge, it will be the school's (SEN Committee's) responsibility to gauge the impact of the aids on the student. If the measures have a relatively negative impact on the student, changes will be made immediately.

Likewise, if the impact is gauged to be relatively positive and steady, the same course will be followed with improvisations. The SEN Committee will design a specific criterion against which every SEN student's progress will be gauged. The criteria should be framed around the following objectives:

- a. Abridging learning gaps
- b. Overcoming potential barriers obstructing the learning and developmental process
- c. Rebuilding confidence and trust in the student

### Responsibilities of the MYP Coordinator

The MYP coordinator will be responsible to:

- Raise staff awareness of the needs of students identified as Students with Special Education needs;
- Provide staff training to successfully implement and support the SEN and differentiated instruction;
- Provide resources for the implementation of the policy.
- Work collaboratively with faculty to support students with special needs;
- Provide the Individual Education Plan for students with special educational needs
- Maintain records;

- At enrolment, advise parents of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement.
- Educate teachers with the special assessment needs policy by IB.

### Procedures to communicate with IB by MYP Coordinator

MYP coordinator on behalf of the candidate will submit the request for inclusive assessments arrangements to IB 6 months before the e- assessments using the online request form.

The following supporting documentation will be submitted (uploaded) with the online request for inclusive assessment arrangements:

- medical/ psychological/psycho-educational documentation (translated into English, French or Spanish where necessary)
- at least one piece of educational evidence. Examples of educational evidence include:
  - ✓ anecdotal observations from the school such as records or correspondence from a class teacher.
  - ✓ samples of the candidate's work (for example, showing unsuccessful work owing to lack of access or successful work owing to access given); the work submitted, which needs only be in one subject, must be work that has been written in English, French or Spanish.
  - ✓ evidence of correspondence or records from a previous school where the candidate was enrolled and whether the assessment arrangement was used.

### Responsibilities of the Parent:

Parents of children with Special Education Needs play a vital role in the assessment, development and improvement of the child. They will be expected to take an equally active part in the child's disability assessment as the school does, and to extend cooperation whenever and wherever required.

The parent/guardian is expected to portray a clear and true picture of the child's disabilities along with authentic facts and details which later assist the school in deciding what provisions need to be made.

### Responsibilities of Admission and Review Committee

The school has a well-defined Admission and Review Committee that is responsible for ARP (Admission and Review Process) to ensure every SEN student is thoroughly assessed in order to provide provisions that address all SEN needs holistically. The panel consists of academically and professionally diverse personnel including the academic director, the director for outreach and programmes, a doctor, a psychologist and seasoned teachers.

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### Citations:

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