



BFIS Learning Support/SEN Policy

December 2016

Mission

Our purpose is to engage our diverse school community in the pursuit of educational excellence and success for all students. (BFIS Mission Statement)

Philosophy

All students should have the opportunity, instruction, guidance and support necessary to succeed in school and maximize their individual academic, social and emotional potential.

Students must be active participants, at the center of the learning process, in an environment that encourages them to pursue their dreams.

Goals

We focus all school endeavors on promoting our three C's: Community, Character and Curriculum. Learning Support services aim to:

- maximize individual student potential and self-advocacy in collaboration with student families, colleagues, and the outside support services that help create the BFIS community
- provide the opportunity, instruction, guidance and support necessary to succeed in school and maximize individual, academic, social and emotional potential that will last a lifetime
- help create an encouraging environment in which students become active participants and are at the center of their learning process

Profile

Students that qualify for Learning Support at BFIS have mild to moderate learning differences and the aptitude to meet curriculum and assessment requirements.

Process

As per the BFIS Admissions policy, applications for children with identified or possible learning differences will be considered by a learning specialist, in conjunction with the admissions and administrative teams, to determine whether BFIS can adequately meet their needs and provide an environment where they will experience success. Entry to the IBDP is non-selective, with no specific entry criteria. Students complete entry assessments in English, Spanish and Math to determine suitability for Language A and the relevant Math course.

Learning Support may be initiated at any point during the student's education when a student, parent or faculty member feels intervention is needed, by referring a student to a learning specialist.

Students who need ongoing Learning Support will be required to have an updated (every three years) evaluation by a licensed professional(s). To determine whether a formal evaluation is required, provisional services may be provided as part of the Child Study Team (CST) and referral process. These services may also include monitoring, formal or informal observations, counseling and/or student support sessions.

Individual content area teachers will provide IB readiness comments at the end of 9th and in 10th grades to help determine whether a student is prepared for the IBDP, taking into consideration both BFIS and IB philosophies. In general, all students start 11th grade as full Diploma candidates, with support and monitoring during the first semester to review their placement. If appropriate, their registration may be changed to "Course Category" if this is seen as a more appropriate route and still provides access to further education. Students in need of [Inclusive Access Arrangements \(IAA\)](#) will provide an updated evaluation, not before Year 10. The IB Coordinator must request the appropriate accommodations based on current evaluation and previous accommodation practices.

Program

Student-centered programs are put into place once the official evaluation has been submitted to the school. An International Individual Learning Plan (IILP) will then be created by the learning specialist in consultation with the student's parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals. The IILP is a confidential, living document which describes the student's current strengths, needs, and goals, as well as the accommodations which will allow him/her to access the curriculum and thus demonstrate learning. It is available only to the teachers that work with that student.

In middle and high school the IILP or the evaluation is used to build a Learning Summary that includes basic information about the student including strengths, difficulties, accommodations, goals and any additional information that is relevant to the faculty that work with him or her. This ensures that teachers are aware of and use a consistent approach within the student's specific program. It also supports teachers to differentiate instruction accordingly.

These documents are reviewed at least once each school year so as to best reflect the student's current abilities and needs. Exceptional learning needs require exceptional teacher and parent support and involvement. The learning specialist maintains open communication with parents, counselors and teachers as necessary.

Practice

In order to promote the least restrictive and most inclusive environment, our specialists push-in to a variety of classes. We assist both individual students and small groups, and we work with our teachers to promote differentiation and effective teaching strategies to achieve agreed-upon goals established in the IILP.

Based on individual learner profiles, specialists may provide direct, small group instruction to build on student strengths and focus on their needs.

BFIS staff may also refer families to outside professionals for services that we are unable to provide. These may include but are not limited to:

- psychologist or psychiatrist
- alternative therapists (ie. music, art, counseling)
- occupational, physical, vision or speech therapists
- tutors
- non-BFIS Learning Specialists
- and other professionals that promote self-awareness and self-esteem

Parents are encouraged to research professional individuals and programs that best suit their family's needs as well as the needs of the student.

Information regarding IB students with Inclusive Access Arrangements (IAAs) is made available to all teachers at the start of each school year and reviewed during Student Support Team meetings. Teachers are informed of accommodations and relevant interventions via a monthly student update and assistance will be provided from the Student Support team. If necessary, the Learning Support department is available to assist with study skills and organization, working with students on an individual or small-group basis to address particular needs at different points in the IBDP, e.g. Extended Essay research and writing, revision and exam skills, anxiety and stress management, etc. This is a flexible model driven by student need and

focused on skills development, while content area support comes from the individual teachers or outside specialist support.

During IB assessments, the Learning Support Coordinator works closely with the IB Coordinator and teachers to ensure all IAAs are in place. This may mean supervising extra time for assessments, providing a reader etc. The Learning Support Coordinator co-manages the IB exams in May, to oversee the separate exam room and ensure students are given the supervised breaks and support they require to perform as well as possible.

For a student to exit Learning Support, the student must achieve academic, behavioral and social/emotional goals targeted at grade level using such tools as MAP, WIDA, class grades and other evaluations including family and teacher observations.

The learning support team strives to keep up to date with best educational practices both locally and globally and to transfer that knowledge within student programs. This professional development is ongoing.

Implementation Process

- the policy is available to all stakeholders via the school website and is included in the Admissions pack provided to all new families
- during the first week of school, and at regular intervals throughout the year, learning specialists will meet with faculty to discuss specific students in regards to the policy as well as providing professional development in relation to learning differences

Review Process

At the beginning of each school year, Learning Support staff schoolwide will meet to review the previous year and create goals for the upcoming year.

This process may include, but is not limited to:

- stakeholder's feedback
- addressing specific student concerns
- updating local service provider's directory
- making sure the policy is available to all staff and that new hires are made aware of its content
- identifying practices that are in alignment with the policy and investigating questions and concerns

This policy will be reviewed every three years and modifications may be recommended to the Head of School and Board as needed.

Links to Other Policies

- BFIS Admissions Policy
- BFIS Academic Assessment Policy
- BFIS Language Policy
- BFIS Academic Honesty Policy

Future Considerations

As resources become available, the Learning Support team recognizes that it needs to continue to expand and better serve a wider population of the BFIS community by providing:

- Expanded LS in the Spanish Department especially in ES
- physical accessibility to all
- an articulated gifted program
- regular training and professional development for staff
- an increase in frequency, variety, and intensity of support
- a consideration of extra tuition cost for extra services

Bibliography

Candidates with Assessment Access requirements. IBO, 2014

Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes. IBO, 2016

Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom. IBO, 2013

The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development. IBO OCC website

<http://www.bfisschool.org/learning/student-academic-support-services/learning-support/>

<http://www.bfisschool.org/welcome-to-bfis/mission-statement/>