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Embassy International School Special Educational Needs Policy

Embassy International School aims to be an environment in the broadest meaning of the word, in which every person in our community can thrive.

'Special Educational Needs', 'Additional Learning Needs' and 'Specific Learning Differences' are popular terms describing a widespread phenomenon; we can all have specific difficulties in learning or coping with lessons at various times in our lives, and for a number of reasons.

Some specific learning differences are essentially temporary in nature and can be caused by issues such as asymmetrical development in early childhood (in other words children grow out of it), whilst other issues can be permanent or long term in nature, such as dyslexia, aural processing difficulties, or language interference. The list of specific differences is truly endless and the degrees of severity involved range from barely visible to serious. Specific Learning Differences also include exceptional high performers, whose needs the school also aims to meet.

Every case is unique.

In many cases early intervention with such difficulties can allow a pupil to either find a long term solution to cope with an issue, or indeed with essentially temporary matters overcome a difficulty. The important thing is to find strategies to help a child achieve their full potential at the same time as minimising the potential negative impact of the difficulty itself.

At the Embassy International School we endeavour to identify 'Specific Learning Differences' and design personal and individualised interventions delivered sensitively through classroom strategies in partnership with the class teachers and where necessary in one to one lessons.

The school has a Support and Development group of staff whose role is to ensure that the environment, didactic approaches and underlying applications of pedagogical theory are optimised as much as possible to support every child in thriving to the best of our collective capacity. The school employs a psychologist, with a wide ranging role covering both emotional issues and developmental issues. Where required, the school will request external assessment of children's needs.

Where specific learning differences are identified the school will hold a meeting with the parents and agree, in writing, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with strategies and provisional targets. This will be reviewed regularly, at intervals agreed in the meeting.

Specific learning differences are a very complicated educational area and are both seen and expressed in different ways in different cultures. This is a particularly difficult issue in international education and as such the school supports teachers with regular training and feedback in this area. If parents know about a specific learning difference their child experiences and have documentation, they are required to inform the school of the full extent of their knowledge upon registration. Specific learning differences are nothing to be ashamed of. Non-disclosure of known issues can cause (needless) harm and (unnecessary) distress to the child concerned and also seriously disrupt group dynamics, thus harming others. When specific learning differences are declared upon entry a programme of monitoring and engaging with these needs will be agreed upon, and a review schedule put in place. Failure to inform school of known specific learning differences, or special needs when registering may be grounds to discontinue the cooperation between school and the family, as it is vital that parents support the school in supporting their child both in terms of information and action.

Dr Lindsay Davidson, Head of School

Embassy International School

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