



Student of Determination (SEND) Policy 2019 - 2020

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The AAM Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision:

Inspiring young minds for future success.

Mission:

Al-Mizhar American Academy is committed to meeting the needs of families with an international outlook who have chosen an American education. Our mission is to promote intellectual curiosity, independent and critical thinking, communication and problem solving skills, a lifelong passion for learning, and an exposure to and a respect for cultural diversity. By expecting academic excellence, we inspire personal growth and develop intrinsically motivated global citizens who are committed to being leaders in community service and environmental responsibility.

Core values: *AAM WAY*

- *Respectful*
- *Responsible*
- *Ready to Learn*

¹ [Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools – Creating the capacity for change, p. 16](#)

² [The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework \(2017\)](#)

³ ISCED 2011, p. 83, UNESCO

Students of Determination Policy (SEND)

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Definition and Rationale

¹ [Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools – Creating the capacity for change, p. 16](#)

² [The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework \(2017\)](#)

³ ISCED 2011, p. 83, UNESCO

What are Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND)

A recent publication by the Knowledge and Development Authority of Dubai (KHDA), Implementing Inclusive Education; A Guide for Schools¹ (which is a follow on from The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework²) describes how all students of determination may experience a special educational need (SEN).

~~They describe a special educational need as emerging when:~~

“the symptoms or impact of an impairment or disorder act as a barrier to learning and restrict a student’s ability to access education on an equitable basis alongside same aged peers. Consequently, schools need to take action to lower barriers to learning to improve the student’s learning experience. This makes it clear that the ‘special educational need’ does not define the student. It is a need for action to be taken by the school.”

This is in line with UNESCO’s definition of special needs education which it describes as:

“Education designed to facilitate learning by individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an education programme. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. Education programmes in special needs education may follow a similar curriculum as that offered in the parallel regular education system, but they take individual needs into account by providing specific resources (e.g. specially-trained personnel, equipment or space) and, if appropriate, modified educational content or learning objectives³ .

In many cases, students with a special educational need will also have a formally diagnosed disability, however, others will not.

¹ [Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools – Creating the capacity for change, p. 16](#)

² [The Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework \(2017\)](#)

³ ISCED 2011, p. 83, UNESCO

A child has a learning difficulty and thus special educational need if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind provided for children of the same age.
- Have had an assessment with an outside professional (i.e., Educational Psychologist, Occupational Therapist) wherein they have been identified as having SEND needs and been provided with data regarding their individual strengths, challenges and suggested teaching/learning strategies.

AAM screens for students with possible special educational needs through the admission process as well as through continuous monitoring by teachers, counselors, and learning support staff. AAM strives to identify students who may have barriers to accessing the American curriculum and achieving their full potential as quickly as possible in order to provide them with the necessary provision for additional assistance based on their individually identified needs.

Legislation and Guidance within the UAE

Please see the AAM Inclusion Policy⁴ for more details on relative legislation and guidance specific to Dubai and the UAE.

Provisions for Students of Determination (SEND)

The teaching and supporting of all students, not only those with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), is a whole school responsibility and requires effective communication, and collaboration between all parties to ensure success.

By implementing this policy (which aligns with the AAM Inclusion Policy⁴), the Inclusion Team at AlMizhar American Academy aim to:

- Identify new students with possible barriers to their learning as early as possible.

³ ISCED 2011, p. 83, UNESCO

⁴ See AAM Inclusion Policy

- Continually assess, monitor and intervene regarding student cognitive, scholastic, emotional and social needs across all phases to assist students in reaching their full potential.
- Review student progress regularly against clearly defined SMART goals on the pupil passports.
- Work towards smooth transitions at entry, between phases and in preparing to move to tertiary education.
- To foster effective communication between staff / parents/ caregivers / external professionals and agencies. Parents of SEND students are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment and the viewpoints of parents/ guardians, students and professionals involved are taken into account where appropriate.
- Provide additional support, through liaising with outside agencies where needed, to provide for the individual student needs.
- Recognize that special educational needs are the responsibility of all, and thus all staff need to be informed and aware of the procedures as well as suggestions for differentiation support.
- Foster different learning styles and flexible strategies which will be responsive to the needs of all students;
- Provide support to teachers, learning assistants (LA), learning support assistants (LSA) and individual learning support assistants (ILSA).
- Provide / suggest continuous professional development opportunities for all staff regarding SEND (both within and outside of the school).

In order to help students of determination, specifically with regards to SEND, AAM aims to have a graduated response that ensures quick identification and the implementation of an effective support continuum. At AlMizhar American Academy we believe in a holistic 'whole school' approach to the SEND policy and its practice to reduce barriers for students and enable them to access all aspects of the school.

Promoting and supporting people of determination, specifically those with SEND

Identification

All teachers are responsible for identifying students with barriers that may be a result of SEND and, in collaboration with the Inclusion Team, will ensure that those students requiring additional support are identified as early as possible. If a student has not been identified upon admission as requiring Inclusion services in relation to SEND, a referral system is in place to allow teachers to flag those students requiring possible additional support⁵.

The formal identification process is as follows:

- The teacher attempts differentiation within the class, possibly seeking support from the subject / grade / phase leader. It is important to keep parents aware of changes to support or concerns.
- If there is still a concern the teacher completes a Student of Concern⁵ (see Student of Concern in the Inclusion Handbook) for any student, they have a concern for. Evidence of what differentiation has been tried is also required

- and both must be sent in hardcopy to the Head of Inclusion.
- The Head of Support Services, in collaboration with the appropriate SEND specialist teacher will then meet with all of student's teachers to elicit any other concerns.
-

⁵ See the Student of Concern
Guidance Document

- Once a referral is received, an Inclusion Team staff member will complete a class observation(s). The SEND specialist teacher (together with the class / subject teacher, parent and student - where appropriate) will discuss ideas for differentiation or accommodations for use within the classroom and set a timeframe (usually 30 days) for the class teacher to implement and monitor for student progress. The student will be placed on an observation list.
- Where necessary a meeting with parents, the class teacher and SEND teacher will be held to discuss strategies and/or to refer to an external professional for further assessment;
- If after 30 days the interventions are not having the desired impact the parents will be called to discuss more intensive support options and a possible referral to an external professional may be made.
- Based on the student's level of required support, screening assessments, or formal diagnosis they will be allocated into one of the 3 support levels (see support levels).
With parent consent, a Passport (see passport example within the Inclusion Handbook) is developed collaboratively with the student (where possible), class / subject teacher, parents, and SEND staff member. The pupil passport is signed by parents and the SEND Specialist teacher as consent for the allocation of the support level.
- In some instances, a child may require push-in or pull-out support by a Learning Support Assistant employed by the school. Parent permission will always be first obtained.
- In some instances, a child may require 1:1 assistance to access the curriculum and an Individual Learning Support Assistant (ILSA) will be recommended to the parents.

Other methods for identifying students with possible SEND include:

- Teacher observations and assessment
- CAT4 assessments
- Formative and Summative assessments
- Standardized assessments (e.g. MAP assessments)
- Parental concerns
- Student class observations
- Identification through external agencies
- Screening tests (e.g. for dyslexia or dysgraphia)

Levels of SEND support provision

As much as possible, AAM strives to meet the needs of the majority of its students within the classroom. However, for some students it may be necessary to work in smaller groups outside of their classroom in activities specifically related to their needs. This may be delivered by a class or subject teacher, SEND Specialist teacher or learning support assistant. Students may also require an individual learning support assistant (ILSA) or engage with external agencies such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, or psychology. The following outlines the specific levels of support at each support level.

- Level 1 -Monitoring Students in Class

Students identified as Level 1 require little to no additional support outside of the classroom. They may have an Educational Psychology report, require specific differentiation strategies implemented by the classroom/subject teacher or assessment accommodations; however their need does not require either push-in or pull out learning support. Should a student be deemed to no longer require level 1 support, an exit letter will be sent by the Head of Inclusion to inform the parent.

- Level 2 - Students with push-in / pull-out support

Level 2 is provided to those students who, despite level 1 interventions are not making adequate progress. They require additional support to meet their targets through push -in / pull-out support and a comprehensive Pupil Passport. Students requiring Level 2 support may

also be directly identified through in-school screening or a formal Educational Psychologist diagnosis. Support for students requiring Level 2 can include 1:1 or small -group intervention by either a SEND Specialist Teacher, learning support assistants, school counsellor or external provider.

- Level 3 - Students with an Individual Learning Support Assistant (ILSA)

This is the highest level of support and is provided for students only when specifically stated

by an Educational Psychology assessment or where deemed necessary by the school due to

high support requirements. Level 3 is used when students require an Individual Learning Support Assistant (ILSA) to assist them in accessing the curriculum. The ILSA must be approved by the Head of Inclusion but is the financial responsibility of the family. All parties involved are asked to sign an ILSA agreement. The Head of Inclusion is the line manager for the ILSAs and all ILSAs meet monthly with the Head of Inclusion to discuss the progress of the students. The ILSA regularly reports back to parents.

Types of Need

Types of need will be identified on the ISAMS register based on student formal reports, but also according to the 2019-20 revised categorization framework for students of determination. Below is a summary, however each category is expanded on in the revised categorization framework and further explained.

Common Barriers to	Categories of Disability
Cognition and Learning	1. Intellectual Disability 2. Specific Learning Disorder 3. Multiple Disabilities 4. Developmental Delay (younger than five years of age)
Communication and Interaction	5. Communication Disorders 6. Autism Spectrum Disorders
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	7. Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity Disorder 8. Psycho-emotional Disorders
Physical, Sensory and Medical	9. Sensory Impairment 10. Deaf-Blind Disability 11. Physical Disability 12. Chronic or Acute Medical Conditions

Provision Maps

Provision maps are completed by each SEND teacher to outline the provision being provided for each student on the register. These are used to monitor and evaluate support on multiple levels. Provision mapping can be found on the Inclusion Sharepoint.

Admissions

AAM is Inclusive in terms of its admissions procedures. For more specific information on student admission and the process with regards to students with possible or identified SEND, please see the [AAM Inclusion Policy](#) and [Admissions Policy](#).

Record Keeping

Proficient record keeping is paramount to the success of any Inclusion program. Thus, record

keeping at AAM relating to SEND will entail:

- Ensuring that all guidelines on data protection and the preservation of confidentiality are followed. Parents are allowed access to data upon request. Within the school only the Head of Inclusion, SLT, and concerned members of staff (on request and where deemed appropriate) are provided with information regarding students. Data may only be shared with external agencies, or in the case of a school transfer, with the express permission of the parent/career.
- Records are updated regularly, detailing any additional provisions for support and parents are continuously updated. This includes both ISAMS (the school management software) as well as the hardcopy files that are kept for each student on the SEND register. See the [AAM Inclusion Policy](#) to see more information on the School Inclusion Register.
- It is the classroom teachers / subject teachers / homeroom teacher's responsibility to keep the class screening up to date as new students enter their classes. This information is also updated by the school nurse and school registrar.
- The Head of Inclusion, class teachers and homeroom teachers are responsible for completing the paperwork required for external agency requests and relevant paperwork in order to support students with SEND at different stages of monitoring and development.
SEND specialist teachers document any meetings with parents to discuss students support plans / pupil passports or potential referrals.
- SEND specialist teachers are responsible for the completion of the Pupil Passport once a term and communicating this with all stakeholders.

Monitoring Student Progress

Progress is the crucial factor in determining the need for additional support and is tracked through the termly review of Pupil Passports and summative and formative assessments. Adequate progress can be evaluated through (the below is not an exhaustive list):

- Observations of the student
- Book audits (age appropriate)
- Progress reports
- Standardized testing (including MAP assessments) and comparing to predictions from CAT4 reports
- Meetings with concerned parties to review goals
- Academic Achievement
- Collecting small steps of progress towards individual targets
- Pupils Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)

Resources

Provision is made for resources for SEND students within the classroom, with Learning Support Teachers, Learning Support Assistants (in secondary) as well as with the Head of Inclusion. Any particular requests for additional resources should be made to the Head of Inclusion. Resources are ordered once per academic year but emergency orders can be made when necessary. The office of the Head of Inclusion contains a SEND resource library where staff can access books and other resources to assist in the effective facilitation of SEND at AAM. There are also resources relating to SEND in the AAM school library.

The educational needs of students are not always immediately apparent. As a school we may need to reallocate resources within the school to support students with special educational needs and disabilities. As a school we are committed to providing qualified personnel to support these students. However, given issues of equity it is not always possible to fund the extra support required from the school's own budget. Therefore, it is an expectation that parents may be asked to fund additional support if required, in line with KHDA regulations.

Staff Development and Training

AAM makes use of local staff training and whenever possible supports staff to attend local courses and conferences. The Inclusion team also provide regular additional training to all staff and parents.

Complaints

Complaints regarding the provision of support for students with Special Educational Needs will be taken seriously and every effort will be made to resolve the complaint within the school. The

Head of Inclusion will discuss any complaint with the member of staff or parents involved and inform the SLT (School Leadership Team). Parents/carers must be kept informed of the complaint procedure.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy

The effectiveness of the SEND policy is monitored by the Head of Inclusion and SLT. The policy is annually reviewed.