



DUBAI GEM PRIVATE SCHOOL

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

Students of Determination (SOD)



Inclusion Policy

1. RATIONALE:

Dubai Gem Private School (hereafter will be read as DGPS) has nurtured, encouraged and cultivated a supportive learning environment where everyone is valued and treated with respect since its inception in 1973.

Based on the motto 'Strive for Excellence', the school strives to empower students to become life-long learners and is committed to developing students to become personally fulfilled, interdependent and socially responsible adults. We believe that all students, including those with any barriers to learning, have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible and equitable across all learning areas.

Dignity and integrity are one of the school's core values and we continuously strive to create a culture of magnanimity and kindness by embracing and respecting differences. We value the strengths of all our students and encourage them to participate, engage and perform to their optimum potential. The governing body, leadership and staff are committed to promoting a safe, positive and supportive learning environment for all students and parents towards building a positive partnership beyond school.

2. OBJECTIVE:

At DGPS, we aim to provide a fully inclusive learning environment that allows all students with diverse needs to participate and progress.

Our inclusive practices reflect:

- Equity in opportunity and elimination of any prejudice and discrimination, if any, against students of determination.
- The support provided by the school for the students of determination is positively perceived, valued and accessed by members of the school community, staff and parents.
- A tried approach that supports and provides education appropriate to the needs and promotes high standards and fulfilment of potential for all students of determination.
- School-wide provisions that are effective and impactful in planning a learning environment based on the needs and barriers of all students of determination.
- Evidence-based teaching and learning with systems to monitor to evaluate the impact on the progress of all students of determination.
- A proactive and intervention-based approach in response to the behaviour and emotional needs of the students
- Need-based differentiation and environmental accommodations to enable complete access to the learning as a part of curriculum planning.
- Positive and optimal support towards the learning and well-being of all students of determination through collaboration and partnership between all the stakeholders.

3. DEFINITION AND IDENTIFICATION:

The inclusive ethos at DGPS is on the principle that all children can learn and succeed.

We respect and abide by the UAE Federal Disability Law 29, 2006 and are committed to contributing to the 'My community ... a city for everyone initiative' to realise a vision of educational inclusion for students of determination. We acknowledge the standards established by the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) and adhere to the framework and directives outlined by the Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) to respond to and meet the needs of students of determination.

The school follows the definition of Special Educational Needs as given by the DSIB, which is as follows:

'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are different from those of most students. They include those who need additional support or diversity in their learning.'

DGPS adheres to the description mentioned in the Revised Categorization Framework for Students of Determination (2019-20) as 'a student of determination is a student with long-term physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, restricts the student's full and effective participation in education on an equal basis with peers of the same age.'

At DGPS, we follow the UAE unified categorization of disability to identify the student of determination.

The table appended below states the Learning Barriers and the Category of Disability:

Learning Barriers	Categories of Disability
Cognition & Learning	1. Intellectual
	2. Specific Learning Disorders
	3. Multiple Disabilities
	4. Developmental Delay
Communication & Interaction	5. Communication Disorders
	6. Autism Spectrum Disorders
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	7. Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder
	8. Psycho-Emotional Disorders
Physical, Sensory & Medical	9. Sensory Impairment
	10. Deaf-blind Disability
	11. Physical Disability
	12. Chronic or acute Medical Conditions

Identification of Enrolled Students- The school has systematic procedures for identifying students with needs, planning need-based provisions and monitoring their progress. The teachers, parents and the support team collaboratively review the student's progress based on ongoing, periodic and term-wise assessments to understand the nature and extent of support required by the student.

At DGPS, we believe in the holistic development of all our students. We continuously strive to ensure that all students experience high-quality teaching and extend the best possible support to those who are achieving below their capabilities. The student's progress and attainment are reviewed to determine if the student needs any exceptional, additional or different support beyond the quality first teaching.

Any student identified with special educational needs indicates that the student: -

- Is significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Demonstrates challenge/s to match or better the student's previous rate of progress
- Finds it difficult to close the attainment gap between the student and their peers
- Manifests social or emotional needs that could impact his/her learning and progress
- Experiences barriers due to the delayed developmental milestones that interfere with their learning, engagement and performance.
- Is unable to demonstrate or engage in age appropriate interpersonal skills like making friends or relating to others.
- Has challenges in retention, processing, reasoning or problem-solving.
- Demonstrates behaviour/s that significantly deviates from what is expected behaviour and impedes the learning of self and/or peers.
- Has difficulty regulating negative thoughts or emotions or experiences a lack of confidence in one or more areas of learning and engagement.
- Shows prolonged and acute signs similar to anger, withdrawal or sadness due to any trauma, loss of a loved one or divorce within the family.
- Has extreme sensorial needs that impacts them in one or more ways across all areas of learning.
- Demonstrates difficulties in organization skills or shows disinterest or withdrawal in several areas of curricular or co-curricular activities.
- Is diagnosed with any physical, sensory or medical condition that presents some restriction or constraints on their learning and engagement.

Additionally, the needs and learning barriers are further determined by:

- The student's performance on aptitude, internal and benchmark assessments.
- The student's progress and response to the quality-first teaching and learning practices.
- The observations by teachers on the learning and engagement of the student across all areas.
- The formal diagnosis by a qualified and licensed medical professional on the difficulty, impairment or disorder manifested by the student.

Identification of New Admission- DGPS is an inclusive school that strives to accommodate the needs of all learners. The school embrace all students with varied needs and conscientiously follows a zero-rejection policy.

In line with the school's Admissions Policy, students will be considered with reference to their needs, resources and the school's ability to meet those needs. Following are the steps observed during the admission process in our efforts to provide appropriate support for Students of Determination:

- The Admission Officer coordinates with the parent and gathers entry-level information about the prospective student.
- The respective teacher conducts the entry-level screening and assessment.
- In case of any concerns or barriers observed, the Admission Officer will arrange for a meeting of the Head of Inclusion and parents for further input and feedback.
- The Head of Inclusion meets the parents to discuss the observations with the respective section head.
- A formal assessment, in case, not available, is recommended to understand the student's needs and possible provisions required to support the child within the school's existing resources.
- Parents are invited to discuss the provisions and recommendations listed in the assessments along with any alternate pathway required to ensure holistic learning and development of their child.

Based on the identification, the school has a comprehensive record-keeping system in the form of a consolidated register with the details about student's barriers, diagnosis and category of disability. In addition to this, the register has information on the level of support, exemptions and LSA status.

This register is reviewed termly and is shared with the teachers for their reference and record.

4. INCLUSION AT DGPS:

DGPS is strongly committed to inclusive education across all year groups; this provision includes one in which the teaching, learning, achievements, attitudes and well-being of all the students who gain admission to school matter, including those identified as having additional needs. The school is committed to recognizing the potential of all students and giving them equity and access to all learning environments across school.

We want to develop each pupil as a whole person with the skills and competencies necessary for his or her future life roles.

For this, the school's approach towards building a holistic, inclusive and high quality learning environment is visible in the following arrangements:

Quality First Teaching - The school dedicatedly follows the ethos of high-quality teaching that focuses on teaching for effective and improved student achievement using outcomes that matter to their future success. It focuses on the pedagogical or content knowledge, quality of instructions, classroom environment, classroom management, teacher beliefs and professional behaviours.

Graduated Approach - The school follows the below appended graduated approach to systematically support students with any needs or learning barriers.



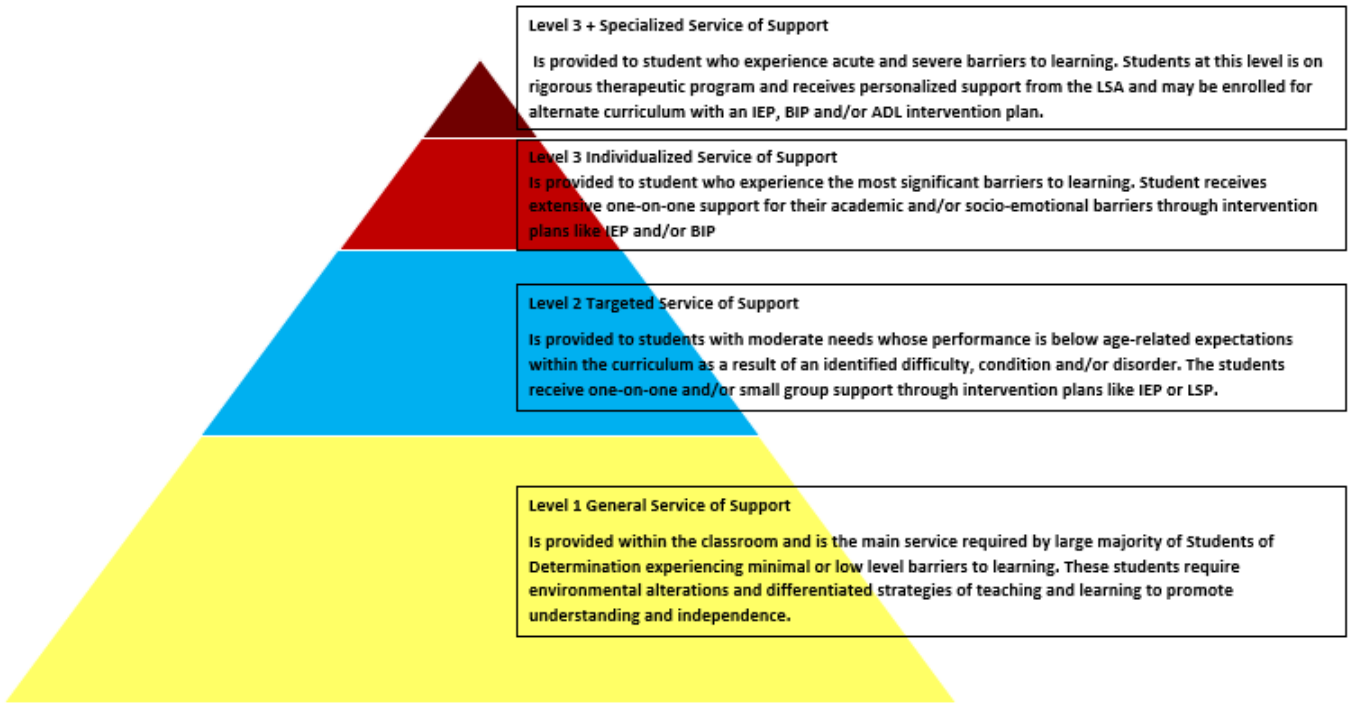
- **Assess-** A holistic understanding of the student's learning needs and barriers is built based on the information gathered from teachers, internal and benchmark assessment data, parents, carers, support team and external professionals.
- **Plan-** The information gathered is used to create a strategic, need-based and comprehensive plan that is both evidence-based and effective to cater to the learning needs of the student. The plan outlines the targets, interventions, classroom strategies, and adaptations required to support the student's learning.
- **Do-** The intervention plan is implemented in all learning environments across the school by the teachers, support team and LSA (if applicable). The parents and carers are guided and encouraged to execute the strategies and interventions at home to create a consistent, supportive and effective environment at home.
- **Review-** A continuous monitoring system is used to identify the impact of the strategies and interventions planned for the student. This includes an exchange of information between all stakeholders on the student's response to the plan and monitoring of the performance data collated from ongoing, internal and benchmark assessments. The evidence-based feedback and performance are further used to refine the strategies and interventions.

With this approach, the school ensures that students can access and have their needs met within the mainstream curriculum. The identification, support and school-wide provisions across all learning environments are monitored and reviewed for better impact.

Provision Mapping - The school has clearly outlined provisions that are mapped based on the level at which the needs and barriers are manifested by the student. The provision mapping will allow the students to experience optimum progress and success.

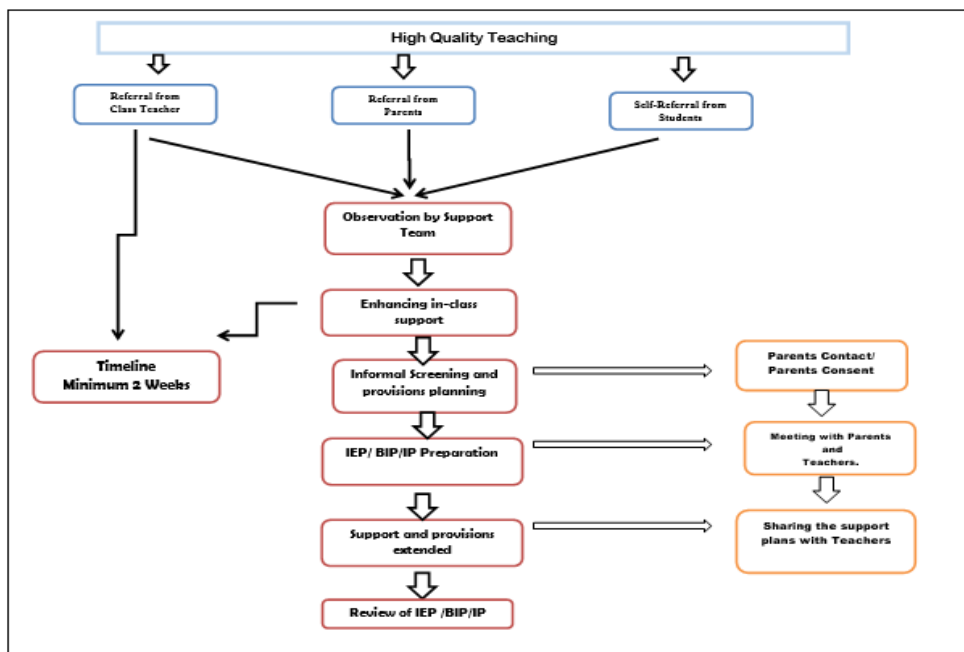
Once the student is placed on the level of severity, the provisions concerning the intervention plan/s, individual support, access arrangements, exemptions etc. will apply to the student. The impact of the provisions will be termly reviewed and updated as per the need-based transitions or weaning of the students of determination.

Following the identification of the barriers experienced by a student of determination, the school follows a 4-tiered system of support:



Based on the ongoing holistic understanding of the needs of the students of determination, the respective provisions are provided to allow them to experience optimum progress and success.

Inclusion Flowchart - The school has clearly outlined a systematic approach to student observation, referral and support in the DGPS Inclusion Flowchart. The school’s flowchart is depicted below and is unique to the school’s structure and systems.



Support Team - The school has a dedicated team titled STEP (Striving Towards Enhancement and Progress) that has Counsellors, Special Teachers and LSAs and is led by the Head of Inclusion.

The Support team works under the direct guidance and supervision of the Principal, who spearheads the department and directs the team to implement and follow practices that reflect the inclusive ethos of the school and the Inclusion Governor who contributes towards the strategic planning and effective implementation of the inclusive practices across the whole-school.

The STEP Team extends their support strategies to ensure that the students of determination receive both one-on-one and in-class support. There are 3 learning Labs, 1 Sensory Room and 2 Counselling Rooms across the school. The learning labs are specifically divided into Literacy/English and Numeracy/Math. Each special teacher is delegated with either Literacy/English or Numeracy/Math for a specific key stage. The team provides both push-ins and pull-out sessions for their respective students and engages in continuous collaboration and communication with both teachers and parents.

The entire STEP Team actively participates in the planning of curriculum adaptations and engages in the screening of learning barriers, planning strategic support, conducting sessions, tracking student's progress and reviewing the strategies based on the student's response and performance. The team is approachable and works cohesively to ensure support to the students, teachers and parents.

The Learning Support Assistants(LSA) are employed by the parents and assist the student in his/her day-to-day learning. The LSAs sign a memorandum of understanding that has set standards and expectations to be observed and followed within the school premise.

Evidence-Based Approach - DGPS follows an evidence-based approach to plan strategic and need-based support for the students of determination. Each student is assigned a separate book that captures their learning and provides an overview of their progress and performance.

The comprehensive plans in the form of Individualized Plan, Behaviour Intervention Plans, Learning Support Plans and /or Activities for Daily Living Plans are prepared to provide strategic support to the students of determination receiving support at 2, 3 and 3+ levels. These plans incorporate complete information about the student's current level of functioning, preferences and requirements. They include specific, realistic and time-bound targets that are planned collaboratively with the teacher and parent.

The monitoring and tracking of students are systematically recorded and termly reviewed on the targets focused in the plan. Based on the student's performance, the progress is indicated on a 5-point scale and the targets are either continued, modified or weaned.

The teachers, parents and carer's inputs and observations are embedded at all levels of planning, monitoring and reviewing of students' performance and progress.

Curriculum Adaptations and Access Arrangement - At DGPS, we strive to ensure that the diverse needs of all students are catered to with high-quality teaching and learning practices. All children irrespective of their needs have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Curriculum modifications and adaptations are determined by the severity of the learning needs and barriers manifested by the students of determination. All staff are trained to plan accommodations and modifications as per the needs and preferences of the students and is reflected through differentiation in content modification, curriculum objectives, teaching style and resources.

Access arrangements at DGPS are need-based and follow the Cambridge and Edexcel guidelines at KS 4 and 5. The access arrangements provided in the form of exemption in Arabic and/or additional language, modified questions, simplified content, extended time, separate seating, reader or prompter are in place for external and (where possible) internal exams. These arrangements are recorded and mentioned in the report card and are termly reviewed based on the student's performance and attainment.

Collaboration with Speciality Centre - The school acknowledges the expertise and specialized services provided by the speciality centre and believes that a collaboration with such a centre will enhance and accelerate the support extended by the school. DGPS has plans to partner with Bridges Speech Centre based in Dubai, for students' assessment on standardized tests and enrolment in intervention programs like ABA therapy, Speech and language therapy, Occupational therapy etc. at an economical price.

5. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

At DGPS, parents are considered partners and their views, opinions and concerns are considered valuable. Parent's involvement in their ward's learning journey is encouraged by the school and are informed about their progress at regular intervals. The school extends continuous support and guidance to the parents and welcomes their active participation through meetings, emails and school communication portals.

6. ALLOCATION OF BUDGET:

DGPS is committed to being inclusive at all levels and continues to be inspired by the visionary leaders of the UAE. Each year, the Principal, in consultation with the governing body approves and allocates the required budget for inclusive provisions to enhance and enrich the school's inclusive provisions and foster an environment that feels safe and encourages students to become personally fulfilled, interdependent, socially responsible adults.

7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES:

The DGPS Inclusion Policy for Students of Determination reflects a strong commitment to create a challenging and inclusive learning environment that encourages high expectations for all students and its efforts towards empowerment and effective inclusion are an integral part of key national and local strategies such as:

- UAE Vision 2021.
- UAE Centennial 2071 Long Term Government Plan.
- Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030.
- Dubai Strategic Plan 2021.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol.
- The UAE 'School for All': General rules for the Provision of Special Education Programmes and Services (2010) guidance.
- The National Policy for Empowering People of Determination, which aims to provide quality inclusive education in the UAE (2017).
- Quality Standards of Services for Persons with Disabilities in Governmental and Private Institutions (2016).
- The National Project for Inclusion for People of Determination.
- Abu Dhabi Educational Council Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual (2012).
- 'My Community: A City for Everyone' initiative (2013) that aims to turn into a fully inclusive and friendly city for People of Determination.
- Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017)

- The Dubai Universal Design Code (2017, Accessibility Code)
- The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
- The Dubai Plan 2021 which aims for a tolerant and fully inclusive city by 2020 which is part of a wider strategic plan, which, in addition to education, incorporates health & rehabilitation, employment, universal accessibility and social protection.
- Implementing Inclusive Education: A Guide for Schools (2017)
- Directives and Guidelines for Inclusive Education (2020)

This DGPS Inclusion Policy is integral to all school policies. It has key links with other school policies such as:

- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Admission Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour Policy

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