



SEN (Special Educational Needs or Learning Differences) Policy

Table of Contents

- 1. Philosophy and Principles**
- 2. School Profile**
- 3. Eligibility**
- 4. Objectives of the Special Needs Program**
- 5. Procedures**
- 6. Documentation**
- 7. Student's Profile**
- 8. Additional Documentation**
- 9. Professional Development**
- 10. Policy Revision**

1. Philosophy and Principles:

The American School of Quito believes all students can learn successfully. Each student has the right to learn at his/her own pace and according to his/her unique learning style and multiple intelligences. We believe that each classroom is a specialized learning environment where student needs and interests determine planning, instruction, and assessment.

Each student has a learning process that is unique and some students experience learning challenges that require a differentiated curriculum and support. Our main objective is to provide academic support for all students to help them develop adequate skills. In addition, our school works toward 1) aiding students to develop a positive self-image, 2) enabling them to understand and accept their difficulties, 3) helping students become self-advocates for their learning, and 4) having students use their strengths to compensate for their differences. Finally, we believe that learning support works best when it leads to academic inclusion inside of the classroom.

2. School Profile

The Learning Differences (LD) Programs form part of the Guidance Department. The LD specialist provides individualized support to students in the areas of need. This specialist works closely with regular classroom and ELL teachers to accommodate and/or modify instruction, assessment, and content. Students receive services both inside and outside of their regular classrooms. When necessary, Individualized Education Programs are developed for students who require a more comprehensive intervention.

In the National Section, the majority of students enter the school through the Nursery program. The LD Specialists, with teachers' feedback and observations, identify students with Special Education Needs and support (language, physical, occupational). Each grade level has one learning specialist in the Primary Section.

In the International Section, students enter all grade levels on a rolling basis during each school year. Therefore, a much more individualized support system has been put in place to guarantee that scaffolding guides students to best transition to the academic requirements of the school. The Section has a learning specialist and an ELL specialist in both Primary and Secondary sections.

3. Eligibility

When the grade level team observes a gap between what is expected for the level and the student's performance in different areas, such as reading, writing, basic math facts or attention, it is important to analyze if the student must receive extra support.

Students who present differences according to group level requirements in the following areas are candidates to be referred to the LD program:

- Language: vocabulary, processing information, production, fluency, articulation.
- Reading: reading performance.
- Writing: production of written material.
- Math: standard achievement.
- Attention: task focus, impulsivity, tolerance of frustration that has an effect in learning.
- Visual and auditory processing: recognition and interpretation through senses.
- Motor skills function: performing fine and gross motor movements with the intent to accomplish a specific action.
- Cognitive functions: abstraction, classification, analysis and reasoning.

4. Objectives of the Special Needs Program:

1. To ensure that students with special needs are identified properly in a timely manner and are provided with the services required.
2. To give students emotional and academic support to enable them to develop adequate learning skills.
3. To help students develop a positive self-image by helping them understand and accept their learning differences.
4. To help students develop self-advocacy and agency strategies to maximize their learning.
5. To guide students to use their strengths to compensate for their differences.

5. Procedures

Modality of LD support: There are three ways of supporting a student inside the school in the LD program: push in, pull out, and monitor status.

Push in (in classroom support): The LD specialist enters the classroom to assist the student in the activities that are being done. The objective is to allow the student to have the opportunity to overcome difficulties within the classroom environment, and use strategies, accommodations, and modifications accordingly.

Pull out (out of classroom support): The LD specialist works in small groups or one-on-one with the student. The objective is to develop learning skills, reinforce areas of need, overcome specific difficulties, and provide academic support according to his or her LD learning profile.

Monitor status: The student receives accommodations and/or modifications in class by teachers, but does not have individual support outside of the classroom. The LD specialist monitors student's progress through in-class observations and teachers' feedback. If a student begins showing delays or low performance according to group level requirements, the Guidance Department and the Administration decide if the student needs to be supported with the other modalities.

Identification, Assessment and Support:

Students may be identified as students who need support, at any time during their academic career at the American School of Quito. The procedures and support differ slightly in each section; each Section achieves the objectives of this Policy according to its specific needs and characteristics.

Accommodations and/or modifications: The teachers accommodate and/or modify their environment, instruction, and assessment according to the LD learning profile. For quimester exams and summative assessments, the LD specialist meets with each teacher to review the accommodations and/or modifications applied to each assessment.

To inform parents about all the accommodations and/or modifications that the student has received, a report will be attached to the student's report card at the end of each partial, and/or at the end of the quimester.

6. Documentation:

RAE (Registro Académico Estudiantil): is a secure online platform restricted to Administration, LD Specialists and Guidance Counselors. This platform is used to record the academic, emotional, and behavioral history of the student beginning in Nursery. This personal documentation contains all testing performed on students, academic records, and accomplishments in sports, cultural events, and scholastics. Confidential family situations/issues that could have an important impact on the student's personal and academic growth is also included in their history.

Student's Profile: LD specialists write the student's profile. This document contains important information about student's overall performance in different areas, stressing areas of strength and weakness observed that academic year. It also specifies information about the current services provided for the student.

Additional Documentation:

- Referral forms
- External psycho-educational evaluation
- Authorization letter
- LD learning profile
- Accommodation/modification reports
- Quimester assessments' accommodations/modifications reports
- Observation forms
- Meeting records
- IEP (if applicable)

7. Professional Development:

The school provides continuous professional development related to learning differences: these may include group discussions, books studies, workshops on differentiating in the classroom, and multiple intelligences. The LD Specialists also provide in-service training to support teachers within the classroom in

regards to differentiating instruction and assessment as well as provide information on accommodations for students. The school actively observes classroom practice with the AdvancED ELEOT (Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool®) tool in order to ensure that all students receive appropriate instruction for their specific needs. The ELEOT tool prioritizes inclusion of all students through Supportive Learning and Equitable Learning guidelines.

8. Policy Revision:

As part of our continuous school improvement, the American School of Quito reviewed and updated the SEN policy in February of 2019 to meet the IB standards as well as AdvancED Ministry of Education of Ecuador. This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it meets the expectations of the IB, AdvancED, and school policies. The Committee responsible for reviewing this policy includes the Director General, National and International Secondary Section Administration, LD Specialists and Guidance Counselors.

The following documents were consulted to create this document:

- LD Protocol International Section FCAQ 2016
- ELEOT 2018

Last updated June, 2019