



**COSTEAS-GEITONAS SCHOOL (CGS)
MYP SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS /
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY**

IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

School Mission Statement

At CGS we strive to provide an academic setting where every student's skills and character can flourish to the fullest by encouraging meaningful connections between classroom and real life experiences. Our students work in an environment of ongoing inquiry, cooperation and mutual respect as they acquire a high caliber education and positive life attitudes to make a contribution to the world they live in.

Philosophy

CGS fully adheres to the International Baccalaureate Organization's belief in the importance of diversity and inclusion. We believe that each student enrolled in the Middle Years Programme at CGS should "receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum." (IBO, 2010) We strongly believe that all students should be provided with multi-perspective learning opportunities through collaborative and differentiated approaches to teaching and learning.

It is our aim to nourish a learning community that recognizes individual strengths and challenges, embraces the cultural backgrounds of each member while maintaining an academic environment of the highest standard. We are committed to providing an environment, which fosters academic, social and emotional growth.

CGS thoroughly aligns with all national educational authorities stipulations regarding specific procedures and documentation for students with special educational needs.

Aim of the Special Educational Needs Policy (SEN) Policy

The aim of the CGS MYP SEN policy is to present the framework, accommodations and services available to ensure that all students are offered the opportunity to fulfill their true potential both academically and socially.

To support all learners, CGS has:

- a. a school culture that promotes open-mindedness and respect for differences
- b. an inclusive admissions policy
- c. systems for early identification of learning needs
- d. policies and procedures that support the programmes
- f. a concept-based curriculum that offers opportunities for differentiation.

At CGS we raise faculty awareness of the needs of students identified as having learning differences and provide training to successfully implement and support learning differences and differentiated instruction.

Services

At CGS, the School Counseling Department (SCD) offers support and guidance to students, academic staff and families alike, constituting an important piece in the school community mosaic. They cover a wide spectrum of challenges, evaluate and provide supportive and advisory services to students having:

- learning difficulties
- social, emotional and behavioral differences
- medical conditions
- speech differences
- mild to moderate visual/aural impairments
- high ability

Admissions

At CGS we admit students with learning differences on condition that they can be supported within the learning support structures at CGS. Admissions decisions are made by the school principals and IB coordinators in consultation with the SCD personnel. Admissions decisions are based upon review of the student admissions documents, including the CGS admissions forms, an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or corresponding documentation, and other related documents.

IB MYP Coordinator

The IB MYP Coordinator:

- communicates documentation of learning differences to IBIS for MYP year 5 students as appropriate
- communicates the approved interventions and accommodations to all stakeholders
- ensures that the approved interventions and accommodations are implemented for IBMYP assessments.

Differentiation

Differentiation is viewed as a framework fostering inclusion and facilitating learning for SEN students. It constitutes an integral part of planning and teaching the curriculum informed by the IB Learner Profile and Approaches to Learning Skills (ATL).

Through differentiation of content, process, product and learning environment, students are offered the opportunity to explore different ways of learning, consider their own learning styles, understand their abilities and skills and become more autonomous learners. At the same time, it cultivates understanding and empathy as it becomes evident to all students that different people learn in different ways.

Teachers, on the other hand, need to consider each student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in designing tasks and assessments that offer all students the opportunity to reach their educational potential.



Accommodations

Some examples of accommodations are the following:

- flexible seating arrangement
- leveled texts
- modified tasks and assignments
- extended time for the completion of tasks or tests
- alternate testing environment
- reader
- prompter
- use of electronic devices for note-taking or completing an assignment
- oral examination in term and final exams

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Identification and student support

Referral to the School Counseling Department (SCD) is made following a request on the part of the MYP administrative and/or academic staff or the parents of a student. When the family of the student does not make the request, formal consent is required prior to the referral to the SCD.

When it is suspected that a student may need additional support, the procedure for referral is as follows:

1. A meeting is held between the tutor/teachers and a member of the SCD to discuss the student's overall presence in class (attitude, attention span, mobility and learning style), as well as academic strengths and challenges following the study of samples of the student's work
2. A meeting with the student's family is held to establish a close collaboration by sharing information in order to agree on a suitable course of action
3. A screening test is carried out either in-school by school psychologists, on an individual basis, or the family are referred to a public body to carry out the test and receive an official evaluation
4. A follow-up meeting is held between the parents and the SCD to discuss the findings of the evaluation and agree on a suitable student support plan
5. A follow-up meeting is held between the student's tutor/teachers and the SCD to inform on the student's strengths and challenges, set individual educational goals, provide additional support in terms of teaching strategies and resources so that the teachers are further equipped to support the student, and if necessary, develop an IEP.
6. At the family's request, the student attends sessions on a weekly basis with members of the SEN Specialists Team during school days by being withdrawn from mainstream classes. The main focus of such "pull-out" sessions is to further support the student on specific areas for growth
7. Meetings between the SCD Coordinator and the SEN Specialists Team are held on a weekly basis to monitor the students' progress
8. In case of children with special needs, who as a result of health problems cannot attend the regular programme of courses at school for a long time, an alternative way of education may be offered.

Collaboration between family and school is established through frequent communication and conferences to discuss the student's progress and develop additional support strategies for parents.



In particular, it is among the SEN Specialists' responsibilities to prepare IEPs in collaboration with classroom teachers, attend parent-teacher conferences, offer feedback on student's progress at the end of each term and at the end of the academic year, etc.

A classroom teacher plays a pivotal role as well by observing closely students to identify possible SEN instances, by working closely with SEN Specialists in designing an IEP, implementing any accommodations proposed, and collaborating with parents to offer optimum learning support to the student.

Psychological educational needs

Identification and student support

Referral to the SCD is made following a request on the part of the MYP administrative and/or academic staff or the parents of a student. When the family of the student does not make the request, formal consent is required prior to the referral to the SCD.

If a student is suspected to be in need of psychological support, the procedure is as follows:

1. A meeting is held between the tutor/teachers and a member of the SCD to discuss the student's behavior and emotional state
2. A meeting with the student's family is held to establish a close collaboration by sharing information in order to agree on a suitable course of action i.e. referral for a psychological evaluation, in-school sessions to further explore the student's needs and provide support
3. Following the psychological evaluation, or the in-school sessions, a follow-up meeting with the family is held to reassess the situation and agree on a suitable support plan such as in-school psycho-educational sessions or seeking counseling privately
4. Meetings are held at regular intervals between the school psychologist and the teachers of the student to discuss the student's progress and provide additional support in terms of strategies and resources so that the teachers are better equipped to support the student
5. Regular meetings with the family are held to discuss the student's progress and provide counseling, if necessary
6. At the same time the educational psychologists may collaborate with other special and competent authorities regarding the cases they monitor.

Teacher support

Teacher support is offered in the form of annual end-of-year meetings held between the PYP, MYP administration and the SCD Coordinator to ensure a smooth transition of students from primary to secondary education. Information is communicated regarding special educational needs, emotional needs or other physical and/or mental challenges.

Further support is available individually for members of the academic staff who wish to receive guidance and/or training as to how best to empower their students, adopt good practices in their classroom fostering inclusion, and encouraging all students to reach their full potential.

Parent support

Parents have unique knowledge of their child. Therefore, parents have much to contribute to their child's learning should s/he be included in the learning support plan. In order to provide the best possible support for students with learning difficulties, the parents need to be supportive of the learning targets and actions to be taken by the school.

Apart from support offered to parents regarding matters of academic or emotional nature, the SCD is in close collaboration with the Parents Association to organize psycho-educational workshops or presentations on matters pertaining to teenage life, i.e. safety on the Internet.

All staff members of the SCD are available during Parent-Teacher conferences to provide feedback and/or counseling as necessary.

Primary Prevention Programmes

Primary Prevention Programmes are designed to safeguard mutual respect, tolerance and inclusion for all members of the student body within and outside the school community.

Primary Prevention Programmes are conducted in the form of in-class workshops for all students aiming at developing and empowering social and emotional skills among them, in response to the developmental needs in adolescence.

These include:

In MYP year 2: *Internet and Social Media/ Safety Issues.*

In MYP year 3: *Peer Pressure: Methods of Dealing with it.*

In MYP year 4: *Introduction to School Vocational Guidance.*

In MYP year 5: *Investigating the factors that affect decision making.*

Accordance with the Ministry of Education Rules and Regulations

CGS fully adheres to regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Education and accommodations proposed are made accordingly. These include among others:

Assessment

- Students who are officially recognized as SEN students are provided with additional time during assessment tasks, and are complementarily examined orally
- Clear instructions, questions and explanations are provided as necessary
- Focus is placed on the content (ideas, information) communicated by the student rather than the structure and the use of the language used in the response

Learning process

- Encouraging students to have an active role in class, treated with discretion and empathy to facilitate academic and social development
- Seating arrangement conducive to monitoring and assisting the student
- Utilizing technological means to assist in the learning process
- Offering additional time for the student to complete or respond to a task

Communication and review

The CGS IB MYP Special Educational Needs Policy was compiled by a committee consisting of the IB MYP Coordinator, IB MYP Deputy Coordinator, the School Counseling Department Coordinator, the special educational needs teachers, and other members of the academic staff.

The policy is reviewed regularly as part of the IB curriculum review cycle and the whole-school improvement plan in terms of student learning. It is informed by relevant research in the field and all relevant publications issued by the IBO. It is also informed by all relevant guidelines of the Greek Ministry of Education and is to be approved by the Bureau of Secondary Education.

The SEN policy is regularly communicated to the body of students and their families as well as academic and administrative staff. It is also available on the school website.