

Ramallah Friends School Learning Support Policy

Philosophy of the Learning Support Department

Ramallah Friends School (RFS) Learning Support Department supports the school's mission statement 'Quaker education believes that all people are equal before God regardless of gender, creed, culture, color or social status.'

The Learning Support (LS) philosophy is linked to the instructional goals and objectives of RFS, and as such will endeavor to support those goals and objectives.

The purpose of RFS Learning Support Policy therefore is to increase the likelihood that children with Learning Needs in the school will make progress and grow in confidence in their own abilities and to help the students become independent, motivated and life-long learners.

Objectives of the Learning Support Policy

The LS Policy at RFS begins with leadership from the Board of Trustees, the Head of School, the Principal of each campus, Departmental Heads and Coordinators all of whom must actively support the LS Department in achieving the following objectives:

- To ensure that students with learning needs and learning difficulties have maximum access to the whole curriculum according to their potential.
- To encourage a shared responsibility in the school, by all the school professional staff to support the LS policy at all levels of education.
- To allow the Head of Department (HOD) LS access to school decision making processes through lower and upper school meetings.
- To encourage and ensure that every department policy is linked to and makes detailed reference to how their teaching and learning practice, assessment recording, reporting and curriculum area documents support children with learning needs.
- To encourage and ensure that each department entitles and provides equity of opportunity for students with learning needs in the classroom and in exam situations.
- To ensure the LS policy works towards goals related to the aims of the school.
- To encourage staff to continue to assume responsibility for the learning of all children in their class and to ensure the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students

- To ensure that support is related to the curriculum
- To encourage an agreement among staff on how a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum be taught in the classroom
- To encourage co-operative planning and teaching by all staff in support of the LS Policy.
- To provide a climate of warmth and support in which students' self-confidence and self-esteem can grow and in which all students feel valued and are able to risk making mistakes without fear
- To identify, assess and provide support for students with learning needs and learning difficulties.
- To develop contacts with outside agencies/skilled individuals in Palestine and to consult with these agencies/individuals regarding students with learning needs at RFS
- To collaborate with library staff concerning the needs of LS students

It is the responsibility of the school to see that all learning needs staff are adequately trained and have opportunities for ongoing professional development

The Head of School has responsibility for overall management of the LS policy. The Head of School should work closely with the HOD LS, who should work closely with the Principals. The Principals should take responsibility for the day to day operation of the policy with the support of the Head of School. On an annual basis, the HOS, HOD LS, and the Principals will evaluate the LS program and make recommendations for improvement, as needed.

All relevant RFS policies should be aligned with the LS policy.

Admissions Policy and Learning Support Students

RFS' admissions procedures sets out the criteria for admitting students to the school. RFS may not be able to meet all learning differences.

The school is able to provide a maximum of three Lower KG students with identified learning difficulties each year. Parents must attach professional documentation of their child's diagnosis and developmental assessment by a specialist that includes implications and recommendations for his/her schooling with this application.

International Baccalaureate Dispensation

Learning support students shall be able to access special conditions according to IBO policies.

Access and inclusion Policy

The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Standard assessment conditions may put some candidates at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment. Inclusive access arrangements may be applied in these circumstances if it is observed that they could reduce or minimize barriers for the candidate.

Inclusive access arrangements may be necessary due to:

- Long-term learning support requirements
- Temporary medical conditions
- Additional language learning.

This access and inclusion policy highlights the inclusive access arrangements (also referred to as access arrangements) available for IB assessment in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). However, the underpinning principle is that assessment is a part of learning and teaching. Therefore, this policy must be used to plan access arrangements for students during learning and teaching. Access arrangements must not only apply to students during summative IB assessments but also be available throughout the course of study (this includes all classroom work and formative assessments that are part of everyday learning and teaching). This policy must guide teachers in their plans to meet the access requirements of students for all their work during their educational journey in the school.

This policy does not cover adverse circumstances—such as family bereavement, civil unrest or a natural disaster—that could affect a candidate either during the preparation of work for assessment or during examinations. Medical conditions that occur within the three-month period before the examinations would also be covered under adverse circumstances.

The IBO believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions, which are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with Learning Needs at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized.

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Next review on: