

Ramallah Friends School

Access and Inclusion Policy

The Ramallah Friends School is committed to the IBO and Quaker values, affirming an inclusive, holistic, academically excellent, socially responsible, and egalitarian learning environment. Inclusive access arrangements aim to remove or reduce barriers students may face during teaching, learning, and assessment. Optimal access arrangements are carefully planned to remove or reduce learning barriers to a level equal to the student's requirements.

Philosophy of Access and Inclusion - The Learning Support Program:

The Philosophy of Access and Inclusion at Ramallah Friends School (RFS) is rooted in the school's mission, Quaker principles, and values. RFS is dedicated to providing all students, regardless of their backgrounds, needs, or challenges, with an academically rigorous, balanced, engaging, and inclusive learning environment that emphasizes collaboration and Quaker values. As a Quaker school under the care of Friends United Meeting (FUM), RFS is guided by the Quaker testimony of equality, the belief that there is that of God in every person. Accordingly, it values every learner equally, whatever their abilities or needs.

RFS affirms and honors the rights of children with diverse abilities to engage actively in natural settings, promoting better education for all students. It understands that inclusion is key to raising educational standards and is dedicated to creating a caring, trusting environment for every learner. The school supports inclusive education to build a community where all children can learn and succeed, tailoring the curriculum to suit each student's unique needs and challenges.

The Learning Support Program at RFS was first established in 1995. It has since evolved into a pioneering model of inclusive education in Palestine, aligning with the school's philosophy and commitment to equality and inclusivity. It is guided by an inclusive philosophy that recognizes and upholds the rights of children with diverse abilities to participate actively in natural settings. By addressing the needs of children facing challenges, the program improves the overall quality of education for all students in the classroom. Given the school's limited resources, the school believes that inclusion is essential to raising educational standards and strives to create a caring, trusting environment for every learner.

Legal and Regulatory Requirements Related to Access and Inclusion:

RFS is a licensed private school in Palestine, supervised by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), and an IB World School authorized to offer the PYP, MYP, and DP. The school has identified the following legal and regulatory requirements relevant to access and inclusion. This section serves as RFS's Legal Requirements Register; the right-hand column explains how RFS meets each requirement and where it is addressed in this policy. To ensure that the Legal Requirements Register remains complete and verifiable, each requirement is checked against the current official source. The annual compliance review

records the title of the applicable law, regulation, or IB requirement, the relevant article or section where applicable, the issuing authority, the current version/date, and the date on which the requirement was verified. Any change identified through this review is recorded and reflected in the policy and related school procedures.

Legal / regulatory requirement	What it requires of RFS	How RFS complies
Amended Palestinian Basic Law (2003) Article 9 (equality and non-discrimination, including on the basis of disability); Article 24 (right to education; private schools follow approved methods under state supervision)	Treat every student equally and without discrimination, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and in alignment with the school's Quaker foundation.	Non-discriminatory admissions and access (see the Admissions section); the school operates under its MoE license and cooperates with the Ministry's supervision and inspection.
Law No. 4 of 1999 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its executive regulations Article 10 (education)	Ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunities to enroll, assess the nature and degree of their needs, and provide appropriate curricula, educational resources, and facilities.	Admissions decisions are not based on disability alone; identification and referral for diagnosis (General Considerations section); individual plans/IEPs, accommodations and accessible facilities (Resources section; Facilities Master Plan).
Decree-Law No. 8 of 2017 on General Education and the regulations and instructions issued under it	Adopt inclusive education that leaves no student behind; private schools must provide quality education to all students, taking account of their capacities and needs; flexible assessment responsive to individual needs; provision for gifted students (grade acceleration subject to Ministry decision); prohibition of violence and protection of all students;	Learning Support Program, differentiated instruction and inclusive assessment arrangements (Objectives; Inclusive Assessment Arrangements); gifted learners are included in eligible needs; any grade acceleration is submitted to MoEHE for approval by the Head of School; compliance with Directorate of Education inspections.

Legal / regulatory requirement	What it requires of RFS	How RFS complies
	MoEHE licensing and supervision.	
MoEHE Inclusive Education Policy (2015) and Ministry instructions (including arrangements for students with special needs in Ministry examinations, where applicable)	Align school practice for identification, support and assessment with national inclusive education policy and current Ministry instructions.	The Learning Support Coordinator aligns procedures with Ministry instructions; for any student sitting a Ministry examination, the school applies for special arrangements through the Directorate of Education.
Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 (as amended)	Uphold the right to education without discrimination and the best interests of the child; protect children from violence, abuse and neglect; report protection concerns to the competent authorities (Child Protection Counselors).	RFS Child Protection Policy and Annex I – Child Protection Complaint and Reporting Mechanism; counselors and designated staff handle referrals.
International conventions acceded to by the State of Palestine (2014): UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 2, 3, 23, 28) and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 24)	Inclusive education at all levels; reasonable accommodation of individual requirements; support within the general education system; non-discrimination.	Reasonable access arrangements and individual support within mainstream classes are the foundation of this policy (Philosophy; Guidelines and Procedures).
IB regulatory requirements: Program Standards and Practices; Rules for IB World Schools; IB Access and Inclusion Policy (November 2023); Adverse Circumstances Policy (August 2021); MYP and DP General Regulations; IB requirements	Maintain and implement an inclusion policy consistent with IB philosophy; submit access arrangement requests with the required evidence and within IB deadlines; keep supporting documentation available for IB inspection; protect	Program coordinators submit requests within IB deadlines with required evidence (Guidelines and Procedures; program sections); records kept securely (Structure and Process section).

Legal / regulatory requirement	What it requires of RFS	How RFS complies
on handling candidate personal data	confidentiality of candidate information.	

Note: Where Palestinian law and IB requirements differ, RFS applies the requirement that gives the student the greater protection, provided it does not conflict with Palestinian law.

Structure and Process for Meeting Legal Requirements:

RFS uses the following structure and process to ensure that it meets the legal and regulatory requirements identified above.

A. Structure: roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility for legal compliance
Friends United Meeting (FUM)	RFS operates under the umbrella of FUM as a Quaker institution. The Board of Trustees governs the school in line with Quaker values and maintains the school's relationship with FUM, ensuring this policy reflects both Palestinian law and Friends' testimonies.
Board of Trustees	Approves this policy and its revisions; receives the annual compliance report from the Head of School; ensures resources are available to meet legal obligations.
Head of School	Holds overall accountability for compliance as the head of RFS as a licensed institution; maintains the Legal Requirements Register with the Learning Support Coordinator; serves as the school's contact with MoE and the Directorate of Education on inclusion matters; seeks legal advice when legislation changes; approves IB access arrangement requests with the school principal and the program coordinator.
Division Principals (Kindergarten, PYP, Middle School, High School)	Implement this policy within their divisions; ensure that admission and support decisions are documented; monitor the implementation of accommodations; and escalate concerns to the Head of School.
Learning Support Coordinator	Maintains the confidential register of students with identified needs; manages referrals, diagnostic documentation, individual plans/IEPs and parental consent; tracks Ministry instructions and updates procedures; trains staff.
Program Coordinators (PYP, MYP, DP)	Ensure compliance with IB requirements; the DP and MYP Coordinators submit access arrangement requests with the required evidence within IB deadlines and keep documentation available for IB inspection.

Role	Responsibility for legal compliance
Counselors and designated child protection staff	Provide social-emotional support; handle child protection concerns and referrals in line with the Child Law and the RFS Child Protection Policy (Annex I).
Teachers	Implement agreed accommodations and differentiation in class and in assessment; record evidence of need and of the student's usual way of working.
Admissions Office	Applies the Admission Policy without discrimination on the basis of disability; records the rationale for admission decisions involving learning needs.
Parents/Guardians	Share relevant information and documentation; give informed consent for assessments, plans and applications to the IB or the Ministry; participate in reviews of their child's plan.

B. Process for compliance

1. Identify and track legal requirements

At the start of each school year, and whenever the Ministry of Education issues new instructions, legislation changes, or the IB updates its policies, the Head of School, the Division Principals, and the Learning Support Coordinator review the Legal Requirements Register. They seek legal advice when needed and update the policy accordingly.

2. Communication

Staff receive training on their legal and IB obligations during induction and annual professional development. The policy is shared with parents and staff.

3. Admit without discrimination

Applications are evaluated in accordance with the Admission Policy. When an applicant has an identified need, the Learning Support Coordinator and Division Principal consider the support the student requires and the support the school can reasonably provide. The decision and its rationale are recorded.

4. Identify and assess needs

Teachers, parents, or coordinators refer concerns to the Learning Support Coordinator, who gathers classroom evidence and, when needed, requests a diagnostic or specialist assessment with parental consent.

5. Plan and implement support

An individual support plan or IEP is agreed upon by the student (where appropriate), parents, and teachers. It specifies accommodations for teaching, learning, and assessment, and is reviewed at least once each term.

6. Apply for external assessment arrangements

When a student needs access arrangements for IB assessments, the following steps apply:

- The **Learning Support Coordinator** reviews the student's needs and prepares the supporting evidence with the teachers.
- The **Head of School** gives internal approval.
- The **MYP or DP Coordinator** submits the request to the IB within the IB's deadlines and keeps all supporting documentation on file.

For any Ministry examination, the school applies to the Directorate of Education for special arrangements.

7. Keep records securely

Learning support records are kept confidential and accessible only to staff directly involved. They are shared with external bodies (the IB, the Ministry, or specialists) only when required by law or IB regulations, and with parental consent where applicable.

8. Address concerns, complaints and appeals

Parents or students who believe the school has not met its obligations may raise the matter with the Learning Support Coordinator, then the Division Principal, then the Head of School, and finally the Board of Trustees. Child protection concerns are addressed in Annex I. Parents also retain the right to contact the Directorate of Education.

9. Monitor and report

Each year, the Head of School presents the Board of Trustees with a compliance report covering the students supported, arrangements requested and granted, complaints received, changes in legal requirements, and actions taken to ensure compliance. Where monitoring identifies a compliance gap, the Head of School assigns appropriate corrective action, identifies the person responsible and timeline for completion, monitors implementation, and reports the outcome to the Board of Trustees.

Rights and Responsibilities of the School Community:

Member of the school community	Rights	Responsibilities
Students	To access learning and assessment equitably; to have their dignity, confidentiality and individual needs respected; and, where appropriate, to participate in decisions about their support.	To communicate their learning needs where possible, use agreed support arrangements responsibly, participate in reviews where appropriate, and respect the rights and needs of others.
Parents/Guardians	To be informed and consulted about identification, assessment, support plans and access arrangements affecting their child; to have information treated confidentially; and to raise	To share relevant and accurate information and documentation, provide informed consent where required, participate in reviews, and collaborate with the school in supporting their child.

	concerns through the school's complaints and appeals process.	
Teachers	To receive relevant information, guidance, training and support needed to implement agreed inclusive practices.	To implement agreed accommodations and differentiation, document evidence of need and the student's usual way of working, protect confidentiality, and communicate concerns through the appropriate school process.
Learning Support Staff and Program Coordinators	To access the information and institutional support necessary to carry out their designated inclusion responsibilities.	To coordinate identification, documentation and support; ensure that applicable Ministry and IB requirements are followed; maintain secure records; and submit required access-arrangement requests within current applicable deadlines.
School Leadership and Board of Trustees	To receive the information necessary to oversee implementation and compliance.	To ensure that the policy is implemented, legal and regulatory requirements are monitored, adequate resources are considered, compliance gaps are addressed, and the policy and Legal Requirements Register are reviewed as required.

Objectives of the Access and Inclusion Policy:

1. Ensure full access to the curriculum for students with learning needs.
2. Foster a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration among staff, including classroom teachers, in supporting the Learning Support policy.
3. Implement departmental policies that explicitly address support for all students and those with learning needs and challenges.
4. Provide equitable opportunities for students with learning needs and challenges in the classroom and during exams.
5. Promote collaboration and communication among teachers, support staff, students, and parents.
6. Cultivate respect, empathy, and understanding within the school community.
7. Ensure adherence to differentiated instruction through staff agreement on implementing a broad, balanced, relevant, and differentiated curriculum.

8. Offer ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers and staff.
9. Regularly evaluate and improve inclusive policies, practices, and resources.
10. Collaborate with external agencies and specialists to access additional support and resources.
11. Involve parents and guardians as active participants in their child's education.
12. Develop personalized education plans, including IEPs where appropriate, in collaboration with parents and students as part of its individualized support and planning process.
13. Develop and maintain diverse, evidence-based learning resources to support varied learning styles.
14. Modifications, accommodations and adaptations are made for students, in order to participate actively with others.
15. Ensure compliance with all Palestinian laws, international conventions, and IB regulations on access and inclusion, as outlined in the Legal and Regulatory Requirements section, by adhering to the structure and processes set out in this policy.

Admissions, Inclusion, and Learning Support at RFS:

1. RFS Admission Policy prioritizes a positive learning environment where all students, regardless of their backgrounds, needs, and challenges, are given fair opportunities to demonstrate their abilities. In accordance with the Amended Basic Law, Law No. 4 of 1999, and Decree-Law No. 8 of 2017, no applicant is denied admission on the basis of disability alone.
2. Inclusive access arrangements at RFS adhere to principles of equal opportunities, maintain standards of excellence, and reflect students' usual ways of working.
3. The confidentiality of student information is ensured, and the integrity of assessment for all students is maintained. Records are handled as outlined in Step 7 of the Structure and Process section.
4. Collaboration among teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and support staff is fostered to identify and address learners' needs.

General Considerations Regarding Students with Identified Learning Needs:

1. The learning support coordinator may request diagnosis documentation including recent and up-to-date formal professional documentation.
2. The learning support coordinator, in consultation with relevant program staff, may require specialist evaluation to ensure the accuracy and reliability of assessments.
3. Updated documentation may be requested by the learning support coordinator during transitions between programs (PYP, MYP, DP) or levels within the school.

Inclusive Assessment Arrangements:

All students must be allowed to take their assessments under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions and procedures would put candidates at a

disadvantage and prevent them from adequately demonstrating their skills and knowledge, reasonable access arrangements may be authorized.

Candidates eligible for inclusive assessment arrangements are those with individual needs such as:

- a. learning disabilities (ADHD, ADD)
- b. Multiple disabilities and physical, sensory, neurological or medical conditions.
- c. Mental health conditions: students experiencing anxiety, depression, trauma-related difficulties, or other mental health conditions that affect their ability to access learning and assessment equitably.
- d. Difficulties writing due to specific learning challenges such as visual processing or fine motor skills.
- e. Communication and speech difficulties.
- f. Autism spectrum disorders.
- g. Genetic or developmental syndromes (Down Syndrome, and other syndromes).
- h. Social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.
- i. Specific Learning difficulties.
- j. Intellectual exceptionalities (Cognitive delay & gifted students)
- k. Speech & Language delay.

Guidelines and Procedures:

1. Inclusive access planning begins early, individualizing support based on observations and professional diagnoses.
2. Requests for inclusive access arrangements for IB examinations require approval from the Diploma Program Coordinator, the Division Principal and the Head of the School.
3. Requests must be submitted six months before the DP examination schedule. The school follows the current applicable IB deadlines. Where IB authorization is required, the process described in Step 6 of the Structure and Process for Meeting Legal Requirements applies.
4. RFS takes responsibility for making arrangements for required students and technology.
5. Requests for inclusive access must be accompanied by (a) evidence from a language test or a psychological/psycho-educational/medical report; and (b) educational evidence from RFS. For detailed requirements, see the IBO Access and Inclusion Policy (November 2023) Section 2.5 "Evidence Required (supporting documentation)."
6. Some inclusive arrangements on IB assessments are at the discretion of RFS's DP Coordinator, while others require authorization from the IBO.
7. IBO authorization for inclusive access is necessary for specific conditions mentioned in the IBO Access and Inclusion Policy. See the IBO Access and Inclusion Policy (November 2023) Sections 4-6.

Adverse Circumstances:

Unusual situations beyond a candidate's and school's control that negatively affect a candidate's performance may be considered under the IBO Adverse Circumstances Policy. For a complete description of mitigating arrangements for adverse circumstances and how to apply them, see the IBO Adverse Circumstances Policy (August 2021) Sections 2-3 updated June 2024.

Primary Years Program

The PYP Coordinator and Learning Support Coordinator must be informed of students who may require inclusive assessment arrangements, identification of needs may be based on formal diagnosis, psychoeducational assessments by qualified professionals, and/or structural observations by classroom teachers and learning support team.

Middle Years program

The MYP Coordinator and Learning Support Coordinator must be informed of students who may require inclusive assessment arrangements. For a student to be granted inclusive assessment arrangements, detailed documentation from an educational psychologist and doctor must be considered. School Leadership will then decide based on that documentation. Depending on the nature of the learning support requirement, inclusive assessment arrangements can include, but are not limited to, extra time in written assessments, using a word processor and a reader, and using a calculator.

Diploma Program

The IB Diploma Coordinator and Learning Support Coordinator must be informed of students who may require inclusive assessment arrangements at least six months before the examination. For a student to be granted inclusive assessment arrangements, detailed documentation from an educational psychologist and doctor must be sent to the IB by the school. The IB will then make their decision based on that documentation. Depending on the nature of the learning support requirement, inclusive assessment arrangements can include, but are not limited to, extra time in written examinations and using a word processor and a reader.

Resources to support the policy:

RFS offers a range of resources and services to facilitate the academic success and well-being of students regardless of their challenges. These include special education programs, individualized education plans (IEPs), learning support specialists, assistive technology tools, one-on-one or small group instruction, and counseling services. The school's commitment to inclusion extends to accessible facilities and ongoing professional development for staff in inclusive education strategies.

Review Process:

This policy document will be constantly monitored. It will be reviewed when Program coordinators deem it necessary, but certainly by five years from the publication date. Program coordinators will ensure its implementation through planning meetings and classroom visits. It is shared with all School stakeholders. In addition, the Legal and Regulatory Requirements section is reviewed annually by the Head of School, the Division principals, and the Learning Support Coordinator, and immediately whenever Palestinian legislation, Ministry instructions, or IB regulations change.

Date:

- September 9, 2019 (Previous version)
- October 2, 2021
- February- May 2023
- Revised May 2026 by Head of School, program coordinators, academic council, and teachers.
- Revised September 2026 to identify all legal requirements and the structure and process used to comply with them, following IB feedback.

