



Special Educational Needs Policy

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Prepared by:
Dir. Josef Zehentner, Principal
Ingrid Donner-Lebitsch, Teacher of English and Religion
Chesley Flannery, SALIS Dean of Students and Intercultural Affairs and Teacher of English
Barbara Reindl, Teacher of Visual Arts and English
Alexandra Gassner-Berger, Teacher of Religion
Elisabeth Hosp, Teacher of Music and Tech Design
Heidi Platzer, Teacher of History and English

Introduction

Both the Austrian curriculum and the IB state that difference and diversity are valuable resources within the school community and central to school life. Accordingly, the Salzburg International School (SALIS) ensures that progressive measures are taken to successfully integrate students with special needs into all facets of academic and social life. Furthermore, SALIS fully embraces the goal of honouring differences amongst the student body, faculty, and staff as the cornerstone to which a rich school environment is built. SALIS creates a stimulating environment to meet students' diverse needs, furthering individual talents and assisting students in all kinds of situations. SALIS offers a variety of services, courses and specially trained faculty to support individual learning abilities and to address prejudice and stereotypes in ways that allow students to develop a healthy and lasting global ethos.

The purpose of this policy is

- To ensure that all students are provided equal access to the IB curriculum and opportunities for academic rigor
- To emphasize that all students and staff are encouraged to embody the IB Learner Profile including supporting students as risk-takers, fostering compassion, and communicating effectively
- To create a curriculum that is creative and differentiated to support all our students in reaching their unique potential. Differentiation refers to any modification to instruction or assessment in order to meet individual needs
- To communicate the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the success of students with special needs. Stakeholders refers to anyone with a vested interest in the success of that student such as a parent, guardian, teacher, counselor, administrator, IB coordinator, and of course the student themselves.

Multiculturalism at SALIS

SALIS is the International Programme at BG Zaunergasse, a well-established Austrian State school. In total, approximately 650 students attend BG Zaunergasse. At the moment, 175 out of these 650 students are SALIS students in our International Programme.

In the SALIS Junior School, ages 10 to 14, the percentage of international students is on average 30% out of approximately 175 SALIS students, whereas in the Senior School, ages 14-18, we expect the percentage to rise to around 50%. SALIS currently accommodates students of around 20 different nationalities. As of 2019, about 70% of students speak German as a first language, just over 10% speak English as a first language, around 5% speak Russian as a first language, and 3% of students speak Romanian or Hungarian as a first language respectively. The rest of the students include speakers of Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Finnish, French, Italian, Korean, Indonesian, Mongolian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Farsi and Pashtun.

SALIS recognizes that *third culture kids* arrive in Salzburg with a variety of concerns and experiences, and that they, along with their families, need support and guidance throughout their years within the school community. To that end, SALIS offers a variety of supports and trainings for students, faculty, and family in cultural competence:

- **The Orientation Team** made up of faculty and students meets with new students in each grade level to introduce the school policies and practices, schedules, classes, and the systems in place for student achievement. A SALIS handbook has been created to facilitate this task.
- **The SALIS Dean of Student and Cultural Affairs** meets with students regularly to resolve concerns and create individualized plans for success, communicating information and plans amongst the stakeholders
- **Youth Coaching:** Advisors work with 9th grade students individually to assess student strengths and weaknesses, creating solutions to advance their personal goals.
- **The Buddy Project:** Upper school students of BG Zaunergasse and SALIS, years 9-12, support newcomers and middle school students
- **Peer Mediation Project:** Students receive education that enables them to settle disputes and help with conflicts
- **Partnership with The Global Salzburg Seminar** offers staff development in current educational research and data, social-emotional pedagogical approaches, and methodologies for navigating cultural competence
- **Ongoing staff development** that reinforces a commitment to International-Mindedness, allows for teaching through inquiry, and encourages personal reflection for all stakeholders
- All teachers receive **IB training** to promote understanding of the IB philosophy, the school's IB policies, and components of the IB programs

Academic Needs

Special Education Needs (SEN) refers to any student who shows a need for extra support or for challenge beyond the general curriculum. We recognize the wide spectrum of needs and abilities along a continuum, including students with learning disabilities as well as the gifted and talented.

Students are advised upon program entry of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement and academic success. In addition to employing teaching strategies that include differentiation for students with special needs, students are also supported through special arrangements if necessary. All SALIS students have access to the following supports and opportunities:

- **Individual Learning Assistance:** Trained faculty aid students in understanding their personal organizational and time management needs, developing strategies for success
- **Better Together:** Student representatives offer tutoring to students
- **ARC—Academic Remedial Coaching:** SALIS faculty assistants offer free afternoon tutoring in each discipline
- **Remediation:** Semester-long program for students needing to compensate for Austrian State expectations, usually in language or mathematics skills
- **“Studienchecker”:** Career and university admissions courses and counselling
- **“Talentecheck”**--cooperation with WKS (Salzburg Institute for Economic Promotion): Testing designed to help students and families make educational decisions based on personality, personal interests, technical competencies, and intellectual aptitude.
- All teachers utilize a variety of formative assessments to determine individual student needs and abilities and to tailor subsequent instruction
 - Classroom support for all students with special education needs and abilities may include curriculum modification, enrichment activities, classroom accommodations, multisensory activities, assistive technology and tools, small-group instruction, or one-on-one support, depending on what all stakeholders agree upon
- Whenever possible, teachers develop summative assessments that are differentiated to provide necessary modification, challenges, and student choice.
 - Students who have been identified with special education needs and abilities will meet with the IB coordinator to ensure that their accommodations can also be provided on any IB internal or external assessments. This is also true for regulating the Austrian Matura (“Österreichische Reifeprüfungsverordnung”)
- SALIS makes yearly plans for weekly staff development (PD – Professional Development Meetings) and will include in that plan time for horizontal and vertical collaboration on curriculum, assessment, student learning and plans for differentiation

Gifted students are offered the following programs:

- **“Drehtürmodell”:** Revolving door acceleration opportunities for middle school students to attend secondary school classes in subjects of their choice.
- **Joint Enrollment:** In cooperation with the “özbF”, students from the 10th grade onwards are offered the opportunity to take university courses
- **The Talent Promotion Courses:** Based on the ALM (Autonomous Learner Model) by George Betts, courses are offered to 2nd form/6th grade through 10th grade students. Two courses per school year allow students to use a variety of skills in project-based learning
- **“Pluskurse”:** A wide choice of courses offered through the Salzburg Education Authority, including science, arts, economy and social affairs, languages and culture
- **SALIS Plus Courses:** Additional courses on offer for all BG Zaunergasse students, provided and organised by SALIS. Participation is fee-based.

Physical and Psychological Needs

The Austrian law requires public buildings to be fully accessible to everyone, and each student has a right to instruction and testing environments that are fair and equal. The following list provides an overview of how physical and psychological needs are met at SALIS:

- Projected remodel of the school: SALIS is already part of the school redevelopment plan – “Schulentwicklungsplan”, SCHEP to create a safer and more accessible infrastructure.
- There is an accessible bathroom available on the ground floor
- Faculty has experience with modifications and accommodations for visual impairments, partially deaf/ deaf students, and cochlear implants (CI)
- Cooperation with the Joseph-Rehrl-Schule, special needs education and in-house training for faculty and assistants (“StützlehrerInnen” – support teachers)
- A doctor (GP) is on campus three days a week
- Cooperation with the school Heilstättenschule of the regional hospitals, Salzburger Landeskrankenhaus and Landesnervenklinik, which provides education for students who cannot attend school because of health issues
- A psychologist is on campus one morning per week
- Dependence Prevention Teacher Representative (“Vertrauenslehrer zur Suchtprävention”)
- A Crisis intervention team is in place on campus
- Addiction prevention workshops occur at regular intervals, cooperation with “Akzente Salzburg”
- Click & check workshops occur at regular intervals, cooperation with local authorities on internet security and cyber-crime prevention

Any student with a special education need must be identified prior to starting the Diploma Program. Special arrangements may include modifications to exam papers, extensions to deadlines, assistance to practical work, additional time, information and communication technology, scribe and transcription, or readers, in line with IB Diploma Programme regulations.

IB Diploma Program special arrangement requests must be submitted to the SALIS IB Coordinator by June 1st of the year prior to entering the IBDP year 1 class and must be authorized by the IBO. Please read the support mechanisms for students needing special arrangements as outlined in the IB publication ***Candidates With Special Assessment Needs***. (occ.ibo.org)

SALIS administration, faculty, and staff strive to meet the needs of each member within the school community. We seek to encourage a safe, just, and friendly environment regarding student differences and abilities. In case a student requires specific assistance, the SALIS administration, faculty, and staff is prepared to support its community members with the resources available or find appropriate and considerate solutions.

A committee will be formed to review special needs practices and this IB policy at the time of each program evaluation. The committee will consist of IB coordinators, administrators, teachers, and parents.

As inclusive education in (higher) secondary schools is still in its early stages, it is necessary to develop effective strategies to increase access and participation in secondary schools such as BG Zaunergasse. The process of evaluating and improving the SALIS special educational needs policy is continual and involves the collaboration and responsibility of the whole school community, the learners, their parents and caregivers, the IB coordinator, the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff:

Responsibilities of the school

- The school needs to make sure that all teachers and staff as well as parents and students are familiar with the ideas of learning diversity and inclusion.
- Teachers and staff must be informed about special educational needs of individual students and provided with supportive training.
- The school must ensure that there are arrangements for teaching and assessment that comply with the SALIS Special Educational Needs Policy, IB requirements and with the Austrian law.

Responsibilities of the teachers

- Teachers should participate in training on learning diversity and inclusion when available.
- Teachers must be aware of Austrian laws and IB regulations regarding special educational needs and comply with them.
- Teachers need to identify students with special educational needs, show them that their needs are taken seriously, and support them during lessons using differentiated teaching methods.
- Teachers must inform the form teacher and the IB coordinator about students with special educational needs, but discretion and confidentiality must be maintained.

Responsibilities of the IB coordinator

- The IB coordinator must be aware of Austrian laws and IB regulations regarding special educational needs and comply with them.
- The IB coordinator must talk to parents, teachers, and students at an early stage in order to ensure that the individual student's needs are met.
- The IB coordinator must inform the headmaster about any requests for inclusive assessment arrangements he or she wants to make and the headmaster must support them before they are submitted to the IB.¹
- The IB coordinator must maintain discretion in providing special educational needs services.

Responsibilities of parents

- Parents should show interest and play an active role in their child's education.
- Parents need to communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's special educational needs.
- Parents need to communicate to the school if there are any changes concerning these needs.
- Parents should discuss inclusive assessment arrangements with the IB coordinator and provide the IB coordinator with the documentation needed for the request.

Responsibilities of students

- Students should communicate their needs regarding their education openly towards parents, teachers, and the IB coordinator, and they can be sure that their needs are taken seriously.
- Students should be aware of the fact that they can always ask for information and support.
- If a request for inclusive assessment arrangements is made, students need to inform themselves and give their consent to this request.
- Students are expected to participate actively in the learning process.

¹ The student (if over 18) or otherwise the parents need to give their consent to a request for inclusive assessment arrangements.

References and links to further information:

Candidates with Special Assessment Needs (occ.ibo.org)

Earl Wooster High School Special Education Policy:

<https://www.woostercolts.com/cms/lib/NV02000980/Centricity/Shared/pdf/ib/ib-programme/ib-special-education-policy.pdf>

Erlass zur Vorbereitung und Durchführung der (standardisierten) Klausur- und Kompensationsprüfungen für AHS/BHS einschließlich BAKIP/BASOP:

https://www.grg23vbs.ac.at/fileadmin/media/infomat/matura/Erlass_VorbereitungKlausurAHS.pdf

Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (2010)

http://www.istafrica.com/uploaded/documents/WeeklyBulletin/Learning_diversity_in_IB_programmes_2010.pdf

Lese-Rechtschreibschwäche oder Legasthenie bei Schülerinnen und Schülern:

<https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/service/schulinfo/legasthenie.html>

Reifeprüfungsverordnung 2012:

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009735&FassungVom=2012-08-31>

Special Education and Learning Needs Guide (occ.ibo.org)

Standardisierte, kompetenzorientierte Reifeprüfung an BHS:

https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/reifepruefung_bhs.html

Übereinkommen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen:

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2016_III_105/BGBLA_2016_III_105.html

Verordnung des Bundesministers für Unterricht und Kunst vom 14. November 1984 über die Lehrpläne der allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen; Bekanntmachung der Lehrpläne für den Religionsunterricht an diesen Schulen (Fassung 10.6.2019)

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10008568>

Verordnung der Bundesministerin für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur über die Reifeprüfung in den allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen (Prüfungsordnung AHS):

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20007845>