



Inclusion policy

Philosophy

The faculty and staff of Gymnasium Birkenfeld strive to build a community that is supportive of all students who choose to participate in the IB. We believe in supporting all of our students, including those with special needs, so that conditions for the programme are as fair and equitable as possible. (Access and Inclusion Policy, published September 2022, p.1; § 2 Grundsatz, Schulordnung für den inklusiven Unterricht an öffentlichen Schulen Vom 16. Mai 2024)

Identification

Before students begin their first year of the IB programme, the IB Coordinator Senior Head of School generate a roster of students and identify students with special educational needs.

It is important that students and their parents are forthcoming concerning a student's special needs and cooperative concerning professional documentation.

If the database indicates that a student has special educational needs, then the IB Coordinator and Senior Head of School share this information with the teachers of the IB student, and all involved work together to assist the student with his or her special needs.

Meeting Needs within the Classroom

The IB Coordinator and Senior Head of School meet with the student, parents and teachers to discuss necessary measures. The teachers work with the student and parents concerning how the student's needs will be met in their individual classrooms and to decide on the best routes of communication for monitoring the student's progress. Teachers are expected to inform the IB Coordinator and Senior Head of School if problems or concerns arise.

One example how special needs are being dealt with in everyday practice: In Languages, i.e. German as well as English and French, special arrangements for students with specific performance deficits, especially dyslexia, are regulated by circular from the Ministry of Education of the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate. These include for example the possibility of remedial courses as well as extension of time allowed for tests or help by

technical equipment to make sure that all students can show their true potential in examinations and are not disadvantaged in any way (compare language policy).

In general, a positive coexistence of people calls for an appreciative and sensitive interaction with each other, especially with regard to the cultural diversity of our society. This is a basic prerequisite for the creation of equal opportunities and education. The KMK recommendations on "Intercultural Education and Training" (2013) have described this aspect as follows:

“With the growing socio-cultural diversity and the associated demands for an equal participation of all in every area of social life, the intercultural opening up and the reduction of structural discrimination have become special challenges. Schools are faced with the task of providing all children and young people, irrespective of their background, comprehensive participation in education and opportunities for the greatest possible educational success, the successful organization of integration processes and thus to a peaceful, democratic coexistence and orientation for responsible behaviour in the globalized world to mediate.” (KMK stands for the conference of the Ministries of Education in all sixteen states of Germany)

In order to promote the idea of an intercultural school and teaching development in the schools, Gymnasium Birkenfeld provides integration classes (international integration classes) for this purpose.

Access arrangements in the IB Diploma Programme

The IB Diploma Programme at our school is an offer for highly motivated and committed students who demonstrate a talent for language learning and the willingness to excel. To ensure fair and equal access to learning access arrangements for students with disabling weaknesses (e.g. attentional disorder, physical impairment, etc.) concerning teaching and assessment may be considered by the IB coordinator and authorized by the IBO. Disadvantage compensation is decided on depending on the individual case and comprises – if need be - the full range of assistive support as authorized by the IBO. The IB Coordinator is responsible for communication with students, parents and the IBO if IB candidates have special educational needs. It is the coordinator’s responsibility to make sure that teaching and assessment is in line with the IB DP rules and regulations. To ensure access arrangements for students with inclusive assessment needs, we follow the following process.

- The form teachers or heads of year will identify students who have special educational needs or disabilities and assess their needs to determine the support they require. This may involve consultation with parents, teachers, the IB coordinator and other professionals. Students and their legal guardians are expected to proactively contact the school and the IB coordinator in this case.
- For students with identified and diagnosed special educational needs for which documentation is provided, the school will develop an individualized education plan which outlines the student's specific needs, goals, and strategies for meeting those goals. It is developed in collaboration with the student, their parents, and their teachers. Inclusive access arrangements must not give a student an unfair advantage.
- The school will regularly monitor and review the progress of students with special educational needs to ensure that they are receiving the support they really need. This may involve meetings with parents and teachers to discuss the student's progress, collecting supporting documentation to verify the access arrangements and making any necessary adjustments to these.
- The candidate's progress will be evaluated twice a year by the IB Staff Conference. If necessary, suitable means of support will be recommended, which may range from the use of additional learning material to intensive counselling and tutoring. If access arrangements require authorization from the IBO, the IB coordinator will submit a request for inclusive assessment arrangements during the final exams to the IBO. Requests for inclusive access arrangements must be submitted six months prior to an examination session to the IB coordinator and include a signed and dated psychological/psycho-educational/medical report or evidence from a language test for additional language learners and educational evidence from the school together with a translation in English.

The inclusive access arrangements provided for a student must:

- be carefully individualized, evaluated and monitored;
- reflect the optimal support that the student requires;
- be based on current, not past, requirements;

- be drawn upon teacher observations in the classroom;
- be considered in line with the eligibility criteria for inclusive access arrangements in this policy and the IB policies
- be strictly based on individual requirements.

(see <https://resources.ibo.org/data/access-and-inclusion-policy> accessed 8 December 2024, § 7 Individuelle Förderung, Schulordnung für den inklusiven Unterricht an öffentlichen Schulen Vom 16. Mai 2024)

Meeting Needs with IB Assessments

The IB Coordinator informs the IBO using the appropriate forms and providing the necessary documentation of the special needs of students requiring accommodations such as extended time on examination papers. Once the IB Coordinator learns of the decision of the IB, the student, parents, and teachers involved will be informed.

School has a very special importance in the life of our children. Learning is not just an exciting development process, which children and teenagers go through together with other participants. School learning and school success are the cornerstones of a fair share in our society.

The aim of the IB is therefore to create a school community in which every child and every young person can exploit his or her potentials and opportunities independently of his or her background. This is achieved through an "individual support", which is beneficial for all students.

Adverse circumstances in the IB Diploma Programme

If an adverse circumstance, such as family bereavement or temporary illness, affects a candidate, either during the preparation of work for assessment or during written examinations, the IB coordinator needs to be informed. The affected candidate may not always be eligible for compensation; the coordinator will counsel the student on this issue based on IB rules and regulations.

- Adverse Circumstances during Examinations (Authorization from the IBO required) If a candidate is too ill to attend school, but on medical advice is capable to take the examinations at home or in hospital, authorization may be given for the examination to be taken at an alternative venue. In principle, the examination should be taken at the same time as other candidates in the group, but if necessary the application for an

alternative venue may include a request to reschedule the examination. Authorization to take an examination at an alternative venue must be obtained. The use of an amanuensis is permitted for all forms of assessment where a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten response or use a word processor. Additional time may be authorized for written examinations and for certain activities connected to internal assessment according to the candidate's assessed needs.

- **Adverse Circumstances during Examinations (No Authorization from the IBO required)** At the discretion of the IB coordinator (or Head of School), the following arrangements are permitted in examinations without prior authorization from the IBO. A candidate is permitted to take an examination in a separate room if it is in the best interests of the candidate or other candidates in the group as long as all regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations are being observed. The coordinator may arrange for appropriate seating to meet the needs of individual candidates (for example, sitting near the front may be appropriate for a candidate with a visual or hearing impairment). A candidate may take medication and/or refreshment to alleviate a medical condition such as diabetes. A care assistant may be in attendance if this is necessary for the welfare or safety of a candidate. A candidate who normally uses an aid (for example a hearing aid) is allowed to use the aid in examinations.
- **Extensions to Deadlines** This arrangement applies to cases of illness or accident when a candidate is genuinely prevented from completing work in time. A request for an extension to a deadline must in these cases be received before the normal deadline.
- **Exemptions from Assessment** Exemptions are not normally granted for any assessment component of the Diploma Programme. However, if an assessment component or part demands a physiological function that a candidate is not able to perform, an exemption may be authorized. If a diploma candidate is unable to complete all requirements for CAS owing to a medical condition, the coordinator must contact the IBO regional office for advice.

Practices: Formative assessment in the IB Diploma Programme

In order to be able “to cater for the diversity of learners and learning experiences in the classroom” (Access and inclusion policy IBO, p. 5) formative assessment is seen as a tool to identify learning obstacles and to find ways to remove them. It allows for students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, which is helpful in taking the necessary steps to move learning forward and to develop to the fullest. Some examples of formative assessment at our school are:

- peer assessment (e.g. based on given or self-defined criteria) ask students to think about their own learning process
- asking students to set individual goals on the basis of their results e.g. in a written exam, concerning their oral participation
- mock exams in preparation of written and oral exams (combined e.g. with peer assessment) help students reflect on what they still need to learn to meet expectations.
- differentiated learning in the classroom regarding the content (adjustment to students’ needs by varying the difficulty or complexity of the materials to be studied, by offering support material, by choosing textbooks that include differentiated materials), the process (teaching methods like Think-Pair-Share, self-directed learning cycles etc.) or product (e.g. text type).

References:

Access and Inclusion Policy, published September 2022, Updated September 2023

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

Schulordnung für den inklusiven Unterricht an öffentlichen Schulen Vom 16. Mai 2024

https://bm.rlp.de/fileadmin/09/03_Unsere_Schwerpunkte/Inklusion/Dokumente/Schulordnung_fuer_den_inklusiven_Unterricht_an_oeffentlichen_Schulen.pdf

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