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Policy on the Provision of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools 2020/2021

Amendment of the Policy approved the BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS in its meeting of 13, 14 and 15 April 2021 by written procedure No 2021/20 on 20 May 2021

This document cancels and replaces document 2012-05-D-14-en-9.

Immediate entry into force

Background

The words expressing the essential aims of the European Schools have been sealed in parchment into the foundation stones of all the European Schools:

“Educated side by side, untroubled from infancy by divisive prejudices, acquainted with all that is great and good in the different cultures, will be borne in upon them as they mature that they belong together. Without ceasing to look to their own lands with love and pride, they will become in mind Europeans, schooled and ready to complete and consolidate the work of their fathers before them, to bring into being a united and thriving Europe.”

The European School is a multilingual and multicultural environment in which the primacy of a child’s mother tongue is safeguarded wherever possible.

The European School offers a single type of general academic education, in which learning conditions become increasingly demanding. This single academic pathway, involving highly cognitive and abstract learning, leads to the award of the European Baccalaureate diploma.

Inclusive Education is the guiding principle of the European Schools, which serve a diverse and mobile pupil population and offers diverse/flexible teaching and learning approaches adapted to children with different learning profiles.

The European Schools work together with the families as from the admission to ensure that the individual needs of every child requiring reasonable accommodation, the provision of support, or challenge are met in order to help them to achieve their full potential.

Different forms and levels of support are provided, designed to ensure appropriate help and equal opportunities for all the pupils, including those having special educational needs, experiencing difficulties at any point in their schooling or gifted ones in order to allow enable them to develop and progress according to their potential.

Introduction

- The policy clarifies and harmonises the provision of support in the European Schools and ensures that the child is at the centre of the support.
- The policy was revised in the context of the ES’ commitment to ensure the right to Inclusive Education according to Article 24 of the UN Convention as a follow-up to the UN recommendation and the 2018 evaluation and Report on Inclusive education.
- The policy should be considered in the broader context of inclusive education and promotion of the well-being of pupils as well as their cognitive, affective and creative development.
- The policy avoids categorising or labelling negatively the child by recognising that any child may need support at some time during his/her schooling.
- The policy makes clear that decisions concerning support are made in the best interest of the child.
- The policy recognises the need to harmonise support across the schools. However, each school exists in its own local context, so detailed arrangements for meeting pupils’ needs and abilities should take local differences and opportunities into account.

- The policy on the Provision of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools has been conceived in line with the key EU strategies.
- Schools' internal guidelines and procedures must be in line with this document. In case of disagreement, the current document overrules the local rules and practices put in place by the Schools.

How to read this document

The aims and principles of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools are stated in this policy document. Definitions and descriptions of every area are set out in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

As the European Schools exist in a multicultural and multilingual context it is necessary to agree on definitions for certain concepts which are used in a very specific way. These definitions have a meaning within the European Schools context which may differ from those used in member states.

Before discussing the different forms of Educational Support, the general principles of learning in the European Schools need to be noted.

1. Teaching and learning in the European Schools

1.1. Communication and collaboration with legal representatives

The European Schools believe that where parents are involved in their children's education and work in partnership with the school, children achieve and thrive more. Communication between the school and the pupil's legal representatives should be open and regular.

This communication is organised in accordance with Article 24 of the General Rules of the European Schools¹. It is essential that parents inform the school of any issues which could affect their child's learning progress and that the school regularly informs parents on their child's development.

1.2. Access to Learning on equal basis and differentiated teaching

The European Schools (ES) are faced with ever greater challenges as the school population becomes increasingly diverse. In order to meet the needs of individual pupils, teachers use a variety of differentiated teaching methods in their classrooms.

In order to meet the needs and abilities of individual pupils, the European Schools apply a consistent framework for the early identification to identify the pupils' functional strengths, abilities and learning styles.

¹ See Article 24 of the General Rules of the European Schools – 2014-3-D-14 - <http://www.eursc.eu/getfile/278/2>.

The European Schools recognize that each student learns in a unique manner and teachers promote the access to learning by creating accessible and flexible learning environments, using of a variety of teaching methods and learning materials in their classrooms. Under certain conditions, a pupil may follow a modified curriculum.

Differentiation is the planning and execution of teaching and learning for all children in all classes which take account of individual differences in learning style, interest, motivation and aptitude, and reflecting these differences in the classroom.

Differentiation forms the basis of effective teaching. It is essential for all pupils, including those pupils requiring support or challenge. Differentiated teaching aimed at meeting all the pupils' needs and abilities is the responsibility of every teacher working in the European Schools and must be common classroom practice.

Differentiated teaching ensures that in planning and delivering lessons, teachers are aware of and take into consideration the different learning styles and individual needs and abilities of all pupils.

This includes meeting the needs of:

- pupils with different learning styles;
- pupils studying in a language section which does not correspond to their dominant language;
- pupils arriving in the system at a later stage who have followed a different curriculum and/or whose knowledge and skills show possible gaps;
- pupils with a mild learning difficulty;
- pupils with a diagnosed special educational need;
- gifted and talented pupils

When taking into account the planning and implementation of differentiated teaching, in order to ensure inclusion and participation, it is vital that the whole class is engaged so that the pupils' sense of belonging to a community is adhered to as a priority. Negative or too explicit labelling of diverse learners is to be avoided at all cost.

1.3. Educational Support

1.3.1. Reasonable accommodation

Depending on their needs, pupils may require different accommodations. European schools offer material and non-material reasonable accommodations in learning and assessment situations.

The European Schools may consider the provision of assistive/compensatory technology (devices, applications, and software) and other accommodations to those pupils with disabilities who may require them to enable them to access education on an equal basis with others.

The European Schools are aware of the rapid development of innovations and new technologies designed to facilitate early identification of eventual learning needs and abilities, remove barriers to access the curriculum and enhance learning and aims at making them accessible to the teaching and learning process, including as special arrangements to all types assessment.

1.3.2. Where normal differentiation in the classroom is not enough, the European Schools provide a range of support structures. Support is flexible and varies as a pupil develops and his/her needs change.

These support measures result in general, moderate or intensive support, type A, B and/or special arrangements.

1.3.3. Universal and Special arrangements

In the context of the equal access, the European Schools have an accessibility duty and offer universal arrangements available to the pupils who might require it, in order to enable pupils to make full use of their potential and to ensure equal opportunities.

1.3.3.1 The European Schools offer special arrangements. These arrangements are listed and made available to pupils during examinations, tests and other forms of assessment to allow the pupil to fulfil his/her potential in the fairest possible way.

The list of special arrangements must take into account the evolution in assistive/compensatory technologies, providing that they are approved at system level in the domains of educational relevance, robustness and data protection compliance.

The list is available in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

1.3.3.2. Special arrangements are authorised when they are clearly related to the pupils' diagnosed need(s) by means of a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report justifying these special arrangements.

1.3.3.3. The implementation of special arrangements is decided on an individual basis by the School Management (up to and including S5) following discussion in the Support Advisory Group (SAG) or, in the case this does not apply, with parents and teachers. The arrangements are included in the pupil's Individual Learning Plan, whenever applicable.

1.3.3.4. In S6 and S7, certain special arrangements can be directly authorised by the Director, other arrangements require the approval of the Board of Inspectors for the secondary cycle, according to the list of both categories of special arrangements as set out in the document 'Provision of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools - Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15) and included as an annex to the document 'Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Baccalaureate' (2015-05-D-12).

1.3.3.5. If the evaluation conditions during the Pre-Baccalaureate and Baccalaureate examinations present a risk to disadvantage the candidate in terms of his/her performance – especially if he/she shows special educational needs – by preventing him/her from demonstrating the level at which he/she has acquired the required competences, special arrangements may be requested and authorised for the written and oral examinations. These special arrangements are intended to remove barriers and to ensure equal opportunities in the assessment process to all the pupils.

The request procedure for applying for special arrangements for the European Baccalaureate is listed in the aforementioned document 'Provision of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools - Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15) and included as an annex to the document 'Arrangements for Implementing the Regulations of the European Baccalaureate' (2015-05-D-12).

1.4. Educational Support Provision

All forms of support should be considered as progressive since they are based on meeting the pupil's needs and abilities, which may vary over time. It is possible for a pupil to benefit from several different levels of support at the same time.

Additional support may result in individual or group lessons to supplement the regular curriculum.

A pupil's absence from other lessons while receiving Educational Support should be restricted to exceptional cases. Educational Support can be general, moderate or intensive.

Educational Support may be provided in situ or at distance, in line with the 'Distance Teaching and Learning Policy for the European Schools' (2020-09-D-10) and with the provisions established in the 'Provision of Educational Support and Inclusive Education in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

1.4.1 General Support

General Support concerns any pupil who may experience difficulties in a particular aspect of a subject or who may need to 'catch up' in a given subject, for example, due to late arrival in the school or illness or because he/she is not studying in his/her dominant language. Pupils may also need additional help with acquiring effective learning strategies or study skills. Such support is provided in or outside the classroom, to small groups and it is short term. Groups are organised vertically, horizontally, within or across sections, by focusing on the needs of the pupils concerned.

The support is planned and specific targets are set, including criteria for success and the information is included in the Group Learning Plan (GLP). The Group Learning Plan is produced by the Support Teacher in coordination with the class/subject teacher and kept by the Support Coordinator.

1.4.2 Moderate Support

Moderate Support is an extension of General Support in terms of complexity and duration and is provided for pupils with a mild learning difficulty or in need of more targeted support. This could be appropriate for pupils who may be experiencing considerable difficulty in accessing the curriculum due to, for example, language issues, concentration problems or other reasons.

Each pupil has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP includes specific learning objectives and criteria for evaluating the pupil's progress and the success of the support. The pupil receiving Moderate Support is following the standard curriculum and he/she is assessed according to the given criteria and learning objectives for his/her class.

This support is given to small groups of pupils with similar needs and abilities or, where appropriate, to individual pupils in or outside the classroom. Groups are organised vertically, horizontally, within or across sections, by focusing on the needs and abilities of the pupils concerned. The methods of assessment used by the subject teacher may be adapted and special arrangements may be considered appropriate.

1.4.3 Intensive Support

Intensive Support is provided to pupils showing special educational needs according to the descriptions in A and B below and in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

In both cases, support can be provided in order to help the pupil develop the required competences (subject knowledge, skills and attitudes). Support is provided in or outside the classroom and to small groups of pupils with similar needs or abilities or to individual pupils. Each pupils receiving Intensive Support has an Individual Learning Plan.

A. This Intensive Support **type A** (ISA) is provided on the basis of a medical/psychological/psycho-educational and/or multidisciplinary report produced by an expert, justifying the pupil's special individual needs and abilities and including the signing of an agreement between the Director and the parents. Intensive Support is provided for pupils with special educational needs such as learning, emotional, behavioural or physical needs (see also the document 'Provision of Educational support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

The provision of Intensive Support is recommended to the Director by the Support Advisory Group. Pupils can follow the standard or modified curriculum. In the latter situation, the pupil accompanies his/her class with progression but without promotion to the next class and as long as this can be shown to be in the best interest of the pupil's social and academic development.

B. This Intensive Support **type B** (ISB) is provided in exceptional circumstances, and on a short-term basis only, and a Director may decide to provide Intensive Support B for a pupil without special educational needs, for example, in the form of intensive language support for a pupil who is unable to access the standard curriculum.

1.5 Decisions concerning the provision of reasonable accommodation

The European Schools are committed to providing Inclusive Education, taking into account the best educational response to the pupils' needs and abilities. This responsibility encompasses assuring general accessibility, including for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities; the provision of reasonable accommodation to the pupils' needs and ensuring a smooth and effective transition to other educational paths, when appropriated.

There may be occasions where, despite the school's best efforts, the School may not be able to provide reasonable accommodation to respond to the pupil's needs. In those cases, the schools should duly justify the reasons. Other educational options should be considered in cooperation with the educational system of the host country of the School or of the home country of a pupil or the country of future destination of the pupil by either complementing the European Schools' educational offer or ensuring a smooth and effective transition to other educational paths/options.

Before taking the final decision on the provision of the accommodations to cater for the pupil's needs or ensuring a smooth and effective transition to alternative schooling options, the Director must seek advice from the Educational Support Coordinator and the Support Advisory Group as well as from the Educational Support inspectors and the relevant national inspectors.

2. Roles and responsibilities

The promotion of Inclusive Education, including the provision of Educational Support, entails a whole system and whole school approach.

Ensuring the promotion of, the commitment towards, and awareness-raising across the system on common values and principles inherent to inclusive education, the availability of resources and the allocation of qualified professionals to the provision of Educational Support is a responsibility that must be shared at system level.

The stakeholders responsible for successful implementation of the Support Policy are the national authorities, the Board of Governors, the Boards of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee, the Budgetary Committee, the Educational Support Policy Group, the Pedagogical Development Unit, the Bacccalaureate Unit and the ICT and Statistics Unit of the Office of the Secretary-General, Support Inspectors and national inspectors of the Member States hosting a European School, the European Schools, pupils and their legal representatives.

3. Resources

3.1. Human resources

The European Schools must take appropriate measures to employ teaching and non-teaching staff with the skills to work effectively in inclusive education environments and qualified to provide Educational Support. An adequate number of qualified and committed school staff is a key asset in the introduction and sustainability of inclusive education.

Educational Support is based on multi-professional cooperation. The school management must assure timely planning and allocation of qualified staff to provide Educational Support and recruitment and training is done in accordance. Roles, duties and working conditions of support coordinators, support teachers, support assistants, psychologists and therapists are described in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

3.2. Material resources

Fulfilment of accessibility standards as well as the necessary and updated technologies and material resources must be assured in order to enable the access and participation of all pupils in the learning process on equal basis with others.

Educational Support requires suitable accessible rooms, assistive and compensatory technologies, equipment and material for its activities. Calculation of the budget allocated for support follows the regulations of the European Schools. The allocation for General, Moderate and Intensive Support is described in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

4. Administration

The rules for admission, procedures and documentation are clarified in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools document – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15).

5. Assessment and promotion

5.1. Principles of assessment and promotion

Assessment of pupils receiving support and appeals procedures follow the regulations set out in Chapter IX of the General Rules of the European Schools. In accordance with Article 57(a) and with Article 61 of the General Rules of the European Schools, all decisions concerning promotion to the year above are taken by the Class Council.

5.2. Educational Support aims at enabling the pupil to reach the levels of performance/and at developing the competences as required for all pupils. A pupil benefiting from a modified curriculum in order to meet his/her needs will be promoted when he/she meets the expected requirements for his/her study level as defined in the General Rules of the European Schools and in the assessment criteria of the different subjects.

If a pupil is not promoted, he/she may progress with his class group for as long as this is beneficial to the pupil's social and academic development. In that case, this is referred to as progression without promotion. From a formal point of view, the pupil who progresses without promotion remains 'non-promoted' (for example, with a view to integration into another school system).

5.3. Any pupil having benefited from progression without promotion may return to a 'standard curriculum' and be promoted to a higher class if he/she shows that the minimum requirements for his/her study level have been met.

All European Baccalaureate candidates must have followed the full S6 and S7 curriculum in order to qualify for award of the Baccalaureate diploma.

A pupil can only qualify for award of the European Baccalaureate when he/she has been duly promoted from S6 to S7.

6. Certification and transition to national schools

When a pupil follows a modified curriculum, the European Schools will issue a certificate describing the subjects followed, the hours completed and the level of the pupil's attainment, which will be recognised by in the Member States similarly to the correspondent national certificates.²

In this respect, national Inspectors will ensure the close cooperation between the school and national educational system.

7. Transition between cycles

Transition between cycles plays a crucial role in every pupil's educational career. Pupils, especially those following Educational Support, need to make positive adjustments to the new cycle so that their wellbeing is maintained and their learning process is coherent and continuous.

² Article 5.1 of the Convention defining the Statute of the European Schools: "Years of study successfully completed at the School and diplomas and certificates in respect thereof shall be recognized in the territory of the Member States, in accordance with a table of equivalence, under conditions determined by the Board of Governors as laid down in Article 11 and subject to the agreement of the competent national authorities."

The School must put in place a transition plan that ensures that all pertinent information and documentation is effectively shared and discussed between the parties in the different cycles involved in the pupils's learning process.

The document 'Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition nursery/primary/secondary' (2015-09-D-41) expands on the rules relating to transition.

8. Quality Assurance

In order to ensure the quality of the Educational Support provided in the European Schools, a number of measures are in place. The roles, responsibilities and procedures are defined in the document 'Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools document – Procedural document' (2012-05-D-15). The efficiency and effectiveness of the support provided is monitored and evaluated at both the system and the school level.

Above all, quality assurance of Educational Support, including the practice of differentiation and inclusion, is an integral part of the quality assurance and continuous development of the school and the system.

9. Data protection

The European Schools assure good governance in Educational Support.

Data processing activities are handled only by staff members with a legitimate need to access the pupils and legal representatives/parents' personal data, for the purchases described above.

The staff members of the European Schools processing personal data will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.