

HBG special education needs policy

The following policy is communicated to the school community, share- and stakeholders alike with the help of our school webpage, the IB school brochure and will continuously be subject of discussion during regular staff meetings. As such it becomes part of the school policies, valid for students and teachers alike.

General Overview

The Hermann-Böse-Gymnasium mission statement includes the “values of a democratic and humane society as the basis of our education and teaching practices. These values incorporate consideration for others and tolerance”. In this context, we appreciate the differences between individuals and do not only aim at integrating students with special educational needs but consider them a valuable addition to our school campus.

The city-state of Bremen was the first of the sixteen states of Germany to introduce the concept of “inclusive schools” with the beginning of the school year 2009-10 by arliamentary resolution. Inclusive schools allow all students a comprehensive and unrestricted access to education.

All secondary schools have to include students with special educational needs by parents request. This means that in these cases students with special educational needs learn in groups together with other students. The senator of education provides the framework for inclusion, including teacher-training, additional teaching-hour-equivalents for school and specially trained teachers.

The only impediment to students with special educational needs concerns students with physical disabilities. The Hermann-Böse-Gymnasium was founded in 1906 and enjoys a status as a state-protected monument which does not allow for any constructional changes on the in- or outside of the building. The construction of ramps or elevators for students in wheelchair is therefore by law not possible.

Purpose

IB World schools have a responsibility to provide access to the curriculum and academic rigor for all students, including opportunities to pursue individual interests, regardless of individual abilities and needs.

Definitions

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. As a secondary state school in Bremen, we are bound to use the policy for special educational needs and inclusion as prescribed by the senator of education. Within these given boundaries, the Hermann-Böse-Gymnasium can develop and align its special education needs policy in accordance with IB prescribed criteria. **Special Education Needs (SEN)** refers to students who show documented need of support or challenge beyond the standard curriculum. We recognize a wide spectrum of special education needs in accordance with IB definitions such as attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, dyscalculia, dyslexia, dyspraxia,

hearing impairments, medical conditions, mental health, physical disabilities, visual impairments, speech/language/communication needs and giftedness.

Differentiation is an instructional design model that modifies the written, taught, and assessed curriculum in order to meet individual needs.

Principles

- All students can learn; all students have a right to a holistic, inclusive education in a caring and stimulating environment
- We place great emphasis on the responsibilities of all teachers to be aware of and provide for students with special educational needs
- We believe all students should be responsible for their own learning by taking an active role in identifying, monitoring, and meeting their own learning needs and abilities
- We view a student's education as a partnership between the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the school and teachers, and the community
- We recognize that modifying curriculum and coursework to meet an individual student's needs may be necessary and appropriate

Assessment

All teachers will utilize a variety of formative assessments to determine individual student needs and abilities and to tailor subsequent instruction. Teachers will develop summative assessments that are differentiated to provide necessary modifications, challenges, and student choice. Students who appear to have special educational needs and abilities will be given further internal and/or external assessments to identify appropriate modifications as needed. Decisions on special arrangements for final examinations for the German Abitur are taken by a special evaluation committee. Requests for special arrangements for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme are transferred to the International Baccalaureate according to the IB regulations after the evaluation committee has decided on the entitlement for special arrangements in close cooperation with the IB Diploma Programme Coordinator.

Examples for special arrangements can only cover some aspects, but give an insight in the general nature of the arrangements.

Special arrangements at the Hermann-Böse-Gymnasium can include:

- changes in the student's working place organization
- modification of font sizes and colors of worksheets and examination papers
- spatial changes e.g. concerning acoustic and lights
- use of special tools like pens, rulers
- use of information and communication technology
- temporary suspension of spelling assessment (for students suffering from dyslexia in grade 5- 10)
- additional time
- rest periods

Support

Support for students with special educational needs and abilities include but are not limited to curriculum modification. Enrichment activities, classroom accommodations, small group instruction, and one-on-one support. When it is determined that a student would benefit from additional support outside of the classroom, services are provided to meet academic, social, or behavioral needs. Additionally, paraprofessionals may provide further support to students. There are numerous measures our school offers when talking about our special education needs policy. These include primary diagnosis in the core subjects in grades 5 and 7 concerning special educational needs, team teaching during years 5 and 6, language support strategies for students who are not native German speakers and/or show speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). Furthermore special educational needs courses are offered for students suffering from Dyscalculia and Dyslexia, medical conditions, mental health issues and/or attention deficit disorder.

Special arrangements are decided during class conferences (years 5 to 10), teachers conferences (in years 11 and 12) or, when final exams are concerned, with the help of an evaluation committee consisting of the head of school, the deputy head and one coordinator of the senior management team.

The introduction of special arrangements are always prepared by the teachers concerned and are reviewed with the student's parents. The special arrangement takes effect only with a decision by one of the conferences mentioned above. The decision must imply all details of the special arrangement including an individualized educational plan and the continuous documentation of the chosen measures.

Prerequisite for an identification of an entitlement for special arrangements is only possible by continuous observation of the student in class and might require diagnostic tools. In many cases the diagnosis can be done by teachers, in other cases there might be a need of support and cooperation by internal school support centers like the *Zentrum für unterstützende Pädagogik – ZuP* (center for special educational needs) or external support centers like the *Regionale Beratungs- und Unterstützungszentren - ReBuz* (Regional assistance centers). In case our school cannot manage the special educational needs of their students, we get further support on demand by asking the regional assistance centers for special educational needs.

Staff Training and Collaboration

All our IB and non-IB teachers regularly participate in professional development workshops to promote an understanding of the components of their respective programs consisting of a mandatory 30 hours per schoolyear.

Teachers receive staff development on strategies to meet special educational needs in the classroom as well as in the general school environment. All teachers regularly meet horizontally and vertically to collaborate on curriculum and assessment, to reflect on student learning, and to plan for differentiation.

We refer to and follow current legislation and school board policies to guide our decisions regarding appropriate levels of support for students with special educational needs. Our target agreements with the supervisory school authority specifically contains the evaluation of assistance measures in the area of special educational needs in our school. This includes a two pillar approach by systematically promoting the performance of student with special needs and putting a focus on social learning.

SEN Policy Review Process

This policy is a living document. It has been created using IB support materials, school district data and input from share- and stakeholders of the school community. It is an ongoing process that will be systematically reviewed, evaluated and modified as needed by IB staff, heads of faculty and senior administration.

For further information contact the IB Coordinator:

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