

Inclusion Policy  
2023 - 2024



دار المعرفة  
dar al marefa



## Our Mission

Our mission is to build a consistent, challenging and safe learning environment that supports each child in exploring their capabilities, encourages them to respect other cultures and embrace the world with open-mindedness, tolerance and confidence.

## Our Vision

Our vision is to create a community that fosters lifelong learning, is rooted in its values and beliefs, is open-minded, tolerant and appreciates diversity. Our graduates are principled and courageous individuals, ready to contribute to a more just and peaceful world.

## Our Philosophy

### **To create our professional community of learners that:**

Recognize the importance of our students achieving their personal learning goals.

Make student development at the center of all school decisions

Aspire our students to reach the highest internationalism and wellbeing



Enable the staff to become life-long learners through the development of their professional practice.



# Inclusion Policy

Reference	PC.5
Person responsible	Head of Inclusion
Date of Review	June 2023

<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Dar Al Marefa prides itself on the commitment to providing a nurturing and enriching educational environment for all students. We believe that every child deserves equal opportunities to learn and grow, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, abilities, or learning styles. By embracing inclusion, we aim to create a school community that celebrates diversity, fosters empathy and understanding, and prepares students to thrive in an inclusive and interconnected world.</p> <p>Our inclusion policy ensures that all students receive appropriate support, accommodations, and resources to reach their full potential, promoting their academic, social, and emotional development. By embracing the principles of inclusion, we not only enhance the educational experience for individual students but also cultivate a culture of acceptance and respect that benefits the entire school community.</p> <p>The International Baccalaureate's definition of inclusion states that: 'Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.' (Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programs, 2016)</p>
<b>Policy Links</b>	L.2, L.4, PC.2

Principal Sign Off	
Date	
Governor Sign Off	
Date	

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## 1. Introduction

It is the belief of Dar Al Marefa that we should strive to ensure all students are able to achieve their individual potential.

Here at Dar Al Marefa we are committed to offering an inclusive, common curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all our students whatever their needs or abilities. We aim to be a professional learning community where all people including those with learning needs (students of determination) can participate as equal citizens. It is our goal to create a culture of collaboration, in a landscape of mutual respect and equality for all. All students are given opportunities to be successful learners, to form positive social relationships with peers and to become fully participating members of the learning community.

We will ensure that:

1. All students have equal value.
2. A commitment to ensure that every student is engaged in curricular activities and can participate in extra-curricular opportunities.
3. An understanding that effective teaching practices are based on personalised consideration of the strengths and needs of each student.
4. Establishing a balance between learning with peers in a common learning environment and focusing on individual learning goals.

Dar Al Marefa will follow and adhere to all provisions, guidelines and expectations found in UAE Federal Law and to meet the goal of being a fully inclusive. The school follows the Dubai Inclusion Education Policy Framework. The Senior Leadership Team of Dar Al Marefa will provide and monitor SEND services to support the individual learning needs of students with a learning barrier so they can meet the challenges of a bilingual IB curriculum and be exposed to lifelong learning skills.

As an IB school, Dar Al Marefa already adheres to the philosophy that inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.

## 2. Philosophy, Vision and Mission for Students of Determination

### Philosophy

Inclusive education is a provision that is committed to educating all students, including students identified as experiencing special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in a common learning environment. In such settings, all students have access to quality instruction, intervention, and support, so that they experience success in learning.

### Vision

Our vision is to create a culture of collaboration, in a landscape of mutual respect and equality for all. All students are given opportunities to be successful learners, to form positive social relationships with peers, and to become fully participating members of the learning community.

### Mission

Our Mission is to achieve a high-quality, inclusive education system. It is vital that all stakeholders across all education sectors within Dubai develop a shared commitment to internationally recognised values of inclusive education.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

- a. A consistent admission and enrolment policy for students of determination will be implemented and the appropriateness of the placement will be evaluated on an annual basis.
- b. The staff and stakeholders in the school will be aware of the importance of identifying and providing for those students who have learning needs. Compliance with current national and local legislation will be strictly upheld and international best practices applied to promote equality of access.
- c. In-service training related to special educational needs will be identified by the Principal in consultation with the staff and will be incorporated into the staff professional development plan.
- d. There will be evidence of a whole school approach to teaching and learning. The staff will ensure that students with learning needs join in the activities of the school together with students who do not have special educational needs. This must be reasonably practical and compatible with the efficient use and distribution of resources.

## 4. Special Education Provision

- a. Dar Al Marefa will provide inclusive teaching practices to students of determination which involves all staff members adhering to a model of good practice. Inclusion is regarded as crucial to the policy, in line with that of the national, local, and IB principles.
- b. The IB Curriculum will be made available for all students. For students with learning needs, a graduated response to inquiry-based learning will be adopted. The school will make full use of classroom and school resources before drawing on external support. If an exceptional situation arises, the best course of action will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- c. The curriculum will be differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils. Collaborative teaching practices and flexible grouping strategies will reflect this approach. Curriculum tasks and activities may be broken down into a series of small and achievable steps for pupils who have marked learning difficulties.

## 5. Admissions Procedures

Dar Al Marefa is highly committed to being an inclusive school which admits students with a variety of needs including those who are gifted and talented, students of determination, or have physical, emotional, social, cultural or language challenges. For further information about the admissions process please refer to the Admissions Policy.

## 6. Students of determination Category

A student of determination is a student with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, restricts the student's full and effective participation in education on an equal basis with peers of the same age.

Students of determination are identified through one or both procedures listed below:

- through the work of a specialist and/or a knowledgeable school team, as displaying almost all the characteristics of a category of impairment, delay or disorder.
- formally diagnosed by a qualified and licensed medical professional as having a long- term difficulty, impairment or disorder.

Learning opportunities for students of determination will be restricted if they are exposed to attitudinal, social and environmental barriers. Schools have a duty to take action to reduce or remove these barriers to ensure that all students of determination can access education on an equitable basis with their mainstream peers.

### a. Categories of disability and barriers to learning

The following framework is based upon the UAE unified categorization of disability. It provides schools with an important structure to support the identification of students of determination.

Common barriers to learning	Categories of disability (aligned with the UAE unified categorization of disability)
<b>Cognition and learning</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intellectual disability (including Intellectual disability - unspecified)</li> <li>2. Specific learning disorders</li> <li>3. Multiple disabilities</li> <li>4. Developmental delay (younger than five years of age)</li> </ol>
<b>Communication and interaction</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Communication disorders</li> <li>6. Autism spectrum disorders</li> </ol>
<b>Social, emotional and mental Health</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder</li> <li>8. Psycho - emotional disorders.</li> </ol>

<b>Physical, sensory and medical</b>	<b>9.</b> Sensory impairment <b>10.</b> Deaf-blind disability <b>11.</b> Physical disability <b>12.</b> Chronic or acute medical conditions
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### b. Definitions

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Learning</b>	Learning means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations and/or mathematical reasoning, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
<b>Social, Emotional and mental health</b>	Students whose behaviour presents a barrier to learning. Students are experiencing emotional problems such as depression, eating disorders, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD)

<b>Physical, sensory and medical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A sensory impairment refers to a loss of vision or hearing that cannot be corrected by using lenses or through devices such as hearing aids.</li> <li>- The key issue to be considered when identifying a physical disability is mobility; the ability of a person to move around in their environment. Physical disability ranges from mild to severe and for some student's mobility is significantly impaired. Some specific examples include muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy or spina bifida.</li> <li>- Students with medical needs will experience significant barriers to learning because of reduced strength, alertness, stamina or concentration and they are identified as having a special educational need.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Communication and Interaction</b></p>	<p>Students who cannot speak well enough to be understood or who stutter or have a speech impediment such as a lisp.</p> <p>Students who find it difficult to respond to language and so cannot follow simple instructions or make themselves understood.</p> <p>Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a range of communication disorders related to students who find it difficult to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communicate with others;</li> <li>- understand social behaviour ; - think and behave flexibly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gifted and Talented</b></p>	<p>Gifted and Talented - students who demonstrate outstanding ability or aptitude in one or more areas of creative or academic achievement. These students would demonstrate performance which is distinct from their peers who are in the same age group. These students may demonstrate special talents and abilities in areas such as poetry, drawing, sport or drama etc.</p>

## 7. Support at Dar Al Marefa by departments

### a. Low Achieving Students

**Definition:** Students who are moderately or slightly below grade level expectations and who require some level of differentiation or accommodation for academic, behavioural, or social/emotional concerns. These students require additional, concentrated support from support teachers due to academic challenges or skills deficits.

**Description of Support in KG and PYP:** Support for students takes the form of both pullout groups. Classroom teachers, Inclusion team, and parents communicate regularly about student progress. Students can be deleted from the Students of Determination register when their skills progress and they no longer require services.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) are developed for students. The Inclusion Specialists develop the IEP in collaboration with the classroom teacher and parents, and the student if possible. The IEPs will be shared with the parents and teachers. Our Inclusion Team review IEPs each term with the classroom teacher. They submit a summary report to the parents.

**Description of Support in MYP/DP:** Support is provided by the subject teacher and the Inclusion Specialist by both pull-out groups and push-in support within the classroom. Students can be deleted from the Students of Determination Register when their skills and progress no longer require the support.

#### b. Formally diagnosed SEND Students from K-12

**Definition:** Parents acquire formal documentation (Ed-Psych Report) from outside professionals to better identify the nature of the student's learning differences. When this outside documentation indicates the presence of learning difficulties, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed for the child.

**Description of Support:** The Ed-Psych assessment is provided to the school and parents by the outside agency. An IEP is developed, based upon the Ed-Psych Report, and goals are identified. A meeting to review and finalize the IEP is scheduled with all concerned parties, including parents, SEND team, therapists, and students (when developmentally appropriate). Strategies are implemented by responsible parties and monitored by SEND team. A follow up meeting is scheduled periodically to review the student's progress or to make necessary changes to the IEP. The same process is followed for social-emotional and behavioural students monitored by counsellor and student's wellbeing.

## 8. High Achievers - More Able/Gifted and Talented

**Definition:** Dar Al Marefa expects academic optimal progress from every student. In some cases, we recognise that there are students who consistently excel above and beyond that of their peers. The aims of this policy are to recognise the unique aspect of each student that makes them an important part of the learning community. The school aims to provide opportunities for students to fulfil their potential in all areas; academic, creative, sporting, and social.

Students who excel in any of the core subjects (gifted) and non-core subjects (talented) are identified by subject leaders and teachers. More able, Gifted and Talented students are also identified through CAT 4 Diagnostic testing or Ed-Psych assessment.

### Aims

- To promote a cross curricular approach to gifted and talented provision.
- To provide learning experiences that enable students to reach their full potential.
- To create a positive atmosphere wherein students can develop confidence and self- respect.

- To ensure students and staff receive specialist support and guidance as appropriate.

### **Objectives**

- To ensure that all able, gifted and talented students have access to a broad, balanced and enriching experience.
- To enable all staff to play a part in identifying able, gifted and talented students and to take responsibility for recognizing and addressing their individual needs.
- To encourage, wherever possible, an effective parent partnership in developing and implementing a joint learning approach at home and at school.
- To involve outside agencies to provide the necessary support for students if needed.
- To help students realise his or her full potential and optimise their self- esteem.
- To encourage and support students to participate in all decision-making processes that occur in their education i.e., their views are sought and considered.

## **9. Identification Procedure**

Identification and early intervention refer to the accurate and urgent process through which education providers, and other professionals, utilise formal and informal methods of assessment to accurately identify the type of SEND experienced by a student. This information is then used to inform the use of targeted, evidence-based interventions which accelerate learning, progress and development.

The following steps should be taken to determine the student's eligibility and services:

1. Referral, evaluation, and eligibility determination
2. Prepare Individual Education Plan
3. Implement Individual Education Plan
4. Monitor, Review and/or Revise Individual Education Plan

### **Step (1) Referral - Inclusion Team**

- a. The Student Support Team (SST) consists of heads of Wellbeing and Inclusion, Inclusion specialists, and the school counsellor.

- b.** The SST will meet regularly to discuss the academic performance of students who are experiencing learning problems and have been referred to the SST.
- c.** Written referrals to the SST may be made by any teacher.
- d.** SST members conduct a review of students 'academic and performance history, medical history and conducts classroom observation in the area of concern.
- e.** SST members make recommendations for learning support interventions intended to improve the student's academic performance.
- f.** The SST members monitor the student's progress and review data weekly for discussion.
- g.** If the student's progress is adequate, interventions may be discontinued when no longer needed.
- h.** Students who do not express severe concerns yet have significant gaps in their learning will receive learning support through high quality teaching. They will continue to be monitored and tracked by other means, which include school wide formative and summative assessments, weekly targets developed to target a student's individual learning needs, international benchmark data and termly level descriptors based on teacher judgement.

### Step (2) Develop Individual Education Plan

The SST determines that the student is eligible to receive education programs and services, an education plan meeting is held and developed. The most important elements of the IEP are the goals and objectives and accommodations, and modifications that are needed to meet the educational needs of the student.

A meeting with the student's parents is arranged and the goals and objectives discussed with them and any strategies that they can follow at home are shared. If parents are required to employ an ILSA to ensure that the student remains on task and is kept safe in school then the Inclusion team will assist the parents in finding the most suitable ILSA depending on the student's needs.

### Step (3) Implement Individual Education Plan

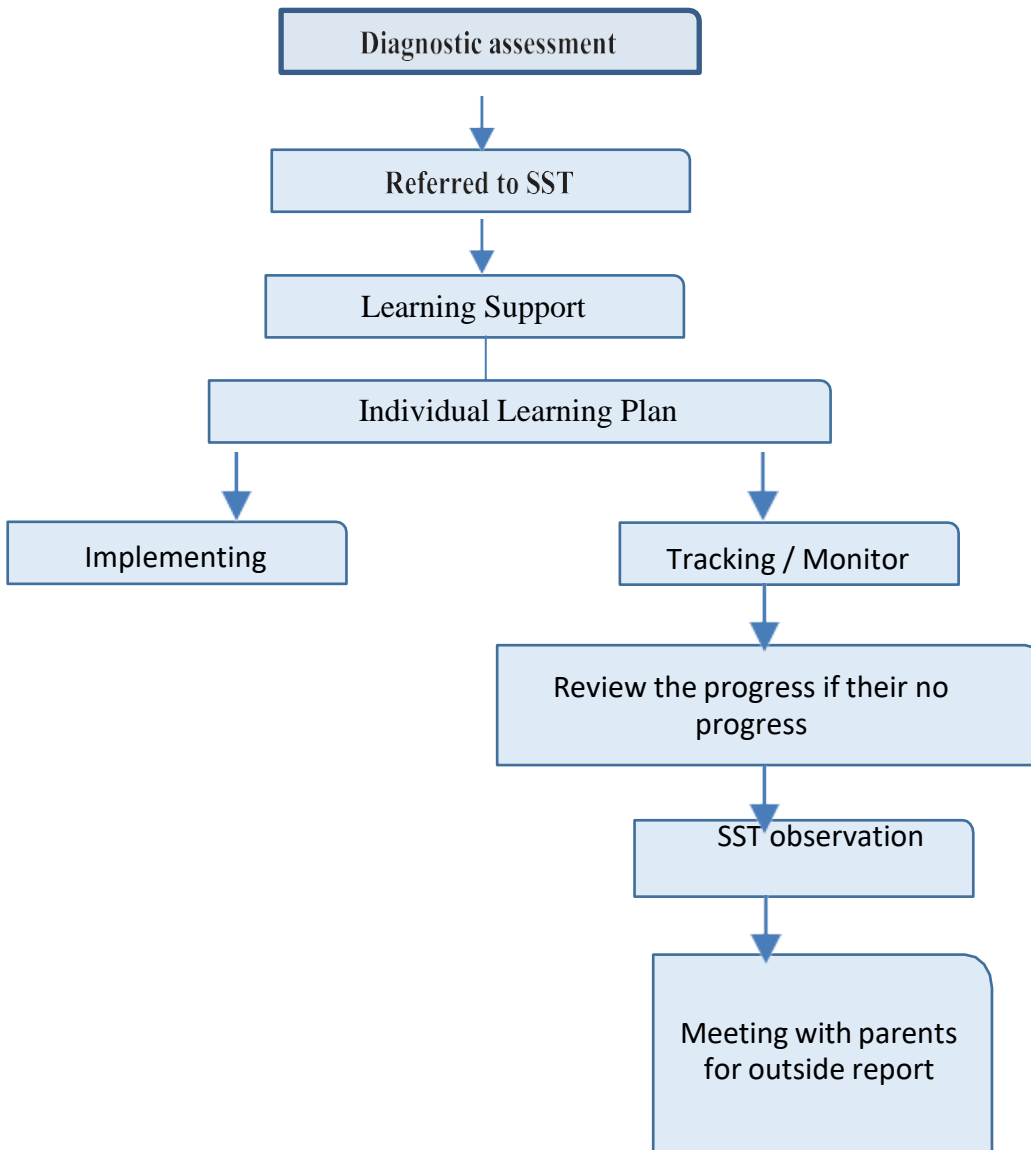
- a.** Special education programs and services are provided to students in accordance with the recommendations of the IEP. The IEP should be implemented immediately following written parental approval. Implementation of the IEP should start as soon as possible but within a 6 week period. There are many factors to consider when placement decisions are being made:
  - 1.** short-term targets set for or by the child.
  - 2.** teaching strategies to be used.
  - 3.** provisions to be put in place.

4. accommodations and modifications to the learning environment.
  5. roles and responsibilities of parents.
  6. Weekly, monthly and termly tracking by using ILP checklist lists detailing progress, and monthly comments to summarise the overall successes and remaining challenges, as it refers to the students ILP goals.
  7. roles and responsibilities of learning support staff.
  8. provisions for in-class and withdrawal support.
- b.** The IEP goals will be fluid and changing according to student needs on an ongoing basis, with input from the classroom teacher, support team, parents and if it can be arranged, the Educational Psychologist who performed the assessment which determined the child's specific learning disability.

#### Step (4) Monitor, Review and Revise ILP

- a.** The IEP should be reviewed, and progress monitored during each regularly scheduled period.
- b.** The Inclusion team, are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the IEP.

## 10. Flowchart for the Referral Process



## 11. Key Roles and Responsibilities

### **School Principal**

In addition to the core functions entrusted to the Principal under the regulation of the Dubai Inclusion Framework, it is assumed that the Principal of a school which provides special education services will undertake basic tasks, of which the most important are:

1. Ensure that the provisions for students of determination is robust, relevant and in line with the school objectives and the Dubai Inclusion Framework.
2. Thoroughly apply the principles and general rules for special education programs.
3. Promote a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of gifted and talented.
4. Create an appropriate educational and school environment that ensures implementation of the special education programs in coordination with the relevant authorities.
5. Facilitate the process of acceptance and integration of students of determination in accordance with the recommendations of the special education team.
6. Monitor the programs in place as well as the teachers by visiting them in classrooms to check their work, activities and involvement.
7. Encourage professional and personal development programs for employees with special needs and monitor their training and work
8. Strengthen relationships with parents and work to create awareness about programs and services for people with special needs within the school and beyond.
9. Make sure that the requirements of every student with learning needs are met.
10. Coordinate with the concerned parties within and outside the school with respect to the transition of students with special needs to the different academic levels.
11. Organize mechanisms to provide services for students with learning needs in resource rooms, and to facilitate the process so that they receive services in these rooms during the school day in coordination with teachers of special education for the resource rooms and subject teachers.

### **SENCO**

1. Work directly with teaching staff to increase their capacity to differentiate for individualized educational needs.
2. Responsible for the operation and monitoring of the Inclusion policy in school.

3. Report directly to the Senior Leadership Team of the School on the progress of SEND provision.
4. Meet with the teaching staff on a regular basis to provide differentiation support and progress updates on students with SEND needs.
5. Maintain the School's SEND register.
6. Provide classroom observations of students who are referred by teachers and provide feedback and support intervention as determined by student need.
7. Oversee all assessment and ensure all records and the correct documentation is available for statutory assessment.
8. Liaise with parents, school counsellor and outside agencies.
9. Contribute to in-service training.
10. Attend outside training.
11. Communicate regularly with learning support staff.
12. Perform twice yearly observations of learning support staff.
13. Meet once a month with learning coaches for advice, suggestions, to help support them with any information relevant to the student and to hear their concerns.
14. Conduct weekly and monthly checks on the classroom teachers tracking of any SEND student in their classroom.

### **Inclusion Specialist**

1. To meet regularly with classroom and subject teachers in order to ensure differentiation is appropriately levelled.
2. To meet regularly with classroom and subject teachers to ensure students are meeting targets set in the plan
3. To provide in-class and withdrawal support as determined by plan.
4. To enable staff to support students during lessons
5. To communicate with classroom and specialist teachers, parents, other relevant staff/administration concerning any pertinent student issues.
6. To advise the Head of SEND on student progress
7. To write plans in consultation with the classroom teacher, parents and the head of SEND
8. To attend all planning meetings and other called meetings.
9. Communicate regularly with the parents via phone, e-mail, and face-to-face meetings
10. Conducting regular observation of students in their class environment to accommodate the students' needs and monitor progress



### **Class Teachers and Subject Teachers**

Although the SENCO has the overall coordinating role, the role of the class teacher is important. It is their responsibility to:

1. Ensure individual needs are provided for within their curriculum area e.g., suitable resources, planning etc. accommodations and modifications to the learning environment, as well as differentiated work to meet a student's learning needs.
2. Differentiate lessons to meet the goals and targets of the plan.
3. Set the referral procedure into motion if there is a concern about a child's progress.
4. Collate accurate information where there are concerns.
5. Deliver quality practice for children with special needs through effective differentiation.
6. Liaise with teaching assistants to ensure correct learning objectives are met.
7. Assist with the implementation of plans.
8. Liaise regularly through established meeting times with the Inclusion team about children with SEND.
9. After consultation with the Inclusion team, exit students from learning support as appropriate.

### **Individual Learning Support Assistant (ILSA)**

1. Complies with all rules and policies regarding safety.
2. Helps Teacher develop, plan, and implement the plan.
3. Assists Teacher in the development of student's individual goals and objectives.
4. Sets up and maintains an appropriate learning environment.
5. Attends and participates in required meetings.
6. Maintains accurate daily progress notes, data collection, attendance records, and incidents and completes all paperwork in a timely manner.
7. Alerts SENCO to any problems or social information about the child
8. Seeks professional growth through reading, attending workshops, seminars, conferences, and/or completing advanced course work.
9. Communicates professionally with students, family members, consultants, elementary school personnel, referral sources, all other staff members and other providers.
10. Actively participates in training sessions.

## 12. Rights, Duties and Responsibilities for Students of Determination's Parent

It is important that there is ongoing and effective cooperation among the school, teachers and parents of students with learning needs, as appropriate in the interest of student through exchange of information, periodic reports, setting educational goals and participation in every step of the educational process.

### a. Rights of Parents

1. Admission and acceptance of the student with learning needs by the school.
2. The school must provide parents with all the information on programs provided by the school for students with special needs.
3. The school must work to create positive relationships with the parents based on mutual trust and effective communication.
4. Parents must be notified of the dates of meetings or assessments, or get-togethers as related to the education of their children along with stating the purpose of such meetings.
5. The school must provide parents with periodic reports on the performance of students in achieving the goals set for them in the educational plans.
6. It is important to notify parents before any formal evaluation of the student, and before any change in the places where services are provided.
7. The school should encourage parents to participate and volunteer in students' or school's activities for the sake of their children.
8. Schools should promote strong relationships with the parents through parents' councils, support groups, and open days for the involvement of fathers and mothers with their children in school activities.
9. Making school and parents aware of the categories and programs of special education.
10. Accept and support the IEP developed for their student. Information provided or observed by school staff is kept confidential and only shared with individuals working with their child.

### b. Duties and Responsibilities

1. Parents are required to attend meetings or assessments related to the education of their children with the need to focus on their involvement in the decision-making process.

2. Effective communication and correspondence with school administration with respect to their child and accept their role in the implementation of educational plans.
3. Share information relating to the student (such as matters related to health or psychology etc).
4. Meeting deadlines as specified regarding registration, evaluation and attending meetings.
5. Full briefing on the academic capacity of the student and not setting expectations which are not commensurate with their abilities.
6. Communicate with the school in the event of any emergency or to inquire about their child.
7. When employing an ILSA then all required documents including a copy of their EID, police clearance certificate and a signed Memorandum of Understanding are shared before the ILSA attends school.

### 13. Graduated Response to Intervention

- a. Dar Al Marefa will provide a graduated response to intervention which provides a step- by-step method of screening, referral, and evaluation of students for special educational needs.
- b. The graduated response recognizes that individual students learn in different ways and can have different types and levels of special educational needs.
- c. The responsibility of completing necessary forms and maintaining records will be the responsibility of all members of teaching staff, as outlined by each stage in the Inclusion Policy.
- d. Within the context of the E- Assessment and IB Diploma program the MYP and Diploma Coordinators will liaise with the IBO to seek inclusive assessment accommodations within official guidelines of the IBO when obtainable and necessary. The school will follow the guidelines set down by the IBO in the relevant documents Including: Candidates with assessment access requirements (2013).

### 14. Confidentiality

The Inclusion Team is bound to keep individual students' information confidential. In order to maintain this, we won't share or discuss information about any student:

1. In a public place
2. With the parents of another student
3. With another student
4. With staff members who are not part of that student's educational/support team