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Learning Support at The American School of Antananarivo

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Philosophy

Philosophically, The American School of Antananarivo (ASA) is an inclusive school, where diversity is valued and we believe that all students can learn. In the publication *Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes* (2010), the International Baccalaureate defines inclusion as:

“... an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.”

Accordingly, the Learning Support Department at ASA coordinates services for students with learning needs, with the aim to reduce barriers to learning and increase equity of access to the curriculum.

Admissions

Students are accepted into ASA if their additional needs can be supported within the regular curriculum; we do not offer an alternative program. We aim to provide an inclusive environment that allows students to develop and be successful according to their strengths, with some adaptations and accommodations to the regular educational program if required.

Parents of students with additional learning needs are required to submit an application form and all relevant assessment reports that clarify their son or daughter's educational needs. Learning Support plans (such as IEPs) from the previous school must be included. ASA may request further assessment information, may interview the parent and/or the student, and may contact the previous school. All of this information is used to decide whether the needs of the student can be accommodated within the current program. Acceptance to ASA and the Learning Support program is the School's prerogative.

ASA is currently able to accommodate students with mild additional needs. We are unable to accommodate students with:

- Significant visual and auditory impairments requiring specialized instruction and equipment;
- Physical disabilities that severely impair mobility;
- Augmentative communication impairments;
- Moderate to severe intellectual or cognitive impairments;
- Serious behavior disorders and/or emotional difficulties;
- Mental health disorders.

For students whose needs are not included in the above list, ASA considers each applicant on an individual basis. The decision to admit an applicant with additional educational needs is made by the Learning Support Team.

Student needs are met within the regular class to the greatest extent possible. A Learning Support Assistant may be needed to allow the student to access the curriculum. This service is an additional expense to the parent.

Before choosing Madagascar as a destination, parents of children with additional needs are also urged to consider the availability of outside specialist services. The services of

Speech and Occupational Therapists, Social/emotional Therapists and Psychologists are rarely available in English.

Learning Support Protocols

Students at ASA can be referred for Learning Support by their parents, their previous school, or by their current teachers. For referrals by current teachers, the [ASA Student Referral Form](#) is to be used.

Our Learning Support Protocols are designed around the IB belief that “inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving”.

Prior to Referral

When a teacher recognizes that a student is not progressing either academically or socially as is expected for his/her age and grade level, the teacher is expected to collect information that will assist in establishing whether the student requires Learning Support. Prior to referral, it is expected that the referring teacher will have tried various ways to differentiate for the student’s learning needs for an appropriate period of time. Documentation of this process is important as it will be needed as part of the referral process. Documentation should include the following:

- Observation and anecdotal records
- Records of attendance and medical concerns
- Evidence and duration of any differentiation strategies that have already been explored
- Work samples that provide evidence of difficulties
- Evaluation of student record of attainment
- Review of scores on standardized assessments conducted by the school
- Previous school records and documentation
- Conversation with the parents

Parents must always be notified prior to the referral of a student.

The need for support of an identified student will usually imply the following procedures, to be organised by the Learning Support Teacher:

- The gathering of further information from the parents.
- Observation of the student, to assess the student’s attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social relations with groups, peers, and adults;
- A history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum. This includes information provided by teachers regarding the student's specific

- abilities in relation to learning standards of ASA's curriculum;
- Review of previous assessments, psychological reports, school reports, and communication with the previous school(s) if needed;
 - Input from the student;
 - Recommendation for a health, vision and hearing screening;
 - Recommendation for a clinical, psychological, emotional, and educational evaluation by an external specialist;
 - Design and implementation of an International Individualized Learning Plan (IILP) for particular situations.

Support is determined on an individual basis and according to each student's identified special educational need. Determination of support is made by the Learning Support Team, based upon information available to them. The support provided for a particular student reflects what ASA is able to provide; it is not a contractual obligation between the School and its teachers nor the School and parents of students identified for support.

Confidentiality

All records of learning needs and data gathered during the information-gathering process are to be treated as sensitive information and should be kept together securely and separately from the student's general school records. The information should be shared only with those who need it in order to take appropriate steps to support the learning needs of the student.

Learning Support files must be stored securely, accessible through the designated Learning Support Teacher. The student's general school record file should be marked to indicate that a Learning Support file exists.

Should the student transfer schools, the Learning Support information gathered will be shared with the new institution as requested by the parent. If the parent does not want the information shared, ASA reserves the right to inform the new school that a file exists and that the child has been receiving support.

Learning Support in Practice

The kinds of support which ASA is currently able to provide include:

- Reading/writing/spelling/phonics remediation;

- Mathematics skills practice;
- Specific social and academic skills, and behavioural coaching, related to the IB Learner Profile and identified goals;
- Curriculum-based support with close collaboration between Learning Support and classroom teachers;
- Specific assignment support.

Students are either supported in class, or given additional small group or one-on-one learning support by the Learning Support Teacher. Teachers are expected to differentiate their lessons, and enable Learning Support students to access the curriculum in a way which is adapted to their needs.

Levels of Learning Support

Our Learning Support model is based on the belief that students vary in their level of ability, achievement, motivation and interest and that individuals respond best to educational programs that provide appropriate challenges and meet their individual needs.

Monitor

Students on monitor status do not receive Learning Support services, but may require some simple classroom accommodations in order to be successful, which teachers are required to provide. The Learning Support Team will periodically review their progress.

Learning Support 1

The student is working on the same instructional objectives and the same curriculum content as his/her peers but requires adaptations to the way the material is presented and/or to the way in which the student demonstrates learning. There is no individual or group instruction from a Learning Support teacher.

Learning Support 2

The student typically works in the regular classroom with their peers but may require some modification to the content of the curriculum and/or instructional practices under the direction of a Learning Support teacher.

Learning Support 3

The LS 3 student may require explicit instruction in the development of social skills and/or require significant modifications to the content of the curriculum and instructional practices. This is done under the direction of a Learning Support teacher.

As of 2017-18, there will be a charge of \$4000 for Level 2 and 3 support. If a Learning Support Assistant is needed in addition to the above levels, ASA will employ an LSA but this will be at the expense of the parent.

Definitions

Evaluation: when further evaluation is requested by the School, this will generally mean:

- An assessment in all areas related to the suspected disability.
- A psychological assessment by a licensed school psychologist, licensed psychologist, or licensed educational psychologist, including an individual psychological examination.

All evaluations must be conducted by qualified persons who are registered, certified, licensed or otherwise approved. Evaluations are at private expense, and may need to be obtained outside of Madagascar, depending on the availability of qualified practitioners and the language need of the child.

Evaluations are generally valid for three years. Re-evaluation is required at this time. A parent may obtain an independent educational evaluation at private expense at any time.

International Individual Learning Plan (IILP): a written statement, developed and approved in a [form](#) established by the American School of Antananarivo, that identifies a student's Learning Support needs and describes the services and/or accommodations ASA shall provide to meet those needs.

ASA will review the IILP's and the progress of each Learning Support Student at least annually. Additionally, every three years, or sooner if necessary, ASA will, with parental cooperation, conduct a full three-year reevaluation. Upon conclusion of the reevaluation, a new IILP will be developed for the student.

Learning Disability: 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 an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.

Learning Support: specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student with identified learning needs.

Learning Support Assistant (LSA): A Learning Support Assistant provides support for a student who has identified additional learning needs. The LSA will ensure that the

student can participate in the learning activities undertaken in class, and successfully access the curriculum. The LSA will be responsible for implementing the targets on the student's International Individual Learning Plan (IILP) in liaison with the class teachers and Learning Support Team (LST). The ASA job description for an LSA can be found [here](#).

Learning Support Student: a student enrolled in our school, who has been - following the evaluations administered by specialists in the suspected area of need - acknowledged by the Learning Support Team to have a significant learning need, and thus unable to progress effectively in the general education program without individually designed instruction. An eligible student shall have the right to receive Learning Support and any related services that are necessary for the student to effectively access the curriculum.

Learning Support Teacher: A person with at minimum a Bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate or license in an area of Special Education or a related service. Licensure shall meet the requirements of the American School of Antananarivo and the requirements for renewal of license, as necessary. A certified or licensed special educator may provide, design, or supervise Learning Support services and create International Individualised Learning Plans.

Learning Support Team: a group of persons (e.g. Principal, Director, Learning Support Teacher) who, together, discuss evaluation results, determine eligibility, develop or modify an IILP.