



Learning Support Handbook for Parents/Guardians



2022-2023

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This handbook is reviewed every two years, items are subject to change as we learn from our experiences and as our student demographics change. We are grateful to: American School of the Hague, International School Basel, Nanjing International School, Kristen Pelletier, and Next Frontier Inclusion for sharing their documents with us as we developed this handbook.

Inclusion at Vienna International School (VIS)

Our mission statement establishes an expectation that all children are provided with opportunities to achieve their potential. Learning Support at VIS is built on a model of inclusion where all students, including those with learning differences, are included in naturally occurring settings and activities with their peers. We are committed to educating all children to achieve their personal potential in the regular classroom setting to the greatest extent possible. We believe that all students can learn and succeed. At VIS, all of our students are challenged to the best of their ability to achieve personal success. In support of this goal, student self-advocacy is an essential element in helping students know how they learn best and how to articulate their learning needs.

Learning Support at VIS includes:

1. Students with mild to moderate learning needs being included in appropriate classes and activities, and provided with adequate support, accommodations and/or differentiated instruction.
2. Classroom teachers and Learning Support teachers (LST) working together to teach all students.
3. Students working in small groups in the regular classroom, sometimes with guidance/support with a LST.
4. Students receiving small group or individual support in the Learning Support Skills Lab (Primary) or Resource Studies classroom (Secondary).
5. 1:1 Individual Learning Assistants (ILA) supporting students when required.
6. Modifying curriculum and/or assessments is decided upon as needed, on a case-by-case basis.

Learning Support at VIS does not include:

1. Students with learning differences in regular classrooms with inadequate support.
2. Students pushed through a curriculum that does not match their individual academic needs.
3. Students with social/emotional/behavioural needs that would substantially disrupt the learning process at VIS.

Admission of Students with Learning Differences

When an application has been submitted, the Admissions Team thoroughly reviews each student's previous school experience and records to make an initial assessment regarding a match between school programmes, school resources and the student's needs, assuring a reasonable prospect for student success. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Members of the Admissions Team for students who have identified learning needs include the Admissions Office, Section Principals, Educational Psychologist, Department Leaders for Learning Support, and Counsellors. Other specialists may be referred to as needed.

Parental disclosure: In order for us to understand each student's learning profile and to plan appropriate educational opportunities, we ask that parents disclose essential information related to their child's learning at the time of their application. Relevant documentation may include psychoeducational reports, Individual Learning Plans, Accommodation Plans, speech-language reports, occupational therapy reports, and/or medical reports. If documentation is more than three years old, an updated psychoeducational report may be required prior to admission. Lack of disclosure may jeopardise a student's ability to be successful within the curricular program offered at VIS, and could potentially lead to a reversal of the admissions decision. We appreciate open and transparent dialogue that occurs between home and school.

VIS offers the IB Primary Years Programme during Grades ELC – 5 (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) during Grades 6 – 10, and the IB Diploma Programme (DP) during Grades 11 and 12. VIS also offers the VIS High School Diploma, which is accredited by the Middle States Association.

We review students' applications on an individual basis, to determine whether we would be able to design a learning plan that would meet each student's unique needs, based on our resources at that time. We always aim to work in partnership with families to provide the best educational programming for our students, within the resources we have available.

The Admissions Office collects and compiles complete application documents from the family, previous schools, and any other related organisations or

professionals. If there is an indication that the student has special needs or has received learning support services, the application for admissions is sent to the Learning Support Department Leader of the Section for review. All learning support information contained in admissions files is confidential and will be shared with discretion and professionalism. The Admissions Team will contact previous schools when needed to clarify the level of support and successful strategies to support the student. After collection of additional information and/or further discussion with some or all of the following individuals: section Principals, Director, Educational Psychologist, Learning Support Department Leader, Counselors, and/or English Language Acquisition Department Leader of the Section, the Section Principal makes a determination whether admission is advisable or if the student's educational needs exceed the School's ability to provide an appropriate educational programme even combined with assistance from the Learning Support Department. This admissions decision is then communicated to the family by the Admissions Office.

We require the following information when considering a student for admission:

1. A current school report, plus the final school reports from the previous two school years;
2. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) or similar Learning Support Plan (if applicable), sometimes called an Individual Education Plan (IEP), from the previous school (in English or translated to English).
3. A psychoeducational, speech-language, occupational therapy or medical report (if applicable and again, preferably in English or translated to English) *standardised test scores should be included in any submitted psychoeducational report;
4. A completed confidential reference from the current school.

Considering available resources, capacity limits, and in order to protect the student-teacher ratio and ensure high quality service, we offer a limited amount of space for students with learning needs. VIS offers the IB Primary Years Programme in Grades ELC – 5 (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) in Grades 6 – 10, and the IB Diploma Programme (DP) in Grades 11 and 12. VIS also offers the VIS High School Diploma, which is accredited by the Middle States Association. Students must be able to access these programs with the resources we have available. VIS Board policy states that admission of a student must not impact the needs of other students negatively.

Enrollment Review

All enrollments at VIS are conditional. In cases where current programming and resources prove to be ineffective in meeting a student's needs, a team, which includes the section Principals, Director, Learning Support Department Leaders, Educational Psychologist, and Counselors convenes to determine the next steps and make decisions about additional needed services and/or continued enrollment. The family will become part of the enrollment review discussion at this point.

Learning Support Staff

Learning Support Teachers (LSTs)

Students who qualify for extra academic support may work with our LSTs. The LSTs work in collaboration with classroom / subject teachers to ensure students have access to the grade level, or otherwise appropriate, curriculum. The LSTs and classroom / subject teachers collaborate to ensure accommodations are implemented and to help differentiate instruction for students receiving Learning Support. LSTs may work directly with students who require additional academic support. This support may take place in the subject classroom or in the Learning Support classroom. LSTs also serve as resources for classroom / subject teachers and parents by providing insights related to learning differences and the impact of those learning differences in the classroom. LSTs maintain data in order to monitor student progress and to guide teacher instruction. LSTs complete necessary documentation, including Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Accommodation Plans (Aps), and progress reports and report cards (where applicable).

Individual Learning Assistants (ILAs)

In specific situations, a student may require the support of a 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant (ILA). The 1:1 ILA assists teachers in the delivery of instruction for the student. The 1:1 ILA works under the direct supervision of the Learning Support Department Leader and classroom / subject teachers. The ultimate responsibility for the implementation and evaluation of support programmes, including assessment of student progress, lies with the classroom / subject teachers and LSTs. Our ILAs are employed by the school, but paid for by the parents. These costs can amount to over 45,000 Euro per year depending on the level of need. We have a limited capacity for how many students with 1:1 ILAs we can support as a school.

At the time of a student's admissions application, if it is determined by the admissions team that a student would require a 1:1 ILA, the family will be informed of the stipulations for enrollment. In these circumstances, if VIS is at capacity with 1:1 ILA support, the student will be waitlisted until a space is available. Additionally, ILA support is only possible for students up to Grade 8. In Grades 9 and above, students must be able to access the curriculum without the support of a 1:1 ILA.

Educational Psychologist

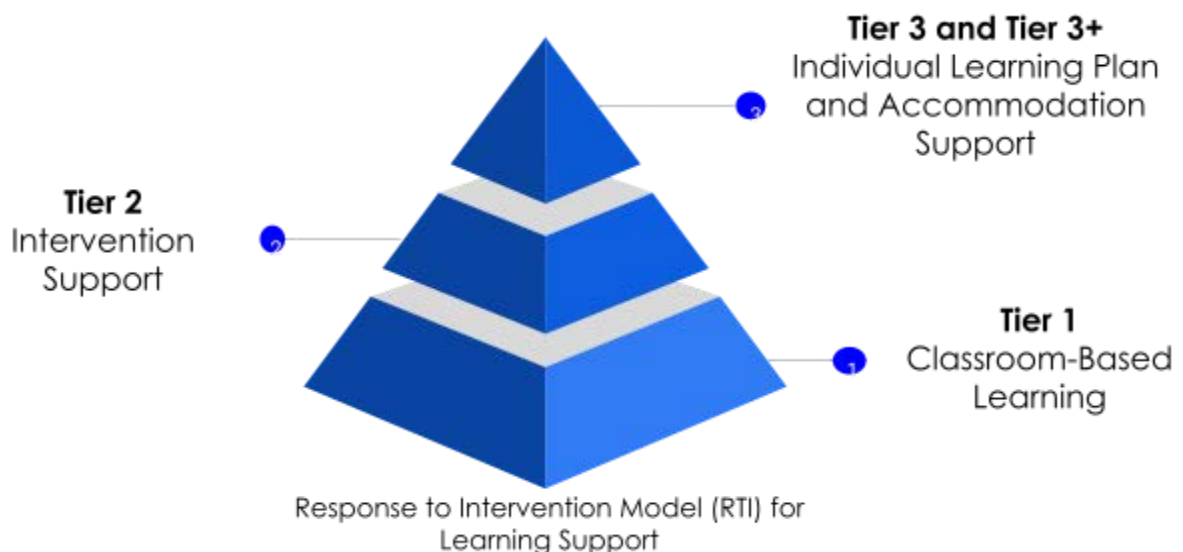
The Educational Psychologist provides consultation services to staff to assist students as well as assessment services to enrolled VIS students. Students newly referred for learning support services are identified through an internal, school-based referral process facilitated by the Primary and Secondary Student Support Teams. Through this referral process and when appropriate, the Educational Psychologist conducts screening assessments to determine a student's relative strengths and weaknesses and recommend appropriate support services, which may include formal Learning Support.

In cases where VIS determines that this internal screening assessment is not sufficient and a diagnostic psychoeducational assessment is required, or if parents are interested in pursuing a diagnostic assessment for their child for personal reasons, the VIS Educational Psychologist is available to consult with parents and offer contact details for private practitioners able to provide psychoeducational assessments in English (fees charged externally). In addition, and in order to meet International Baccalaureate Organization requirements, students who will be sitting IBDP exams in Grade 12 will require a diagnostic psychoeducational assessment, completed between Grades 10 and 12. Again, as this service is not provided by the school, the VIS Educational Psychologist is available to consult with parents and provide contact details for private practitioners (fees charged externally).

When a parent of a VIS student has concerns about a child's performance or well-being, they should contact the student's class teacher (Primary Section), or Grade Leader (Secondary Section). The concern will then be directed to the Student Support Team, Counsellor, or Educational Psychologist, as appropriate.

Primary Learning Support Structures

At VIS, our aim is to provide an equitable educational environment and learning experience to meet the unique needs of all of our students. To do this, we employ a tiered approach to learning support based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model. The RTI process is a means to identify and target learning needs based on learning data. Educational decisions on the length and intensity of provided interventions are decided based on the student's response to the interventions. If the student is making sufficient progress, the student will either remain at that tier of support, or move down a tier. Subsequently, if a student is not meeting the targets, a higher tier of support will be considered. The tiers of support and exit criteria are described in further detail below.



Tier 1 - Classroom-Based Learning

Students participate in the same curriculum content and work towards the same learning outcomes as peers. Students benefit from instruction in the classroom, but may need differentiation and/or accommodations to access and demonstrate understanding of the curriculum. Students receiving Tier 1 support are assessed according to grade level criteria.

Students may receive indirect support in the following ways:

- Consultative support from a learning support teacher (LST) is provided to

class teachers to support pre-referral differentiation strategies.

- Assistive technology in class and/or for assessment purposes

Tier 2 - Pre-Referral Learning Support

Students participate in the same curriculum content and work towards the same learning outcomes as their peers; however, students at the Tier 2 level receive an intervention to close a gap in their learning. The intervention takes place for six to eight weeks and progress is monitored by the LST. Students receiving level 2 support are assessed according to grade level criteria.

Students may receive support in the following ways:

- Individual or small group instruction in class or in the LS Skills Lab - not to exceed 40 minutes five times per week.
- Primary Learning Interventions: Early interventions by LS team (ELC - 2; in-class or Skills Lab) based on learning data and collaborative discussions with teachers. Targeted Intervention Support for 6-8 weeks (Grades 1-5), using research based interventions when appropriate. All students receiving learning interventions are progress monitored to measure response to the intervention and determine referral pathway.
- Referrals to outside resources, such as Speech and/or Occupational Therapy may be made when appropriate.

Exit criteria for Tier 2: Students are working with expected level of independence at grade level standards for a sustained period of time (at least half a school year) based on common assessments.

Tier 3 - Formal Learning Support

Students participate in the same curriculum content as their peers, but require accommodations and/or differentiation to access and demonstrate understanding of the curriculum. The focus of instruction may be targeted interventions aimed at teaching specific skills within the context of the grade level / class curriculum. Students are assessed according to grade level criteria, and will have an ILP. The ILP is developed in collaboration with teachers, the student, parents, and the LST. Students will also receive an ILP report along with their class report two times per year.

Students may receive supports included in Level 2, in addition to:

- Students will have Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Level of support will be determined and takes into consideration internal and external psychoeducational assessment recommendations.
- Consultative support from a learning support specialist: guidance from LST provided to class teachers to support differentiation of lessons, assessments, and home learning.
- Small group instruction, 1:1 support from an LST, and/or skills lab sessions.
- Assistive technology for learning and assessments.
- Support services will not exceed 40 minutes a day, five times per week.

Exit criteria for Tier 3: When students are working to their potential at grade level standard for at least half a school year based on school wide assessments and performing within the expected range with peers their age based on an academic testing provided by the Educational Psychologist, or when needs can be met at Tier 1.

Tier 3 + 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant - Intensive Learning Support

Students participate in a programme based on the grade level curriculum, but adapted or modified to meet the student's individual needs. The student has a 1:1 learning assistant that supports his/her learning, social-emotional and/or behavioural needs throughout the school day. The student is supported through an ILP, and when appropriate, the curriculum is modified to a level suited to the student's ability and learning profile. At times, students have been exempt from German classes to receive further intervention on ILP goals. These decisions are made in consultation with the ILP team (parents, LST, class teacher, and principal). Students will also receive an ILP report along with their class report two times per year.

Students may receive supports included in Tier 2, in addition to:

- 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant
- Small group instruction, 1:1 support, Skills Lab sessions
- Facilitation of integration in grade level balanced with core academic skills, depending on the needs of the student
- Additional support to target social-emotional and/or behavioural development, depending on the needs of the student
- Students often require additional external support services, e.g. Speech-Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, intensive counselling

services. These are not services provided by the school, and are funded by families.

Exit criteria for Tier 3 + 1:1: When students are working to their potential at grade level standard for at least half a school year based on school wide assessments, demonstrating performance within the expected range on more comprehensive testing by the VIS educational psychologist or an external psychologist, or when needs can be met at Tier 3 support without a 1:1 ILA.

Secondary Learning Support Structures

Types of Support

- Consultation for students, teachers, parents
- Accommodation Plan (AP)
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Resource Studies (Grades 6 -10)
- Modified assessment and reporting (as applicable; options may be limited in the upper Secondary grades)
- Testing center modeled on IBDP access arrangements
- 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant (Grades 6-8)

At VIS, our aim is to provide an equitable educational environment and learning experience to meet the unique needs of all of our students. To do this, we employ a tiered approach to learning support based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model. This approach allows us to identify and target learning needs based on data. When the data indicates a student making sufficient progress, the student will either remain at that tier of support, or move down a tier. Subsequently, if a student is not meeting the targets, a higher tier of support will be considered. The tiers of support and exit criteria are described in further detail below. In Secondary School, an additional focus of learning support is to support students in building independence through developing a range of strategies they can use to support their learning and performance. While testing accommodations are provided for students in Grades 11 and 12 through provision of an Accommodation Plan, direct learning support services are limited. It is expected that by the end of Grade 10, students will have acquired the skills and strategies necessary to be successful in the courses required to pursue a VIS High School Diploma or International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

Tier 1 - Classroom-Based Learning

Tier 1 is universal instruction delivered to all students. At Tier 1, Secondary students are not enrolled in learning support services. Students participate in grade level curriculum content and work towards grade level learning outcomes. Classroom teachers use best practices in teaching and learning, including differentiation strategies, to meet students' needs.

Tier 2 -Accommodation Plan

An Accommodation Plan (AP) is created for students who need specific accommodations in order to access the curriculum. Accommodations provide equitable instruction and assessment for students by reducing or eliminating the effects of a student's learning difference. They do not change or reduce the learning expectations in regard to the goal being addressed or assessed. Provision of accommodations are based on data from psychoeducational assessments or other relevant assessments.

Examples of accommodations include:

- Preferred seating
- Extended time for assignments and exams
- Use of assistive technology
- Alternative format for demonstrating conceptual material
- Instructions broken down into sequential steps
- Breaking tasks down into smaller, more manageable chunks
- Use of graphic organizers/scaffolds

If a student will be taking an external exam with an organization such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) or College Board, documentation will be provided to the external organization. The external agency will ultimately make the final determination about accommodations on external exams (e.g. IB exams, SATs).

Tier 3 - Individual Learning Plan and Resource Studies

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is created for students whose learning needs indicate they will benefit from more support. Students with ILPs receive the same accommodations described in the Accommodation Plan (see above). In addition, students with ILPs work towards specific goals documented in the ILP and are also supported through enrollment in Resource Studies in Grades 6-10. Provision of accommodations and identification of specific goals are based on data from psychoeducational assessments or other relevant assessments.

Tier 3 + 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant and/or Modified Curriculum

A small number of students may require support beyond Tier 3. This may include support from a 1:1 Individual Learning Assistant (ILA) and/or modified assessment and reporting. In the Secondary school, 1:1 ILAs may assist in delivering

instruction. Modifications to course content and learning objectives will be reflected in a student's ILP. Modifications made to instruction and/or assessment change, lower, or reduce grade level learning or assessment expectations. More often than not, the resulting student product is not the same as a student product without modifications. Modification eligibility is a team decision and parent permission must be obtained prior to implementation.

Modifications are described in the ILP and documented on the report card/transcript. A student receives a modified transcript at MYP/DP level. Students will earn an "M" and an asterisk (*) indicating that the student was on a modified programme for one or more subject areas. In some cases the modification will include renaming the course for transcript clarity purposes. Students in Grade 10 who either do not meet the Grade 10 MYP requirements for the Certificate of Achievement or who have insufficient credits due to being on a modified programme will earn the Certificate of Completion at the awards ceremony. Students in Grade 12 who do not meet the requirements for the VIS High School Diploma will earn the VIS High School Certificate at the awards ceremony.

Exit criteria: Enrollment in Learning Support services is reviewed each semester, and decisions are based on data, which may include in-class assessments, report cards, school-wide assessment data, academic testing provided by the VIS Educational Psychologist, or psychoeducational assessment data provided by external psychologists. Recommendations for changes to a student's support will be reviewed by the Secondary Student Support Team and will be discussed with parents and students before a final decision is made.

Document Review Process

Adopted: MONTH YEAR

Effective: MONTH YEAR

Review Date: MONTH YEAR

Revised: MONTH YEAR

Authorisation Process:

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- Student Support Service teams in either section of the school can propose changes in procedures and/or to the document to the section Principal
- If approved, the Section Principals update through the Communication Department for publishing