

## Learning Support Handbook

### AISM's PHILOSOPHY

The American International School of Monrovia is committed to providing a high quality English language education, rooted in an American oriented curriculum for students from a wide range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds, within the city of Monrovia, Liberia.

The School pledges to maintain educational excellence and, in order to reach this goal, we will:

- provide a safe, nurturing and friendly environment for all students
- teach the information, skills and processes that prepare students to function effectively in a rapidly changing world
- encourage students and cultivate in them an inquisitive nature as well as the love of learning so that both become life-long activities
- teach students the methods and disciplines necessary to be able to utilize effective study habits for the rest of their lives
- provide instructional programs that stimulate and challenge students, providing for their present and future needs, while consistently stretching the limits of their abilities
- help and encourage students to develop personal values, which enable them to be responsible members of society and as such to make their own decisions as informed individuals
- impart an understanding of the complexity and interdependence of people, cultures and the environment
- take advantage of the cultural diversity within the school and the community
- make full use of the opportunities and resources available to the school in any country
- be aware of the often transient nature of our pupils and prepare them to transfer successfully to any other of similar level and quality educational institution

## AISM's Learning Support Beliefs and Expectations

AISM Learning Support department:

- Value all students
- Work to maintain a safe physical and emotional environment for all students
- Uphold and communicate high and clear expectations to all students
- State, maintain, and follow clear and fair routines
- Are respectful in demeanor and communication
- Differentiate instructions and activities
- Actively engage and differentiate learning tasks for students
- Encourage students to advocate for themselves
- Challenge students to achieve their personal success to the best of their ability
- Include students with learning needs in appropriate classes and activities with adequate support
- Support classroom teachers when incorporating accommodations to help students access the school's curriculum

## Admissions of Students with Special Needs

The following steps are followed after AISM admissions receives an application from a parent with a child with special needs:

- Admissions team reviews application and school records to make an initial assessment regarding the student's needs and to determine if AISM's resources are adequate to meet the student's needs. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.
- The admissions team with the student's parents, determines whether the student will require a learning assistant in the classroom at an additional cost.
- The Admissions Coordinator may schedule a meeting with the student's parents so that the team has a mutual understanding of the needs of the student and appropriate plan for the student's success.
- AISM requires current year reports and one year academic records, including standardized reports and psychological reports if available, and one letter of recommendation.
- The Director and admissions committee will make the final decision to admit the student.

## Confidentiality

Confidential students' records and information are shared only among staff that work directly with a Learning Support student. All conversations concerning any student must take place in a secure location. Confidential student records will be kept securely. No Learning Support student record will be released without the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

## Learning Support Staff

The Learning Support staff is a valuable resource for the classroom teacher and parents. They provide information and insight regarding students who may need academic support. When students are deemed to require learning support at AIS, AIS Learning Support staff will address what the individual student needs in order to make educational progress. If a student has a Learning Support Plan or an accepted Individual Education Plan from another institution, AIS Learning Support staff will address what the individual student needs in order to make educational progress, but this is neither a guarantee of achievement of each goal on the IEP or Learning Plan, nor a guarantee of promotion, passing grades, or graduation.

Students who qualify for extra academic support, work with the Learning Support Administrator and/or a Learning Support assistant. The Learning Support administrator, Learning Support assistant, and the classroom teacher works collaboratively to ensure that the student has access to the grade level curriculum as well as other curriculum if needed. If a student needs additional academic support, the Learning Support team may work directly with the student.

The support setting may be in the classroom or in the Learning Support classroom. The classroom teacher and the Learning Support staff are responsible to differentiate instructions and implement any accommodation that is appropriate for the student. In order to monitor student's progress, the Learning Support staff will maintain data. The data will also help to guide instruction.

In situations when a student requires an assistant to work directly with him or her, the assistant will assist with instruction by working under the supervision of the classroom or Learning Support Administrator.

## Academic Support Models

AISM does not have adequate resources to provide support such as educational psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychological therapists, or other specialized staff. AISM will only admit students with mild disabilities or needing mild to moderate support.

### Level 1 Minimum Support

A student may participate in the regular curriculum but may receive consultative support from the Learning Support teacher or Administrator. The Learning Support teacher or Administrator:

- may provide strategies or guidance to the classroom teacher to support differentiation of lessons , activities, homework, or assessments.
- observe student in the classrooms
- assist the teacher with short-term systematic or approved early interventions programs
- review the student's progress at the end of the quarter to determine the success of the interventions or program.

After the student is working independently at expected grade level for one semester, making progress on standardized assessments, and based on recommendations from the classroom teachers, Learning Support administrator, parents, counselor, and the director, the student may then exit the program.

### Level 2-Moderate Support

A student is noted to require Level 2, moderate support when she or he requires accommodations and support in two or more subjects to understand the curriculum. The focus of support may be remedial, basic, or foundational skills instruction, within the grade level. The student is assessed at the grade level unless the student has an IEP or Learning Plan with modifications. Students requiring moderate support may be admitted on a case by case basis.

Here are examples of moderate learning support from AISM Learning Support Department:

- Guidance and strategies from the Learning Support Administrator provided to classroom teachers to support differentiation, assessments, or homework assignments
- Provide small group instruction, one-one support, pull-out sessions (up to 90 minutes, three times week)
- Student may require a daily one on-one learning assistant
- A student may exit Moderate Learning Support when working at grade-level for one semester based on class assignments and assessments and does not require a learning assistant for 70% of daily classes.

### Level 3 Intensive Support

Students requiring intensive support are students who may require a daily one-on-one learning assistant to all classes, during playtime, and lunch. If a student requires a one-to-one assistant, the cost will be borne by the student's parents. AISM admissions committee will make the final determination as to whether AISM has the resources to support a student requiring intensive support.

## Accommodations

Accommodations are specific changes made to instruction or assessment so that students requiring accommodations may fully assess the curriculum at AISM. They do not change or reduce the learning outcomes. Some accommodations are but not limited to::

- Preferred seating
- Extended time for instruction and assessment
- Alternative format
- Instructions broken down into sequential steps
- Use of graphic organizers or scaffolds

## Modifications

Modifications are created for students with a diagnosed disability who require modifications to the curriculum. Alterations made to the curriculum, instruction, or assessments changes lower or reduce grade level learning or assessment expectations. The end learning product is often not the same as a student without modifications. Adding modifications to a student's learning plan is a team's decision and parents' permission must be obtained before implementation of any modification. Modifications are documented on the Learning Support Plan/IEP and will be documented on the student's progress report.

## The Referral Process

A referral of a student to AISM Learning Support may occur after a parent, teacher, or group of teachers notice issues surrounding the child's learning or progress that requires attention or intervention.

The parent will:

- contact the student's teacher or teachers to schedule a parent-teacher-counselor conference to voice concerns
- the team will review student's grades, MAP assessments, and classroom behavior to decide on appropriate classroom interventions for the student if needed
- the teacher or teachers will observe and monitor the student for a period of six weeks and document student's progress including grades and teacher's observations
- the team will schedule a meeting with the parents of the student to continue strategies and interventions in place or make a decision through the counselor and school division administrator to refer the student to AISM Learning Support for strategies and support

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- the school division counselor and division administrator will complete the referral for and submit the form to the director for approval, and submit to the Learning Support Administrator
- The Learning Support administrator will schedule a team meeting with the student's parents, division counselor, division administrator, student's current teacher, and any person that may supply relevant information needed to determine the level of support that the student requires, and to develop the student Learning Support Plan for a specified period of time.

## Criteria for Learning Support

A	Documented concerns by student's parents, previous teachers, and/or current teachers
	The student has a history of poor academic grades documented by progress reports and report cards
	Interventions and strategies have been implemented in the classroom and documented over a period of 4-6 weeks with little or no student progress
	The student demonstrates academic achievement one to two grade levels below expectations on benchmark, criterion referenced assessments, or diagnostic assessments.
B	The student has a Individual Education Plan or Learning Support Plan from another school
C	The student has a current psycho-educational evaluation or diagnosed Specific Learning Disability that impacts learning
D	The student has a diagnosed physical disability that impacts learning