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# Inclusion Policy



*Al Mawakeb School*

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# **Inclusion Policy for AMK**

## **1.0 Introduction**

In accordance with “My Community, a City for Everyone” initiative, Dubai is committed to becoming a completely inclusive city by 2020, catering for students of determination. Federal law no. 29 (2006), Federal Decree no. 116 (2009), Dubai’s Supreme Legislation Committee’s Law no. 2 (2014), and Executive Council Resolution no. 2 (2017) demonstrate Dubai’s commitment to ensuring the educational and social inclusion of all children and adults of determination and their families.

We at AMK are well aware of, and promote, the principles of Inclusion and Equity which are engulfed in AMK’s core values.

All stakeholders at AMK shall encourage students of determination to strive in a safe learning environment. Parents, students, and staff aim to work collaboratively to maintain consistency and ensure the academic and psychological wellbeing of students of determination. In order to ensure progression and inclusion, our focus will be on the students’ strengths rather than weakness.

## **2.0 Values**

Our focus at AMK is to “Inspire, Empower and Guide” our students to grow, strive and become independent active learners that can serve the UAE community. Inclusion is a matter of working collaboratively towards success. Our pedagogies and approaches towards inclusive education are inspired by our core values: family, honesty, leadership, respect, responsibility, care, commitment, tolerance, acceptance and excellence.

## **3.0 Definition**

“An impairment is defined as a medically identified condition or a long-term limitation of a person’s physical, mental, cognitive, communicative and/or sensory functions. Impairments become disabilities, when the person experiences attitudinal, social and/or environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community. Therefore, a disability is the result of an individual’s interaction with society, if barriers to participation for that person are not removed. It is not an attribute of the person.

In the context of education, those who remain excluded from schools and other education provisions are most often those children who experience a special educational need and disability (SEND).”<sup>1</sup>

#### **4.0 Rationale and Aims**

“Inclusive education is not a marginal issue; in fact, it is central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners regardless of their disabilities and the development of more inclusive societies. Inclusive education is essential to achieving social equity and is a constituent element of lifelong learning.”<sup>2</sup>

We at AMK, are aware of the challenges that students of determination face and we are driven to provide them with consistent support to cater for their needs. By establishing an inclusive environment based on equity, we aim to minimize environmental or educational barriers which may hinder students’ learning and accessibility; with the intention of ensuring a smooth transition for students along their academic journey.

High quality education is provided to all groups of students by developing equal learning opportunities, in a common and safe learning environment, to maximize their full potentials and innate talents. We shall ensure that all students feel welcomed, develop a sense of belongingness and form positive social relationships with their peers. We shall provide every student with access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

To achieve this, the school will ensure that all stakeholders:

- view and value student diversity as integral to the human condition
- acknowledge that all students have the right to education in a common learning environment
- recognize the learning potential of all students
- engage with theories of learning that support child-centered and differentiated and personalized approaches to teaching and learning
- prevent marginalization and discrimination in education by diverting from labeling students with determination in order to reduce barriers to participation in learning

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<sup>1</sup> Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, Knowledge and Human Development Authority, 2017

<sup>2</sup> UAE School Inspection Framework 2015-2016, p. 13

- be proactive with including all students in a common environment by reducing barriers to learning by adapting and modifying curricula, teaching and learning strategies
- fulfil their responsibility to facilitate and instill an inclusive culture within their individual education settings and be accountable through the programs, practices and outcomes of the entire learning community

The school will also:

- establish an Inclusive Education Action Team (IEAT) consisting of the principal, vice principal, Inclusion Champion, Inclusion Coordinator who leads the provision for students of determination, and support teacher(s). The IEAT may also include other staff members such as: learning support assistant(s), counselors, therapists and classroom teachers
- where appropriate, assign Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to individual students of determination and/or class groups as needed
- where appropriate, develop partnerships with special centres and external professionals who work with individual students. These partnerships will be responsive to the needs of students of determination and their families to ensure access to high quality inclusive education

## **5.0 Procedures**

### **5.1 Admissions**

Students of determination have the same right as all other students as principles of equity are evident at AMK. The school shall therefore ensure that:

- a student of determination shall have an equal opportunity as any other applicant of being admitted to school. Admission into all educational settings, including early years shall not be conditional upon the submission of a medical diagnosis
- in exceptional circumstances, where the school denies a student of determination admission, the criteria and rationale for the decision will be clearly described through the completion of KHDA's non-admission notification procedure for students of determination
- students of determination will receive "sibling priority" for admission to the school

- students of determination will be actively supported to participate in the process of learning, as they develop their potential and build relationships with their peers, through social interactions
- students of determination will receive proper adjustments, accommodations and modifications matching their needs, grounded on the principles of the right based approach which will provide them with equitable access to educational opportunities

## **5.2 Identification and Early Intervention**

The school will identify a student as one of determination if the student's educational needs "are different from those of the majority of students and arise from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder."<sup>3</sup> Such disabilities or recognized disorders fall under different categories. (Refer to Appendix 1).

Since AMK fosters an inclusive learning environment, in which students with diverse needs are included in the mainstream community of learners with various needs and abilities, the school shall adopt the following identification and early intervention strategies:

- carry out an "assessment of educational needs" through informal assessments, screening tools and CAT 4 if needed as formal assessment
- analyze the outcome of the assessments and screening tools alongside other information to appropriately and professionally identify the category and level of need experienced by the student
- determine the type and level of support appropriate for each student, based on their needs. This will include, yet not be limited to, the following:
  - Strategies matching students' needs including accommodations and modifications
  - One-to-one or small group pull out sessions and differentiated and personalized activities
- develop IEPs including both academic and behavior skills depending on the need
- use the IEP as a SMART document to inform the use and impact of Specific intervention, Measurable outcomes, Attainable targets, and Relevant and results-oriented activities and Time-sensitive measures, in response to the need experienced by each student

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<sup>3</sup> UAE School Inspection Framework 2015 – 2016, pp 117 – 118.

- provide a list of external agents to liaise and work in partnership with centers offering intervention programs to enable effective transitions of students of determination into formal mainstream education settings

### **5.3 Monitoring Student Progress**

The Inclusion Department will monitor and adjust the intervention plan when the progress results show that the student is progressing above expectations, not progressing, or maintaining school expectations academically or behaviorally. Students of determination will be monitored based on their student's academic and personal achievements, which will be documented in their IEP. In addition, students who are gifted and talented will be monitored according to their Advanced Learning Program (ALP).

### **5.4 Communication with Parents**

Parents are expected to have full-time engagement and involvement in the learning process of the different groups of students of determination and gifted and talented. Members of the Inclusive Education Action Team shall be involved in the communication process with parents via email, meetings or phone calls. The school shall set a timetable to communicate with parents on a regular basis to discuss the academic/behavior performance. Scheduled meetings with parents shall be conducted to discuss progress reports, progress and attainment of IEP/ALP targets. Meetings shall be documented through communication logs to track crucial key points throughout the academic year. Immediate communication with parents shall happen in case of an emergency or other important reasons such as disruptive behavior, sickness, etc. Parents are also expected to attend the parent-teacher conferences when requested.

### **5.5 Extra-Curricular Activities**

Students of determination shall be engaged in various extra-curricular activities such as field trips, community service, and club memberships as they shall not be marginalized.

### **5.6 Reporting**

The Inclusion Department shall collect and report information and periodic data on:

- The numbers of students of determination disaggregated by gender, age, nationality, type of need, attendance levels, health status and location/jurisdiction

- The number and characteristics of students who are denied admission to schools and other education providers – specifically related to their needs
- The number and characteristics of students of determination attending mainstream education settings and special education centers
- The number and characteristics of students of determination transitioning into higher educational systems once they reach 18 years of age
- The progression and outcomes of students of determination attending mainstream educational settings and external support agents  
School level data on accessibility, accommodation, teacher and student support (including number of support teachers and learning support assistants), IEPs, training, funding, assistive technologies and other types of support compliant

## **6.0 Duties and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 Governing Body**

The Governing Body shall ensure that the positions of school and program leaders, such as Principals, Vice Principals, and other members of the leadership team, are filled by candidates who have, or have the capacity to acquire, the identified knowledge and skills related to operationalizing the KHDA's Inclusive Education Policy Framework.

### **6.2 Principal/Vice Principal**

- Admit students with special needs and provide them with equal learning opportunities as with the rest of typically developed students
- Comply with UAE Federal Law No. 29/2006 including the School for All's general rules for the provision for special education program and services launched by the Ministry of Education
- Promote inclusive education across the school and acknowledge the rights of all students including those of determination
- Organize educational staff and other school resources to meet the learning needs of all students
- Organize working conditions that foster inclusive practices such as collaborative educational cultures, teachers' involvement in professional development that is meaningful for their work and enable them to focus on the development of teaching strategies
- Conduct classroom observations to monitor the implementation of the inclusion program of the school

- Communicate with parents/guardians about the personal and academic information of students of determination
- Develop a CPD (continuous professional development) program plan for all staff in school
- Follow up, monitor, review and evaluate the IEP/ALP of the students of determination, gifted and talented
- Allocate services/resources in the classroom based on the specific needs of different groups
- Execute the managerial roles and responsibilities in sustaining collaboration and accountability of all staff to ensure the accomplishment and monitoring of academic and behavioral performances of students of determination
- Ensure that when discriminatory action against a students of determination is suspected he/she will take action to resolve the matter through mediation among the involved parties including, remedial action to eliminate the discrimination and referral to the appropriate education authority for review and action
- Develop partnerships with other educational entities, including schools, universities and specialized service providers to plan, organize and deliver pertinent training and capacity-building courses and programs in Dubai
- Develop and implement a plan to ensure the accessibility of school premises and other education settings in accordance with Dubai Universal Accessibility Code
- Ensure that, where appropriate, educational staff have access to expert support from external professionals such as psychologists, therapists, counsellors, medical practitioners and others

### **6.3 Parents/Guardians**

The duties and responsibilities of the parents/guardians in providing inclusive education are stated below:

- Provide the school with complete information regarding the need of their child such as personal, medical and health records or any other pertinent information
- Collaborate with the school Principal and Heads of Sections (HoS) regarding transition matters.
- Participate in all school meetings with the Principal, Vice Principal HoS, Inclusion Coordinator, classroom teachers, support teachers to become updated with their child's status and contribute to their child's progress



- Contribute to building the IEP goals and the development and regular assessment and evaluation of IEPs/ALPs
- Maintain verbal, written or virtual correspondences with their child's teacher and inform the school administration for possible adjustments and changes in terms of the child's routine, information, etc.
- Attend school-sponsored workshops to broaden the understanding and develop the skills to further support the child's educational needs
- Openly consider requests from the school and cooperatively work with external agencies, if needed

#### **6.4 Governor for Inclusive Education (appointed by the school)**

The Governor for inclusive education holds school leaders to account for the improvements of provision and outcomes for students of determination. He/she shall:

- Develop and maintain an awareness of inclusion provision on behalf of the Governing Body
- Oversee the provisions for inclusion in the school
- Monitor the effective implementation of the school's Inclusion Policy
- Confirm that all students of determination get the support they need to access the curriculum and are full participants in school life
- Meet with Inclusive Education Action Team in the school 2 - 3 times a year, or as needed, to understand how the school is complying with the requirements and standards set in the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework
- Occasionally observe students of determination during learning activities
- Report and provide up-to-date feedback to the Governing Body, following visits to school, on the inclusion provisions and the implementation of the Inclusion Policy
- Help review policies on provision for students of determination and ensure statutory policies for inclusion are shared on the school portal

#### **6.5 Inclusion Champion (appointed by the school)**

The Inclusion Champion has the key role of promoting inclusive ideas and modelling approaches that support the development of inclusive attitudes and methods. He/she will motivate others to share in this experience and shall:

- Promote services and practices pertaining to inclusion
- Advocate to inclusion, exceptionality and principles of equity

- Ensure that educational staff receive effective support to meet the needs of individual learners in their classes
- Ensure educational staff are accountable for the monitoring of student progress in learning

### **6.6 Inclusive Education Action Team (IEAT):**

The duties and responsibilities of the IEAT in providing inclusive education are stated below:

- Develop and implement a strategic Inclusive Education Improvement Plan which specifies how support to teachers and students will be delivered and how it can be improved over time, to ensure the successful inclusion of students of determination
- Ensure that flexible curricula pathways respond to the diverse cognitive, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students and are supported by a variety of teaching methods to accommodate a range of learning styles
- Foster the use of inclusive instructional strategies and quality teaching through on-going capacity building, including providing classroom teachers with coaching, mentoring and support to facilitate learning for all students
- Ensure that teachers have access to and use new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies considered essential for meeting the needs of individual students, specifically those of determination
- Embed effective collaborative systems to draw on the knowledge and competencies of educators, therapists and other members of staff to assist each other in meeting the needs of students of determination
- Actively engage families, parents, caregivers and other relevant stakeholders, such as community and social workers and medical professionals, to share responsibility for the education of students of determination
- Meet on a regular basis, typically once a week, and maintain minutes of the meetings and utilize effective systems to follow-up on specific actions and strategies
- Review and update the strategic Inclusive Education Improvement Plan on an annual basis
- Make support teachers (ST) and learning support assistants (LSA) available to the school team to assist classroom teachers in providing effective instruction to students with diverse learning needs

- Provide the appropriate regulating authority with systematic updates on the implementation of the inclusive education policy framework and submit required documentation, as agreed with the relevant authority

### **6.7 Inclusion Coordinator:**

The Inclusion Coordinator shall:

- Consult and collaborate with parents and caregivers of students of determination to ensure appropriate and adequate provisions, accommodations, modifications and services are provided, including the use of assessment procedures and screening tools
- Ensures that all stakeholders are informed and updated regularly with regard to students of determination
- Supervise the overall compliance of the teachers and staffs with the Inclusion Policy on daily basis in the school
- Conduct classroom observations to monitor the implementation of the provisions and ensure that the IEP is strictly implemented
- Liaise with teachers and support teachers to monitor their daily operations with students of determination
- Meet regularly with teachers to discuss the IEP targets and the performance of students to identify the progress
- Follow-up on the individual progress of students of determination in terms of academic, behavioral and personal development
- Communicate and meet with parents/guardians, on a regular basis, to assess the impact of IEPs and to discuss issues or updates related to the academic and behavioral performances of their child
- Partake in the organization and preparation of CPD or training related to inclusive education for all stakeholders
- Coordinate with external agencies such as psychologists, social services and learning support agencies whenever needed, to ensure the students' best interest, yet maintain confidentiality
- Establish and operate collaborative problem solving processes and approaches with teachers to identify and deal with problems and challenges that emerge for students
- Ensure that parents of students of determination, and where appropriate the children themselves play a central part in the development of the IEP and related program design
- Ensure that curricular adjustments and modifications foster the learning of all students by enhancing the participation and learning of students of determination

- Consult and collaborate with parents and caregivers of students of determination to ensure appropriate and adequate provisions, accommodations and services are provided, including involvement in:
  - the use of assessment procedures
  - education service planning
  - the evaluation of education services
  - the evaluation of support and assessment services.

### **6.8 Classroom Teachers:**

The Classroom Teacher shall:

- Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of inclusive education values and principles
- Be proficient in inclusive education techniques, curricular modification, personalization of learning objectives and assessment strategies
- Work with parents, caregivers and professionals to develop appropriate individual education plans for individual students of determination
- Utilize “assistive technologies” whenever needed
- Implement inclusive strategies to cater for students’ needs
- Collaborate with support teams to create opportunities that facilitate the meaningful participation of all students in the common learning environment (e.g., lesson planning, classroom set-up, purposeful student groupings)
- Apply formative assessment, universal design for learning, differentiation and other learner-centered activities, so that students can pursue and achieve curricular-based learning goals

### **6.9 Support Teachers:**

The Support Teacher shall:

- Work directly with student(s) to determine individual needs and collect information about the students’ strengths and challenges necessary to complete an IEP
- Provide instruction to student(s) individually or in small groups inside or outside the common learning environment
- Focus on supporting teachers in an active and sustained manner across the year in accordance with the time allocation guidelines below:
  - 60% of the time should be allocated to supporting teachers and strengthening instruction
  - 25% of the time should be allocated to supporting student

- 15% of the time should be allocated to planning an organization study and administrative work (IEPs, progress reports etc.)

### **6.10 Learning Support Assistants (LSAs):**

The LSA shall:

- Assist students who require support within the classroom setting (e.g., eating, using the bathroom, dressing)
- Contribute to the education of students in inclusive schools and classrooms by implementing small-group and individual instruction
- Prepare learning materials for use by student(s) under the direction of the teacher
- Collect formative assessment data on student performance and progress, based on systems designed by teachers or Inclusive Education Action Team
- Facilitate peer interactions based on guidance from the teacher and Inclusive Education Action Team
- Invite students to help each other and, as required, and engage in non-instructional tasks (e.g., group supervision such as in the cafeteria, on the playground, bus boarding, field trips) identified by teachers and the Inclusive Education Action Team
- Apply current best practices and strategies learned through professional development courses, in-service training or workshops

### **7.0 Essential Information**

- a) Governor for Inclusive Education: Ms. Sarah Al Mudharreb
- b) Inclusion Champion: Ms. Samira Al Awadhi (School Principal)
- c) Inclusion Coordinator: Ms. Yasmina Keis

### **8.0 Conclusion**

We strongly believe that providing equity of opportunity leads to healthy environment among students of different aptitude levels. This eventually results in more desirable and favorable outcomes. As we value individual differences of our students, our educational goals, strategies, and pedagogies are always intertwined with the provision for students of determination. We, at AMK, shall pursue high quality education to all groups of students by providing equal learning opportunities to maximize their full potentials.

## **9.0 Policy Review**

The Senior Leadership Team will conduct an annual review of the maintenance and repair policy and procedures and share suggestions for improvement with the Governing Body.

## **Appendix 1: Categories of Students of Determination<sup>4</sup>**

### **1) General barriers to learning (Intellectual disability):**

A disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and in adaptive behavior, which cover a range of everyday social and practical skills. This can be mild, moderate or severe.

### **2) Multiple disabilities:**

A student who experiences a number of severe barriers to learning, such as a sensory disability and a physical disability, may be identified as having a multiple disability.

### **3) Developmental delay (younger than five years of age).**

These include problems with language or speech, vision, movement/motor skills, social and emotional skills and thinking/cognitive skills.

### **4) Specific learning disorder (Specific barriers to learning)**

A specific learning disorder is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. The disorder may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or understand mathematical calculations.

### **5) Communication disorders (Communication barriers)**

A communication disorder is an impairment in the ability to receive, send, process, and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems. A communication disorder may be evident in the processes of interpretation, hearing, language, and/or speech.

### **6) Autism spectrum disorder (Barriers with social interaction, communication and flexibility)**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental condition that involves persistent challenges in the areas of social interaction, communication, and restricted or repetitive behavior(s).

### **7) Psycho-emotional disorders (Emotional and psychological barriers)**

These are disorders such as Depression, Bi-polar disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Obsessive/Compulsive disorder, and Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

### **8) Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (Barriers with attention and self-regulation)**

### **9) Sensory impairments (Barriers with using the senses):** These include Visual impairment, Hearing impairment

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<sup>4</sup> KHDA's revised categorization framework for students of determination (2019-20)

- 10) Deaf-blind (Barriers with seeing and hearing)**
- 11) Physical disability (Barriers with physical movement):** These include Muscular dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida
- 12) Chronic or acute medical conditions (medical barriers):** Represented by reduced strength, alertness, stamina or concentration. Examples of chronic or acute health problems include heart defects, epilepsy, and cancer or brain tumor.



## **Policy Addendum**

### **Accommodations for Students of Determination**

The school shall improve learning processes and outcomes of students with disabilities during a crisis such as COVID-19 by:

#### ***1. Assessing accommodations***

Faculty, parents and individual students assess each student's situation and discuss adjustments needed for distance learning. Some examples include using alternatives to print, such as audio or other formats in instruction, as well as pictures, flexible scheduling and deadlines, and assistive technology.

#### ***2. Modifying curricula and instructions***

Learning in a remote setting may differ from mainstream, classroom-based environments. This includes expectations for students and teaching methodology. Curricula can be adjusted. For example, homework can be simplified, allowing students to dictate rather than type, and audio materials can be provided for reading assignments.

#### ***3. Implementing project-based learning***

Studies show that students with disabilities learn more by using research and analysis to complete a project. Project-based learning also improves self-esteem and promotes positive engagement. Teachers are vital for this type of learning. They shall try as much as applicable to design and introduce assignments and make sure that the student understands how to complete them.

#### ***4. Ensuring individualized education program (IEP)***

IEP requires that teachers, students, parents and families work together to decide on the effectiveness of a remote-learning setting and how to best proceed with each student's education. Arrangements shall be made to design a SMART IEP in collaboration with the parents and the student. Agreement shall be made on the procedures to track the student's progress towards achieving the IEP.

#### ***5. Supporting teachers***

Teachers shall be provided with constant guidance and relevant, evidence-based resources by the Inclusion Team on how to deliver lessons in remote and online settings in special education.

#### ***6. Providing family and caregiver support***

Systemic approaches are necessary to help parents and caregivers with both their domestic responsibilities and students' education. This shall be done through constant communication between the school's Inclusion Team and the parents.

**Revision History:**

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of changes</b>	<b>Requested By</b>
0	04/09/2016	Initial Release	CAO
1	06/01/2019	General Review, aligning policy with KHDA's Inclusion Framework	Inclusion Department
2	10/06/2019	General review, Renaming the policy from SEND Policy to Inclusion Policy. Changing terminologies from SEND to Inclusion and Students of determination	Inclusion Department
3	28/01/2020	Removing the conditional statement on acceptance of students of determination	Inclusion Department
4	20/10/2020	Including an addendum related to Covid-19	E&C