

LWIS – UNIVERSAL SCHOOL OF LEBANON

LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM HANDBOOK

“we measure success one happy learner at a time”

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INTRODUCTION

Universal School of Lebanon is a uniquely supportive environment that is home to students with abilities as diverse as their backgrounds, united by shared values and purpose.

Learning Support Services offer specialized learning support for students who have been identified as having learning differences in reading, written expression, math and organization.

In small group settings, students and LS teachers work to develop strategies and skills for remediating the student's specific learning challenge. LS teachers and parents collaborate to form a cohesive unit of support to guide each student to a shared definition of personal success.

PHILOSOPHY

All students are unique individuals who learn at their individual pace and in their individual style.

For students with learning differences, learning is a challenge every day. The LS team at LWIS-USL works with students with learning differences to help them develop the necessary academic skills needed for them to learn. To be more effective and to ensure all students are learning to their fullest potential, the LS team utilizes a holistic approach to education and academic development; this approach aims to encompass physical, social, artistic, creative and emotional aspects of a child's development.

At LWIS-USL, all teachers strive to provide an environment where students can develop their skills, knowledge, and self-confidence. Teachers, parents, external therapists, and any other specialists who may be involved with the student, work collaboratively in the best interests of the student. The team ensures that the best resources, support, and environment are being provided to the student.

STAFFING

The Learning Support Team consists of a group of qualified teachers, a speech therapist, and shadow teachers who work collaboratively with class/subject teachers to ensure that all students with learning needs can access the curriculum.

Our aim is for students to access not only the content of a subject, but also the learning processes required for reasoning, inquiring, analysis and problem solving in a particular academic domain. Accordingly, we assist teachers to identify the student's learning style, scaffold their learning, and differentiate the curriculum.

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

We believe that every student is unique in his or her own way. We actively support our students in a safe, caring and enriching environment that allows them to grow and mature academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. Universal School of Lebanon supports students with special educational needs who demonstrate a reasonable ability to be successful in our academic programs.

- The curriculum, teaching methods, resources and expectations will be suited to the wide range of potentials, levels of attainment, and different learning styles represented by the student body.
- Teachers are responsible for increasing access and engagement in learning for all learners by responding positively to the diverse and unique learning needs of each individual.
- Teachers are responsible for differentiating and matching teaching approaches to the student's learning needs.
- Teachers are responsible for promoting and enabling equal access to the curriculum: "learning for all"

- Teachers use scaffolding teaching strategies (graph organizers, visual aids, demonstrations, structured collaborative groups, use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas).
- Teachers envisage the use of technology as a way of assisting in alleviating and removing barriers to learning. It also enables learners with language barriers to access materials.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

LWIS-USL believes that the admission process should not discriminate against students with special needs, but should instead attempt to assess the strengths of the whole child. All applicants undergo initial baseline testing.

The Head of the LS Department assesses the students, after reviewing assessment results and other documents (reports), and decides whether students are likely to be successful in LS Department.

Parents of every new student are required to submit details of any previous learning support provision or specialist evaluations/assessments.

If after admission, the Head of the LS Department finds that the child's educational needs cannot be met by the school, he/she reserves the right to ask, and aid where possible, parents to choose an alternative school provision.

REFERRAL TO THE STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)

Step 1:

When the mainstream teacher suspects any learning difficulties, he/she shares his/her concern with the head of LS and discusses the academic performance of students who are experiencing learning problems.

The SST conducts a classroom observation in the area of concern and makes recommendations to improve the student's academic performance. The SST also begins to monitor the student's progress.

If the student's progress is adequate and the interventions appear successful, the SST can determine that no need for Special Education Programs.

Step 2:

When the interventions have been attempted but do not sufficiently address the child's needs, the head of LS will meet with the student's parents to review why a comprehensive evaluation is necessary and how it will benefit the child, and share information with parents about qualified professionals who can assess their child.

- Parents schedule their child's assessment with a qualified psychologist.
- Once assessment is complete, parents share the written document with the head of LS. The SST meets to discuss the assessment and the recommendations.
- The head of LS meets with the student's parents to share results of the evaluation and to explain the services the SST is recommending

Step 3:

Students with formally diagnosed learning disabilities or special educational needs as identified by a doctor or educational psychologist will have an individual educational plan (IEP) written for them that will help students, parents, and teachers identify the following:

- Performance background for the student, including strengths and areas of concern.
- Student goals and strategies; the IEP will record only that which is different from or additional to the normal curriculum, and will concentrate on several targets that closely match the student's needs. The IEP will be discussed with the parents.
- The IEP should be reviewed and the student's progress monitored closely by the SST.
- Each objective is measured and assessed (Brigance assessment).
- A progress report will be sent twice per term.
- The SST schedules an annual review report at the end of Term 2 and makes recommendations for the next school year.

LEARNING NEEDS

There are certain groups of students with additional educational needs who require instructions beyond what the regular classroom curriculum can provide. These learning needs may be categorized.

Special Education Categories

The following categories of disabilities qualify a student to receive special education services at LWIS-USL, if the disability affects the child's academic performance.

1. Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD)

- Dyslexia: A specific difficulty in learning to read, spell and write
- Dyscalculia: A specific difficulty in understanding the language, concepts and procedures of mathematics.
- Dyspraxia: An immaturity or impairment in the organization and planning of controlled movements.
- Dysphasia: Difficulty in producing or understanding grammatical and semantic structure of language.

2. Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD): A condition where there is a markedly reduced ability to attend and maintain concentration, sometimes accompanied by extreme physical restlessness.

3. Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties: A condition that exhibits inappropriate behavior or feelings under normal circumstances, which adversely affects educational performance.

KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning support teacher

- Supports students' individual learning needs
- Participates in the effective implementation of IEP
- Provides additional support or accommodation for students when required
- Closely monitors the progress of the student
- Collaborates with parents of students with special needs to strengthen the home-school partnership

Head of Department

- Accepts students with special needs who have a reasonable expectation of success with LWIS-USL curriculum and to provides them with opportunities to learn
- Thoroughly applies the principles and general rules for special education programs
- Promotes a culture of inclusion and concern for the rights of all students
- Strengthens relationships with parents and creates awareness about our program
- Organizes mechanisms to provide resources and services for LS students at LWIS-USL

Parents

- Attend meetings and provide necessary assessment related to the education of their children
- Collaborate with school teachers to strengthen the home-school partnership
- Set appropriate expectations for their child which are adequate with his or her capabilities.