



# **Student support policy**

## **The IB Diploma Programme**

April 2018  
Next review: April 2020

At Viborg Katedralskole all students will be supported according to their needs.

The support structure consists of initial measures where all students talk to a counsellor within the first one-two months, and later a needs-based support where the school helps providing support based on an individual assessment. This support can be in the shape of frequent talks with the school counsellors, entering a mentoring programme, sessions with the school psychologist or sessions with a reading/writing counsellor. All of these support measures are coordinated by Education Manager, Lene Gade, the IB coordinator, Mads Fedder Henriksen and the student counsellor, Rikke Møl Bramming. If the student lives in the boarding school, the live-in teachers and the leader of the boarding school are also involved when relevant.

More detailed information of these support measures and other initiatives to support learning and well-being in the school is provided below.

The school's Admissions Policy outlines the academic requirements and expectations that should be met to be considered for the IB Programme and can be found here:

### **Identifying students' needs**

In all of the school's programmes every incoming student will be called in for an individual, mandatory introductory interview with a school counsellor. The purpose of the interview is to identify the strong and weak sides in every student, covering a wide spectrum of personal and academic issues. If this initial interview shows that there is a further need for counselling, the counsellor will call in the student for further, in-depth talks. If there is no need, the student will not be called in automatically. There is, however, always the possibility of seeking counselling as the counsellor has office hours more times every week and can easily be contacted if there is an instant need for a talk.

Furthermore, teachers, the IB coordinator and in some cases parents can initiate a round of talks which may be enough, or which may lead to the involvement of further support staff (psychologist, reading counsellor, mentor) within the school, or to professional help outside the school (e.g. own doctor, psychiatrist, therapist).

### **Student support counsellors**

At Viborg Katedralskole there are four student counsellors, one of these at the moment working with the IB/PreIB students. All the counsellors have received extensive special training. The current IB/PreIB counsellor is also the English A teacher, teaching all of the students, and CAS coordinator and as such the one person who has the closest relationship to the students.

The most important aspect of the counsellor's work is to support and help the students to be able to complete their education, and to help them deal with individual, social and time-managing challenges. Each counsellor has the responsibility for particular classes and works closely with the class teams and the team coordinators and, in the case of the IB and PreIB students, the IB coordinator.

The students can always get in touch with the counsellors with questions, personal issues – or the need just to have somebody to talk to. They can come in the office hours which are posted on lectio, the school's electronic message board, or contact the counsellors via email.

The students meet their counsellor a few days into the first school year where they present themselves and what they can offer in terms of support. Within the first two months an individual talk is carried out to discuss how the student feels about beginning at the school, both concerning the subjects and the social issues.

## **Psychologist**

The school has access to a trained psychologist and/or a therapist where you can have one or more sessions, according to need. All students who have a need can get in touch with the psychologist through Education manager Lene Gade (lg@vibkat.dk) or their student counsellor.

## **Mentoring**

The school has a corps of mentors who as a part of their job support students with special challenges (mental, social, academic). These mentors have all received special training through a Cognitive Mentor's basic course carried out by psychologists and cognitive therapists, which gives an insight into various diagnosis and their particular challenges, motivational and dialogical techniques and more.

The mentors are all experienced teachers in the school, some are also student counsellors or boarding school teachers. These mentors will be allocated to students who encounter social or personal challenges that the regular contact with an adult professional might help to ease. The typical issues are the need of help to structure homework, to overcome social and psychological barriers and to cope with stress. The mentors are allocated by Educational Manager Lene Gade.

## **Homework cafés**

Every week there are 5 homework cafés at the school where students can get help with their daily homework and written assignments. These cafés take place in the library at the school and in the common room of the boarding school. The students work together, enjoy themselves, have a biscuit and a cup of tea – and do their homework. Everybody is welcome and attendance is usually high.

Mondays and Tuesdays, 14-16, there are subject teachers to help with English/Danish/Social studies. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 14-17, it is math/physics/chemistry. On Tuesdays, 15.15-16.45, students can get help with physics and math in the boarding school.

The teachers in these cafés are all to some extent able to help English-speaking students. As the IB community in the school grows, special sessions for IB subjects and students will be put in place.

### **Reading counselling**

The school has a reading counsellor who is also an experienced English teacher. She can provide special help if students have problems with spelling, writing, grammar, reading or the understanding of texts. Depending on the challenges we can provide training in small groups or individually, to increase reading speed, learning to read and understand texts better etc.

All new students will be screened for dyslexia and other reading and writing difficulties within the first few weeks of their studies. Following this, the reading counsellor will give feedback to the IB coordinator if special measures need to be put in place.

The reading counsellors also provide help for dyslexics, where students apart from individual coaching also will receive a free IT-package including tailor-made software and a laptop helping you through their daily challenges. If you know that you are a dyslexic, please make the school aware before entering the school, even if you feel no need for assistance.

### **Exams and access arrangements**

The IB recognises that some students have learning difficulties and offers the possibility of Inclusive Access Arrangements for them.

The IB regulation 'Candidates with assessment access requirements' states the following:

Learning support requirements Support and/or access required to enable some candidates, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, reach their full potential in learning and assessment.

Candidates who require inclusive assessment arrangements may have learning support requirements due to one or more of the following:

- Autism spectrum/Asperger's syndrome
- Learning disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Mental health issues
- Multiple disabilities
- Physical and/or sensory challenges
- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

- Specific learning difficulties
- Speech and/or communication difficulties

The DP Coordinator can apply for such accommodation, but has to do so at least 6 months before the final exams. Any such application must be accompanied by recent specialist test results. Preparing this material can be a time-consuming process so it is best to consult the school as soon as the student has enrolled in the Diploma Programme.

Information about learning difficulties will be treated with discretion. Please do not withhold it in the belief that such secrecy will help the students. Share it with the IB Coordinator and the Student counsellor. Parents wishing to know more about the IB policy and practice regarding Inclusive Access Arrangements can ask the IB Coordinator for further information.

Although the school aims at supporting students with these challenges, it should be noted that experience tells us that the strict requirements and many deadlines built into the IB Diploma makes for a challenging course of education for all students. Potential students with and without special challenges will always be informed of this and in some cases recommended to search for more realistic alternative educational pathways.