



Inclusive Education Policy

The IB Diploma Programme and PreIB

Last review May 2021
Next review: October 2023

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

The IB regulation *Access and inclusion policy* (IBO, Cardiff, 2021) outlines the principles, guidelines and procedures for this.

The overall principle for this policy stated in the document is:

The purpose of access arrangements is to remove or reduce barriers that students may face in teaching, learning and assessment. When the school recognizes that a student has access requirements, this policy must be used in conjunction with teacher observations to plan the necessary access arrangements for the student. This IB policy is based on the principle of optimal support, which means that the access arrangements must be accurately planned to remove or reduce barriers; they must neither be more nor less than what the student requires. The access arrangements for a student must be used for learning and teaching; this means that they must be used during classroom instruction, classwork and related activities and tests. (p.1)

And, additionally:

Not all students who have access requirements will need learning support. (...) learning support is not restricted to students with identified challenges and must be provided to any student who requires support. (p.4)

We strive to live up to these principles and allocate significant time and funds to do so.

Support structure

The support structure consists of initial measures where all students talk to a counselor within the first one-two months, and later a needs-based support where the school helps provide support based on an individual assessment. This support can be in the shape of frequent talks with the school counselors, entering a mentoring programme, meetings with the school coach, sessions with the psychologist team working for the school, or with a reading/writing counselor. In some cases, cooperation and coordination with outside specialists are needed, such as the municipality, medical doctors/hospitals, student's own psychologists or psychiatrists.

All of these support measures are coordinated by the IB coordinator, Mads Fedder Henriksen and the student counselor, Rikke Møl Bramming, with the assistance of Education Manager Majken Vestergaard, who is in charge of the student support measures of the school as a whole, but principally the Danish section. If the student lives in the boarding school, the contact teachers there and the leader of the boarding school will also be involved according to need.

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 counselor. 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 counselor 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 counselor 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 counselor, mathematics counselor, mentor) within the school, or to professional help outside the school (e.g. own doctor, psychiatrist, therapist).

IB Student counselor

At Viborg Katedralskole, one of the counselors has the IB and PreIB students as her particular area. These students have backgrounds and challenges that can be particular to their international background, the fact that many of them live far from their parents, and thus in some cases present particular challenges. This counselor is also the CAS coordinator and an English A teacher, and as such one of the persons who has the closest relationship to the students.

The most important aspect of the counselor'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. The counselor coordinates and collaborates with the class teams and the IB coordinator in finding the best solutions for the individual challenges that a student may face.

The students can always get in touch with the counselors 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 counselors via email.

The students meet their counselor 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 and/or personal issues.

Psychologists

The school has access to a team of professional psychologists, *PsykologCentret Viborg* to which we can refer students needing professional attention in cases of crises or when suffering from mental challenges. The students will be referred to the psychologists through either counselors, education managers or the coach – typically in cooperation. The waiting time for this is typically very short; typically, the psychologists are available for talks within a week or two. The school will pay for the first three consultations, and if the student/family decides to continue the talks with this psychologist, they can do so at a discounted rate.

Coach

The school has an experienced coach attached who typically cares for the students whose challenges are beyond the capabilities and/or time available for the student counselor or mentors. The coach is in very close touch with the students in question and available for longer or more frequent consultations and can be contacted directly by the students, also outside of work hours.

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 diagnoses and their particular challenges, motivational and dialogical techniques and more.

The mentors are all experienced teachers in the school, some are also student counselors 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 Education Manager Majken Vestergaard.

Homework cafés (study hall)

Every week there are 4 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. The teachers in the cafes are often IB or PreIB teachers as well as teachers in the Danish system.

Mondays and Tuesdays, 14-16, there are subject teachers to help with English/Danish/Social studies. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 14-16, it is math/physics/chemistry. On Tuesdays and Thursdays 18:30-20:30, boarding school students can get support at the boarding school, where older and academically excellent IB students are available to support the other students. This is a paid job for those students, and a job for which they have to apply.

Reading counselling

The school has a certified reading counselor who is also a Danish and German 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 counselor will give feedback to the IB coordinator if special measures need to be put in place. The reading counselor is able to carry out further screenings in English, German and Danish for students in need of documentation in order to apply for inclusive arrangements at exams.

The reading counselor also provides 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. Incoming students or their parents must in the application form make the school aware of any learning challenges or medical challenges that the school needs in order to set up inclusive arrangements.

Mathematics counselling

The school has two trained mathematics counselors, one of these also an IB mathematics and Economics teachers. These counselors support students who experience particular challenges with e.g. dyscalculia or mathematics in general, including tailored courses for students who find it difficult to meet the minimum criteria for a given level in the subject.

Exams and access arrangements

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

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 IB 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.

Sharing information

Information about learning difficulties will be treated with discretion. We urge applicants to the programme to not withhold relevant information in the belief that such secrecy will help the students. Parents wishing to know more about the IB policy and practice regarding Inclusive Access Arrangements can ask the IB Coordinator for further information.