



Prva gimnazija Varaždin  
International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

## **Inclusion Policy**

**Prva gimnazija Varaždin  
International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme**

**Diploma Programme  
Inclusion Policy**

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### **IB mission statement**

The international Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

### **PGV mission statement**

We aim to provide students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills according to contemporary educational practice.

We want to develop curious, inquiring and knowledgeable young people who will understand, respect and care about others.

Our goal is to produce future citizens of the world who will know how to accept challenges, how to act in global reality, be active lifelong learners and competitive collaborators within international society.

## IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet help to create a better and more peaceful world.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>INQUIRERS</b><br/>We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.</p>             | <p><b>OPEN-MINDED</b><br/>We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.</p>                                  |
| <p><b>KNOWLEDGEABLE</b><br/>We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.</p>                                     | <p><b>CARING</b><br/>We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.</p>                                                                                   |
| <p><b>THINKERS</b><br/>We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.</p>                                            | <p><b>RISK-TAKERS</b><br/>We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.</p>                         |
| <p><b>COMMUNICATORS</b><br/>We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.</p>             | <p><b>BALANCED</b><br/>We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives-intellectual, physical and emotional-to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.</p> |
| <p><b>PRINCIPLED</b><br/>We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and right of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.</p> | <p><b>REFLECTIVE</b><br/>We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.</p>                                                                  |

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## Introduction

The importance of acknowledging and celebrating differences among people is clearly indicated in the IB Mission Statement which emphasizes the importance of encouraging “students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that **other people, with their differences, can also be right**”.

This document aims to communicate to all of our stakeholders – parents, students, teachers and administrators – our expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all our International Baccalaureate (IB) students as required by International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and Croatian legislation, and supported by Prva gimnazija Varaždin (PGV). Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organizational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community (*Learning diversity and inclusion in the IB Programmes*).

## Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to:

- Explain our philosophy regarding learning support and access requirements (AR) of our students;
- Describe the practices that ensure that the AR of our students are identified early, assessed, and provided for;
- Describe school practice of recording and reporting on achievement of students with AR;
- Inform the stakeholders about the inclusive assessment arrangements (IAA) available for candidates with assessment access requirement (AAR) during their preparation of work for assessment and in their examinations;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

## Our philosophy regarding inclusive education

The IB supports the premise that schools should be organized in a way which recognizes and supports learner variability. Learner variability is a term that embraces all students and does not exclude on the grounds of strengths, challenges, age, social status, economic status, language, gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality. Taking into account changing histories, circumstances and contexts, learner variability represents the shifting combination of strengths and challenges that learners experience. Within this understanding it is recognized that there is no average brain and thus no average student.

Learner variability upholds that categorizing students according to diagnostic labels (ADHD, dyslexia, and so on) does not provide sound indicators of a student's potential or appropriate teaching strategies (*Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate Programmes*).

The following IB Standards and Practices require schools to demonstrate their support for learning diversity:

Purpose (0101)

- The school community fosters internationally minded people who embody all attributes of the IB learner profile. (0101-03)

Leadership and governance (0201)

- The school organizes time for learning and teaching that provides a broad, balanced and connected curriculum and serves the changing needs of its community. (0201-03)

#### Student support (0202)

- The school provides relevant human, natural, built and virtual resources to implement its IB programme(s). (0202-01)
- The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support. (0202-02)
- The school fosters the social, emotional, and physical well-being of its students and teachers. (0202-03)
- The school provides guidance and support that help students succeed in its IB programme(s) and plan for the next stage of their educational and/or career-related experiences. (0202-04)
- The school builds relationships with the wider community that are a source of wisdom and expertise to strengthen the implementation of its IB programmes (0202-05).

#### Teacher support (0203)

- The school provides time and other resources for teachers to collaborate effectively in the implementation of IB programme(s). (0203-03)

#### Culture through policy implementation (0301)

- The school secures access to an IB education to the broadest possible range of students. (0301-01)
- The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)
- The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews a language policy that helps to foster intercultural understanding through communicating in a variety of ways in more than one language (0301-04)

#### Coherent curriculum (0401)

- Teachers collaborate to design, plan and deliver the school's IB programme(s). (0401-02)

#### Students as lifelong learners (0402)

- Students take ownership of their learning by setting challenging goals and pursuing personal inquiries. (0402-06)
- Students pursue opportunities to explore and develop their personal and cultural identities. (0402-07)

#### Approaches to teaching (0403)

- Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals. (0403-05)

#### Approaches to assessment (0404)

- The school administers assessment consistently, fairly, inclusively and transparently. (0404-03)

The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education where:

- education for all is considered a human right
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student
- every educator is an educator of all students
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities
- all learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
  - full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
  - assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
    - multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right and a resource
    - all students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens

- all students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are considered
- all students in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect
- diversity is understood to include all members of a community
- all students experience success as a key component of learning

## Promoting learning and teaching for learner variability

In concordance with the IB philosophy and Croatian legislative, at PGV we acknowledge that our students have different educational and learning needs, abilities, and goals, and that that their learning processes are diverse in terms of learning styles, means and rates at which they acquire knowledge and develop skills. Thus, we aim to provide learner centred IB instruction wherein all students receive the necessary resources, guidance and accommodations, but also challenges needed for personal growth and success. In order to achieve that, at teacher meetings we plan and reflect on students' needs, our teaching principles, IB approaches to teaching and learning, collaboration, creating optimal learning environment and assessment.

## Inclusion Committee

Inclusion Committee (IC) is a school body responsible for ensuring that the student's access requirements (AR) are assessed properly, that teachers are informed about appropriate approach to students with specific AR and that there is a continuous monitoring of the student's response to various teaching differentiation techniques. IC consists of school psychologist or pedagogue, the IB coordinator and at least one teacher.

## Identifying and assessing students' access requirements

Since at PGV we offer (only) the Diploma programme, for the first two to three months of students' enrolment in the IB our approach is mainly directed towards the students' adjustment to a new educational frame. During this time, all teachers actively work on improving students' understanding of the programme requirements, and help them to recognize their unique interests and strengths, as well as skills in need of improvement. Careful consideration is given to a student's choice of subjects. The subjects chosen should allow them to demonstrate their strengths and empower them as learners.

At this time, students and their parents are also encouraged to share all existing relevant information and (where applicable) documentation about medical or other issues which may contribute to the students' AR.

Inclusive access arrangements may be necessary due to:

- long-term learning support requirements (in case of specific learning issues, language and communication disorders, physical and sensory conditions, mental health issues)
- temporary medical conditions
- additional language learning

Teachers share their observations about students' adjustment and attainment at regular meetings in order to develop learner-cantered teaching approach for each of our students.

Special attention is due when a student's feelings, behaviour or attainment diverge significantly from the teacher's, parents' or their own expectations.



If there is existing documentation on student's AR, the IC instructs all the student's teachers about possible ways to meet student's needs in the classroom.

If the observations of any of the stakeholders indicate that there is a possibility of any previously undetected or unreported AR for a student, the IC informs the student and parents about relevant professionals who can assess the student's AR. However, the monitoring of the student and tracking of the efficiency of various teaching approaches can start sooner than the documentation for the assessment access is delivered. As soon as the student and parents are informed about the need of an assessment of the student's needs based on any of the stakeholders' observations or concerns, the IC instructs all the student's teachers to keep a record of their work with the student and the student's response to approaches they tried.

## Meeting student diversity in the classroom

While some differentiation in approach is needed and provided for each student, our school identifies long term learning support needs according to national legislation and IB recommendations (as outlined in a document *Meeting student diversity in the classroom (2013)*). IC is responsible for informing all teachers about the IB recommendations for meeting students' specific needs at our school. The information provided for teachers may include:

- information about factors that affect a student's learning, particularly with regard to inquiry-based learning
- possible ways to respond to the student's needs
- possible ways to differentiate and match teaching approaches to the student need
- knowledge of technology that can assist in alleviating and removing barriers to learning

All teachers must also be acquainted with the four principles of good practice, as indicated by the IBO.

## Principles of good practice

### 1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem

An affirmative model of identity ensures that all students are visible and valued. It is a model that challenges the tragedy model of disability where learners recognize that it is possible to make a difference in their own lives and society.

### 2. Valuing prior knowledge through:

- meaningfully assessing existing knowledge, strengths and interests
- recognizing that there may be gaps or overlaps in learning
- working with students to construct individual learning profiles to inform teaching and learning
- explicitly activating learners' prior understanding to promote new learning
- considering prior learning when designing, differentiating and planning for new learning.

**3. Scaffolding** - a temporary strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be impossible or much more difficult to accomplish. It may include: graphics visual aids, demonstrations, dramatization, small, structured collaborative groups, teacher language, use of mother tongue or best language to develop ideas and initial plans.

**4. Extending learning** by combining high expectations with numerous opportunities for learner-centred practice and interaction with cognitively rich materials and experiences.

Given the wide range of access arrangements suggested by the IBO, it seems fair to assume that students with AR and their teachers will need sufficient time to get to know each other and to identify,

through experience within each subject, the exact teaching and learning strategies that work well for them.

Teachers should be prepared for a period of trial and error while implementing differentiation and are expected to demonstrate a reasonable degree of flexibility and patience during that time. Students should commit to collaborating with their teachers and sticking to the agreements made with their teachers and should be aware that accommodations due to their AR are only to be used on the long run if they prove to be efficient in practice. Inclusive access arrangements aren't meant to be done only according to written recommendations, but should be regularly reflected upon in terms of what works and what doesn't, and adjusted or updated when needed. This makes keeping the record of the work with a student very important.

## Recording and reporting on attainment of students with LSR

Teachers are expected to record their work with students with inclusive access arrangements. Educational evidence may include one or more of the following:

- Teacher(s) observations outlining students interests and strengths as well as any barriers which may be apparent in class, plus a brief summary about the arrangements provided to the candidate in order to access learning and assessment and the effects of such arrangements
- Sample of work done under timed conditions without assessment arrangements and with it
- Evidence of learning support and access arrangements in previous school or grades and their continuation in the DP
- Individualized learning plan – congruent with our approach in the national programme, the learning plan is discussed between a student with IAA and each teacher, between teachers and school psychologist and IC and parents. Discussions result in a written summary of students' strengths, interests, needs and access arrangements for each subject. Teachers continually monitor student's learning in the context of access arrangements and provide adequate feedback to them, parents, homeroom teacher and IC. Learning plans are reviewed and updated when any party recognizes the need for it, and minimally once a year (at the start of each school year for all students with AR). General agreements written in plans still provide freedom for teachers and students to be flexible and explore practices that fit them the best. The point of writing plan is to clearly and effectively communicate access arrangements in the context of student's personal development, without overburdening teachers with administrative tasks.

This documentation may be used to establish the evidence for assessment access requirement (AAR), since the IBO requests that the decisions on the type of inclusive assessment arrangements to be provided for a candidate must be strictly based on current individual requirements.

## Assessment access requirement (AAR)

The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Standard assessment conditions may put some candidates at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment. Inclusive access arrangements may be applied in these circumstances if it is observed that they could reduce or minimize barriers for the candidate (*Access and Inclusion Policy*).

All inclusive access arrangements authorized by the IB are based on the following principles: maintaining standards, reflecting usual ways of working, consistency for all candidates, confidentiality and maintaining integrity of the assessment.

The following is a list of assessment access arrangements that may be granted to candidates with AAR:

- An aid normally used by the candidate (for example a Braille slate, a hearing aid, a low vision aid, a magnifying aid, noise buffers)

- Appropriate seating arrangement
- Writing an exam in a separate room
- Rest breaks
- Clarifications by invigilators or designated readers
- Communicators
- Prompters
- A care assistant or a nurse
- Naming colours by a designated person
- Access to modified papers and examination papers in Braille
- Access to additional time
- Access to writing (graphic organizers, scribes, Word processor, spellcheck, speech recognition software, transcriptions)
- Access to reading (reader, reading software, reading pen)
- Access to speech and communication (Sign language interpreters, Augmentative communication device, lip reading)
- Access to practical assistance
- Access to calculators
- Access to extension to deadlines
- Access to deferral to external assessment
- Additional opportunities to retake an exam
- Access to alternative venues
- Access to reasonable adjustments

Some of the inclusive assessment arrangements require authorization from the IB Assessment centre while others are available at the discretion of the coordinator or head of school. The IC discusses the need and the adequacy of arrangements for each student with AR, taking into consideration records and reports made by student's teachers and existing expert documentation.

## Documentation for IAA

For inclusive assessment arrangements that require authorization from the IB Assessment centre the following documentation is requested by the IB:

1. A psychological/psycho-educational/medical report or evidence from a language test for additional language learners

A psychological/psycho-educational/medical report must be written by medical, educational or psychological professionals with appropriate qualifications and/or professional licences in Croatia.

According to the requirements made by the IB all psychological/psycho-educational/medical reports must:

- be legible, on a document with a letterhead, signed and dated
- state the title, name and professional credentials of the person(s) who has undertaken the testing
- state specifically the tests or techniques used
- be consistent with the coordinator's request for access arrangements
- be accompanied by a translation into English, French or Spanish, if it is not written in one of these IB working languages.
- state the candidate's performance on nationally standardized psychological tests (where available and published, recent editions of standardized tests should be employed)
- report results as standard scores, which have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, and not percentiles or age/grade equivalents

According to the requirements made by the IB all psychological/psycho-educational reports must also:

- state the candidate's performance on nationally standardized psychological tests (where available and published, recent editions of standardized tests should be employed)
- report results as standard scores, which have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, and not percentiles or age/grade equivalents.

All language test reports for additional language learners must:

- state the standardized language test used

- state the language proficiency and performance benchmark results from the testing and the alignment with the proficiency criteria stated in section 5.2 and 5.3 of this document.

The supporting documentation (a medical or psychological evaluation report) must have been undertaken and dated within three years of the intended examination session. The exception to this is for inclusive access arrangements for additional language learners where the supporting documentation (language evaluation report) must be conducted no earlier than one year before the examination session.

2. educational evidence from the school described in the section *Recording and reporting on attainment of students with LSR* of this document

All requests made by school for inclusive assessment arrangements must be submitted to the IB six months prior to an examination session, that is, November 15th for candidates registering for the May final examinations. That is why it is necessary for the candidate (and his parents) **to submit required documentation to the school by September 15<sup>th</sup>**. The medical/psychological reports should be congruent with the educational evidence, that is, with the actual student's and teachers' experience in the classroom.

The school must obtain consent from the candidate, provided he or she is at the age of consent in their country, or from the candidate's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for submitting the request for inclusive assessment arrangements.

## Access and inclusion planning during the COVID-19 pandemic

In times of COVID-19 pandemic, we aim to be particularly alert to students' responses to extraordinary circumstances, especially those with pre-existing mental health challenges and those with experiences directly related to COVID-19, such as illness and bereavement. We aim to support students with their mental well-being and provide care to those who face challenges through flexible and supportive approach by all teachers and monitoring emerging needs for inclusive access arrangements in teaching, learning and assessment.

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of the School

- to provide guidance to students with AR to help them make informed decisions concerning application to our program
- to raise staff awareness of the learning support and inclusive access requirements of our students
- to provide resources for the implementation and continuation of the Inclusion Policy
- to make sure the program follows Croatian laws regarding students with AR

### Responsibilities of the Inclusion Committee

- to make information about inclusion and differentiation available to teachers and students as appropriate and needed
- to encourage communication among teachers, and between teachers and students with AR about learning support and access requirements
- to ensure quality decision-making about learning support and assessment access
- to nurture a culture of collaboration, respect, support and problem solving

### Responsibilities of the IB Coordinator

- to work collaboratively with faculty to support students with AR
- to apply to the IB for students with AAR
- to provide examination accommodations as needed and approved by the IB

- to maintain discretion and confidence in providing special education needs services

#### Responsibilities of the Teachers:

- to identify struggling learners and refer the student to the counsellor or IB coordinator as needed
- to implement the appropriate interventions suggested by the IC
- to maintain accurate records of students' progress
- to participate in all required training when available
- to maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing special education needs services

#### Responsibilities of the Parent

- to communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's AR
- to communicate with the school regarding any changes in their child's AR
- to provide documentation needed for IBO accommodation requests
- to play an active role in their child's education

#### Responsibilities of the Student

- to be proactive in asking for assistance from the school administrators, faculty, and staff
- to be an active participant in classes and meetings
- to collaborate with teachers on learning plan development and reviews
- to follow all PGV and IB policies and procedures
- to accept their responsibilities and exercise their rights while respecting other people's rights

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