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ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Middle Years Programme- Years 4 & 5

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XV. gimnazija, as an IB World School since 1991, promotes high academic standards in both IB programmes: Middle Years and Diploma, as expressed in the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile, as well as in the XV. gimnazija mission statement.

1.1. IB mission statement

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

The IB programmes encourage both personal development and academic achievement challenging students to think critically, to ask the right questions and think across disciplines. An IB education also fosters diversity, curiosity and a healthy appetite for learning.¹

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.

1.2. XV. gimnazija mission statement

Our school aims to develop knowledgeable, principled and open-minded young people who will help create a better world, showing compassion and understanding for all the people in the world.

Our curriculum encourages students to become independent and critical thinkers, more inquisitive, risk-taking young people who will have to make responsible and educated choices and will apply the skills and knowledge they have learned in our school in their future lives.

Furthermore, we try to provide our students with opportunities that will enable them to develop and challenge their own personal values fostering open and effective communication.

Since we believe learning is a process, we hope all our students will become lifelong learners with a capacity for compassion and empathy, as well as strong international-mindedness.

¹ <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/>

XV. gimnazija VISION AND MOTTO

In an environment lead by high quality educators through nurturing talents and multicultural projects, we strive to educate young people to become knowledgeable, socially and ecologically aware lifelong learners.

When asked about the importance of (college) education during his visit to Boston, Massachusetts in 1921, Albert Einstein remarked that **'Education is not the learning of facts, but training of the mind.'**² Although XV. gimnazija is a high school the school staff also believe in this idea and thus Einstein's words have become our school motto.

1.3. 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 create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers

They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable

They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers

They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators

They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled

They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded

They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring

They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers

They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced

They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective

² "Einstein: His Life and Times" by Philipp Frank, published in English in 1947

They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

2. Standards and Practices

The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and the IB philosophy and provides support for students with learning difficulties and/or special educational needs.

This policy is developed in line with the requirements of Croatian Ministry of Education Policy for Children with special needs presented in the document "Pravilnik o postupku utvrđivanja psihofizičkog stanja djeteta, učenika te sastavu stručnih povjerenstava (Regulations on the Procedure of Determining a Child's or Student's Psychophysical Condition and the Composition of Expert Teams, Official Gazette 94/2013)" and IBO guidelines.

XV. gimnazija, a selective school, a school of equal opportunities, provides access to the full range of the curriculum for all students, including those with SEN, and encourages full and active participation in all areas of school life. We firmly believe that all children have the right to achieve their full potential, regardless of their gender, race, culture, language, physical ability, special educational needs or socioeconomic background. All students, irrespective of their ability, are encouraged to develop an awareness of and respect for individual differences.

However, all inclusive access arrangements at XV. gimnazija are based on the following principles (according to the Access and inclusion policy IBO, August 2021) :

Maintaining standards

1.1 The school must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates.

1.2 The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment.

1.3 The inclusive access arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the aptitude to meet all assessment requirements leading to the completion of the programme.

1.4 In the case of internal assessments, marks must always be awarded based on the candidate's work in accordance with the assessment criteria. Under no circumstances must teachers consider other factors such as the candidate's challenges or difficulties.

1.5 A subject result means the candidate has met the objectives of that subject, i.e. they have been able to demonstrate what was being assessed.

2.1. Educational context of XV. gimnazija

XV. gimnazija is a large, selective, state secondary school of about 1,050 male and female students. As such, we are a school that maintains a high academic standard and would not be a suitable educational setting for children with below average ability. Our school aims to ensure curriculum breadth, balance,

relevance and differentiation for all students. Our mission is to develop a more diverse, inclusive IB community by enabling access to an IB education.

SEN candidates should apply to City Educational Office (“Gradski ured za obrazovanje”) providing all the necessary documents. They are assured direct enrolment, but have to take Placement exams from English, Math and interview (similar to Entrance exams), before other candidates. Results of entrance and placement exams are published on www.mioc.hr and Final candidates’ list on www.upisi.hr. Since the Ministry of Education approves the quota of 40 students to be enrolled into Year 1 of the International Programme, the maximum number of SEN students in every generation is 4, which equals to 10 % of the total number of students (who are divided into two classes).

Candidates with special educational needs are placed on a separate list, all based on the total number of points determined during the evaluation process, in those educational programs which were recommended to them by the expert on professional orientation within the Croatian Employment Service.

Within the school we offer professional support, which includes access to counselling sessions if needed to help our students with emotional, social or mental health difficulties. For students with more serious difficulties parents will be advised to seek further professional help out of school.

Provision for students with SEN is planned, monitored and reviewed by the SEN team.

2.2. Members of the SEN TEAM are:

- Principal
- MYP and DP Coordinator
- School Psychologist
- Homeroom teachers

SEN team meetings, attended by the Principal, MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator and the School Psychologist, are held at the beginning of each academic year and throughout the year when necessary. Subject teachers report student concerns at regular staff meeting and through emails to the SEN team prior to the SEN meeting.

2.3. Definition of Special Needs

Students have special education needs if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special education provision to be made for them. Students have a learning difficulty if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of students of the same age and/or a disability which either prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities for students of the same age.

SEN could imply that a student has:

- sensory or physical needs (e.g. hearing or visual impairment, locomotor impairment)
- learning difficulties in particular areas
- medical or health conditions
- emotional or behavioural difficulties

- speech difficulties
- autistic spectre difficulties.

SEN Policy also refers to “**students with an individualized approach**”. These students are enrolled through a regular enrolment procedure but require an individualized approach in teaching and learning. Their status is acknowledged by the City Department after the parents submit all the necessary medical and professional documentation. Parents first address the school psychologist who reports the case to the Teachers Council after which a school medical doctor is contacted to provide all the necessary medical documentation. The status is communicated to the school based on which the school psychologist addresses the teaching staff providing guidelines with support and intervention needed for every student who might fall into the SEN status , including teaching and learning strategies to be applied in class. All subject teachers are responsible for meeting the needs of students with such status, and for providing a suitable environment in the classroom. Regular contact is made with parents through e-mail, meetings and phone calls in addition to the standard reporting procedures.

2.4. Strategies used in XV. gimnazija for addressing the needs of SEN students:

- Identifying and assessing of individual needs
- Advising and working with colleagues and external support services
- Communicating with parents
- Keeping in mind welfare and self-esteem of students

The identification of SEN students is built into the process of monitoring the progress and development of all students. Our intervention is designed to help students become independent learners. Therefore, XV. gimnazija incorporates this into its policy by providing an individual approach for SEN students that might have a range of different problems.

Students with SEN are entitled to access arrangements. The purpose of access arrangements is to remove or reduce barriers that students may face in teaching, learning and assessment. 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. Access arrangements must also be continuously monitored to ensure that they remain the optimal support for that student. Access arrangements allow SEN students to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment; they enable some students, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, to reach their full potential in learning and assessment. Not all students who have access requirements will need learning support.

As previously stated, all inclusive access arrangements at XV. gimnazija are based on the following principles (according to the Access and inclusion policy IBO, August 2021) :

Maintaining standards

- 1.1 The school must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate’s level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates.
- 1.2 The arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment.
- 1.3 The inclusive access arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the aptitude to meet all assessment requirements leading to the completion of the programme.

1.4 In the case of internal assessments, marks must always be awarded based on the candidate's work in accordance with the assessment criteria. Under no circumstances must teachers consider other factors such as the candidate's challenges or difficulties.

1.5 A subject result means the candidate has met the objectives of that subject, i.e. they have been able to demonstrate what was being assessed.

The IB believes that all candidates must be allowed to take their tests and examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard examination and test conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage, and would prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of access arrangements may be authorized.

Candidates may need access arrangements due to learning support requirements such as:

- learning disabilities
- specific learning difficulties
- communication and speech difficulties
- autism spectrum disorders
- social, emotional and behavioural challenges
- physical and sensory challenges
- medical and mental health difficulties, including temporary medical conditions

Inclusive access arrangements permitted in tests and examinations at the discretion of the coordinator (or Principal):

- The coordinator may arrange for appropriate seating to meet the needs of individual candidates.
- A care assistant, or if necessary a nurse, may be in attendance if this is required for the welfare or safety of a candidate. The assistant must not be another candidate or a relative of the candidate.
- A candidate who normally uses an aid (such as a coloured overlay, coloured filter lenses, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a visual aid or a magnifying aid) is allowed to use the aid during tests and examinations.
- For a candidate with hearing challenges, a communicator may be used to convey the coordinator's or invigilator's oral instructions.
- If a candidate has difficulties in reading or attention, examination directions may be clarified by the invigilator or a designated reader.
- For a candidate who has colour blindness, a designated person is permitted to name colours in an examination.
- A candidate may be permitted rest breaks if required to do so due to medical, physical, psychological or other conditions.
- A candidate may be permitted the use of a prompter due to attention issues, psychological or neurological conditions. A prompter would ensure that a candidate pays attention to the examination.

2.5. Responsibilities of the school and the coordinator

All requests for inclusive access arrangements submitted by parents or legal guardian(s) of a student and a coordinator must have the support of the Principal.

If needed, the school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students to help alleviate any substantial disadvantage they experience because of their disability, and will not discriminate against them. Student and their parent/legal guardian will be involved as fully as possible in the decisions that affect them.

We treat all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB staff.

The school is responsible for making all arrangements for approving and appointing individuals required to support an access arrangement .

To submit requests for inclusive access arrangements a psychological/psycho-educational/medical report is required.

The school may suggest a list of professionals who parents may contact for further assessment and help.

Furthermore, the school organizes workshops and presentations related to mental health issues including alcohol and drug related problems, eating disorders, bullying and similar.

The school needs to make certain that all teachers and staff but also parents and students are familiar with the Access and Inclusion policy.

It is of great importance that all teachers and staff are aware of the needs of students with special educational needs; for this reason, the first staff meeting at the beginning of every school year is focused on informing the staff about specific SEN students; in specific cases, the school must provide training for teachers and staff to support them.

The school must ensure that there are arrangements for teaching and assessment that comply with the Access and Inclusion Policy of the XV. gimnazija and with national and IB laws.

The school must ensure that national and IB laws regarding students with special educational needs are followed. Inclusive assessment arrangements will be planned for students according to the conclusion from the meeting between Coordinator, homeroom teacher with parents and submission of supporting medical documentation.

The IB MYP coordinator must talk to parents, teachers, and students at an early stage in order to ensure that the individual student's needs are provided by the school and the teachers.

The IB MYP coordinator needs to make sure that the student has enough time to become familiar with individual arrangements.

2.5. Responsibilities of the teachers

All members of the teaching staff have a responsibility to ensure that each student is given as many opportunities as possible to fulfil his/her potential within the standard classroom environment. They are expected to address the learning support needs of the students in their lessons, and to recognize if and when a greater degree of intervention is appropriate to enable students to learn effectively. Subject teachers, when planning the curriculum, unit plans and assessment policy, take into consideration the SEN students' possibilities and their various learning abilities, so that differentiation strategies and flexibility of

timing and approach are adjusted to their needs. Scaffolding is often used as a strategy for students to accomplish highest levels of achievement such as graphic organizers, visual aids, small groups, individual work or use of mother language, if possible and when necessary.

The homeroom teacher and the whole teaching staff are also required to monitor and review the progress of students towards their individual targets.

When planning the range of new learning strategies, previous learning experiences or prior knowledge is also taken into consideration as well as students' individual needs and goals. It requires the learner to take a more active and responsible role in the planning, carrying out and reviewing of what is learned.

- Teachers must be aware of national and IB laws regarding students with special educational needs and comply with them.
- Teachers have to be aware of the Inclusion Policy of the XV. gimnazija
- Teachers should participate in workshops on special educational needs.
- Teachers need to identify students with special educational needs, show students that their needs are taken seriously, and support them during lessons using differentiated teaching methods.
- Subject teachers must inform the staff, home - room teacher and/or the IB MYP coordinator about the progress of students with special educational needs.

2.6. Responsibilities of parents and students

Parents have a vital role in the identification of and support for SEN students. Efforts are made to work in partnership with parents throughout the screening process, formal assessment, and during the measurements of progress and reviews.

- Parents should always show a great interest in their child's education.
- Parents should inform the IBMYP coordinator during the enrolment process and teachers about their child's special educational needs; they need to hand in any kind of documentation regarding their child's special educational needs and communicate if there are any changes concerning these needs.
- Parents should discuss with the IB MYP coordinator possible inclusive access arrangements and provide the documentation needed for the request.
- Students should communicate their educational needs openly to parents, teachers, or the IB MYP coordinator with full awareness that their needs are taken seriously.
- Students should be aware of the fact that professional advice is available within the school;
- If inclusive access arrangements are administered, the candidate must be familiar with any assistive equipment and any software that is requested as an inclusive arrangement.

3. Action plan for inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs

3.1. Attention Challenge Disorders

After parents submit medical documentation, SEN team members and subject teachers discuss what measures have to be taken in order to integrate the student and enable him/her to achieve the goals set for each subject. The first step is always asking for the recommendations and tips in a written form provided by experts (psychologist, speech therapist, doctor, medical staff, etc.). The school psychologist

provides recommendations and tips for each student at the beginning of the school year at the first staff meeting as well as the written ones in the so called 'e-dnevnik', the official school record book. Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- Allow students longer time periods for writing essays, tests, quizzes, etc.
- Break a task into smaller activities to allow students to do it partially
- Occupy the student with an activity when he/she starts to be nervous and not focused anymore (erasing the white board, going for a short walk, bringing something from the library, etc.)
- Structure instructions into smaller sections, divide them into smaller parts
- Ask the student to repeat the instructions to be certain that he/she understood them
- Read out test directions to a student with attention challenges
- When possible allow the student to be assessed orally and not through a written assessment task
- Encourage the student whenever possible
- The focus should be on the content, not on spelling, grammar or handwriting

3.2. Dysgraphia, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia

Learners with the above mentioned disorders may benefit from specific arrangements that take their difficulties into account. Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- Allow extended time for tests, exams and assignments
- Allow breaks during tests and exams
- Provide a quiet or separate testing area so there are fewer distractions and less noise
- Use a computer instead of writing exams and assignments in hand
- Modify test papers by enlarging font size, using specific font type
- Use accessible materials and assistive technology, such as word prediction, speech to-text and text-to-speech software.
- Teach with visuals, stories, and hands-on activities
- Avoid asking student to read aloud in class
- Break information into smaller steps and allow extra time to process
- Allow verbal responses, allow the student to verbally express how to solve the problems
- Allow student to have the math formulas and use calculator
- Allow the student to use graph paper to assist in organization of numbers
- Ensure that the student has mastered previous skills.
- Break down assignments into sections
- Highlight keywords in word problems.
- Offer examples of completed projects.
- Allow students to dictate work to a scribe and allow them to correct later.
- Do not grade on neatness of written work.
- Stress quality over quantity.

3.3. Hearing Impaired Students

Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- A student with hearing problems, ear implants etc. is always seated in the first row of the classroom
- A candidate who normally uses an aid (such as a coloured overlay, coloured filter lenses, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a visual aid or a magnifying aid) is allowed to use the aid in examinations
- Keep instructions brief and uncomplicated as much as possible. When repeating instructions, repeat exactly without paraphrasing
- Present lecture information in a visual format (e.g., chalkboard, overheads, PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.)
- Use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information
- Repeat the comments and questions of other students, especially those from the back rows. Acknowledge who has made the comment so students who are deaf or hard of hearing can focus on the speaker
- If possible, provide transcripts of audio information
- Face the class while speaking
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing often use vision as a primary means of receiving information. Captioned videos, overheads, diagrams, and other visual aids are useful instructional tools for students with hearing impairments
- Be flexible: allow a student who is deaf to work with audio-visual material independently and for a longer period of time
- Provide hand-outs (preferably electronically) in advance of lectures
- Encourage the use of spell-check and grammar-assistive devices when appropriate to the course
- Break information into small steps while instructing on new tasks
- When in doubt about how to assist the student, ask him or her as privately as possible without drawing attention to the student or the disability
- Using visual aids and materials during your instruction is beneficial for those with a hearing loss, as vision is their primary means of receiving information

3.4. Vision Impaired Students

Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- A candidate with visual challenges can be allowed to use a hand-held magnifier
- A candidate who normally uses an aid (such as a coloured overlay, coloured filter lenses, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a visual aid or a magnifying aid) is allowed to use the aid in class and examinations
- For a candidate who has colour blindness, a designated person is permitted to name colours in an examination
- Lighting may be a particular consideration for a candidate with a visual challenge
- Keep instructions brief and uncomplicated as much as possible. When repeating instructions, repeat exactly without paraphrasing, use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information
- When teaching, state objectives, review previous lessons and summarize periodically

- Provide vision-impaired students with materials in alternative formats at the same time the materials are given to the rest of the class. The student must specify the preferred format, such as enlarged font
- Repeat aloud what is written on the board or presented on overheads and in handouts
- Keep a front row seat open for a student with vision impairment
- Be flexible with deadlines if assignments are held up by the document conversion process
- Provide hand-outs (preferably electronically) in advance of lectures and seminars, and allow audio-taping where possible to assist review of notes. Some students may need handouts and tests on coloured paper to reduce glare
- Be aware of the effect of lighting and reflections on white-boards
- Convert exam papers in their usual format (e.g., Braille, modified layout, large print)

3.5. Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- An examination room with an echo may be difficult for a student with autism, they should be provided a silent room
- Structured assignments and task analyses should be used. Explicit directions and procedures provide students with the tools, guidelines, and supports for completing tasks and assignments
- Visuals as educational tools should be used to assist individuals with ASD to organize information for processing and recall understand how concepts relate
- Providing access to material and letting students know what will happen during an activity in advance through priming
- Explicit directions and procedures provide students with the tools, guidelines, and supports for completing tasks and assignments
- Offer students choice in general, and especially choice using a high-interest topic or on how to present learned information to the class (e.g., photo essay, visual map, written test) since this can highly motivating and increase the likelihood of task completion

3.6. Students with other medical issues

Students with various medical issues (diabetes, colitis, etc.) which can influence their learning abilities must bring medical documentation and written instructions and recommendations provided by experts. Teachers are recommended to use the following teaching strategies:

- A candidate may be permitted rest breaks if required to do so due to medical, physical, psychological or other conditions
- A candidate with a complex medical challenge needs a care assistant throughout the day
- A candidate with diabetes may be provided rest breaks to check blood sugar levels and take medication or eat
- A candidate with medical condition may be provided rest breaks to take medication or go to a toilet

3.7. Review process

The Inclusion Policy will be reviewed regularly by the SEN team and subject teachers as part of the curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan. This policy is available to stakeholders on the school website.

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