DUBAI
Knowledge المعرفة

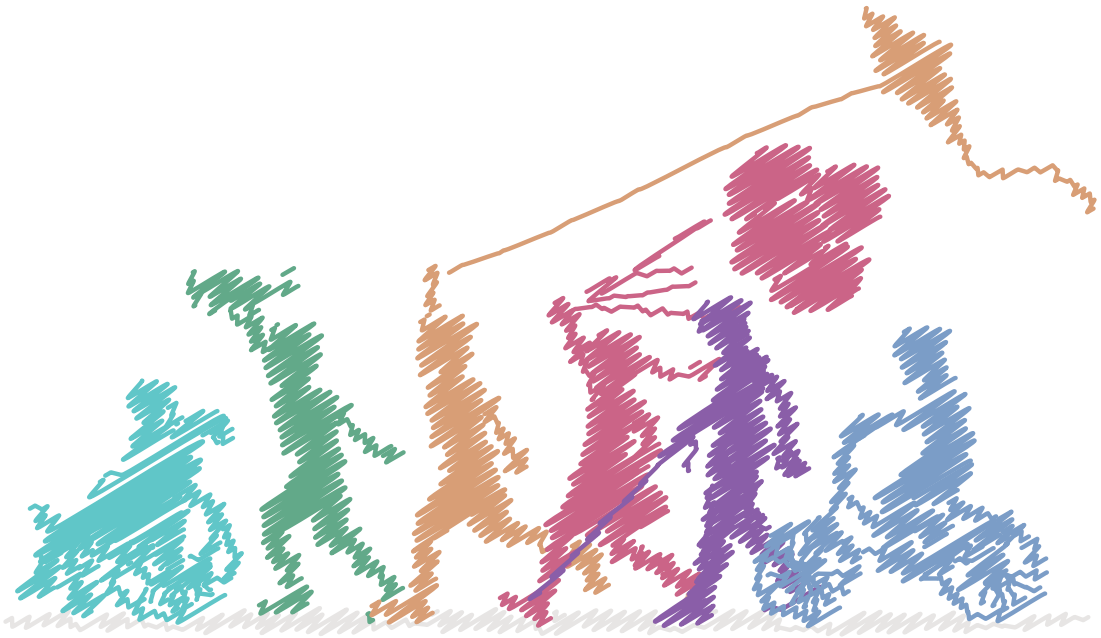
IMPLEMENTING
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:
A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

CREATING THE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE



IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the guide is to support Dubai private schools in embedding inclusion and equity in their educational policy and practice. The main objective is to create system-wide change to overcome barriers to educational access, participation and engagement.

The guide should be used as a supplementary reference document to enable better understanding and more effective implementation of the standards set out in the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017).

- Development of the school's self-evaluation form
- Teacher training and monitoring
- School improvement planning
- Communication with other stakeholders

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The guide is intended to be used by Dubai private school leaders, but could benefit other stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents, and community representatives. The guide also presents useful information to potential investors and educational operators.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) prioritised its commitment to persons of determination through the ratification and adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This commitment was further emphasised through the aims of UAE Vision 2021 and is reflected in the implementation of national priority initiatives as the country moves towards achieving the aspirational vision of the 'UAE Centennial 2071'.

Top among the UAE Centennial 2071 priorities is for the UAE to offer the best education in the world, in order to empower future generations to become a united and fully cohesive pinnacle of global success. The concept of inclusive education lies at the heart of educational excellence and has been prioritised within governmental policy and national strategy. It encompasses the principles of diversity, equity, respect, and acceptance. When we improve the quality of inclusion within our schools, we improve education for all.

> *Inclusive education is not a project or an initiative. It is the progressive development of attitudes, behaviours, systems and beliefs that enable inclusive education to become a norm that underpins school culture and is reflected in the everyday life of the school community.*
>
> *(Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework, p.53)*

Challenging and changing outdated perceptions and perspectives of disability is vital to enable a vision of inclusive education to become a reality in any education system. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, has led this transformation through his recent announcement that persons with disabilities will now be referred to as 'people of determination'; emphasising their valuable contribution to our society and highlighting their strength of character, perseverance and courage

Legislative frameworks provide strong policy support for the effective inclusion of students of determination within Dubai, including: Dubai Law No. 2 of 2014 concerning the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, and Executive Council Resolution No.2 of 2017 on regulating private schools in Dubai, provide strong support for the effective inclusion of students of determination within

Dubai. Such legislation emphasises the need to enforce the right of students of determination to access education, and promote inclusive practices across Dubai's educational system.

> *A student of determination is; a student with a long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with various barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in education on an equal basis with other peers of the same age.*
>
> *(based on UNCRPD definition of ensuring persons with disabilities)*

In Dubai, the development of a fully inclusive system of education has been accelerated through the implementation of the 'My community... a city for everyone' initiative which, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum which, has led to the formation of Dubai Disability Strategy and recently the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework . This framework provides clear standards for all education providers about how to effectively include students of determination within their learning communities, and emphasises the importance of inclusive education as a hallmark of educational educational excellence'.

KHDA has prepared this guide to support schools in developing the capacity required to adopt and embed inclusive education in accordance with the agreed quality standards. A series of future guides and publications that target other education providers and stakeholders will be provided over time.





A VISION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A SHIFT FROM A MEDICAL MODEL TO A RIGHTS BASED MODEL OF DISABILITY

Education transforms lives and through their attendance at inclusive schools, students of determination can realise their potential and equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to thrive as adults. The success of inclusive schooling is heavily dependent upon the school community holding positive views about the potential of all students, irrespective of background, ability or culture. It is crucial that school leaders continuously monitor the expression of beliefs and attitudes and evaluate their impact upon lowering barriers to the achievement of inclusive education.

When beliefs and attitudes related to disability are informed by a medical model, people tend to view disability as something that is 'wrong' with a person's body or mind. People of determination are viewed to be 'suffering' from an illness, disease, disorder, or defect that needs to be 'treated and cured' by medical and educational professionals in order for them to be successful.

> *Inclusive education is about access to quality education for all students, particularly students of determination and those with special educational needs, by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education program in a common learning environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion.*
>
> *(p. 53)*

Schools that operate a 'medical model of disability,' often associate the presence of a disability with students' reduced capacity to learn and succeed. This negatively

impacts upon teacher perception, and limits their expectations of student performance, progress and outcomes. These schools tend to rely more heavily on specialists and medical professionals to assess, diagnose and treat students in an attempt to make them 'better learners'. As a result, students are barely integrated in these schools, and no meaningful support is provided. The presence of a medical model of disability within schools prevents the achievement of inclusive education.

Schools operating an alternative model of education that is human-rights based, and more in line with the UNCRPD's principles and directives, recognise a student of determination's right to access the same quality of education as other students. They seek to identify the presence and impact of the difficulties experienced by these students, and maintain high expectations of their participation, engagement and success. These schools shift from viewing the disability within the person to recognising that disability is created from influences outside of the person as constructed socially by the discriminatory attitudes, policies, and systems. Such schools understand that they need to develop more effective teaching, learning, and curriculum development processes that cater to all, irrespective of abilities or needs. They work in partnership with parents, specialists, and other community members to devise strong, comprehensive, and sustainable systems of inclusion.

Inclusive Schools work towards enabling every teacher to play a key role in facilitating the educational inclusion of students of determination. Systems of teacher professional monitoring and support are designed to ensure that each teacher is fully empowered to remove obstacles which impose educational, and ultimately social exclusion. In these schools, students demonstrate better developed learning skills, are more resilient in the face of challenge, have a determination to succeed and are better prepared for their future. They are also encouraged and supported to become lifelong learners through accessing opportunities within tertiary education, vocational training or adult education without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. In inclusive education settings, students with and without needs benefit.

The UNCRPD sets a clear rationale for transitioning from a medical to a rights-based model of disability to achieve the ultimate goal where the inclusion of persons of determination is viewed as a human right, as opposed to a requirement for the benefit of individuals and society in general. Consequently, Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017) utilises the social construct of disability to set a clear vision of inclusive education across Dubai and defines disability as:

> *'A social condition that occurs when an individual with a long term limitation, experiences attitudinal, social and environmental barriers that prevent full and effective participation within a community. A disability is the result of an individual's interaction with society and is not an attribute of the person.'*
>
> *(p.9)*

THE INCLUSIVE ROLE OF SCHOOLS:

This refreshed view places a clear responsibility on schools to identify the barriers it imposes upon the learners and to take action to reduce any negative impact on their social, emotional and academic growth.
Students who are fully 'included' in their school have the benefit of being educated in a welcoming environment where diversity is valued and learning preferences are identified, understood and accommodated. Consequently, these students are able to engage in relevant, meaningful and challenging learning experiences alongside peers of the same age.

This is a life-defining experience for students of determination and their families, as education focuses on opening rather than closing doors to opportunity.

Inclusive schools are places where students of determination:

- are valued as learners with the potential to succeed and flourish alongside peers of the same age
- benefit from interventions that lower barriers and enable them to engage, participate and progress within relevant and meaningful learning activities
- develop the resilience, self-belief and skills they require to reach their potential and develop a life-long passion for learning.




Coloured pencils
Chalk board
Felt tips
Paint brushes
Paint
Paint
Glue sticks
Sticky tape
Aarvi
Advaith
Anusha
Atharva
Writing area
4 children can work here
It's the weather

ADMISSION AND ACCESS

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

Dubai Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017), supported by Dubai Law No.2 (2014) and The Executive Council Resolution No.2 (2017), makes it clear that the admission of students of determination within inclusive schools is assured: schools must not refuse to admit students of determination because of their experience of disability.

Schools are required to commit to the admission of students of determination and prioritise the registration of those who are siblings of existing students. Schools should communicate this commitment clearly through policy statements, including a sibling priority policy, website content and promotional materials. A more inclusive approach to student admission will be evident in a more diverse population of students of determination and through policies and communications that do not specifically exclude students with more complex needs. Students of determination with severe and profound needs that cannot be met in a school have the opportunity to access educational and therapeutic provisions in special education centres or centres for students of determination.

As part of their planning, schools are required to assess their physical and human resources to ensure the provision of facilities, resources, and equipment that is required to conduct the educational activities for students of determination who experience a range of disability.

Examples of positive actions that schools can take to avoid incidents of discrimination that prevents admission include:

- adjusting admission criteria to accommodate the needs of all students, including students of determination
- ensuring that any additional fees to parents are necessary, minimal and represent good value for money
- communicating a clear commitment to the inclusion of students of determination within marketing materials, websites, displays and policies.

ACCESS REQUIREMENTS:

Access to education is not only dependent upon the admission of the student. It includes the extent to which a student is able to engage with and actively participate in appropriately challenging learning experiences.

Procedures, which assess a student's educational need as part of the admission process, play a particularly important role in enabling a student's access to education. The associated outcomes empower schools to proactively identify practices that may restrict, limit or prevent a student from accessing education alongside their peers, and informs actions to ensure they minimise any impact upon a student's learning experience and outcome.

Reducing and removing barriers to learning prevents discrimination in education. Eliminating discriminatory practice within the school community and classroom context are fundamental steps to achieving a truly inclusive system of education.

Examples of positive actions that schools can take to avoid incidents of discrimination that prevents access ensuring:

- the learning experiences of all students are functional, relevant and meaningful
- the academic, personal and social development of all students through the provision of appropriate support
- participation in all school events and activities





ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

Almost all students of determination will experience a special educational need (SEN). A special educational need emerges when the symptoms or impact of an impairment or disorder act as a barrier to learning and restrict a student's ability to access education on an equitable basis alongside same aged peers. Consequently, schools need to take action to lower barriers to learning to improve the student's learning experience. This makes it clear that the 'special educational need' does not define the student. It is a need for action to be taken by the school. This is in line with UNESCO's definition of special needs education:

> *Education designed to facilitate learning by individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an education programme. Reasons may include (but are not limited to) disadvantages in physical, behavioural, intellectual, emotional and social capacities. Education programmes in special needs education may follow a similar curriculum as that offered in the parallel regular education system, but they take individual needs into account by providing specific resources (e.g. specially-trained personnel, equipment or space) and, if appropriate, modified educational content or learning objectives.*
>
> *(ISCED 2011, p. 83, UNESCO)*

In many cases, students with a special educational need will also have a formally diagnosed disability, however, others will not. It is important for both groups of students that schools develop comprehensive understanding of related barriers to learning, and ensure that their special educational needs are fulfilled. Any reports accompanying the formal diagnosis should be used by schools to inform their educational assessments.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

An effective whole school incremental system of assessment is an essential component of the procedures required to evaluate and identify the special educational needs of students. Assessments can be informal or formal, can come from different sources and may include a psychological or medical diagnosis. However, these should not be set as a condition to start any required educational provision.

The outcome of teacher assessment and internal processes, which benchmark, monitor and analyse student performance provide valuable information to signal the need for further assessment and screening: fluctuations in student achievement levels should be monitored closely, and sustained periods of academic decline should be identified and examined in order to remove any potential barriers to success. Particular indicators of concern may include:

- a student who makes significantly slower progress than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- a student who fails to match or improve upon previous progress rates
- a student whose gap in attainment, when compared to same-aged peers, widens.

Targeted discussions with parents, student observations, and the analysis of behaviour and attendance patterns over time can provide valuable information to inform further assessment. These discussions and observations should be conducted by members of the inclusion support team such as the support teacher and the leader of provision for students of determination.

SCREENING TOOLS

The additional use of informal and formal screening tools and behaviour checklists, including those adopted or recommended by health authorities, provide useful information to further guide identification processes. Screening tests enable the early detection of risk factors that indicate a possible difficulty, disorder or impairment. They can be applied with large populations in a way that is not intrusive or over complicated and consequently are an effective strategy to initiate identification procedures.



Screening tools can be used in a formal way, by health or social authorities for example, or informally within schools or other education settings. The key function of screening tools is either to identify developmental aspects of concern or more specific barriers to learning. These tools can be used by parents, nurses, teachers, support teachers or the leader of provision for students of determination and enable the gathering of information about the behaviours and skills displayed by a particular student so that comparisons can be made to:

a) the behaviours and profile of skills that are typically expected for a student of the same age, therefore identifying potential areas of concern, or further need of standardised assessment or diagnosis,

b) the behaviours and profile of skills associated with particular difficulties with learning, such as ADHD, dyslexia, or dysgraphia, and therefore help to shape the planning of intervention and support.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

Diagnostic assessments may be used for either educational or medical purposes. From an educational perspective, a school-based diagnostic assessment is a form of pre-assessment. It allows a teacher to determine a students' profile of strength, weakness, knowledge, and skills and provides important information to help guide lesson planning and curriculum modification. The assessment outcome may also enable educators to make predictions about future achievement and inform expectations about student learning and performance within the school.

From a medical perspective, a diagnostic assessment is a formal and standardised procedure which is applied by an appropriately qualified and licensed professional. The purpose of this type of diagnostic assessment is to examine the developmental/functional profile of children in order to provide information about areas which may require further monitoring or support. For some students, this process will lead to the formal diagnosis of an impairment, disorder or disability, in accordance with the UAE unified categories of disability.



INTERVENTION

INTERVENTION PLANNING

Effective procedures to assess and identify a student's special educational need is essential to inform provision to lower barriers to learning. The diversity of need experienced by students of determination requires a graduated approach to intervention. Such provision will include:

- Level 1: high quality teaching where teachers accommodate individual differences in ability, learning style and behaviour, through effectively differentiated classroom practice.

- Level 2: personal support and/or curriculum modification to enable a student to engage with, and participate in, appropriately challenging learning experiences and achieve within age-related expectations. Support teachers and or in-school specialists are likely to support this process by observing lessons and making recommendations as well as providing support through professional coaching and monitoring.

- Level 3: individualised programmes to accelerate progress or enable students to achieve their potential. This provision is 'additional to' or 'different from' the provision required to meet the needs of most of students within the school, and is likely to include the use of specialist approaches, intervention or support services.

Schools should ensure that progress indicators, from the student's starting points, are continuously monitored and reviewed to inform the further refinement of practice, provision, and intervention over time.

In most cases, students will have their learning needs met within the context of the inclusive classroom alongside peers of the same age. This requires teachers to develop a comprehensive understanding of:

- different barriers to learning
- the restrictions these barriers place on access to and engagement within the curriculum,
- the ultimate impact on students' personal, social and educational outcomes.

Targeted professional training and support for classroom teachers is a critical component of inclusive classrooms. It informs the teacher's ability to intervene through adapted teaching approaches and resources; it enables effective collaboration and team working, and enhances the quality of the relationship between the teachers, students, and their parents.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

The impact of intervention for students of determination is improved through the use of an individual education plan (IEP). The IEP is not a point of action, but should be viewed as a continuous and collaborative process of development, implementation, and review. The decision to develop an IEP will be informed by the results of associated assessments. It should be generated by a knowledgeable and collaborative team, including contributions from teachers, parents, specialists and the student him/herself. Each student's IEP should be unique, and take account of their specific profile of abilities, skills, challenges, and interests. It contains measurable goals and information about the specific types of modifications and/or support strategies required to lower barriers to learning and ensure progress. Any specific challenges related to the transition of students should also be incorporated in the IEP.

Whilst in-school specialists may lead on the development of the IEP, it is essential that classroom teachers are enabled to implement it, and therefore be held accountable for its impact within the classroom. An effective IEP is the cornerstone of quality education for students of determination.



SYSTEMATIC SUPPORT

The achievement of a fully inclusive education system requires that sustainable and systematic support is embedded within each school across Dubai. School communities must build the capacity to identify and remove barriers so that inclusive learning experiences become an expected element of everyday school life. The requirement for schools to introduce enhanced professional roles across their staffing structures provides a powerful mechanism to enable this change.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

A school's governing board plays a critical role in providing systematic support for the development of an inclusive school. The importance of their influence is further emphasised by the requirement for every governing board to appoint a dedicated governor for inclusive education.

The governor for inclusive education should be committed to developing the knowledge, understanding and skills required to provide effective support and challenge to the school as it progresses towards realising a vision of inclusion in practice. This will include supporting the governing board to:

- set strategic direction through a clearly-stated inclusive vision and ethos
- hold the designated school-based inclusion support team accountable for the development and implementation of an appropriate inclusive education improvement plan
- allocate financial investment to ensure that targeted plans are sufficiently resourced
- monitor the overall educational performance of the school through clear inclusive education outcomes and impact measures.

The governing board of every school across Dubai is expected to prioritise the development of a fully inclusive system of education. The commitment of the governing board should be evident in the representation and engagement of key stakeholders such as parents and students of determination.

THE INCLUSION SUPPORT TEAM

All private schools across Dubai must ensure the formation of an inclusion support team to assist the principal in achieving a vision of inclusive education in practice. The inclusion support team will be led by the school principal, and include school staff with specific roles in developing inclusive education. Core members of the team should be: the inclusion champion, the leader of provision for students of determination and representation from both support teachers and learning support assistants. Each member's core role within the school is specific and distinct, however, as a team, they serve the same function; to generate an inclusive system of education for students of determination.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Strong leadership is a critical factor in generating inclusive schools. School principals play a uniquely powerful role in enabling students, staff and parents to think and act in a more inclusive manner. Consequently, it is important that they develop a comprehensive understanding of inclusive approaches to education and be clear about the strategies required to embed these approaches across their school. The principal, in partnership with the inclusion support team will:

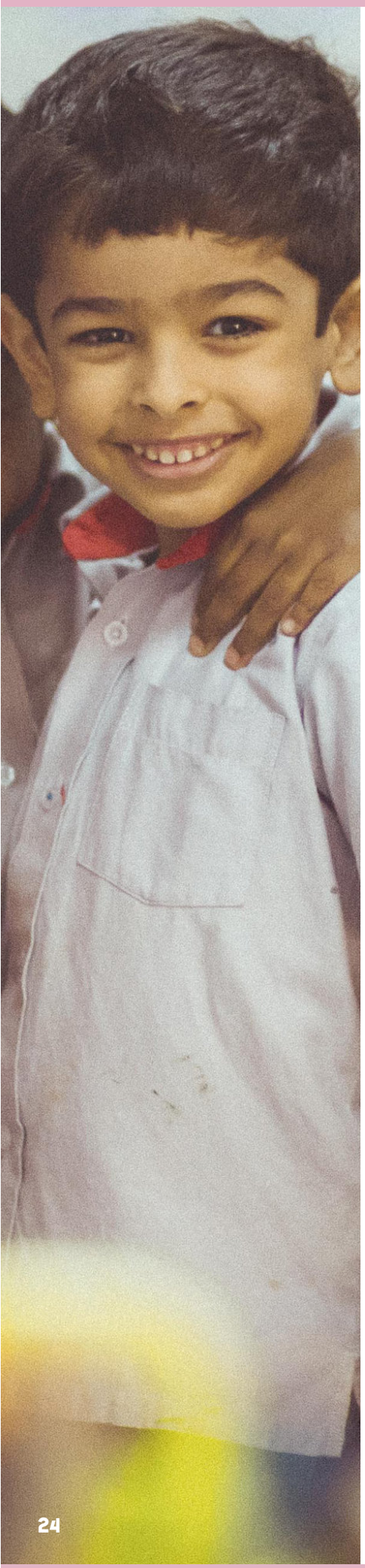
- effectively communicate a vision of inclusion, ensuring the engagement of the entire school community
- conduct a school-wide review of current practice to highlight examples of best practice to grow further, and to identify areas which require targeted improvement
- develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic inclusive education improvement plan
- ensure that all staff receive the support they require so that inclusive approaches to teaching and learning are embedded within their practice
- provide an annual programme of continued professional development for all staff at all levels across the school
- apply a rigorous system of monitoring and review to track progress and inform revisions to strategic plans
- ensure that recruitment and induction processes prioritise inclusive practices as a key component of professional roles.

THE ROLE OF THE INCLUSION CHAMPION

Each school's nominated inclusion champion has been identified as a key advocate for the inclusion of students of determination. The inclusion champion should be a positive communicator, a knowledgeable educator and a skilled practitioner with a passionate belief in the value of inclusive systems of education.

The inclusion champion plays an important role in:

- promoting ideas and modelling practice that support the development of inclusive attitudes and approaches
- engaging thoughtfully with feedback from the community through positive relationships and well-developed interpersonal skills
- sharing information with senior leaders
- providing the motivation and support required for improvement over time.



THE LEADER OF PROVISION FOR STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION

The leader of provision for students of determination will hold deep knowledge about barriers to learning experienced by students, the associated challenges for teachers and the impact on learning, development and outcomes. The leader of provision plays a crucial role in supporting classroom teachers to identify and develop specific approaches in the classroom so that every student is empowered to succeed. Particularly important aspects of the role are:

- working alongside teachers to observe, assess and identify special educational needs
- working collaboratively with other in-school specialists, such as therapists, counsellors or psychologists, to promote student learning, development and wellbeing
- providing advice and guidance to both teachers and parents
- promoting high expectations of student learning and achievement
- supporting the development of relevant and meaningful learning activities
- facilitating collaborative meetings to promote the development of individual education plans
- monitoring and supporting classroom teachers in the development and implementation of specific strategies to lower barriers to learning
- implementing evidence-based programmes of intervention for individual and small groups of students.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPPORT TEACHER

Schools across Dubai are now required to have support teachers in place to enable the creation of inclusive classrooms for students of determination. The support teacher is identified as a competent teacher who demonstrates high levels of skill and ability in applying inclusive approaches within their teaching practices.

Their core function is to serve as a role model, coach and professional mentor for classroom teachers as they work

to develop their practices to meet the learning needs of diverse student populations. The role is central to the development of inclusive schools and should be prioritised; support teachers should spend no less than 60% of their time engaged in activities that directly influence the inclusive competence of classroom teachers.

Additionally, support teachers spend up to 25% of their time working directly with individuals or small groups of students in order to implement interventions and accelerate achievement. Ideally, these interventions should take place in the classroom. However, in a minority of cases, some students may require access to specific or specialist support outside the classroom context.

Support teachers require time to plan, develop and reflect. This is essential if they are to maintain their professional role and have a consistent impact upon teaching practices within the classroom. Consequently, the support teacher should also continue the pursuit of knowledge and effective pedagogy through professional resources, such as webinars, collaborating with colleagues and connecting with other professional learning communities.

The support teacher's ability to form positive and professional partnerships with classroom teachers is essential if they are to successfully engage them in personalised professional development programmes. Each programme will require a different approach and should respond to the individual needs of each teacher. Consequently, principals should ensure that each support teacher develops the skills required to apply the essential components of professional support. The essential components of teachers' professional support are detailed below:

A. OBSERVATIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Initial class visits and a review of the students' profiles of needs will inform the process of setting mutual goals between the support teacher and classroom teacher. As trust builds and the professional partnership develops, the focus of these observations will become more targeted and be linked to specific outcomes.

B. COLLABORATIVE REVIEW OF STUDENT DATA:

Support teachers play a key role in modelling effective data literacy. Classroom teachers need to be able to analyse assessment information effectively in order to understand achievement potential, identify student need and address any particular barriers to learning. The development of the teacher's ability to use formative assessment is a key part of this process; it ensures that teachers can swiftly and effectively adjust their teaching in response to emerging needs within the classroom.

C. CO-PLANNING:

The development of strategies to meet the learning needs of both students and teachers will be the focus of thoughtful collaborative planning. This will include: identifying the most appropriate teaching strategies; intervention approaches; learning activities; assessment methods; learning outcomes; and collaborative approaches to ensure that all students become fully and actively engaged in the learning process.



D. MODELLING:

An important part of the capacity building process is to provide models of expected practice within the context of the classroom. Engaging support teachers in co-planning with classroom teachers will enhance the impact of these strategies. A critical responsibility of the support teacher is to model strategies which promote effective student engagement and skilful teaching practice. Support teachers may also provide opportunities for the professional development of learning support assistants and give indications on how best to assist individual students.

E. CO-TEACHING:

Regular opportunities for co-teaching are essential to enable the continual refinement of inclusive teaching approaches. Such opportunities reduce student/teacher ratio, increase the opportunities to differentiate in response to student need, provide a shared experience of teaching challenges, enable direct professional feedback on the success of new strategies, and promote further learning-centred dialogue between the support teacher and classroom teacher.

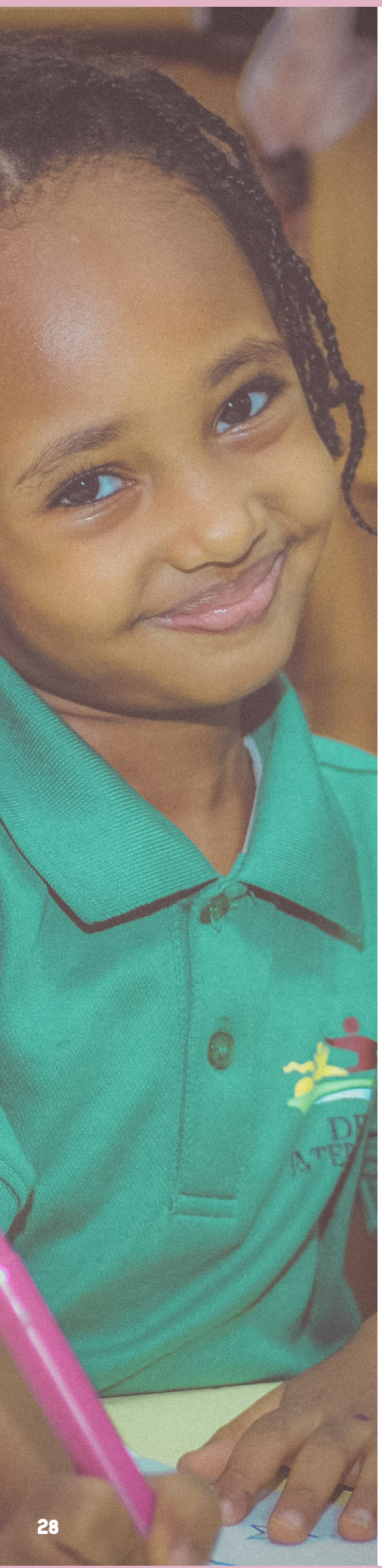
F. COLLABORATIVE REFLECTION:

The support teacher should regularly monitor and evaluate improvements in the teacher's practice, identify its effect on student learning and outcomes and select the focus for further development. This is important as it ensures that support is well-targeted and that success indicators are evidenced, shared and celebrated.

G. GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

As the confidence of the classroom teacher grows and enhanced practices become embedded, the support teacher should gradually withdraw their professional support. A planned follow up with a teacher may be agreed to review the retention of new practices and their impact on student learning. Classroom teachers who are able to refine their practices, grow in confidence as professionals serve as important advocates of further professional development opportunities.





THE ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

Classroom teachers are responsible for the learning, progress, and outcomes of all the students in their classroom. They may be the first to raise a concern about potential learning difficulties within their students. It's important that teachers continuously develop their confidence, willingness, knowledge and skills to provide learning opportunities to their students of determination on an equal basis to others. The classroom teachers' duties involve working with a collaborative team including parents, support teachers, learning support assistants (LSAs), and specialists. They need to be open to continuous self-development to enhance their inclusive teaching competencies. Their main roles include:

- assessing, evaluating, and reporting on students' progress
- providing a safe, welcoming, and motivating environment for learning
- working closely and in parallel with other professionals
- planning whole class, group, and individual instructions and delivering them
- incorporating any needed modifications and accommodations to maximise their students' achievement
- taking part in the development of the IEP and its progress review
- implementing goals set in the IEP
- managing information about students and communicating this information to parents and other relevant personnel
- supervising and coordinating work with the LSAs
- promoting student interactions with their peers

THE ROLE OF THE LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

The effective learning support assistant (LSA) has an important impact on the development of inclusive classrooms for students of determination. In Dubai, the LSA replaces the former 'shadow teacher'. LSAs should have access to ongoing professional development to ensure that they are fully effective in their roles.

LSAs should be enabled to work in collaboration with classroom teachers so that students of determination are successfully included in the classroom environment alongside their peers. This includes involving the LSA in assessment processes, record keeping, lesson-planning, and resource development. The classroom teacher is responsible, and ultimately accountable for, the impact and outcomes of the students' educational programme. The role of the LSAs is to support this process by aiding the classroom teacher in the development of a stimulating and productive learning environment. LSAs should be trained in using different approaches to lower barriers to learning, and to facilitate student engagement and participation within relevant and meaningful learning opportunities.

LSAs should be used differently across different phases of the school depending upon classroom and student need. Some schools may use LSAs across different class groups to support whole class teaching. Others may deploy them to provide specific support to small groups of students. Schools could also choose to use school funded LSAs to decrease the financial burden to parents. The specific responsibilities will differ according to the individual context of each LSA, but will include:

- providing individual support to a specific student
- promoting access to targeted support outside of the classroom
- working on differentiated activities with groups of students
- liaising with the leader of provision for students of determination
- developing social/emotional skills
- working with teachers to monitor the progress of students
- supporting intervention or therapy sessions.

An effective LSA provides a 'bridge' of support to students, helping them achieve what they are capable of without creating dependency. The development of independence in all aspects of school life is a key part of the role, and includes allowing a student to make mistakes and to look for their own ways to solve problems. Consequently, key indicators of learning support success include; the extent to which students become more independent in their learning, are more able to regulate their emotions and behaviour, or are more tolerant and resilient in the face of challenge. Effective learning support will enable students of determination to become confident learners who are increasingly able to contribute to and gather meaning from the school and wider community.

RESOURCING

The journey towards inclusion requires changes at many levels including; school facilities, equipment, teaching programmes, curriculum delivery methods and student assessment systems. However, much can be done to reduce the need for excessive levels of additional resources through optimising current practice and through re-organising and re-directing current resourcing levels. Key aspects for consideration will include:

- meeting the expected ratio of support teachers across the school; equivalent to one support teacher for every 200 students in the general student population (For example, a school of 2000 students would fund 10 support teachers)
- meeting the expected ratio of LSAs across the school; equivalent to at least one LSA for every 125 students in the general student population (For example, a school of 1250 students would fund 10 LSAs)
- ensuring that school facilities are fully accessible for all students. Associated actions should take account of the standards set out in the Dubai Universal Design Code
- providing sustained professional development opportunities to allow educators to strengthen the skills and specialist knowledge needed to work with all students in common learning environments.

Improvement planning that is well-developed and targeted will help to ensure that specific resourcing to promote inclusive practices are cost effective and, over time, will enable school communities to serve all students more effectively.

Most in-school provision for students of determination should be funded through the school's operational budget, at no additional cost to parents. However, a minority of students may require access to high levels of specialist provision and support to enable their full engagement in appropriate learning experiences. This may include full time personalised support by a trained LSA or access to specialist therapeutic services. In these cases, it may be feasible that parents incur additional costs.

Where parents are required to pay additional fees for specialist provision, schools must ensure that:

- additional fees represent the actual cost of services with no additional profit
- clear evidence is shared with parents that justifies the additional provision
- regular reviews evaluate the impact and outcomes of additional services within a clear timeline.





BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE NETWORK

The development of inclusive education requires the support of all stakeholders. This includes school leaders, teachers and families, therapists and medical professionals, pre-primary and higher education settings, and early intervention and centres for students of determination. All must work together to build a genuinely inclusive educational ecosystem.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Schools should place particular importance on the engagement and participation of the parents of students of determination. Parents have the most direct and lasting impact on a student's learning and development and, as the first educators of their children, they play a crucial role in their children's educational journeys.

Leaders at all levels must put parents at the heart of the educational process and ensure they are equal partners in the education of their children. This includes encouraging their active participation in assessment and planning, and ensuring that they have a voice in policy, strategic planning, decision-making and evaluation.

The following principles should underpin the way in which schools engage with parents:

- promote a shared and clear focus on the outcomes that students and their families want to achieve, so that all decisions are informed by these aspirations
- ensure the participation of children and their parents places students of determination at the heart of the educational system
- provide greater choice and control for students and their parents over the type of support they receive.

The Inclusive Education Policy Framework (2017) requires all those who teach students of determination to have the highest aspirations of their educational experiences, outcomes and future achievements. The effective engagement of parents is a critical factor in ensuring that the identification of a disability does not result in unnecessarily low educational expectations. Schools should ensure that:

- students and their parents are able to contribute to, and influence, the planning of provision
- students and their parents are provided with the information and support necessary for them to make informed choices about their chosen pathways and future opportunities.

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

School leaders at all levels should develop links with other education providers to support the exchange of expertise and knowledge. The effectiveness of these collaborate partnerships should be guided by common interests and a clear focus on inclusive education. A key example is to work together to ensure the smooth transition of students as they progress through their educational experiences.

Underdeveloped systems of transition to, within and from schools present significant barriers to the educational inclusion of students of determination. Consequently, inclusive schools are expected to engage in wider networking and collaborative relationships, such as:

- early intervention and centres for students of determination– to facilitate the transition of students into inclusive schools
- tertiary and higher education providers – to ensure that students of determination have the opportunity to access further academic study
- vocational and alternative learning programmes – to enable students with specific profiles of ability to engage with functional, relevant and meaningful learning pathways
- therapy and medical centres – to facilitate the use of specialist approaches and therapeutic strategies within classroom settings and by classroom teachers.



MOVING FORWARD

With the aim of achieving inclusion for all, the UAE believes in providing an education system that welcomes and nurtures everyone; represents the diversity of our society and includes students of determination. All students have the right to be recognised as having the ability and potential to achieve, succeed and flourish. Adopting inclusive education is not a short-term goal, but it is an evolution in the minds and attitudes within schools and the wider community. It is a continuous process of evaluating, planning, implementing, and reviewing actions and their impact. It is enabled through developing meaningful partnerships and generating collective efforts that, over time, create independent, productive, and happy individuals and societies.

As schools move forward and build the capacity to achieve inclusive cultures, practices and outcomes, KHDA will support by monitoring, guiding and facilitating the process through a range of present and future measures. These include:

- tracking of students of determination through an inclusion register
- annual inclusion audits, to monitor and review the level of a school's compliance with the key standards of Dubai inclusive education policy framework (2017) and the Executive Council Resolution no.2 of 2017
- evaluation of the quality of provision and outcomes for students of determination through school inspection processes
- regulation of procedures used by schools to increase student access and engagement in inclusive education.

This guide is the start of a series of other guides and publications that aim to offer further direction to different stakeholders about inclusive education and its implementation across Dubai.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this guide, contact KHDA at: info@khda.gov.ae



DEFINITIONS

COMMON LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

An educational setting where students from different backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in an inclusive environment. Common learning environments are used for the majority of the students' regular instruction hours and may include classrooms, libraries, gym, performance theatres, music rooms, cafeterias, playgrounds and the local community. A common learning environment is not a place where students of determination learn in isolation from their peers.

Effective common learning environments:

- enable each student to fully participate in the learning environment that is designed for all students and is shared with peers in the chosen educational setting;
- provide a positive climate, promote a sense of belonging and ensure student progress toward appropriate personal, social, emotional and academic goals;
- are responsive to individual learning needs by providing sufficient levels of support and applying student-centred teaching practices and principles.

DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination occurs when actions that cause a student to experience unequal, inferior and unjust treatment than another student on the basis of experiencing a special educational need (SEN).

In-direct discrimination occurs when an education provider applies a provision, criterion or practice in the same way for all students, but by doing so has the effect of putting students of determination at a disadvantage compared to other students.

DUBAI UNIVERSAL DESIGN CODE

The Dubai Universal Design Code provides clear guidance and standards about how the built environment and transportation systems in the Emirate of Dubai shall be designed, constructed and managed to enable full access and use by all members of the community in Dubai. Including access to and use of education settings.

DIAGNOSED DISABILITY

When an appropriately qualified and licenced psychologists or medical professional implements a formal diagnostic procedure involving standardised

GOVERNOR FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The governor for inclusive education is a nominated member of the governing board who is fully committed to, and proactive in, setting and prioritising a clear vision of inclusion. He or she will, on behalf of the governing body, play a key role in providing support and challenge to the school as it works to achieve an inclusive system of education for students of determination.

GOVERNING BOARD

A governing board is a voluntarily engaged but formally appointed representative group of stakeholders. Their role is to ensure that schools are well-run by management, statutory obligations are met and that high quality outcomes are delivered. All governing boards of private schools have four core functions:

1. Setting strategic direction within the context of a clearly-stated vision and ethos;
2. Holding the senior leadership team accountable for achievement of the strategy and running of the school;
3. Overseeing the overall educational performance of the school and suggesting ways for improvement;
4. Overseeing the financial performance of the school – this includes setting fees, budget oversight, and achieving financial targets.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The inclusive education improvement plan is a strategic plan for improvement that is ratified and monitored by the governing board. It is developed and implemented by the inclusion support team and should set out, in a clear and comprehensive way, the school's priority improvement plans to enable the achievement of an inclusive system of education. It should explain the main measures it will take to raise the quality of education for students of determination, the resources dedicated, and the key outcomes and targets it intends to achieve.

INCLUSION SUPPORT TEAM

Led by the principal, the inclusion support team is a school-based team of educators, charged with the responsibility of implementing and monitoring the changes required to achieve inclusive education. The core members of the team should be: the inclusion champion, the leader of provision for students of determination and representation from both support teachers and learning support assistants.

LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT

A learning support assistant is a trained member of education support staff who works under the direction of a classroom teacher. Their primary role is to effectively support students of determination to access appropriate learning experiences within common learning environments alongside same aged peers.

The core functions of the LSA are to:

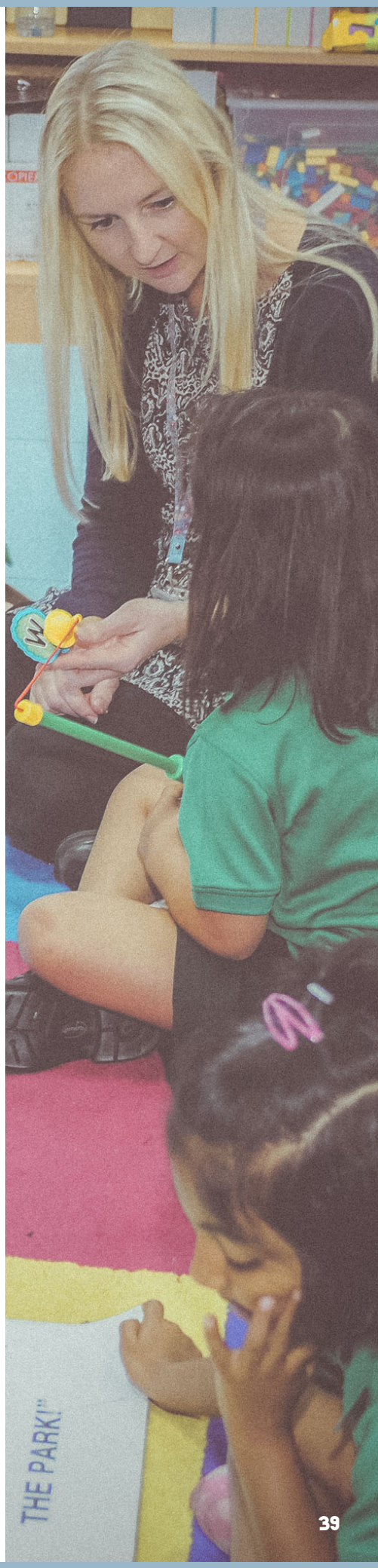
- provide support to the classroom teacher in the development of a stimulating and productive learning environment
- use approaches to lower barriers to learning to promote student success
- facilitate student engagement and participation within relevant and meaningful learning opportunities.

SUPPORT TEACHER

The support teacher will be identified as a highly competent teacher who demonstrates high levels of skill and ability in applying inclusive approaches within their teaching practices. Their core function is to serve as a role model, coach and professional mentor for classroom teachers as they work to develop their practices to meet the learning needs of diverse student populations. The role is central to the development of inclusive schools and should be prioritised.

UNCRPD (UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

The UNCRPD is the human rights convention concerning people of determination. It is a list of rights guaranteed to people of determination to improve their access to society, education and employment. People of determination are still covered by other UN rights and convention documents; however, the CRPD specifically spells out rights that pertain to the ability to interact within their own communities.



KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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