



# Policy Documents

## Inclusion Policy



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# I. MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

## A. Newton Free School Mission Statement

Newton Free School's core mission is to uncover and harness its students' potential to shape them into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring global citizens who can take the lead in making the world a better place.

To achieve this, Newton Free School aims for its students to find joy in exploring, discovering and acquiring new knowledge and skills both within the classroom and beyond. It is our aim:

- To help our students grow into internationally-minded people with a strong sense of civic responsibility who can help to build a more peaceful world;
- To keep our students' learning abreast with the latest scientific achievements and to provide knowledge based on ideas and issues that are of local and international significance;
- To equip our students from an early age with study skills and learning habits so that they can seek and attain knowledge independently and collaboratively;
- To enable our students, to grow into daring and enterprising individuals who can achieve success while helping others to become successful as well;
- To develop students' ability to think creatively and critically when problem-solving and addressing challenging issues;
- To inspire our students to become resilient and resourceful life-long learners who are always willing to grow from the experience;
- To foster the skills of effective communication so that our students can express themselves confidently and creatively in multiple languages using various platforms.

## B. The International Baccalaureate 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 organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

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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.

### C. Purpose of the Policy and Inclusion Philosophy

This policy has been developed by Newton Free School to ensure that the diverse needs of all children, whatever their learning difficulty, are all provided for, their barriers to learning are minimised and that children have equal opportunities to access the curriculum of the school. Further, this policy serves the purpose of informing parents/carers and guardians how SEN provision is structured at Newton Free School, how it is identified, managed and provided for and how special educational plans are created.

The fundamental aim of the document is to support and inform the practices of effective inclusive education at Newton Free School.

At Newton Free School we believe that every student is unique and different with their individual physical and psychological characteristics, skills, emotions, interests, personal experiences, academic needs and studying styles, and all of this/these differences must be taken into consideration in the teaching and learning process.

The Georgian law on inclusive education states that students with special educational needs should be equally engaged in the academic process alongside their peers. In order to achieve successful engagement, we believe that the school, its teachers, parents and students should work closely together.

The student has special educational needs if he/she needs additional support and/or has significant difficulties with accessing the general curriculum in comparison to his/her peers and where, as a result, one or more of the following actions must be taken by school community:

- Modification of general curriculum
- Adjustment of the physical environment
- Creating Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Creating Behavior Support Plans (BSPs)
- Requesting special arrangements for examinations or internal assessments
- Providing assistive technologies is available

Special Educational Needs can include the following, but are not limited by them:

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- Physical challenges
  - Learning disabilities
  - Sensory challenges
  - Speech difficulties
  - Behavioural and emotional difficulties
  - Long-term hospitalization needs
  - Social difficulties
  - Mental health disorders

According to UNESCO, inclusive education is seen as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education.” Thus, we believe all children benefit from additional support to help them to learn. Some need more help than others but all can and all do learn. There are some individual differences in the way children learn. Some take longer than others, and some have different learning preferences but all benefit from good, well-informed teachers, be they the parents or carers, relatives, other children, or assistants and teachers in their schools.

## II. ADMISSIONS AND IDENTIFICATION

Special Educational Needs could be identified before accepting students at School and/or after teaching takes place.

### A. Admission

In case SEN is identified prior to accepting the student and the guardian provides all necessary documentation, a special committee is assembled. The committee consists of the school’s psychologist, teachers, guardian(s), IB coordinator, and school’s administration members, if possible and if he or she wishes, the student can also be part of the committee or at least take part in creating the IEP/BSP.

The committee further makes decisions about special educational needs and in case the school accepts the student, provides recommendations for all parties. The Committee decides upon the acceptance of the student based on its capability to meet their educational needs. All decisions are made considering the best interests of all students.

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## B. Identification

To make sure all students including students with academic, behavioural, and/or social-emotional difficulties can succeed in their learning, NFS has a designated team of psychologists (special education teachers, behavioural specialists). Homeroom and subject teachers work in close collaboration with the team of psychologists and implement their recommendations in their teaching practice; based on these recommendations teachers identify specific measures and manage primary signs of learning difficulties in the classroom.

If there is a reasonable doubt that a student might have special education needs and primary measures are not effective enough, he/she raises the concern. After this special committee is assembled. The committee consists of the school's psychologist, teachers, guardian(s), IB coordinator, and school's administration members, if possible and if he or she wishes, the student can also be part of the committee or at least take part in creating the IEP/BSP.

The committee collects information (evidence) from all teachers and synthesizes this with their own observations. Once the evidence is collected with parents'/guardians' consent the student is referred to further external assessments. The principal or the guardian/parent requests the allocation of a multidisciplinary team for inclusive education to evaluate the student. The multidisciplinary team uses various tools/methods (e.g. interviews, observation, tests/surveys, etc.) to:

- Identify the special education need(s);
- Officially determine (grants or terminates) the status of the student with special education needs;
- Elaborate recommendations for the school community in regard to the modification of the curriculum, adaptation of the learning environment, and development and implementation of individual learning plans;
- Elaborate recommendations for parents/guardians in regard to learning strategies and preparing the child for an independent life.

Further, if parents/guardians of the student determine to have their child additionally assessed by the independent specialist, the NFS team actively collaborates with the specialist designated by the parents/guardians.

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### III. GIFTED STUDENTS

At NFS we define giftedness according to the National Association of Gifted Children:

“Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in the top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports).”

As long as Georgian legislation does not give recommendations or regulations about educating gifted students, the school has to identify and provide any support available by itself.

In case there is a reasonable doubt, that a particular student can be identified by the school as gifted, a special committee is assembled. The committee consists of the school's psychologist, teachers, guardian(s), IB coordinator, and school's administration members, if possible and if he or she wishes, the student can also be part of the committee.

The committee decides what recommendations can be given to the child, guardians and teachers and what can be further steps in educating gifted children according to best international practice. The common steps for supporting gifted children's education are the following:

- Acceleration – whereby the gifted child is allowed to learn material at a more rapid pace or is promoted more rapidly through grades;
- Enrichment – whereby the gifted child works through the usual grades at the usual pace but with a curriculum supplemented by a variety of cultural activities;
- Differentiation – whereby gifted children are accelerated or enriched within the regular classroom.

### IV. PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION

At NFS unit planning process is a collaborative endeavor, where the individual needs of all students are taken into account. Units are based on the primary knowledge of students informed by rigorous formative assessment practices. We ensure the academic and social-emotional needs of each and every student are addressed by granting them agency



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and making sure their voice is heard and reflected in units. Differentiated instructions are implemented in all MYP unit plans - content, instruction and assessments are modified so that all learners succeed in their individual learning journeys.

As mentioned above all special education students are integrated into mainstream classes. Thus, teachers and special education teachers collaborate on lesson planning to ensure the instruction addresses the heterogeneous nature of the class.

### A. Individual Education Program (IEP)

An Individual Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of an educational program which is developed, reviewed, revised and implemented for a school-aged child with a disability. IED is collaboratively developed by the psychologist, special education teacher, subject teachers and parents.

The IEP documents the specific accommodations or supports the student needs to ensure that the individual needs of the student with a disability are met as adequately as the needs of students with typical development. The IEP defines short-term (3-months) objectives. These objectives are being reviewed on a regular basis and updated if needed.

## V. PARTIES RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to achieve the best outcomes, mutual collaboration between parties is essential. The parties include, but are not limited to: The School (Administration, IB coordinators, operational staff, medical staff), teachers, guardians, and students. All of them have their own responsibilities in assuring/supporting inclusive education in our school.

### The school's responsibilities are:

- Raise employees' and student's awareness about special educational needs and inclusive education in general;
- Provide necessary training to teachers and students;
- Ensure that all parties are regularly involved in individual education plans/behaviour support plans and recommendations are met;
- Provide additional resources, i.e. learning materials, adapting to physical environment etc.

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### Teachers' responsibilities are:

Teachers are the key persons in creating IEPs/BSPs and supporting students at school, their responsibilities are:

- Take an active part in preparing IEPs/BSPs and working closely with other parties;
- Evaluating student performance and alert all parties about significant changes;
- Comply with Georgian legislation, school and IB policies and regulations about Special Educational Needs;
- Communicate with guardians about students' evaluation, progress or any other changes;

### Guardians' responsibilities are:

Guardians are almost fully aware of the students' needs and wishes, their skills and emotions. They are most actively involved in the process; their responsibilities are:

- Being actively engaged in the process (creating IEPs/BSPs, evaluation etc.);
- Providing all the necessary information and documentation to the school and other parties when needed;
- Providing all additional support to student needs in order to meet the expectations;

### Students' responsibilities are:

- Participate in discussions about their needs and recommendations;
- Make his/her own choices from the offered objectives;
- Reflect on their progress through evaluation processes;
- Advocate for his/her needs in class and during assessments.

### IB coordinator's responsibilities are:

- Consider whether suitable arrangements, for both teaching and assessment, can be made for that student, before accepting a student with special educational needs as a candidate for the Diploma Programme;
- Being actively engaged in the process;
- Inform IB about SEN students and their needs and request inclusive access arrangements for exams and in-school assessments;

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- Oversee the arrangements for inclusive access arrangements during the examination sessions;
  - Communicate with guardians about students' evaluation, progress or any other changes;

## VI. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Newton Free School can provide students with the following special arrangements for external and internal assessment, that require authorization from the IB:

- Additional time
- Rest periods
- Computers and other forms of assistive technology
- Separate rooms
- Scribes
- Readers
- Prompters
- Extensions to deadlines
- Assistance with practical work

## VII. COMMUNICATION OF SEN POLICY TO THE NFS COMMUNITY

The SEN policy will be introduced to the NFS community through a variety of pathways including staff meetings, parent meetings, and homeroom lessons. The policy will also be available on the NFS website. New staff will be familiarized with the document during orientation.

## VIII. REVIEW PROCESS

The SEN policy will be reviewed regularly as part of the Board's cycle of policy reviews, curriculum review cycle and as part of the whole school improvement plan. The policy will be updated as needed. The Leadership team will review the implementation of the policy in classrooms and throughout the school on a regular basis as part of the appraisal process.

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11. Coordinator support material – The International Baccalaureate Organization
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13. [Inclusive Education](#)
14. [The Law of Georgia on General Education](#)

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## X. ABBREVIATIONS

**NFS** Newton Free School

**SEN** Special Education Needs

**IEPs** Individual Education Plans

**BSPs** Behavior Support Plans

**IB** International Baccalaureate