

# **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM**

**EL COLEGIO DE PANAMÁ**

**2024**

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## **Special Educational Needs Policy**

An effective Special Educational Needs Policy for an inclusive school should address the identification and assessment of students with special needs, curricular adaptations, diversity teacher training, resources and supports, parent and community engagement, as well as the promotion of an inclusive environment that fosters acceptance and respect among all students.

In addition, it is crucial to establish clear procedures for collaboration between professionals, transparent communication, and continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

Our teaching-learning process is designed to promote meaningful learning, the acquisition of skills, values and knowledge that prepare our students to face the challenges of the future, and, in the same way, to serve students with special educational needs (SEN) on equal terms with the rest of the students.

### **General Objective:**

Create an inclusive educational environment that guarantees equitable access to education and promotes the academic and social success of all students, with the specialized support of the Special Educational Team, in such a way as to promote an effective implementation in line with the needs that arise.

## **Our Team:**

### **Who are we?**

Our team is made up of 27 specialists who are trained and highly qualified in different areas such as: psychology, occupational therapy, learning difficulties, special needs, educational psychologists, speech therapy, among others.

### **Functions of the Special Needs Team**

- To ensure that each student develops their potential to the maximum, considering their learning pace, needs, abilities, and limitations.
- To observe all students in the classroom and carry out interventions or follow-up of cases that present some difficulty at an academic, social and/or behavioral level.
- To work together with teachers in the search for strategies to address behavioral, social, and/or academic issues with students, respecting their individual differences.
- To maintain open communication with parents.
- To conduct follow-up meetings with external specialists who are working with the student.
- To ensure that the curricular adaptations that are made are in line with the needs of the student.

### **Team Continuing Education**

We consider the professional development of our team to be one of the cornerstones of this process, and that building community and helping each other is important, which is why we implemented our Special Education Symposium, providing an opportunity to solidify and update concepts, strategies, and educational tools as a team.

Additionally, we participate in training to update concepts and implement innovative pedagogical strategies within the educational environment.

## **Inclusive Environment:**

El Colegio de Panamá was born from the need for an inclusive educational center with an innovative and transformative vision of learning.

As part of the inclusion program, we promote diversity, meaningful learning, values, and the acquisition of individual skills. Our students learn about the importance of teamwork, growing together in a climate of respect and tolerance, preserving, and enriching their identities, creating learning spaces based on environments of communication and coexistence.

A student has special educational needs when he or she has greater difficulties than the rest of his or her peers in accessing the information that is determined in the curriculum that corresponds to his or her level due to his or her age and development. To compensate for such difficulties, adaptations and/or modifications in the curriculum are considered for the student. A student with special educational needs is one who requires, during a period of their schooling or throughout it, certain support, and specific educational attention.

We maintain intervention protocols for different psychosocial situations, ensuring the well-being of our student population. Additionally, our team of specialists carries out group interventions with students through the spaces of *Social Emotional Learning*, a program focused on the comprehensive development of social, emotional, and behavioral competencies.

## **Our Process:**

### **Identification and Evaluation:**

For El Colegio de Panamá, it is of utmost importance to carry out a transparent and systematic process for the early identification of students with special educational needs, with the participation of the Special Education team in summative evaluations and observations in the school environment.

When necessary, evaluations are implemented where the Special Education team contributes with its experience in understanding the emotional and cognitive needs of the students.

### **Curricular Adaptations:**

To implement curricular adjustments, we work closely with teachers and specialists in each subject, as well as external specialists, with the aim of

developing personalized intervention plans that address the academic and socio-emotional needs of each student.

At El Colegio de Panamá, we make **accommodations**, which are those that provide the student with specific curricular support (such as extra time, variations in the structure of the test, etc.) that do not modify the academic curriculum. We also make **modifications**, which are curricular supports that modify the internal factors of the curriculum (objectives, contents, activities, and assessment), adapting them to the student's level of functioning.

The Special Education team ensures the adaptation of pedagogical resources and materials to meet the specific needs of the students.

### Resources & Supports:

The educational psychology team seeks to ensure that the necessary resources and support are available and specifically tailored to address the individual needs of students.

We have Learning Center spaces, student-centered classrooms, where you can work 1:1 with the specialist teacher or in small groups focused on achieving a specific academic and/or socio-emotional goal.

### Interdisciplinary Care:

El Colegio de Panamá seeks to work collaboratively with parents and different external specialists, with the aim of reaching agreements, solutions, strategies, and action plans that benefit students with special educational needs. The school tries to support and reinforce, as much as possible, the process of each student both in the classroom and in the Learning Center.

### Parent & Community Involvement:

We consider it of utmost importance to involve parents, specialists, counselors, mentors, and tutors in the learning process of our students, providing clear information about the needs of the students and collaborating in the development of support strategies at home through follow-up meetings, phone calls, emails, Family Link conversations, Student-Led Conferences, Parent-Teacher Conferences.

## Continuous Evaluation:

Considering the individual development of each of our students, we hold team meetings on a regular basis to measure the effectiveness of the strategies implemented and adjust as needed, with a special focus on the emotional well-being of the students.

These meetings are held internally (between specialists) and at an interdisciplinary level (Special Education team, teachers, external specialists, and parents)