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PHILOSOPHY

We believe that every child is a unique individual who needs a secure, caring and stimulating atmosphere to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically and socially. Every child has a potential and should be given equal opportunities for learning and growth.

Learning differences which refers to the differences in listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics among children is a stumbling block for a child's development. These skills are essential for success at school and for coping with life in general.

These children and their parents need a special support system that can understand and lend a helping hand to bridge the gaps in learning. Unfortunately, due to the general lack of awareness, insensitivity and overcrowded classrooms, these problems remain unidentified and unattended which results in poor performance.

Symbiosis International School provides emotional, educational and moral support through their Pastoral Care Department which plays a pivotal role in catering to children with special needs with various programs. Children with differences are catered keeping in mind their learning styles and multiple intelligences and to accomplish this goal, the Pastoral Care Department incorporates multiple strategies, inclusive curriculum and differentiated learning along with relevant facilities and resources to ensure overall progress of the child.

We help the child to overcome learning challenges as a detour rather than a road-block. The gradual progress in learning milestones serves as a catalyst for self-confidence and self-esteem for the students.

Some of the learning differences which are catered to in the department are Autism, Down syndrome, ADD, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia. The School provides a plethora of opportunities for students with special needs as we believe *"EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO LEARN"*.

The school attempts to have a holistic approach to meet the personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs of every pupil, in order that each might participate fully and gain maximum benefit from everything the school has to offer.

The Special Education Needs Cell is referred to as the Pastoral Care Department at Symbiosis International School.

AIM

To educate and empower students with Special Needs, incorporating different learning styles and Multiple Intelligences to tap the hidden potentials.

OBJECTIVES

Proactive:

- To identify the minimum level of learning during initial screening.
- To provide checklists and rating scales to facilitators and coordinators at the beginning of the academic year.
- To provide bridging program to parents after initial screening.
- To initiate intervention program with the consent of the parent.
- To provide facilitators and students with strategies and activities with instructional support tools that foster academic competence.
- To conduct Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles test for all students.
- Professional training of staff to upgrade skills and knowledge in the field of Special Needs.
- To update parents regarding the students progress.
- Conducting need based sessions for all age groups.
- Conducting individual counseling sessions for students and parents.

Positive:

- To help children Academically, Socially, and Emotionally.
- To support the students and promote inclusion, reduce the underachievement gap and enable all students to reach their full potential.
- To update resources and provide them to classrooms as and when needed.
- To improve learning opportunities and raise the achievements of the students with special education needs.
- To liaison with other external agencies to ensure there is a multi-professional approach to meeting the needs of learners.
- To meet individual needs through wide range of provisions given by the IB.
- To create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students that strengthens connection between home and school.

- Conducting parent training sessions and workshops.
- To adapt to new technological aids to enhance and support learning of children with Special Needs.

Plausible:

- To enable every student to experience success.
- To provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual needs and ability and wherever possible to meet those needs in the mainstream classroom.
- To prepare students with Special needs to meet daily challenges through teaching of life skills.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The school provides opportunities to enhance professional growth at regular intervals which include individual development, in-service education to implement new practices and take on new roles.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Enrollment in School:

During admissions, students are screened to identify their Minimum Level of Learning. This helps the school to identify their learning needs if any and provide necessary support. The placement of the students at SIS depends on the levels achieved across the different criteria assessed. Thus the placement falls under four broad categories:

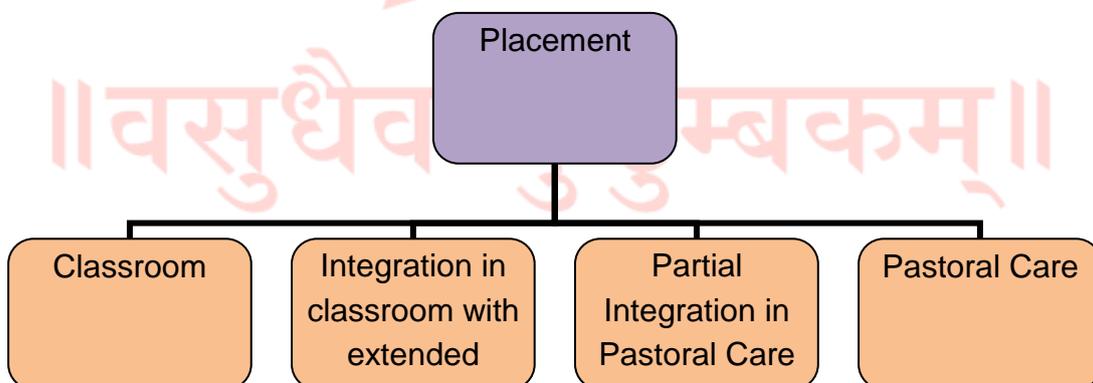


Figure 1: Placement of students

Enrollment in Pastoral Care:

- Referrals from agencies outside of school
- Referrals from parents, facilitators and coordinators

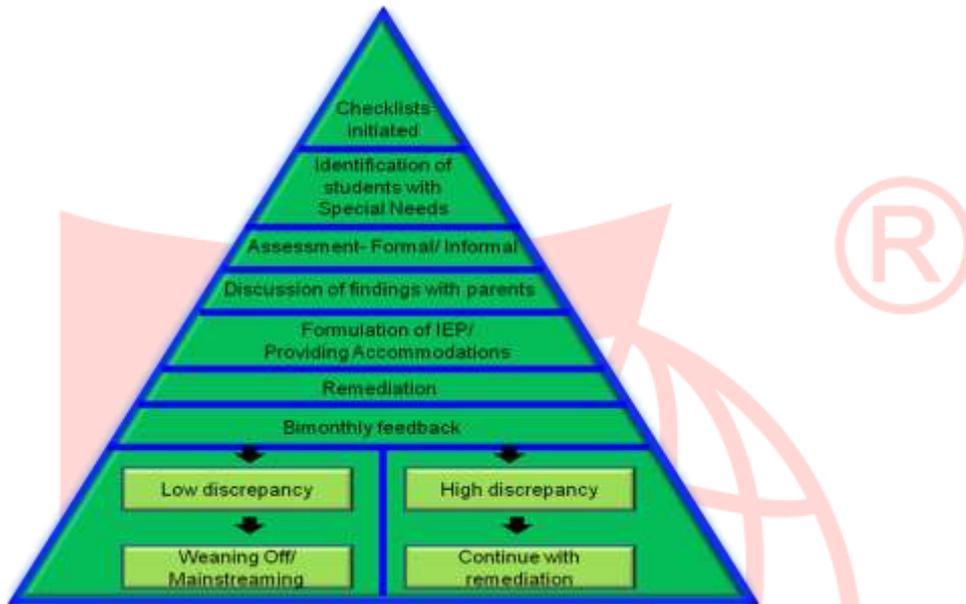


Figure 2: Process of Intervention

Identification of Students with Special Needs:

Students having specific difficulty in learning academic skills and other skills found during the observation period are referred to the Pastoral Care department by parents, facilitators or Program coordinators.

The student’s achievement level is identified along with the student’s strengths and weaknesses. The assessment of behavior, social and emotional levels are also done using informal and formal standardized psychometric tools. Medical documents and case history are also taken into account to identify the area of difficulty. Thereafter, a consultation with the parent is done to discuss the plan of action. A consent form is duly signed by the parent and the school to enroll the student in Pastoral Care.

Individual Education Plan:

The Pastoral Care Team along with the Teacher and the Parent formulate an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) keeping in mind the discrepancy in the grade levels and student’s achievement levels. The Team provides support in the areas of concern by providing strategies and activities to support academic development. Reviews of the students needs are done bimonthly to determine the level of

progress. A student will remain in the program as long as the discrepancy is minimized. The different skills catered in the IEP are:

- Academic Skills
 - Language- The students' language levels are assessed keeping in mind the different language components that includes phonemic awareness, reading, reading comprehension, spellings, vocabulary, Grammar, writing skills and free expression. Once the discrepancy is identified, the students IEP for language is formulated and remediation is initiated to bridge the gap. The department provides for accommodations and exemptions during the teaching-learning process keeping in mind the difficulty of the student.
 - Mathematics- The students are assessed for numbers, number concepts, number identification, mental math, basic math operations depending on the age and class to be enrolled. The disparity is addressed through remediation and provisions.
 - Unit of Inquiry
 - Cognitive Skills- It includes fine motor, gross motor, thinking skills and logical reasoning skills, visual discrimination, memory.
 - Social Skills- Interpersonal skills
 - Emotional Skills- Identifying emotions and managing behavior
 - Communication Skills- understanding of spoken language and body language
 - Life Skills- It involves Study skills, Time management, Organizing skills, Conflict resolution, Stress Management, Problem solving
 - Behavior Modification- It includes sharing, making better choice, helping, respect and care, courtesy, responsibility, listening, working hard.
 - Sensory Needs- It includes low sensitivity, high sensitivity, balance and body awareness.

Need based accommodations, exemptions and differentiated learning strategies are provided keeping in mind the difficulty of the concerned student.

Remediation:

Remedial program is initiated keeping the IEP in focus. Sessions are held as per the requirement of the student on a one to one individual assistance. Monthly activities are designed keeping the yearly target in mind. The focus is on adopting a child-

centered approach, which provides individualized learning and teaching programs based on the assessed needs and strengths of each child. Apart from catering to the academic skills, the remedial program also fosters the development of appropriate social skills, communication skills, motor skills etc. Various therapies are implemented to achieve the desired goals. Once the student attains the required level of learning, the support is gradually withdrawn.

Extended Classroom Support:

To attend to a student in mainstream classroom to provide extra attention to complete classroom related tasks, trained special educators help the homeroom facilitators in providing support in the teaching- learning process (academic related).

Follow Up:

We value the support of parents and work in partnership with them at all stages of intervention. A bimonthly feedback of student's progress or changes in intervention is intimated to the parents placed in the Pastoral Care Department. Parental counseling and training is also an integral ongoing component, which looks at consultation, sensitization and providing updates.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role and Responsibilities of Special Educator:

The work of a SEN teacher is often challenging and varied and involves:

- Identify students with learning needs through informal tests
- Formulate the Individual Education Plan (IEP) along with SENCo and initiate the remediation process to bridge the learning gap
- Assessing children who have long or short-term learning difficulties and working with colleagues to identify individual pupils' special needs
- Preparing lessons and resources to meet the individual needs of pupils
- Teaching either individuals or small groups of pupils within, or outside the class;
- Using special equipment and facilities, such as audiovisual materials and computers to stimulate interest in learning
- Marking and assessing student work

- Organizing learning outside the classroom in activities such as community visits, school outings or sporting events
- Receiving in-service training
- Reporting and Updating regularly to SENCo with regard to all students undergoing remediation.

Role and Responsibilities of Speech Therapist:

- Identification of students at risk for later problems
- Assessment of students' communication skills
- Documentation of outcomes
- Development and Implementation of Speech IEP's
- Combine communication goals with academic and social goals
- Collaboration with remedial facilitators
- Provide all reports and documents of the students undergoing speech therapy
- Support parents with training for students specific needs
- Reporting and Updating regularly to SENCO with regard to all students undergoing Speech Therapy.

Role and Responsibilities of Pastoral Care Coordinator (SENCo):

The Pastoral Care Coordinator (SENCo) is responsible for:

- The day to day operation of the school's SEN policy
- Referrals from parents, coordinators and other agencies
- Conducting formal (psychometric) and informal tests
- Filling in Documents and forms to enroll the student in the Pastoral Care Department.
- Planning the Education Plan (EP) with the classroom teacher in consultation with the parent.
- Assessing, planning, monitoring and reviewing child's provision and progress
- Supervising different teaching approaches and support material considering the difficulty of the student with Special Education Needs
- Making arrangements for monitoring progress against the EP, and arrange a review of progress every two months
- Reviewing the goals of IEP at regular intervals

- Should have the details of the assessment, and provision for the child's special needs during his time at the school
- Facilitating internal and inter-departmental communication with regard to special education needs to the different program facilitators
- Maintaining SEN register for all pupils with special needs
- Administration, including updating and maintaining records of pupils' progress
- Establishing and contributing to SEN training
- Liaison with External Agencies
- Keeping written notes of all correspondence, tests and contacts with parents and other parties
- Providing clinical evidences for students with learning disorders in order to seek accommodations and exemptions
- Providing accommodations according to the IGCSE and IB (Candidates with Special Assessment Needs)
- Ensuring close contact with parents to review the students' overall progress
- Providing vocational and career counseling
- Helping students adjust emotionally and socially through counseling
- Behavior management of students
- Conducting need based activities through all the academic programs
- Collaborating with the classroom teacher to define appropriate activities for the pupils in relation to the curriculum
- Supporting the facilitators with the methods and strategies to cater to individual needs
- Screening students for enrollment in school to assess minimum level of learning
- Maintaining specific resources for special education needs students
- Coordinating with the facilitators and making SEN resources available to enhance the learning process in classroom
- Reporting to the Director, Program Coordinators with regard to students availing facilities of Pastoral Care.

WORKING PROFILE OF THE DEPARTMENT

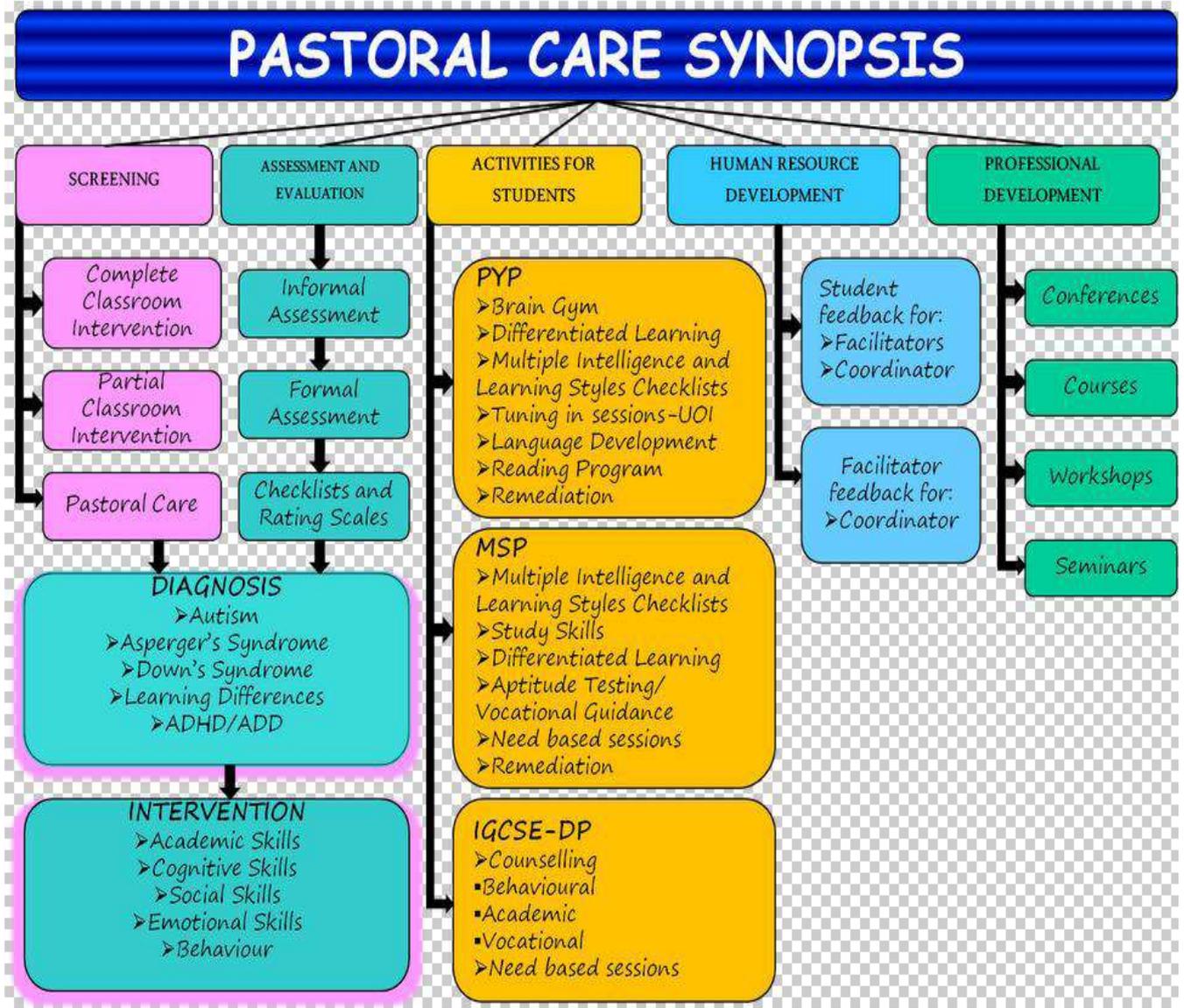


Figure 3: Pastoral Care- A broad View

LIAISON WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Referrals are done to consultants and specialist that include Developmental Pediatrician, Speech/ Language Therapist, and Occupational Therapist as per the requirement of the student.

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