



GLEN AUSTIN LEARNER SUPPORT POLICY

Glen Austin High School aims to provide quality tuition through means of a child centred approach. In doing so, we aim to maximise the potential of individuals and ensure that learners of all ability levels are equipped to meet the challenges of education. This includes cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. Inclusive education aims to identify and remove all possible barriers to learning.

To achieve this it is necessary for all stakeholders to be involved: teachers, parents and learners.

Often learners are faced with challenges in the learning process that are a result of a broad range of experiences in the classroom, at school, at home, in the community, and/or as a result of health conditions or disability. These challenges are referred to as 'barriers to learning and development'.

This policy also regulates the composition and operations of the key coordinating structures required for the implementation of an inclusive education system.

This policy is compiled with reference to the following documents:

1. Education White Paper 6 (Special Needs Education)
2. Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS; 2014)
3. National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement; Grd R to 12 (2011) (CAPS)

When learners enrol at Glen Austin High School they are required to write a screening test which focuses on Languages and Mathematics. The aim of these tests is to determine on what level a specific learner is concerning these subjects. This will enable the educators to determine areas of support and appropriate intervention strategies.

As mentioned, all stakeholders should be involved:

1. FORM CLASSES EDUCATORS

They are required to be responsible for the following matters:

- 1.1 To familiarize themselves with the history and background of each learner. This should be done by using the data provided on the application forms completed by the parents as well as the learner profile forms.
- 1.2 The Form Class Educator is expected to follow up and monitor learner attendance, behaviour and the general wellbeing of a learner. When noticing any alarming tendencies regarding these mentioned matters, it should be reported to the Head of Grade in writing.
- 1.3 By keeping the provided daily register a Form Class Educator should be alarmed by a learner's frequent absenteeism. This should also be reported immediately to the Head of Grade.
- 1.4 Form Class Educators should also be aware of learner's possible changing circumstances e.g. death in the family, divorce, a parent losing a job, etc. so that appropriate support can be given. The responsibility of the Form Class Educators in instances like this will mainly focus on caring and comforting. If it appears that a learner suffers from emotional and/or physiological trauma because of these circumstances, the matter should also be referred to the Head of Grade.

2. HEADS OF GRADE

They are required to be responsible for the following matters:

- 2.1 Following up on all cases referred to them by the Form Class Educator.
- 2.2 Take appropriate action to solve and/or mediate the specific problem.
- 2.3 Investigate the issue and compile a written report on actions taken, outcome of intervention and recommended intervention strategies.
- 2.4 In the case of academic challenges, Heads of Grade must consult with the specific subject educator and the HOD responsible for the subject.
- 2.5 The Heads of Grade will be responsible for contacting the parent/guardian in cases of absenteeism or behavioural problems.

2.6 Should further steps be necessary for action, the Heads of Grade must refer this matter to the School Based Support Team (SBST). The roles and responsibilities of the SBST will be outlined in Addendum A.

2.7 The strategy for assessing and supporting individual students' needs is always discussed fully with parents. Parents are encouraged to meet with the school to discuss reports and support. Communication with parents by telephone and e-mail is encourage and should occur frequently.

3. HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

HODs are mainly responsible for the effective and successful implementation of the specific subject curriculum and should be aware of challenges that learners may have in a specific subject. HODs must therefore be aware of the results of assessment tasks, tests and examinations. This information should be accessible through the following:

- Mark sheets
- Averages
- Analyses of questions and marks
- Post-moderation

Based on this information a Subject Teacher and the HOD should develop an intervention strategy which will be addressed in the extra classes. (The extra class program will be detailed in Addendum B.)

4. PARENTS

Parents are responsible for informing the School about any specific needs their children may have upon entering the School. Parents are required to forward to the School any assessment reports which clarify their child's specific difficulties (these might include reports written by educational psychologists, specialist teachers and teachers from previous schools). Such reports may be used to help determine whether the School is able to meet the particular needs of a child with specific difficulties. Parents are timeously informed about information sessions and parent's meetings – they are requested and encouraged to attend these meetings. These parent's meetings take place once a term. Upon attending parents are requested to complete an attendance register. This will be kept as evidence of parental involvement.

Parents are kept involved in and informed about all school activities on the **D6 Administrator Programme**: This includes dates for assessment and homework given to learners.

5. LEARNERS

Wherever possible, learners themselves should be involved in assessing their progression. Learners' own perceptions of themselves and their learning are crucial when identifying the need for support. Therefore, it is imperative that learners follow the action plan that is developed for them. It includes attending the extra classes where applicable. (More on this will be detailed in Addendum B.)

6. SUBJECT CHOICES

Subject choices (especially Grade 9 and 12) are very important and should be handled with great concern.

- 6.1 The School can advise a learner to change a particular subject due to poor academic performance and in the case where a learner experiences a subject as a challenge. In this regard the learner will be advised, counselled and guided in choosing another subject. It still remains the prerogative of the learner and parent to agree to the subject change. A subject change form will be given to the parent to complete and authorise the change of the subject. In case of a parent not agreeing to the subject change, the parent will be requested to motivate why the subject change is not acceptable and sent it back signed. Parents can also request from their side for their learner to change subjects in writing. The parent will receive the same form as mentioned above, to complete and motivate the change. This request will be considered by the Deputy Principal in consultation with the applicable Subject Educators. Any decision taken would be in the best interest of the learner. These Subject Change Forms will be kept and filed by the Deputy Principal and safe guarded.

For procedures concerning subject choices we are guided by the following documents:

- **Chapter 4 of the National Policy Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Senior Certificate Examination** (Page 17 paragraphs 3, 4 and 5).
- **Chapter 6 (35) of the National Policy Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12** (Page 43 and 44).

7. CONCESSIONS

As soon as it is clear that a learner has a specific barrier or challenge in a specific area and has been evaluated by the SBST, such a learner should be recommended for a concession [according to SIAS "Accommodation(s)/Exemption(s)"].

The National Policy Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 (chapter 6) lists a number of barriers which can grant a learner a concession.

When requesting a concession from the DBE, Annexure B (Form DBE 124) should be completed and accompany the request for a concession.

The applications for concessions will be handled by the Deputy Principal with the help and support of the relevant stakeholders and the SBST.

It is our aim to identify these barriers as soon as possible and in the case of grade 12-learners a request for a concession should be made **no later than the end of March**.

All documents and the final approval (concession granted by the DBE) should be filed and safe guarded for further reference and when officials of the DBE visit the school and/or monitoring the examinations.

Concessions for foreign students: The National Policy Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National (Chapter 6 Section 33 p. 37) clearly defines who a foreign student is and what concessions can be applied for in terms of Languages.

It clearly states what documents a learner should have to prove his/her immigrant status and how a learner can be accommodated in Languages. This will be the school's point of reference when dealing with such issues.

8. LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

The child's interests should always be the first priority. Should a learner wish to enrol at this school and the learner has certain challenges in terms of disabilities, the issue should be discussed with parents and reports should be provided by parents indicating the severity of the disabilities and the challenges the school would be facing in providing a conducive, adequate environment for the optimum functionality and development of the learner. If the management feels such a learner cannot be accommodated reasons should be provided and alternatives should be suggested to the parents.

9. CONCLUSION

This policy has been drafted with the best interests of the learner at heart – taking into account the stakeholders and processes prescribed by legislation and policy documents. This policy is subjected to possible change after being reviewed at least once a year by the relevant stakeholders and/or when changing circumstances require changes and adaptations.

ADDENDUM A
SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT TEAM

According to SIAS, the SBST is responsible for the following:

- (i) To respond to teachers' requests for assistance with support plans for learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- (ii) To review teacher-developed support plans, gather any additional information required, and provide direction and support in respect of additional strategies, programmes, services and resources.

It is the responsibility of the principal to establish the School-Based Support Team and ensure that the team is functional and supported.

The SBST will consist of the following members:

SBST Member	Position	Role and responsibilities
Mr HA Abbott	Principal	Supervising and guidance (Chairperson)
Mr D van Niekerk	Deputy Principal	Handling all official documents and communication with the department. Ensuring school documentation of learners are complete and up to date. Ensuring reports of educators are functional and detailed.
Mr Moyo	Head of Department (Councillor)	Gives background of learners discussed and share information gathered from educators. One on one counselling with learners if necessary.
Mr H du Toit	Head of Department	Gathering of information about learners from educators and assist the Deputy Principal where needed and necessary.
Mrs C v.d Berg	(Councillor)	Assists mister Moyo in the counselling of learners.

The SBST must document their meetings, keep minutes of meetings and give feedback to parents and educators. Once the SBST has decided on a plan of action (intervention strategy), such an action plan must be monitored and evaluated frequently.

This action plan can include intervention from outside (external) sources and this should be done in agreement with and consent from the parents.

If necessary adjustments should be made to the intervention strategy for a certain learner or groups of learners.

Interviews with learners should take place and documented so that progress can be monitored.

Regular feedback should also be given by educators and this feedback should be documented.

Once the SBST decide to refer a specific learner to the DBST (District Based Support Team) the relevant documentation according to the SIAS document should be completed by the school.

The SIAS document states that when a school seeks support from the DBST, forms SNA 1 and SNA 2 should be completed by the school.

ADDENDUM B

EXTRA CLASSES

Extra classes are taken seriously by the school and has been introduced to assist learners in reaching their maximum potential and to address certain challenges that specific learners might have in certain subjects.

Currently there is a morning extra class programme and an afternoon extra class programme.

The programme is co-ordinated by the Deputy Principal in consultation with the Principal. The extra classes are specific in content and should be structured around the results learners obtained in the latest tests and/or examination.

Parents are informed about these extra classes and learners identified for additional support have to attend the afternoon extra classes.

The Principal has requested educators to keep attendance registers, have a specific content plan and evidence of what learners are doing in the class.

Learner's progress should be monitored by conducting small, informal tests – the results thereof will give an indication if there is progress and if adjustments should be made to the programme.