



Inclusive Education Policy in the Emirate of Sharjah (From Early Childhood to Higher Education)

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Introduction:

The Emirate of Sharjah is committed to establishing an inclusive and comprehensive education system spanning from early childhood through to higher education, in which every student belongs, is appreciated, and is empowered to realize their full potential. This Policy is aligned with the national policy for empowering Students with Special Educational Needs (SEND) in the United Arab Emirates. In 2010, the UAE ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), one of the most significant milestones among a series of organizational, economic, and social measures undertaken to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities and promote their empowerment, in accordance with the Federal Law No. (29) of 2006, and amended by the Federal Law No. (14) of 2009, concerning the Rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the Cabinet's Resolution No. (3) of 2018 Approving the National Unified Classification of Disabilities (People of Determination) in the UAE. In 2020, the “Inclusive Education Policy” mandating all public and private schools that follow the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum was adopted, alongside with other relevant federal laws.

This Policy aims to establish a unified and comprehensive regulatory framework for inclusive education across all stages of education in the Emirate of Sharjah, including early childhood centers and nurseries, private schools offering international curricula, and higher education institutions. It defines the standards, procedures, and accountability mechanisms required to strengthen inclusive practices and to ensure the provision of equitable, high-quality educational opportunities within the least restrictive environment for every student, thereby enabling meaningful participation and both academic and social achievement.

By aligning the trends and standards across all the educational stages, the Emirate of Sharjah ensures consistency and continuity in the provision of appropriate support for students with SEND. It further promotes an educational culture that celebrates diversity and upholds the values of equity and inclusion. A firm commitment to the principles of inclusive education, including the provision of reasonable accommodation, remains consistent across all stages. All procedures shall be derived from this unified Policy and shall be subject to the oversight of the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) and the relevant regulatory authorities to ensure consistency and quality of implementation. Higher education institutions shall be subject to the provisions of this Policy within the scope of the mandates of the Sharjah Council for Higher Education & Scientific Research (SCHESR), and in coordination with the relevant regulatory authorities, each in accordance with its sphere of competence.

Policy Terms and Definitions:

Term	Definitions
Emirate	The Emirate of Sharjah.
Supervisory Authorities	Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA), with respect to nurseries and schools, and Sharjah Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research, with respect to higher education institutions, each within its respective mandate and in accordance with the applicable legislation in the Emirate of Sharjah.
Educational Institutions	Institutions providing education and care services to students across early childhood and mainstream education stages, including nurseries, kindergartens, and schools licensed by the SPEA, as well as higher education institutions.
Higher Education Institutions:	Educational institutions licensed by the competent authorities in the UAE offer academic programs beyond the secondary education stage and award academic qualifications such as diplomas, bachelor's, master's, and PhD's degrees, in accordance with approved frameworks and standards.
Specialized Institutions	Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services (SCHS) / Sharjah Centre for Learning Difficulties (SCLD).
Special Education Centers	A specialized institution or center that provides intensive educational, therapeutic, or rehabilitative services to persons with SEND through specialized programs, therapies, or temporary inclusion plans, where the school environment alone does not meet the student's needs. These centers aim to prepare and support students for participation in mainstream educational settings to the greatest extent possible. Special education centers in Sharjah must adhere to the principles of this Policy and coordinate with the mainstream schools and families to facilitate inclusion and avoid the long-term segregation of students.
University Disability Support Centers	Centers that ensure the right of students with disabilities to access equitable educational opportunities in universities.

Inclusive Education	A rights-based approach to education that welcomes and supports all students in inclusive, age-appropriate learning environments alongside their peers, including those with SEND. Inclusive education encompasses the removal of barriers to learning and participation, the provision of necessary accommodations and modifications, and the promotion of a sense of belonging for every student.
Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct	A document that defines the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of staff working in educational institutions.
Student	Any individual enrolled in educational institutions, including children with SEND.
Child	Any human being born alive who has not attained eighteen (18) years of age.
Law	Federal Law No. (29) of 2006, as amended by the Federal Law No. (14) of 2009, on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Objectives:

1. To achieve high-quality inclusive education across all educational institutions in the Emirate of Sharjah, including Nurseries, early education and kindergartens, private schools (K–12), and higher education institutions, through the development and implementation of unified quality standards for inclusive education programs and services, in coordination with the competent authorities, each within its mandate, including Sharjah Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research (SCHESR), in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided to students with SEND and the quality of their outcomes.
2. To ensure equal educational opportunities for students with SEND across all educational stages, in line with the applicable laws and regulations in the UAE and to guarantee that every student receives an appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP) tailored to their needs, enabling them to attain suitable qualifications and achieve their full potential, thereby ensuring fairness and equity for all students.
3. To promote a shared understanding of inclusive education among all the education sector professionals and partners in the Emirate of Sharjah, ensuring the alignment of approaches and practices across early childhood institutions, schools, and universities in both the public and private sectors, while considering the differing regulatory and supervisory frameworks of each educational stage.
4. To ensure accurate assessment and diagnosis, as well as effective education for students with SEND, delivered by qualified and specialized personnel, while focusing on developing the technical competencies of teachers, administrators, specialists, and all personnel working with this group, in accordance with the best international practices in inclusive education.
5. To create inclusive and accessible learning environments that meet the spatial and educational needs of students with SEND across all educational institutions, including learning environments that promote social interaction and the development of communication and participation skills.
6. To enhance the involvement of parents and guardians across all educational stages, in line with the characteristics and nature of each educational stage, to ensure effective communication with educational institutions and to support the educational process in a sustainable manner.
7. To raise community awareness regarding students with SEND and their active roles in society, and to enhance their participation across various fields, thereby promoting a culture of inclusion and appreciation of diversity within the Emirate of Sharjah.

8. To provide appropriate specialized pathways and programs for students with SEND within private educational institutions (mainstream education and higher education) in the Emirate of Sharjah, in accordance with their individual needs, to enhance their abilities, enable the continuity of their education, and prepare them to effectively assume future roles within society.
9. To design a monitoring and evaluation mechanism (performance indicators, periodic reports, and comparative data) to assess the quality of inclusion outcomes.
10. To strengthen the governance and integration of inclusive education in the Emirate of Sharjah by defining roles and responsibilities and coordinating efforts among relevant authorities, ensuring the effective implementation of inclusive education standards across all educational stages.
11. To ensure the safe and smooth transition of students with SEND from mainstream education to higher education (including the definition of mechanisms that will be implemented in this context, executive regulations).
12. To enhance corporate integration within the inclusive education system in the Emirate of Sharjah by developing effective mechanisms for coordination and resource and expertise sharing, including specialized equipment, resource rooms, assistive technologies, and diagnostic services among educational institutions, thereby ensuring optimal use of resources, improving the efficiency of services provided to students with SEND, and promoting the sustainability of the inclusive education system across the Emirate.

Ethical Charter for Inclusive Education

Professional ethics constitute a cornerstone in the success of inclusive education policies in the Emirate of Sharjah, where an equitable and inclusive educational environment is built upon the commitment of all education professionals—including teachers, school principals, specialists, and administrators—to professional conduct that upholds human values and preserves the dignity of all students, including persons with SEND. This Charter is grounded in the national directives of the UAE, the general principles of the Inclusive Education Policy, and the regulatory guidelines of the competent authorities in the Emirate of Sharjah, each within its respective mandate, including the SPEA with regard to mainstream education, and the SCHESR with regard to higher education institutions, in addition to the recommendations of the relevant specialized authorities, namely Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services (SCHS) and Sharjah Center for Learning Difficulties (SCLD), as leading authorities in empowering persons with SEND.

The Charter sets out a set of core principles that all education practitioners must adhere to:

- **Equity and Fairness:** Treating all students with respect and equality without discrimination based on ability and ensuring equal access to educational resources and services.
- **Empowerment and Participation:** Supporting the participation of students with SEND in decision-making related to their education and ensuring the involvement of parents and guardians.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Performing professional duties in accordance with the highest standards of competence, responding to accountability with integrity and cooperation, and continuously improving performance.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Respecting the confidentiality of students' and families' information and disclosing it only with official consent or in cases requiring legal intervention or student protection, in accordance with the applicable regulations.
- **Professional Ethics in Inclusive Education:** Professional ethics in inclusive education are based on adherence to human values and responsible professional practices that ensure the dignity of students is preserved and that fairness and equity are achieved in inclusive educational environments, including:
 - Commitment to applying ethical principles of inclusive education across all relevant educational and administrative contexts.
 - Adherence to professional behaviors that respect students' dignity and rights, and prevent any discriminatory or harmful practices.
 - Responsible and ethical handling of professional challenges, and making educational decisions in the best interest of the student.

- Promoting a culture of professional accountability by linking ethical commitment to professional development programs and performance evaluation systems, in accordance with the approved regulations.
- Adopting a comprehensive professional competency standard that governs professional practices when working with students with SEND.

Commitment to professional ethics is a critical element in building public trust in the inclusive education system. Practitioners are expected to serve as models of integrity and responsible conduct in their interactions with students, colleagues, and families. This is reflected in their refraining from using their positions for personal gain or engaging in behaviors that may compromise the quality of education or negatively affect the educational environment.

Accordingly, adherence to the Ethical Charter for Inclusive Education is not merely a professional obligation, but also a human and societal commitment that reflects the Emirate of Sharjah's vision of building a tolerant, equitable, and resilient educational community, capable of embracing all students and enabling them to realize their full potential.

Policy General Scope

This Policy applies to all education sectors within the Emirate and encompasses service providers and care institutions in the following areas:

- **Early Childhood Education:** This includes all nurseries and early intervention centers that provide services to children from birth up to school-entry age within the Emirate of Sharjah.
- **School Education (K–12):** This includes all educational institutions at the kindergarten, primary, preparatory, and secondary cycles located within the jurisdiction of the Emirate of Sharjah, regardless of the curriculum adopted, including specialized schools.
- **Higher Education:** This includes all post-secondary education institutions, including universities, colleges, and vocational training institutes licensed within the Emirate.
- **Shelter and Social Care Institutions:** Institutions affiliated with the Sharjah Social Services Department (SSSD) as well as special education centers licensed and accredited by the SSSD.

All educational institutions falling within the scope of this Policy are required to comply with the principles and requirements of inclusive education. The provisions of this Policy in the higher education sector shall be implemented through the SCHESR, in accordance with its regulatory mandate and applicable legislation, and in coordination with the relevant authorities.

Legal Compliance

This Policy shall come into effect at the beginning of the 2025/2026 school year. All educational institutions in the Emirate are expected to achieve full compliance with its requirements and standards not later than the 2027/2028 school year.

Non-compliance with the provisions and procedures of this Policy shall constitute a violation subject to the necessary regulatory and legal actions by the competent authority, depending on the sector. The SPEA shall be responsible for enforcing compliance within the mainstream education institutions, while the SCHESR shall assume this responsibility for higher education institutions, in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

In furtherance of enhancing the quality of implementation of inclusive education policies, the SPEA shall adopt the level of institutional compliance with these policies as a key component of school performance evaluation. This shall consider the extent to which inclusive practices are effectively integrated and implemented. Evaluation outcomes shall be used to identify areas for improvement, guide institutional support, and recognize institutions that demonstrate advanced levels of inclusive education implementation, promoting their practices as benchmarks at the Emirate level.

Policy Targeted Groups

Special Educational Needs (SEN/ SEND)

This term refers to a broad range of difficulties or disabilities that may limit a student's ability to access the prescribed curriculum without appropriate modifications or accommodations. These challenges may encompass physical, sensory, cognitive, communication, behavioral, or emotional aspects, thereby necessitating the provision of specialized educational support for each student. Such needs may require the development of Individual Education Plans, the provision of specialized educational services, or the use of a range of support strategies to ensure effective learning. They may manifest as comprehensive challenges and difficulties affecting all areas of learning, or as specific skills in areas such as reading, writing, or numeracy, as well as in the ability to understand and express information. They may also present as difficulties in social interaction, behavior management, attention, or self-regulation, in addition to motor or sensory challenges that may affect participation in both curricular and extracurricular activities. All these aspects are integral considerations within inclusive education policies, which aim to create flexible, equitable, and inclusive learning environments that respond to the diverse needs of all students and ensure equal opportunities for their academic and social development.

Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Neurodevelopmental disorders refer to a group of conditions that typically emerge early in development, often before a child enters school. They are characterized by developmental deficits that result in impairments in personal, social, academic, or occupational functioning. These developmental deficits may range from specific limitations in learning or the regulation of particular functions to more pervasive impairments affecting social or intellectual abilities. This category includes (intellectual disability, communication disorders, autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder, specific learning disorders), as well as other neurodevelopmental conditions.

Intellectual Disability	These include three categories based on specific mental abilities and age: 1. Intellectual Disability: Cognitive abilities are determined through standardized and approved intelligence assessments. 2. Global Developmental Delay: Applicable to children aged five years and below; not specified by a defined level of cognitive ability. 3. Unspecified Intellectual Disability: Applicable to individuals above five years of age where cognitive ability cannot be reliably specified. Cognitive abilities are determined through approved intelligence assessments. Intellectual Disability is defined as a disorder with onset during the developmental period, characterized by deficits in both intellectual functioning and adaptive functioning across conceptual, social, and practical domains. The diagnosis requires the presence of all three of the following criteria: (Deficits in intellectual functioning - Deficits in adaptive functioning -Onset of intellectual and adaptive deficits during the developmental period).
Communication Disorders	Communication disorders involve impairments in speech language, and communication. Speech is the expressive production of sounds and includes articulation, fluency, voice, and resonance quality. Language encompasses the form, function, and use of a conventional system of symbols (e.g., spoken words, sign language, written words, images) governed by specific rules for the purpose of communication. Communication includes any verbal or non-verbal behavior (whether intentional or unintentional) that influences the behavior, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. The diagnostic category of communication disorders includes the following: Language disorder, speech and sound disorder, childhood-onset fluency disorder (stuttering), social communication disorder, and other specified and unspecified communication disorders that manifest during or after the developmental period.

Neurodevelopmental Disorders	
Autism Spectrum Disorder	A developmental disorder in children resulting from a dysfunction in the nervous system, characterized by deviation and delay in the development of core functions associated with the growth of social and communication skills, including attention, sensory perception, and motor development. It typically appears within the first three years of a child's life and is defined by two main features: 1. Deficits in communication (verbal and non-verbal) and social interaction. 2. Repetitive stereotyped behaviors and restricted interests and activities.
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	A persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is inconsistent with the developmental and functional level of the individual's chronological age. This condition has a direct and negative impact on social, occupational, and academic activities. It is considered a neurobehavioral disorder that results in multiple challenges for individuals from early childhood through school years and into adulthood. Individuals generally exhibit impairments across three domains (inattention, hyperactivity, and combined inattention and hyperactivity), with varying degrees of severity. These impairments must be present in at least two settings (e.g., school, home, work), and there must be clear evidence of interference (conflict) with developmentally appropriate academic, occupational, and social functioning. For example, a child may display aggressive behavior, difficulty understanding tasks and instructions, indifference, lack of attention to detail, difficulty sustaining attention and completing activities, poor listening, disorganization, and failure to adhere to schedules and time commitments.
Specific Learning Disorder	A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, whether spoken or written, which manifests as an impaired ability to listen, think, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations. It includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, and dyslexia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, intellectual disability, emotional disturbances, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages. The intellectual abilities of individuals within this category, as measured by intelligence assessments, are within the average range or above.

Sensory / Physical / Psychological – Emotional Disabilities	
Visual Impairment	A severe visual impairment ranging from total vision loss (“blindness”) to partial vision loss that cannot be corrected through surgery, glasses, or contact lenses. Visual impairment cases can be classified as follows: Total Blindness: The complete loss of vision to less than 20 degrees, even with the use of corrective lenses. Individuals in this category cannot benefit from mainstream educational programs, and the legal and educational definitions both apply to this condition. Partial Blindness: Where visual acuity in the better eye is 6/60 or less. Low Vision: Partial loss of vision in the better eye that cannot be improved through visual aids, contact lenses, medication, or surgical intervention. The degree of visual impairment varies from one individual to another.
Hearing Impairment	It is a partial or total loss of hearing that affects an individual’s ability to use hearing for communication or learning in a mainstream educational environment. Hearing impairment includes hearing loss, and individuals with this condition require specialized services to develop language, speech, and verbal communication. Hearing impairment may be conductive, sensorineural, or mixed. Hearing impairment includes the following: Deafness: A dysfunction in the auditory nervous system resulting in non-functional hearing. This significantly limits the use of verbal communication, and the individual typically relies on alternative communication methods such as sign language. The degree of hearing loss exceeds 90 decibels (profound hearing loss). Hearing Loss: A variable or permanent loss of hearing that affects communication methods relying on hearing as a primary source. Individuals may require hearing aids or assistive devices. Hearing loss ranges from 26 to 90 decibels. It includes several types: (bilateral and unilateral hearing loss, symmetrical and asymmetrical hearing loss, and progressive, sudden, or stable hearing loss).

Sensory / Physical / Psycho/ Emotional Disabilities															
Deaf- Blind Disability	It refers to the co-occurrence or simultaneous presence of both hearing and visual impairments, resulting in profound communication needs and additional educational needs that cannot be met solely through special education programs designed for individuals who are blind or those with hearing impairments.														
Physical Disability	A chronic neurological, muscular, or skeletal impairment that limits a person's ability to use their body in a typical manner, thereby affecting daily life activities, particularly active participation in school activities within a mainstream educational environment. Such a disability may result from congenital deformities present at birth, chronic diseases, fractures, or amputations. Physical disability may affect one or more of the following skills: 1. Functional skills: Reduced functional abilities or independent working skills. 2. Motor skills: Inability to perform or complete motor tasks. 3. Educational performance: Physical disability affects the student's academic performance, resulting in a level lower than that of their peers. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S.N.</th><th>Cases Included under Physical Disability</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Paralysis conditions: quadriplegia, paraplegia, hemiplegia, or monoplegia resulting from spinal cord injuries, stroke, cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, or peripheral nerve dysfunction or neuropathy, etc.</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Paralysis cases in which the individual is unable to walk, requiring the use of assistive devices.</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Paralysis cases in which the individual experiences difficulty in walking, requiring the use of assistive devices; however, the individual is able to walk without them, albeit with difficulty.</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Amputation cases involving one or more upper or lower limbs: (above the elbow, elbow joint, wrist, hip joint, knee joint, ankle, or partial foot amputation).</td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>Muscle weakness caused by central and progressive neurological diseases such as muscular dystrophy, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis.</td></tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>Severe spinal deformities and chronic diseases that result in disability.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S.N.	Cases Included under Physical Disability	1	Paralysis conditions: quadriplegia, paraplegia, hemiplegia, or monoplegia resulting from spinal cord injuries, stroke, cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, or peripheral nerve dysfunction or neuropathy, etc.	2	Paralysis cases in which the individual is unable to walk, requiring the use of assistive devices.	3	Paralysis cases in which the individual experiences difficulty in walking, requiring the use of assistive devices; however, the individual is able to walk without them, albeit with difficulty.	4	Amputation cases involving one or more upper or lower limbs: (above the elbow, elbow joint, wrist, hip joint, knee joint, ankle, or partial foot amputation).	5	Muscle weakness caused by central and progressive neurological diseases such as muscular dystrophy, Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis.	6	Severe spinal deformities and chronic diseases that result in disability.
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Psych / Emotional Disorders	Under the umbrella of psychological disorders, several terms are used, such as (emotional disorders, behavioral disorders, or mental illness). It refers to a complex emotional condition accompanied by distinct physiological and physical activity, in which emotional responses are inappropriate, either in excess or deficit. This condition appears in the individual through one or more of the following characteristics over a long period and to a significant degree, negatively affecting educational performance and daily life functioning: - Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. - Inability to build or maintain interpersonal relationships with peers or adults. - Inappropriate patterns of behavior or emotions under normal circumstances. - A general mood of unhappiness or depression. - Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or educational problems. This term includes cases of schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder, severe phobias, major depression, anxiety disorders, trauma and stress-related disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and neurocognitive disorders, etc. Due to the diversity and multiplicity of these disorders, reference may be made to the fifth edition of the DSM-5 for each disorder and its diagnostic criteria.
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Sensory / Health/ Physical / Psycho/ Emotional Disabilities	
Multiple Disability	A person with disability that falls under one of the following categories (neurodevelopmental disorders / sensory disabilities / physical disabilities / psychological or emotional disorders), accompanied by one or more additional disabilities classified under a different category within these groups. Examples include the co-occurrence of intellectual and physical disabilities, or hearing and intellectual disabilities. This category does not include the combination of visual and hearing impairments, as both fall under the category of sensory disabilities, nor does it include the presence of two disabilities within the same category of neurodevelopmental disorders. These multiple disabilities result in direct developmental and educational challenges that significantly affect individual functioning, making it difficult to place the individual in programs designed for single disabilities. Scientific literature often associates multiple disabilities with severe disabilities due to the extensive difficulties the individuals face in performing daily life activities.
Gifted and Talented	
Gifted and Talented	They are students who demonstrate exceptional ability or high levels of competence in one or more areas of creativity or academic achievement. These students exhibit performance that is significantly above that of their peers within the same age group. They may display particular talents and abilities in areas such as poetry, visual arts, sports, drama, etc.
www.mocd.gov.ae http://www.dsm5.org/	

Policy Implementation Guidelines

The provisions of this section shall be applied in a manner that considers the differences across educational stages and the nature of higher education institutions, while adhering to the general principles of inclusive education without prejudice to the approved regulatory and academic frameworks.

First: Admission and Registration:

No student in the Emirate of Sharjah shall be denied admission to an educational institution on the basis of SEND. This is subject to the approved academic admission requirements for each program or educational stage, in a manner that does not conflict with the principles of inclusive education. All educational institutions (schools, nurseries, and universities) are required to implement admission procedures that are transparent, predictable, and free from barriers for students with SEND. **including: -**

- Admission criteria and requirements shall be inclusive and comprehensive. Any admission tests or interviews must be adapted as needed (e.g., providing a quiet environment, assistive technologies, or alternative formats) to ensure equal opportunities for applicants with special educational needs.
- Informal admission “withholding” practices are strictly prohibited, including undisclosed pre-screening processes intended to exclude students who learn differently, or advising parents to seek enrolment in other institutions. Unjustified refusals of admission shall be considered a violation of regulations and will be addressed accordingly by the supervisory authorities.
- Each educational institution shall develop and publish a written inclusive admissions policy, to be reviewed periodically, clearly outlining procedures, available accommodations, and specific criteria for the admission of students with SEND, in alignment with the principles set out in this guideline.
- Each educational institution that includes educational and psychological specialists, is advised to establish a committee responsible for evaluating applications requiring specific accommodations and providing appropriate recommendations to ensure admission without compromising the quality of the educational process.
- Educational institutions shall document all admission and rejection decisions in writing, using approved and standardized forms.
- Any decision of rejection—where applicable—must include clear and specific justifications based on objective educational grounds, without contradicting the principles of inclusive education.

- The competent supervisory authority shall be formally notified in cases of repeated rejections related to special educational needs, in order to take the necessary regulatory actions in accordance with approved frameworks.
- The appropriate specialization shall be determined based on specialist assessment of the student's case, in order to prevent academic failure.

Second: Quotas and Equitable Distribution:

To support inclusive education at the system level, the Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) and the Sharjah Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research (SCHESR) shall establish target enrolment rates for students with SEND within mainstream educational settings. All education providers are required to admit a proportion of students with SEND that reflects the global prevalence rate, estimated at approximately 16% according to statistics issued by the WHO. As a minimum requirement, each educational institution shall allocate no less than 5%–8% of its total capacity for students with SEND. Higher education institutions are also encouraged to actively recruit and support students with SEND within their programs, without prejudice to approved academic admission requirements, the nature of programs and specializations, and with due consideration to the academic autonomy of higher education institutions.

- The SPEA shall monitor admissions data on an annual basis. Where institutions are found not to be enrolling a sufficient number of students with SEND without an acceptable justification, this shall trigger intervention by the Authority to ensure a more equitable distribution.
- Conversely, no single educational institution is expected to assume responsibilities beyond its actual capacity. Where the needs of enrolled students with SEND exceed what can reasonably be provided, SPEA shall coordinate, in collaboration with specialized authorities, the transfer of additional students to other schools with sufficient capacity, while ensuring that no student is denied a place. However, the concept of “capacity” must not be misused—it refers to actual limits determined after exhausting all reasonable accommodations, and not to subjective preference or institutional inaction.
- Educational institutions shall prepare an approved annual plan, prior to the start of each academic year, for the enrolment of students with SEND. This plan shall be reviewed and updated in line with emerging developments.
- As a minimum, the annual plan shall include:
 - **The targeted percentage for enrolling students with SEND during the academic year.**
 - **The specializations and support services available within the institution or through partnerships with accredited authorities.**

- **A plan for developing an inclusive educational environment, including physical accessibility, educational resources, and staff capacity-building.**
- **The annual plan shall serve as a tool for planning, monitoring, and evaluation, considering the balance between the requirements of inclusive education and the institution's actual capacity.**

Third: Publication of Admissions Policies:

Each educational institution shall publish an “inclusion-friendly admissions policy” as part of its overall inclusive education policy. This policy (subject to review during inspection processes) must clearly outline how the institution welcomes students with SEND, the support available from the point of admission, and the steps for parents/ students to disclose needs and request accommodations. It shall also identify a designated point of contact (such as an Inclusion Coordinator, Special Educational Needs Officer, or Student Affairs Officer) responsible for guiding families through the admissions and registration process.

Fourth: Inclusive Participation:

Admission constitutes only the first step—true inclusion must extend to full participation in all aspects of school or university life. Educational service providers are required to:

- Ensure equitable access to the curriculum: Students with SEND should, as far as possible, have access to the same curriculum as their peers, with appropriate accommodations provided. Where curriculum modifications are necessary, they must be individualized and based on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or accommodation plan, while maintaining the student's integration within core educational experiences.
- Ensure inclusion in extracurricular activities: Schools and universities must enable students with SEND to participate in extracurricular activities and volunteering opportunities. This may require specialized equipment, support staff, or equivalent alternatives. The default expectation shall be participation alongside peers. Where inclusive access is not feasible, institutions must provide the closest possible inclusive alternative, avoiding systematic exclusion (e.g., organizing an inclusive parallel activity rather than excluding the student).
- Prevent segregation or isolation: The creation of parallel tracks or “special” classes within educational institutions shall be minimized. While this policy does not prohibit the use of resource rooms or small groups for temporary support, these must complement, not replace, participation in mainstream classrooms. The segregation or permanent grouping of students with SEND is prohibited, except in rare cases where it demonstrably serves the student's best interests (with parental consent and periodic review). In higher education, all academic programs are expected to accommodate

students with SEND, and the establishment of separate “special programs” should be avoided unless they serve as transitional pathways toward full inclusion.

- Preservation of dignity and confidentiality: All admission and participation procedures must respect the dignity and rights of the student. Information related to disability shall be treated as confidential and shared only with those directly involved in providing support. Any practices involving stigma are strictly prohibited, such as disclosing a student’s condition without consent or isolating them due to a misunderstanding of certain behaviors.
- The Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or accommodation plan, shall include a dedicated “Participation Plan” component, specifying appropriate academic and extracurricular activities for the student, as well as the mechanisms that support full participation. This component shall be reviewed periodically.
- Training shall be provided to academic, educational, and administrative staff on techniques for supporting social interaction and managing behavioral diversity within inclusive classrooms, ensuring meaningful and safe participation for students with SEND.
- Consideration of academic accommodations in teaching and assessment methods: Faculty members and teachers are required to consider the special educational needs of students in inclusive settings when delivering instruction and facilitating classroom interaction. This includes adapting the pace of teaching, simplifying the presentation of content, and employing a variety of instructional methods, without compromising core learning outcomes. Appropriate accommodations in assessment and examination methods must also be provided, in accordance with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or approved accommodation plan. This may include—where appropriate—the use of alternative assessment formats such as multiple-choice questions, practical examinations, or continuous assessment, instead of exclusive reliance on essay-based formats. Such measures ensure fair and effective evaluation of the student’s achievement and prevent undue academic strain or failure resulting from the method of assessment rather than the student’s actual level of attainment.

Fifth: Leadership and Accountability in the Inclusive Education Policy

Leadership Commitment:

Strong leadership is the cornerstone of building an inclusive culture. Accordingly, leaders of educational institutions (including nursery managers, school principals, university presidents, deans, and heads of academic departments) are expected to adopt inclusive education as a core institutional value. They are entrusted with articulating a clear vision for inclusive education, allocating the necessary resources, and modelling inclusive behaviors. Their fundamental responsibility lies in developing the institution’s own inclusion policy and implementing it in line with their roles.

Roles and Responsibilities: This policy requires the establishment of clear roles and organizational structures within each institution to ensure accountability. Including:	
Educational Institution Administrations	Each school (from kindergarten through Grade 12) shall establish an Inclusion Support Team led by a qualified Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) or Head of Inclusion. The team shall oversee identification processes, the development of IEPs, classroom support, teacher training, and the monitoring of progress for students with SEND. In early childhood centers, an inclusion specialist or designated supervisor shall perform a similar role, working in collaboration with families to develop early intervention plans. In higher education, institutions shall provide a mechanism, unit, or designated coordinator for disability support services, in line with their approved academic and administrative structures, to ensure the provision of necessary accommodations to students across programs.
Governing Boards:	School governing boards or institutional owners shall appoint a designated member, referred to as the “Inclusive Education Coordinator,” or establish a committee responsible for overseeing the implementation of inclusive education. This member shall ensure that inclusion-related matters are incorporated into board meetings, monitor key indicators (such as enrolment figures of students with SEND and their academic attainment), and coordinate with the SPEA or relevant regulatory bodies during evaluations.
Teachers and Faculty Members:	All teachers, not only specialists, are responsible for the learning of students with SEND within their classrooms. They are required to collaborate with Inclusion Support Teams to adapt teaching methods and provide appropriate accommodations. The effectiveness of their support for student diversity shall also be incorporated into their professional performance evaluations.
Students and Parents Engagement:	While ultimate responsibility rests with the institutions, the policy encourages empowering students—particularly at higher levels—to advocate for their own needs, and urges parents to act as active partners. Their perspectives must be taken into consideration, without placing the burden of inclusion solely upon them.
Sharjah Private Education Authority (SPEA) and the relevant local	The Sharjah Education Authority, in collaboration with relevant local and national authorities, shall develop an integrated framework of professional standards and licensing requirements for specialized roles supporting inclusive education. This framework shall cover Inclusion Coordinators, special education teachers, and specialists in fields such as psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and

and national authorities	behavior, as well as educational support assistants. All professionals within these categories must hold accredited academic qualifications and an official professional license issued by a competent national authority. In this context, new licensing categories shall be introduced and implemented progressively, including a requirement for Inclusion Coordinators to obtain a specialized professional certification in inclusive education. Mainstream education teachers shall also be required to complete no fewer than 20–30 hours of continuous professional development training in inclusive education practices, in order to strengthen their competencies and enabling the effective implementation of inclusive and equitable teaching practices for all students. The SPEA further seeks to establish and maintain an updated national database of qualified professionals in the field of inclusive education, thereby supporting effective planning and the optimal deployment of specialized personnel in accordance with the needs of educational institutions in the Emirate of Sharjah. With respect to higher education institutions, the application of licensing and professional development requirements shall consider the specific nature of academic roles and the approved systems governing faculty members, ensuring alignment with academic accreditation requirements and institutional human resources regulations.
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Accountability Mechanisms: The SPEA and the SCHESR shall monitor the extent of institutional compliance with this policy through multiple mechanisms, including:	
Corporate Inclusion Policy:	Each institution shall adopt its own Inclusion Policy document (or a dedicated section within its institutional handbook), considering its specific context while aligning with the Emirate's overarching policy. This document must include the institution's vision for inclusion, admission and identification procedures, implementation of IEPs, accommodations and reasonable adjustments, staff roles (including the designation of an Inclusion Coordinator), any additional services or fees, and grievance and complaints mechanisms. The policy must be published and reviewed annually, taking into consideration the nature of the educational stage and ensuring alignment with the regulatory and accreditation frameworks applicable to higher education institutions.
Inspection and Classification:	The inspection framework for nurseries and schools, as well as quality reviews in higher education, shall include comprehensive inclusion standards, such as the quality of practices, student outcomes, accessibility of facilities, staff training, and parent satisfaction. Any deficiencies in this

	area shall be reflected in the institution's rating and may lead to corrective actions. In higher education, the support provided to students with SEND shall be taken into consideration in the evaluation of universities and colleges. - Educational inclusion shall be included within the institutional inspection report, comprising both quantitative and qualitative assessments of indicators such as: ○ The rate of implementation of IEPs. ○ The number of successful accommodation cases. ○ Levels of satisfaction among parents and students. ○ Staff competence in implementing accommodations.
Data and Reports:	Educational institutions must maintain annual data on the number of students with SEND, their categories, the services provided to them, and their academic progress, without identifying them by name. This data will be sent to the SPEA to support system-wide strategic planning, identify resource needs, and ensure the smooth transition of students between institutions. Data privacy will be strictly maintained, and the data will be used only by authorized parties. The SCHESR will also work to develop mechanisms for corporate linkage and integration among universities, colleges, and relevant educational institutions, enabling the exchange of aggregated data, coordination of services, and sharing of resources and expertise related to inclusive education, in support of the continuity of services provided to students and the achievement of effective integration in the implementation of inclusion policies across the Emirate of Sharjah.
Continuous Improvement Plans:	Educational institutions where deficiencies in inclusion practices are identified are required to submit an approved improvement plan to the SPEA, which must include measures such as staff training, facility improvements, hiring of specialists, or increasing enrollment rates for students with SEND. Identify tools to measure the effectiveness of these measures (such as pre- and post-tests, assessment interviews, and IEP reviews) to evaluate their impact within a specified timeframe, with follow-up to ensure implementation.

Support Practices of Inclusive Education:

Each educational institution shall establish inclusive education support systems, whose primary role is to identify needs and issues, provide timely intervention, and ensure the provision of appropriate accommodations for students. These systems shall include:

Early Identification and Monitoring (Assessment)	
Early Years Screening:	Nurseries and early childhood centers shall maintain developmental screening checklists and tools for the early identification of potential delays or developmental difficulties in a child's growth. When a concern indicator arises (such as delayed speech, unusual behavior, or sensory impairments), staff must communicate with the family and, with their consent, request further assessment (through pediatricians or early intervention specialists). Early childhood centers should maintain links with therapy services and early intervention initiatives to facilitate referral and early support, rather than adopting a "wait-and-see" approach.
Entry into School and Ongoing Monitoring:	Schools shall have an admission questionnaire directed to parents as an initial tool in the preliminary identification process. It must be clearly designed to enable parents to disclose any previous medical or psychological diagnoses, known special educational needs, or educational support services the student has previously received. The school bears responsibility for continuous monitoring and periodic assessment. Teacher training in observing behavioral and academic indicators associated with special educational needs is an essential component, including learning difficulties, developmental, sensory, behavioral, or social disabilities—according to the latest professional standards. When any concerning indicators arise, whether identified by a teacher or a parent, the school's Inclusion Support Team shall promptly initiate the collection of relevant data. Including information on the student's performance, teacher observations, and results of initial screening tools, in order to determine the likelihood of special educational needs, which may require student referral for a comprehensive assessment by accredited specialists. All screening and assessment procedures must be conducted using tools aligned with national guidelines, ensuring consistency and fairness in identifying needs and subsequently providing appropriate support.

Formal Assessment and Diagnosis:	Although schools and universities do not conduct medical diagnoses, they shall facilitate referral to qualified specialists when necessary (such as referral for psycho-educational assessment or hearing evaluation). Educational institutions must support parents in understanding the importance of assessment and provide guidance on accessing relevant services. (In higher education, institutions shall assist adult students in locating assessment services if they request accommodations without prior documentation). The absence of a formal diagnosis shall not delay the provision of support; instead _ temporary accommodations shall be provided based on observed needs pending official reports. Universities are also required to conduct non-medical diagnostic screenings and appropriate functional academic assessments for students with SEND. These assessments aim to identify required academic support and accommodations, and to evaluate the institution's readiness to provide such support, without being used as a mechanism for exclusion or denial of admission, thereby ensuring equal opportunity and transparency in educational decision-making.
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Second: Individual Planning (Educational/Individual Plan / Family Service Plan / Accommodation Plan)	
Development of Plans:	Once a student with additional needs has been identified, an appropriate individual plan shall be developed. In school stages, this is referred to as the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), prepared by the Inclusion Support Team in collaboration with parents and the student, where possible. The plan identifies strengths and areas of need, sets clear educational objectives, and specifies accommodations, modifications, and support services. For young children from birth to 3 years of age, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is used, focusing on early developmental goals and family-centered strategies. In higher education, the corresponding plan is referred to as the Academic Accommodation Plan, developed by the disability support unit in consultation with the student, based on submitted disability documentation.
Family and Student Involvement:	Parents (or the adult student) must be involved in the planning process. Their views and preferences shall be taken into consideration. No major decisions regarding support or educational arrangements may be made without consultation with the family and efforts to reach a mutual agreement. Parents are required to sign the IEP/IFSP to confirm their participation. In higher education, the student's consent and active participation are essential, as they have the right to register for support services and choose the accommodations they wish to use.
Review and Updating:	Individual plans are dynamic and evolving tools; they must be reviewed at least annually (and preferably two to three times per year) to evaluate and update goals and services. If the student does not make the expected progress, the plan must be revised accordingly. In early childhood, the IFSP is reviewed more frequently, due to the rapid developmental changes occurring at this stage. In higher education, the plan may remain relatively stable; however, it should be reviewed whenever needs change or difficulties arise. Its implementation must be monitored each academic semester through coordination with faculty members.

Third: Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS)

Each educational institution shall clearly define the services provided within each level of support and ensure the existence of a clear pathway for progression between these levels. For example, when a mainstream education teacher observes that a student is experiencing difficulties (i.e., Tier 1 support is insufficient), the case shall be referred to the Inclusion Support Team for consideration of Tier 2 support. If difficulties persist without meaningful progress, the case shall be escalated to assess the possibility of Tier 3 intervention. Similarly, if the student demonstrates significant improvement, the level of support may be reduced gradually.

This dynamic approach is based on flexibility in the provision of support, reducing over-reliance on a single level and promoting more efficient and integrated use of resources.

Sharjah adopts a Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS), also known as “Response to Intervention,” in order to ensure that the level of support corresponds to the severity of the student’s needs:

Tier 1 – General Support:	High-quality, inclusive instruction in the mainstream education classroom forms the foundation for all students. Teachers shall use differentiated instruction strategies and the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to engage students at different levels of ability. This level also includes positive behavior support and social-emotional learning, benefiting all students, including those with mild learning needs. Most students with SEND should be able to progress within the classroom environment through effective Tier 1 practices and minor accommodations when required. Example: A teacher uses visual aids and multi-sensory activities with all students, which naturally benefits a student with a student difficulty without the need for removal from the classroom.
Tier 2 – Targeted Support:	This level of support is provided to students who require assistance beyond universal support (Tier 1), through targeted interventions, often delivered in small groups or through short-term withdrawal sessions. These interventions are considered complementary to classroom instruction and not a replacement for it. Tier 2 support may include remedial literacy programs, social skills groups, or physiotherapy sessions provided several times per week. This support is typically delivered by specialists such as learning support teachers or therapy professionals, who work directly with the student. The aim of this level is to provide additional support to address specific learning or skill gaps. Example: A student with moderate dyslexia receives three weekly sessions within a specialized reading program (Tier 2), while continuing

	to attend mainstream English lessons, where the teacher provides supportive reading accommodations.
Tier 3 – Intensive Support:	This is the highest level of support and is provided to students with significant or complex needs. It may include direct (one-to-one) support, highly specialized programs, or the provision of a specialist teacher or support staff offering continuous assistance to the student. Students at Tier 3 typically have an IEP with detailed objectives, and may follow an adapted curriculum based on their abilities. The student may spend part of the school day in a learning support room or therapy setting when necessary, while ensuring maximum possible inclusion in the mainstream classroom whenever appropriate. Example: A child with an intellectual disability may follow an alternative curriculum focusing on life skills during part of the school day with a special education teacher (Tier 3), while also joining peers in the mainstream classroom, art and music lessons, and school activities, with the support of a learning support assistant to ensure active participation. In the context of higher education, Tier 3 may require the provision of a full-time personal assistant or advanced assistive technologies to enable the student to attend lectures and engage academically. Progression to Tier 3 must be supported by a comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment report, including analysis of academic and behavioral performance, therapeutic evaluation where required, parental or student consent depending on the educational stage, and the development of a fully documented and approved IEP. In higher education, Tier 3 requirements shall be implemented in a manner consistent with the adult student's autonomy as an adult and the range of services available, without requiring approvals or procedures that are inconsistent with the nature of the university stage.

Fourth: Inclusive Teaching and Learning Teachers and faculty members are expected to employ inclusive (education) pedagogical approaches.	
Differentiated Instruction	Teachers shall adapt their instructional methods and learning materials to accommodate diverse learning styles and varying levels of student ability. This may include simplifying instructions, providing enrichment activities, using visual schedules, and other supportive strategies. Differentiated instruction must be a planned component of lesson design, rather than an improvised response. In higher education, faculty members are expected to offer a degree of flexibility in how students complete assignments. For example, a student with dysgraphia may be permitted to deliver an oral presentation instead of submitting a written essay, where the learning objective is to assess understanding rather than handwriting ability.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Curriculum design should be guided by the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensuring that learning materials are accessible to all from the outset. For example, videos should include captions that benefit students with hearing impairments as well as others, and multiple means of engagement should be provided, such as discussions or practical activities. Schools are also expected to provide or develop learning resources that are accessible to all students and to share best practices among teaching staff.
Assistive Technology (AT)	Educational institutions shall provide, or permit the use of, assistive technologies that support students with SEND. Examples include communication boards or speech-generating devices for non-verbal students, screen-reading software for visually impaired students, and specialized educational programs for learning difficulties. The policy stipulates that the absence of assistive technology must not constitute a barrier to learning. Where a student requires a specific device or software, the school or university— in collaboration with the parent— shall make reasonable efforts to provide it or allow its use if supplied by the student, as part of the necessary support arrangements.
Curriculum Modification	Where a student faces challenges in accessing parts of the curriculum despite accommodations, curriculum modifications may be implemented. This may include adapting learning outcomes to align with the student's needs or using supportive and supplementary curriculum frameworks. However, such modifications must be individualized and designed in consultation with parents and the student. There is no separate standardized curriculum for students with “special

	educational needs.” It is preferable that adapted programs retain some shared learning outcomes with the mainstream curriculum—for example, a mathematics objective aligned with a core concept taught to the class, but adjusted to match the student’s level.
Curriculum Adaptation	Accommodation, within the context of inclusive education, refers to adjustments made to the learning environment, methods of instruction, or assessment approaches, with the aim of enabling students with SEND to fully access the prescribed curriculum without altering its academic content or expected standards. Accommodations do not involve any simplification or substantive modification of objectives or content; rather, they focus on removing barriers related to modes of delivery and response, thereby ensuring equitable access and fairness for all students.
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	Many students with SEND may experience behavioral or emotional challenges. Accordingly, schools and universities shall implement proactive, positive behavior support systems rather than relying on punitive approaches. The use of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is recommended to understand the underlying causes of behavior, alongside the development of Individual Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) where necessary. Seclusion or physical restraint shall not be used except in extreme emergency situations that pose an immediate threat to safety, and even then, must strictly adhere to established guidelines. Staff should also be trained in de-escalation strategies within the classroom environment and in implementing preventive measures that reduce frustration and behavioral incidents, such as providing appropriate breaks tailored to the student’s needs and diagnosis, while considering the level of severity that may impact performance and achievement.

Fifth: Support Services and Personnel The inclusive education system relies on a range of diverse support services.	
Specialist Staff:	Educational institutions should employ, or ensure access to, specialists such as special education teachers, psychologists, counsellors, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, behavior specialists, and others, based on the nature and needs of their students. While it may not be feasible for every school to have all specializations on-site, there must be a clear service delivery model outlining the number of specialists employed within the school or those supporting through specialized centers, including defined caseload expectations for each specialist, or arrangements where a group of schools shares a specialist. Higher education institutions are also required to provide support services for students with SEND, such as disability support units and counselling services, in addition to arrangements with specialists to deliver therapeutic support when needed.
Learning Support Assistants (LSAs)	They are also referred to as teaching assistants or (shadow teachers), and they are a key component in supporting students with high needs within the classroom. Schools must provide such support when necessary, particularly where a student requires one-to-one assistance to ensure access to learning, whether for safety reasons, personal care, or to support the student's performance and development. It is preferable that the school recruits and trains the support assistant; however, if provided by the parent, the school remains responsible for verifying the assistant's competence and ensuring their effective integration within the classroom environment. Educational policies also encourage reducing full reliance on individual assistants by strengthening the capacity of teachers and peers to include the student, while emphasizing that such support must be provided when needed and not withheld, leaving the student to face challenges without assistance. A clear plan should also be established for the gradual withdrawal of support and reducing dependence on one-to-one assistance over time.
Resource Rooms and Support Spaces:	Schools and nurseries should provide a resource room or learning support room—a dedicated space equipped with additional learning materials, used to deliver individual instruction or small-group teaching for students for a limited period of the day, within the framework of Tier 2 or Tier 3 support. This room should be a welcoming and non-stigmatizing environment, and may also be used for enrichment or support for a wide range of students, helping to normalize its use across both individualized and enrichment programs. In higher education, this

	concept may take the form of a support center or assistive technology lab, where students receive remedial instruction or academic support in an appropriately equipped environment.
Therapy Facilities:	Schools, nurseries, and centers may need to provide specialized therapeutic facilities, such as sensory therapy rooms or specialized equipment for physiotherapy. School buildings, whether newly constructed or renovated, must comply with Universal Design standards, including wheelchair ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, and design considerations that accommodate students' needs, while ensuring compliance with the UAE Code for Accessible Environments approved by the Cabinet, and supporting efforts to achieve an inclusive and fully accessible learning environment for all.
Collaboration with External Services	No single educational institution can independently provide all required services. Therefore, schools and universities must establish partnerships and referral networks with external entities, including formal memoranda of understanding with local clinics or specialized centers to provide additional therapeutic or diagnostic services for students when needed. Universities may also collaborate with community organizations and centers to offer vocational training opportunities or fieldwork placements for students with SEND. Sharjah's inclusive education policy particularly supports an integrated, holistic service delivery model, whereby coordination between the education, health, and social services sectors ensures the provision of comprehensive, joined-up support for the student.

Sixth: Transition and Progression in the Educational Pathway	
From Early Intervention to School	When a child transitions from an early intervention program or nursery to kindergarten or Grade 1, a clear transition plan must be developed. This includes holding meetings between the early childhood team and the school inclusion team, exchanging reports on the child's progress and effective strategies, and gradually introducing the child to the school environment through school visits, the use of social stories, and other preparatory tools. Families must also be supported during this stage to ensure continuity of services.
Through Educational Stages and Transitioning from Special Education Institutions	Transitions between different levels within a school, or between schools or special education centers, may present challenges due to changes in teachers and learning environments. Schools shall establish clear transition procedures and regulations, along with early orientation meetings. The school that the student is leaving should also transfer all relevant records and information to the receiving school (subject to parental consent). Students may be further prepared for changes in routine through additional visits or peer support program (Buddy System) to facilitate adaptation.
From School to Higher Education or Employment	For students with SEND in secondary education, post-school planning is essential. This process should ideally begin in Grades 9 or 10, where the school, in collaboration with the student and their parents, explores post-graduation options, whether higher education, vocational training, continuing education, employment, or (a combination thereof). The IEP at secondary level should include goals related to independent living skills, career exploration, and identifying necessary accommodations in university or workplace settings. If higher education is the chosen pathway, the student should be connected with disability support offices during the application process to ensure that required accommodations are arranged from the outset. If the student is transitioning to the labor market, the school may collaborate with vocational rehabilitation institutions or local companies to provide internship opportunities or real-world work experience.
Within Higher Education and Employment	Higher education institutions must support students with SEND during their transition into university life through orientation programs that take their needs into account, as well as during their transition into the labor market. University career guidance services should collaborate with employers to promote inclusive employment practices and may facilitate

	employment opportunities or vocational training placements for graduates with special educational needs.
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Seventh: Curriculum, Assessment, and Certification The inclusive system may require some flexibility in teaching and assessment methods; however, it must also ensure that certificates and qualifications retain genuine value and clear meaning.	
Curriculum Access:	The general principle is that students with SEND should follow the same prescribed curriculum, with the provision of necessary accommodations. Where certain parts of the curriculum remain inaccessible even with accommodations, partial participation is encouraged, whereby the student engages with the content and the curriculum is modified in line with the student's abilities and as reflected in the IEP.
Assessment Accommodations	All educational institutions must provide appropriate assessment accommodations to ensure that students are able to demonstrate their knowledge fairly. These accommodations include extended time in examinations, rest breaks, alternative formats (oral instead of written responses, use of a reader or scribe, assistive devices such as spell-check tools), a quiet testing environment, and other relevant adjustments. Such accommodations must be documented within the IEP or the accommodation plan, in accordance with the policies issued by the SPEA and other relevant competent authorities.
Alternative Assessments	In cases where a student follows an adapted curriculum, alternative assessment methods may be used, such as projects, portfolios, or practical tasks, to measure progress against individual learning objectives. These assessments must be accurate and aligned with the student's abilities and IEP, even if they are not identical to mainstream classroom standards.
Certification and Graduation	This aspect represents a highly important component, particularly in relation to how certificates are awarded to students benefiting from accommodations or modifications: Students receiving accommodations only (without modification of learning outcomes): These students are assessed according to the same standards as their peers, with only the necessary accommodations in place. They are therefore eligible to receive standard certificates or diplomas, without any differentiation or indication in the final document. Students following adapted curricula:

	Where a student's educational program differs significantly from standard graduation requirements (for example, focusing on life skills rather than advanced academic subjects), the student is awarded an alternative completion certificate, such as an "Inclusive Education Certificate," in accordance with the regulations set by the SPEA and other competent authorities. This certificate reflects the skills attained by the student within their IEP. It may be subject to equivalency procedures in line with the regulations and frameworks established by the relevant authorities. Such certification must not be considered merely an attendance record, but rather a true reflection of the student's achieved learning outcomes. The decision to transition to this pathway must be made in partnership with parents and only after ensuring that all possible accommodations have been exhausted. These provisions for alternative certification apply to school education only and do not extend to higher education. In higher education: - All students who meet the requirements of an academic degree, even with accommodations, are awarded the same qualification without discrimination. University programs are generally not modified in terms of core requirements; however, alternatives may be provided, such as substituting certain courses, reducing semester load, or extending study duration. If a student is unable to complete a degree, higher education institutions shall provide recommendations for suitable academic or vocational pathways aligned with the student's abilities, such as (continuing education program, technical institutes, or accredited vocational program) within the emirate, in accordance with approved higher education regulations.
Exam and Certification Policies	The SPEA, in collaboration with the relevant competent authorities, shall develop specific guidelines to operationalize the above. Examination bodies and certification authorities shall be directed to adapt their procedures to ensure they are inclusive, and clear mechanisms shall be established for granting exemptions or substituting parts of the curriculum in rare cases. Importantly, any assessment accommodation must balance fairness to the student with the credibility of the qualification—that is, maintaining academic standards while allowing flexibility in methods of assessment.

Special Education Centers

Role of Special Education Centers:

The Emirate of Sharjah recognizes the vital role played by special education centers in providing rehabilitation and training for persons with disabilities within an integrated support system. These centers offer specialized educational, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services that may be difficult for mainstream educational institutions to provide independently. However, in line with international best practice, these centers are not viewed as parallel or segregated pathways, but rather as partners and enablers of the inclusive education approach. The policy emphasizes that enrolment in a specialized center must be based on specific needs that cannot be met within a public nursery, school, or college, even with the provision of additional services and support, and such enrolment should preferably be temporary or part-time.

1- Referral to Centers:

Referrals to specialized centers shall be carried out in accordance with the procedures and regulatory frameworks approved by the competent authorities in the Emirate, and in coordination among them within each entity's mandate. A student shall not be referred to, or enrolled in, a specialized center without careful review and the approval of a multidisciplinary team consisting of (SPEA, SCHS, SCLD, and SSSD). This typically applies in cases of severe or multiple disabilities requiring intensive medical or therapeutic interventions throughout the day (such as a child requiring intensive one-to-one therapy and medical supervision that cannot be provided in a public school). Even in such cases, the arrangement should be reviewed periodically to explore opportunities for reintegration. A partial inclusion model may also be applied, allowing the student to attend selected academic and social activities on specified days or times in coordination between the educational institution and the specialized center.

Final referral to centers such as Dar Wahat Al-Rushd is subject to approval by the relevant legal and social competent authorities, and not solely educational authorities.

Where the referral is educational in nature, the committee shall be responsible for it. However, where the referral has a legal or social dimension, responsibility shall lie with the SSSD as the competent authority, particularly in relation to referrals to Wahat Al-Rushd.

2- Center Operating Standards:

Specialized centers in the Emirate of Sharjah are required to comply with the same quality and qualification standards applied in schools. This includes employing qualified special educators and therapists, adopting an educational framework (even if individualized), and tracking student progress through objectives similar to IEPs. Centers are also required to develop a transition plan for each student —whether towards reintegration into inclusive schools or towards social and vocational inclusion for older students. They must also comply with reporting requirements and provide data to the SPEA and relevant authorities, in support of the comprehensive inclusive education monitoring system.

3- **Collaboration with Schools:**

Inclusive schools are expected to establish effective partnerships with specialized centers. These partnerships may include knowledge exchange (such as training school staff in specialized intervention techniques by center staff, and vice versa), joint activities (such as inclusive sports or arts events), and collaborative transition planning when a student is ready to move from a center to a school. No student may be transferred to a different setting without adequate preparation. Similarly, if a student in an inclusive school experiences significant difficulties, consultation or temporary placement in a specialized center may be arranged instead of requiring the family to withdraw and seek another school independently.

4- **Parental Choice:**

The policy respects the right of parents, particularly those with children with severe disabilities, to make informed decisions, while ensuring that sufficient information is provided to them. Although the policy supports the principle of inclusion, it acknowledges that some families may initially prefer a specialized setting. The education authority will ensure that parents receive appropriate guidance on the benefits of inclusive education and the services available in public schools, so that their decision is informed and not based on misconceptions regarding the inability of public schools to support their child. The relationship between inclusive schools and specialized centers is expected to be complementary and collaborative, serving the best interests of the child and meeting their needs in the least restrictive environment.

5- Higher Education and Adult Services:

For young people facing challenges in accessing higher education, vocational training centers and adult day program are available in Sharjah. This policy aims to reduce the number of students leaving school without clear pathways, through coordination between specialized centers and higher education institutions, and the development of joint transition program. These may include life skills program delivered in centers in collaboration with universities, or continuing education program for students with intellectual disabilities developed through voluntary partnerships, in line with the capacities of higher education institutions and their approved academic and accreditation frameworks. These initiatives reflect Sharjah's commitment to inclusive education beyond the school level and the exploration of flexible models that ensure continuity of learning.

Mandatory Partnerships

To enhance the utilization of specialized expertise, the SPEA and the SCHESR will encourage the establishment of partnership agreements between higher education institutions and external specialized authorities.

- Educational institutions are advised to establish at least one formal partnership with a specialized center or clinic to provide referral services, training, or the implementation of joint program. This ensures that schools have direct access to specialized support.
- Educational institutions are encouraged to collaborate with a higher education institution or vocational training college to support capacity building. For example, in programs in inclusive education, the preparation of special education teachers, or the training of learning support staff. Universities may provide trainees or deliver training workshops to schools, while schools offer practical training opportunities for university students, thereby contributing to prepare the future educators with practical inclusive education skills.
- Higher education institutions should also establish partnerships with special education centers or disability advocacy organizations to strengthen their research and support services, or benefit from the expertise of rehabilitation institutes to enhance accessibility to laboratories, improve practical training, and conduct research on inclusive education within higher education institutions.
- The SPEA will maintain a list of approved or recognized partners and organize networking events to connect institutions with one another. Nurseries and schools will be required to include a summary of the activities and outcomes of these partnerships in their annual reports, to ensure their effectiveness and not being limited by formal arrangements.

Family and Community Engagement

First: Role of the Family

Families (parents or guardians) are key partners in achieving successful inclusion for students with SEND. Educational institutions must actively engage and empower families at all stages:

- **Communication and Engagement:**

Schools and centers should ensure regular, respectful, and transparent communication with parents regarding their children's progress, challenges, and achievements. Parents must be invited to attend all meetings related to their child's individual support plans (such as IEP/IFSP meetings or progress reviews), and their views should be given due consideration. In early childhood, home visits or family training may be offered to support learning and development at home, in coordination with relevant authorities.

- **Parents Education and Training:**

Educational institutions should provide workshops or awareness materials for parents on relevant topics (such as supporting learning at home, behavior strategies, use of assistive technology, transition planning, and rights and responsibilities under the policy). This aims to strengthen families' capacity to support their children and advocate for their rights.

- **Family Support Networks:**

Nurseries and schools are encouraged to facilitate the formation of support groups or networks among families of students with SEND. Sharing experiences among parents, under the guidance of a counsellor or inclusion coordinator, can provide both emotional and informational support. Families should also be connected with civil society organizations and relevant associations to access community support beyond the school, including respite care services or counselling.

- **Family Rights:**

The policy affirms the right of families to raise concerns or submit complaints if they feel that their child's needs are not being adequately met. Each educational institution must establish a clear mechanism for resolving disputes related to inclusion. If they disagree with a support decision or feel discriminated against, parents should be able to escalate complaints progressively (first to the school administration, and then to the SPEA if the issue remains unresolved). Any form of retaliation against the student or their family for exercising their right to complain is strictly prohibited; rather, constructive feedback should be viewed as an opportunity to improve service quality.

Second: Community Engagement

Building an inclusive education system is a collective societal effort that extends beyond nurseries, schools, and universities. Key components of this partnership include:

- **Awareness and Advocacy:**

The Emirate of Sharjah will continue to implement awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and reduce stigma associated with disability, in collaboration with entities such as SCHS and the SCLD. Nurseries, schools, and universities are expected to participate by hosting events linked to international observances (such as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Autism Awareness Month, etc.). Success stories of inclusive education should also be highlighted in local media to showcase the achievements and contributions of students with SEND within their communities. This policy seeks to foster a society that views individuals with special educational needs as active contributors rather than as subjects of pity or exclusion.

- **Collaboration with Community Organizations:**

Educational institutions should collaborate with civil society organizations, sports clubs, and cultural and arts centers to provide inclusive activities. For example, a local sports club may open its programs to students with SEND through adapted sports, or tailor activities to meet their needs. Similarly, museums and science centers can adapt exhibitions to accommodate diverse student needs, ensuring inclusive participation in school trips. The education authority may also establish a coalition of community partners committed to inclusion, to facilitate and strengthen such collaborations.

- **Volunteering and Community Service:**

Promoting a culture of inclusion by encouraging students without disabilities to support their peers with SEND through structured volunteer programs. These initiatives may include “Peer Support Programs” (for academic or social support), or encouraging school and university students to volunteer in special education centers or inclusive camps. Likewise, students with SEND themselves should be engaged in community service activities, reflecting their capacity to contribute. Such reciprocal engagement fosters mutual respect and helps break down stereotypes.

- **Role of Families and the Community in Governance:**

The policy encourages the representation of students with SEND and their families in advisory bodies. The SPEA will include parent representatives, and potentially young people with diverse special educational needs, in its inclusion-related advisory committees. At the school level, parents may participate in school improvement or inclusion committees to ensure that the community’s voice informs decision-making. This aligns with the principle of “Nothing about us without us,” rooted in community

initiatives led by SCHS in collaboration with international partners to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities.

- **Third: Collaboration Between Stakeholders:**

- **Community engagement** also includes coordination among various public and private authorities (health, social services, employment, and transport) to support inclusive education. This includes:
 - **Health sector:** Collaborates with schools to provide medical and psychological support.
 - **Social services and charitable supporting organizations in the country:** Provide financial assistance where needed and family counselling, particularly for low-income families.
 - **Transport authorities:** Ensure the availability of accessible school transportation (such as buses equipped with lifts and trained attendants).
 - **Economic sector and employers:** Collaborate with secondary schools and universities to provide vocational training opportunities and future employment pathways, as part of their social responsibility and staff development initiatives.

Reporting, Evaluation, and Monitoring

To ensure the effective implementation of this Inclusive Education Policy, continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established, supported by transparent reporting requirements. These will consider the differences in oversight and evaluation tools between school education and higher education, in alignment with the respective accreditation and quality assurance systems for each stage.

Monitoring and Follow-up of Policy Implementation

The SPEA is responsible for overseeing the extent to which educational institutions comply with the policy, through the following:

- **Annual Inclusive Education Audit and Review:**

Each educational institution will undergo a dedicated review or audit focused on inclusive education (either as part of the regular inspection cycle or through a specialized process). During this audit, trained evaluators will review documentation (such as the inclusive education policy, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) plans, and staff training records), observe classroom practices, conduct interviews with staff, students, and parents, assess the physical environment. A standardized framework, aligned with the requirements of this policy, will be used to evaluate performance across key indicators (such as accessibility, teaching practices, student outcomes, etc.). The findings will be presented in a report that includes examples of good practice and recommendations for improvement.

- **Evaluation of the Inclusive Education Quality in Educational Institutions:**

In mainstream education schools (Kindergarten to Grade 12), the performance of inclusive education shall be considered a core component of the overall school evaluation (a school cannot be classified as “outstanding” where its performance in inclusion is weak, as inclusion is an integral part of educational quality). In higher education institutions, inclusive education shall be embedded within accreditation standards and quality assurance reviews. Likewise, evaluations of early childhood centers shall take inclusive education standards into account. This integrated approach ensures accountability, reinforcing that excellence in inclusive education forms an essential part of overall institutional excellence.

- **Data Collection:**

As outlined in the Leadership and Accountability section, data shall be collected on the enrolment and achievement of students with SEND. Institutions may also be required to utilize additional tools such as:

- **Parent and Student Surveys:**

The SPEA may conduct annual surveys of the parents of students with SEND (and of the students themselves, where appropriate based on age), to assess their level of satisfaction with the support provided and to identify any systemic challenges (such as delays in service provision, gaps in information, incidents of bullying, etc.).

- **Outcomes Tracking:**

In addition to academic outcomes, further indicators shall be monitored, including attendance rates of students with SEND, their progression between grade levels, graduation rates, and post-school pathways (such as transition to higher education or entry into the labor market). This tracking supports the evaluation of whether inclusive education is delivering meaningful and sustained outcomes over time.

- **National Database:**

A centralized database shall enable relevant authorities and educational institutions to track the movement of students with SEND (ensuring that student records are transferred when a student moves between institutions), as well as to monitor cases of school dropout. It shall also support dropout prevention—where a student with SEND withdraws from an educational institution, the database shall record the reasons for withdrawal and the actions taken to reintegrate the student into an alternative educational program or appropriate service. Regular analysis of this data shall inform policy refinement and continuous improvement.

Evaluation of Policy Effectiveness

At the macro level, the Emirate of Sharjah shall conduct periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of this Inclusive Education Policy:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):**

The SPEA shall define key performance indicators aligned with the objectives of the policy, including the proportion of students with SEND, reflecting actual prevalence rates; the percentage of schools meeting the minimum required inclusion standards; levels of parent satisfaction; and improvements in inspection ratings related to inclusive education standards. Qualitative indicators shall also be considered, including the effectiveness of complaint resolution mechanisms related to inclusive education, as well as improvements of school culture and climate towards inclusive education practices.

- **Medium- and Long-Term Reviews:**

The first review shall be conducted after one year, followed by regular reviews every two years. This evaluation process shall include the collection of feedback from stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and community organizations), as well as comparing the data before and after policy implementation. Where certain aspects are found not to be achieving the intended outcomes, adjustments may be proposed—such as revising class systems, clarifying defined roles, or redefining terminology. The Emirate of Sharjah is committed to an evidence-based approach—adopting what works and revising what does not deliver the intended impact.

- **Reporting and Transparency:**

The SPEA, in collaboration with the relevant competent authority, shall publish **an annual Inclusive Education Report**. This report shall summaries progress under this policy framework and shall include data such as:

- **The number of students with SEND in the Emirate of Sharjah and their distribution across schools and educational stages.**
- **A summary of inclusive education outcomes, including the number of schools across performance levels, key strengths, and areas for improvement.**
- **Notable inclusive education initiatives or success stories within educational institutions.**
- **Training programs and resources developed during the year.**
- **Proposed objectives for the following year and any policy amendments.**

The report shall be made available to government leadership and the public, reinforcing transparency and highlighting how Sharjah's efforts align with national goals and international obligations.

- **External Reviews:**

In addition to internal monitoring, Sharjah may commission external evaluations by international experts in inclusive education to assess progress against global standards. These reviews provide independent credibility and equitable in recommendations, free from local bias.

- **Monitoring and Follow- up Outcomes:**

Without prejudice to applicable legal and regulatory frameworks, and without affecting accreditation or sanction systems applicable to higher education institutions:

- **Compliant institutions, or those demonstrating strong progress**, shall be recognized and awarded.
- **Partially compliant institutions** shall receive support (including guidance and additional training resources) and be closely monitored to ensure improvement.
- **Institutions found in breach of key provisions** (such as refusal of admission, imposition of unauthorized fees, or failure to provide agreed support) shall be subject to accountability measures, which may include penalties imposed by the SPEA.
- **System-wide level:** Where monitoring identifies systemic patterns (such as shortages of specialists in a particular field or widespread challenges in supporting a specific disability group), the SPEA shall intervene strategically by establishing task forces to develop resources and provide targeted support.

Management of Educational Resources of Inclusive Education:

Successful inclusion requires the availability of adequate resources—human, financial, technological, and infrastructural. This section outlines how the Emirate of Sharjah will ensure alignment between resources, funding, and the objectives of inclusive education, and defines policies related to the financing of additional support.

First: Human Resources and Capacity Building:

- **Requirements for Employment:** All educational institutions shall allocate sufficient staffing capacity to support inclusive education, in line with the nature of the educational stage, the size of the institution, and its academic programs. In higher education institutions in particular, appropriate specialist staffing must be ensured. The minimum expectations include:
- **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Teacher / Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO):** Each school shall have at least one qualified SEN teacher/coordinator. In very small schools, one coordinator may be shared across a group of schools, subject to the approval of the SPEA. Early childhood centers shall

also have at least one staff member trained in special education or early intervention. Universities and colleges are required to provide specialized staff to support students with SEND.

- **Learning Support Teachers or Specialists Team:** This team should be proportionate to the size of the school, and include one specialist teacher for every (20–30) students with SEND, as will be further detailed in implementation guidelines. These specialists shall work collaboratively with classroom teachers to deliver co-education, or targeted individualized support outside the classroom where necessary.
- **Adequate Number of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs):** A sufficient number of learning support assistants shall be available to provide individualized support for students who require it. The ratio of students with SEND within the mainstream classroom shall generally range between (3–6) students, depending on the individual needs of each student, while ensuring that no student requiring a dedicated support assistant is denied this support due to budgetary constraints. Schools shall plan and allocate their annual budgets to ensure the recruitment of an appropriate number of assistants.
- **Access to External Specialists:** Where such specialists are not available within the institution's staff, appropriate arrangements shall be made (as outlined in the support systems framework) to engage external professionals such as therapists, psychologists, and other specialists. Some of these services may be provided through government authorities or through contracted private sector service providers.
- **Faculty in Higher Education Institutions:** Colleges and universities must ensure that academic staff are familiar with inclusive education practices. This includes the presence of academic development leaders or learning designers specialized in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and accommodation strategies to support faculty members. Academic advisors and counsellors should also be trained to guide students with disabilities in course selection and in planning their academic and career pathways.

Accordingly, there is no internationally agreed- upon specified number for the teaching caseload of specialized teachers in inclusive education settings. However, the factors influencing caseload in inclusive school settings shall depend on:

- **Severity and type of disability:** The more severe or complex the disability, the higher the level of support required, which reduces the number of students a teacher can effectively support.

- **Service delivery model: Self-contained classrooms:** Typically include a small number of students (4–10 students) due to higher levels of their educational and behavioral needs. Alternatively, services may be provided in **Resource rooms / pull-out services**, where the teacher works with small groups of students outside the mainstream classroom to provide specific and focused interventions. **Or support (In-class inclusion / push-in support)** is delivered within mainstream classrooms, allowing for a larger number of students but with less intensive individual intervention for each student. Or services may be provided by **Itinerant Teachers**, who move between multiple schools or classrooms and often support a larger caseload (approximately 12–22 students).
- **Age/grade level of students:** Younger students often require more intensive support in foundational and daily living skills, which affects caseload capacity. Working across different age groups also requires greater adaptability to varying academic content and developmental needs.
- **Professional responsibilities related to other job duties:** These include data collection and analysis, consultation with public teachers, participation in professional development program, and attendance at IEP meetings.
- **Travel time:** For itinerant specialists, travel between multiple sites is a significant factor that affects the time available for direct service delivery.

Compliance with these standards shall be monitored. The SPEA may issue additional or more detailed ratios and requirements as needed. As enrolment of students with SEND increases, staffing levels shall expand accordingly in line with demand. The basic principle is that funding for inclusive education must grow in proportion to need, rather than limiting admission due to resource constraints.

- **Training and Professional Development:**
A mandatory core training program on inclusive education shall be implemented, covering disability awareness, instructional adaptation and modification strategies, IEPs development and implementation, and behavior management approaches. This training is expected to be integrated into professional licensing requirements for teachers, and pre-service teacher induction program shall include a dedicated component on inclusive education.

Specialized training program and certification pathways shall be promoted for Inclusive Education Coordinators (SENCOs), special education teachers, and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). For example, SENCOs may be required to obtain a recognized certificate or

diploma in inclusive education or special education. The SPEA may also collaborate with universities to provide such programs locally.

Regular workshops and refresher training courses shall be delivered in collaboration with specialized institutions and subject-matter experts. These may cover targeted instructional strategies (such as teaching students with autism spectrum disorder or dyslexia interventions), the use of assistive technologies, and the effective management of inclusive classrooms.

It is equally important that training extends beyond teaching staff to include non-teaching personnel, such as bus drivers, reception staff, laboratory technicians, etc. ensuring they are aware of how to interact positively and supportively with students with SEND. The SPEA shall provide a digital resource library (online portal) containing tools, guidance materials, and e-learning modules on inclusive practices, accessible to all education professionals across the Emirate of Sharjah.

Second: Financial Resources and Funding Models:

Inclusive Education as Part of Core Funding:

- It is expected that schools and educational institutions treat the resources required to implement core inclusive education practices as an integral part of their baseline operational budgets, rather than as optional additional expenditures. This means that general tuition fees or the funding allocated to the school must cover the “core inclusive services” provided to students with SEND. These core services include: Having an inclusion coordinator / Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), differentiated instructional approaches within the classroom, the development of IEPs, collaboration with parents, basic in-class accommodations, and the provision of limited out-of-class support or psychological counselling sessions—that is, services that fall within the scope of the school’s educational mandate. Such services must not be subject to any additional charges imposed on parents. Whereas the fee and funding provisions outlined in this section apply to school education, they do not extend to higher education institutions, which are subject to independent fee and funding systems.
- **Additional Support and Fees:** Where a student requires services that go beyond the scope of core inclusive provision—such as a full-time dedicated learning support teacher (formerly referred to as a shadow teacher), intensive specialized therapy sessions during the school day, or advanced assistive technologies—additional funding considerations may arise, and this policy sets out clear conditions under which schools or centers may charge additional fees to parents for inclusive education services, including:

- 1- Schools must obtain prior approval from the SPEA (or the relevant regulatory authority) before requesting any additional fees for supporting a student with SEND. The school must clearly justify what additional services are required, why they fall beyond core provision, and the associated cost?
- 2- Any approved additional fees must be transparently documented in an “Individual Service Agreement” with parents, separate from standard tuition fees. This agreement must include a precise description of the service (e.g., “dedicated learning support assistant for 30 hours/week” or “specialized therapy sessions delivered a specified number of times per week”), the duration of the service, a detailed cost breakdown, and quality assurance mechanisms, as well as it must also specify the service provider (whether school staff or an external specialist).
- 3- Additional fees must be strictly non-profit in nature—meaning the school may only recover the actual cost of the additional service and must not use it as a revenue source. The SPEA shall review proposed fees to ensure they are reasonable (for example, by verifying the qualifications and salary of a dedicated assistant to prevent overpricing).
- 4- A maximum shall apply to the amount that may be requested from parents. If the required level of support entails extensive resources to the extent that costs become prohibitive, the school must coordinate with the SPEA to identify alternative solutions (such as government support, sponsorship from charitable organizations, or, in rare cases, placement in a more specialized institution). A student must not be denied essential support solely due to a parent’s inability to pay; rather, the institution must work with relevant entities to identify an appropriate solution.
- 5- Private schools may charge approved additional fees; however, they are encouraged to establish scholarship program or financial assistance schemes to support families who are unable to cover such costs.

- **Physical and Technological Resources**

Material and Technological Resources:

- **Infrastructure:** All new educational facilities in the Emirate of Sharjah must be designed in compliance with the standards set out in the UAE Accessibility Code (UAE Accessibility Code – ABA), which serves as the nationally endorsed reference for ensuring a safe, accessible built environment for all individuals, along with other relevant regulations related to the rights of persons with disabilities, including equipping buildings with ramps, lifts, tactile guidance pathways for students with visual impairments, and accessible restrooms and changing facilities. Existing buildings must undergo gradual retrofitting in accordance with a clear, time plan. Each educational institution shall develop a comprehensive accessibility plan outlining the necessary

modifications (such as installing lifts or acoustic panels for noise reduction) and the timeline for implementation. The owner shall fund these modifications as part of its capital improvement allocations. Where financial constraints arise, institutions may seek support or adopt phased solutions; however, essential accessibility requirements (such as entrance ramps and accessible restrooms) are non-negotiable.

- **Digital Accessibility and Assistive Technology in Inclusive Education:** The inclusive education policy of the Emirate of Sharjah is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, can access digital learning resources unimpeded, in line with the **National Digital Accessibility Policy** issued by the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (2024). The SPEA seeks to enhance the integration of assistive technology in inclusive education in collaboration with relevant authorities by supporting the provision of assistive devices through lending systems, such as a centralized library of adaptive tools, promoting inclusive digital program, and offering group licensing for software such as text-to-speech readers at the emirate level. Educational institutions must also ensure that their digital systems, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), comply with digital accessibility standards, so that they support tools such as screen readers. Educational institutions technology plans should integrate inclusive tools such as interactive boards that support multi-sensory learning and communication applications for non-verbal students. Compliance with these standards shall be essential to ensuring an inclusive digital learning environment that promotes digital equity, and enables all students to participate actively and independently in the learning process, in line with Sharjah's vision of a sustainable and equitable education system.
- **Adapted Learning Materials:** Schools must allocate dedicated budget items for the provision of learning materials tailored to the needs of students SEND, such as Braille or large-print books for students with visual impairments, as well as interactive tools and supportive instructional resources suited to diverse learning styles. The SPEA will also play a coordinating role in this area by working with relevant authorities to develop and provide simplified or alternative versions of official curricula, ensuring consistency in the quality of content delivered to all students.

Sustainability of Resources:

This policy emphasizes that inclusive education is not a temporary initiative, but a long-term commitment that requires sustained funding and ongoing readiness. Accordingly:

- **Inclusive education budgets must be stable and protected**, and should be incorporated annually as part of the institution's core operational expenditures. Reducing spending on support services or cutting specialized staff for financial reasons constitutes a direct violation of the rights of students with SEND.

- **Investment in inclusive education yields long-term efficiencies.** Resources allocated today for training, adapting the school environment, and strengthening the capacity of educational staff contribute to reducing future challenges and costly interventions. Therefore, future evaluation mechanisms will consider the impact of these investments through indicators such as a reduction in referrals to high-cost specialized institutions as public schools become more responsive to students' needs.

The policy seeks to embed a corporate culture that views inclusive education not as an additional financial burden, but as a fundamental component of high-quality education. In practical terms, this means that inclusive education must be systematically and consistently integrated into **school improvement plans, annual budgets, and human and material resource allocation strategies.**

Service Terms:

Term	Definition
Accommodation	Changes in how a student accesses learning or is assessed, without altering the intended learning outcomes or curriculum requirements. Accommodations shall include supports or adjustments such as (extended time in examinations, the use of assistive technologies, sign language interpreters, or wheelchair-accessible ramps), to enable the student to access the standard curriculum in the same way as their peers. Students receiving accommodations are expected to meet the same academic standards.
Modification	Changes to what a student is expected to learn. Curriculum modifications involve altering learning objectives or the standards required for success and are used for students with SEND. For example, by providing a simplified curriculum or alternative goals. As a result of these changes to learning outcomes, the student may follow a different curriculum or receive a certificate of completion that differs from the standard qualification (see the certificates section below).
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	A written plan developed for a student in kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) with special educational needs. It outlines the student's current abilities, educational goals, required accommodations or modifications, and the support services to be provided. The plan shall be developed collaboratively by the school support team and the parents (with the student's involvement where appropriate), and shall be reviewed regularly to monitor progress. In early childhood, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) may be used instead to plan early intervention services in partnership with families. In higher education, an

	Accommodation Plan or a similar document shall be used in place of an IEP to define the accommodations and support provided to the student.
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):	A principle that requires educating the student in a setting that is as close as possible to the public education environment, alongside peers without disabilities, to the greatest extent that is appropriate. More restrictive settings (such as special classes or specialized centers) should only be used when the student's needs cannot be adequately met within the mainstream classroom, even after appropriate supports have been provided. This principle affirms that the mainstream education environment is the first and preferred option, and that individualized services or specialized placements should be used only when necessary, with clear plans in place to gradually increase inclusion.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL):	An educational approach that focuses on designing curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment practices from the outset to be accessible to all students, regardless of their abilities. UDL is based on providing multiple means of engagement, expression, and representation of content, thereby reducing the need for later modifications. Although UDL is not a mandatory requirement, this policy strongly encourages its implementation to ensure that learning experiences are inclusive and accessible to all.
Reasonable Accommodations:	As defined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), means necessary and appropriate modification or adjustments that not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the educational context, this term refers to changes or supports provided to a student to remove barriers within the learning environment (such as providing assistive devices, adjusting seating arrangements, or modifying assessment policies). All educational institutions are required to provide reasonable accommodations, unless doing so would result in a fundamental alteration of the program or place an undue burden on the institution. In such cases, alternative solutions should be sought in consultation with the relevant educational authority.

المراجع والملاحق



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Annexes: Annex I – Job Title

Job Title	Role Description	Typical Qualifications/Equivalencies in the United Arab Emirates
Special Educational Needs Teacher (SEN Teacher)	A qualified teacher specialized in educating children with learning difficulties and a range of disabilities. The role involves adapting teaching methods, developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and working directly with students across a variety of educational settings.	Bachelor's degree in Special Education or - Bachelor's degree in Education with a qualification in Special Education - Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or a Master's degree in Special Education/Inclusive Education (often required or preferred) - A recognized teaching license issued by the relevant educational authority in the state - A specified number of training hours or a micro-credential in the field of special educational needs.
Inclusive Education / Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO/SENDSCO)	A qualified teacher responsible for implementing the day-to-day school's Special Educational Needs policy and for coordinating the support provided to students with SEND. The role involves liaising with school staff, parents, and external authorities.	Postgraduate qualification (e.g. Master's degree or PGDE) in Special Education or Inclusive Education - Extensive teaching experience, including in the field of special education - SENCO certification from a recognized authority.
Special Educational Needs Teaching Assistant / Learning Support Assistant (SEN TA/LSA)	Provides direct support to students with SEND under the supervision of teachers and/or the SENCO. Assists with learning tasks, personal care (where required), social and emotional development, and behavior management.	-Minimum of a high school diploma - A degree or certification in Special Education, Educational Assistance, or in a related field is preferred.

Educational Psychologist (EP)	Assesses children's learning, social, and emotional difficulties. Provides advice and interventions to schools, families, and relevant authorities. May contribute to formal assessments for education, health, and care plans.	-A Bachelor's degree in Psychology (usually for UAE nationals only, and at an assistant level) - Advanced degree (Master's/PhD) in Educational Psychology, School Psychology, or Clinical Child Psychology - A professional license from the relevant health/social authority in the state.
Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)	Assesses and treats speech, language, communication, and swallowing disorders. Works with individuals and groups, and provides support and guidance to teaching staff and families to help students access the curriculum.	A Bachelor's degree in Speech and Language Therapy or Communication Sciences - Master's degree in Speech and Language Therapy is often required or preferred - professional license from the relevant health authority in the state.
Occupational Therapist (OT)	Assists students with physical, sensory, or cognitive challenges in participating in school activities. Focuses on developing fine and gross motor skills, sensory processing, and daily living skills (such as writing, using tools, and self-care).	Bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy - Master's degree in Occupational Therapy is often required or preferred - professional license from the relevant health authority in the state.

Annexes: Annex II – Services for Students with Special Educational Needs (/SEN/SEND)

High-Quality Services	Minimum Services	Special Educational Needs
Assistive technology (e.g., speech-to-text software). Therapeutic programs or after-school tutoring. Alternative formats (e.g., audiobooks, large print materials). Parent training or workshops. Access to a learning support center or access to support services. - Speech and language therapy (if related to language-based learning difficulties). - Psychological services for cognitive or educational assessments. - Behavior support plans, where necessary.	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - A tailored plan outlining learning goals, accommodations, and support services. - Developed collaboratively between specialist teachers, parents, and professionals. Academic accommodations - Extra time for tests and assignments. - Preferential seating. - Simplified or broken-down instructions. Classroom support - In-class support from a special education teacher or teaching assistant. - Modified teaching strategies (e.g., visual aids, multi-sensory instruction). Assessment modifications - Alternative ways to demonstrate learning (e.g., oral responses instead of written tests) - Reduced number of test items or modified test content. Progress monitoring - Regular assessments to track academic development. - Instructional adjustments based on data. Collaborative planning and team meetings - Scheduled meetings with parents and support staff to review progress and adjust the IEP. Inclusive learning environment: - Placement in mainstream classrooms in the (LRE) with support whenever possible.	Specific Learning Disorder A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes including understanding or using language, whether spoken or written, which manifests in difficulties of listening, thinking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations. This includes perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, and dyslexia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily a result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, or as a result of environmental, cultural, or

		economic constraints. The intellectual abilities of this group, as measured by intelligence tests, are within the normal range or above.
- Psychological support in school for emotional adjustments. - Family counselling and support groups. - Involvement of a case manager or social worker. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy sessions - On-site therapeutic sessions or sessions coordinated with the school. - Supporting the development of gross and fine motor skills Transport services (if applicable) - Accessible school transportation with wheelchair access, seatbelts, or supervision as required.	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - A plan specifically designed to meet the student's medical and educational needs. - Includes goals, necessary accommodations, and care protocols (e.g., medication schedules). Accessible school environment - Barrier-free access (e.g., ramps, elevators, and accessible toilets). - Adaptation of classrooms and activity areas to ensure mobility and safety. - Appropriate seating arrangements for wheelchairs or mobility devices. Academic accommodations - Reducing academic burden and extra time for completing assignments or exams. - Assistance with note-taking or provision of digital materials. - Using assistive technology (e.g., adaptive keyboards and speech recognition software). Health-related support services - Access to a school nurse or trained staff for medication administration, seizure protocols, etc. - Emergency response planning and staff training on students' specific physical conditions. - Collaboration with specialists as needed. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy support - Training teachers on positioning, mobility, and safety during school routines. Inclusive participation in school life - Equal access to extracurricular activities, field trips, and school events. - Adapted physical education activities or alternatives aligned with the student's abilities	Physical Disability A chronic neurological, muscular, or orthopedic disability that limits an individual's ability to use their body in a typical way, thereby affecting daily activities. As a result, participation in regular educational settings may be impacted. This type of disability may be caused by congenital malformations present from birth, chronic medical conditions, injuries, fractures, or amputations. Physical disabilities may affect one or more of the following skills: -Functional skills: Reduced ability to perform daily

	Trained staff support • Training teachers and assistants on how to support the student's specific physical or medical needs. • Support from a special education coordinator or inclusive education team. Regular review and monitoring • Ongoing assessment of physical and academic progress. • Regular updates to the IEP based on changes in condition or performance.	functional tasks or work independently. -Motor skills: Inability to perform or complete motor tasks. Academic performance: The physical disability affects the student's educational performance, resulting in achievement levels lower than their peers.
• Access to low vision clinics for assessments and devices recommendations. • Training family to support learning at home. • Emotional and social support (e.g., peer counselling).	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) • A customized plan that meets the needs of students with visual impairments, including learning objectives and accommodations. Accessible learning materials • Braille copies of textbooks and worksheets for students proficient in Braille. • Large-print or high-contrast printed materials to meet the needs of students with visual impairments. • Digital materials compatible with screen readers or electronic magnifiers to enable independent access to educational content. Assistive technology • Screen-reading software such as JAWS and NVDA. • Screen magnification tools. • Braille note-taking devices or refreshable electronic Braille displays. • Audiobooks or text-to-speech tools. Orientation and mobility training • Instruction to help students navigate safely and independently within the school and community. • Training may include cane use, route planning, and environmental awareness. Specialized instruction and support	Visual Impairment A significant loss of vision ranging from total blindness to partial vision loss that cannot be corrected through surgery or the use of glasses or contact lenses. Visual impairment can be classified as follows: • Total blindness: Complete loss of vision, with visual acuity reduced to less than 20 degrees even with corrective lenses. Individuals in this category cannot benefit from educational

	- Access to a specialist teacher for students with visual impairments to provide academic adaptations and appropriate learning strategies. - Collaborating with public education teachers to adapt educational content delivery methods to meet the needs of students with visual impairments. Accessible school environment - Safe, barrier-free physical layout, e.g., tactile floor markings (handrails). - Classrooms and facilities clearly labeled, with Braille signage where possible. - Consistent classroom organization to support spatial orientation. Modified assessments - Providing tests in accessible formats such as Braille, audio, or large print. - Granting additional time or allowing to oral responses, depending on the student's needs. - Using scribes (writing assistants) or assistive devices during assessments, to ensure equitable performance and expression of knowledge Training for educational staff - Teaching, communication, and inclusive education strategies for students with visual impairments. - Training in assistive technology and environmental adaptations. Inclusive participation - Supporting equitable participation in sports, arts, clubs, and school events. - Adapting to physical education and extracurricular activities. Monitoring and regular updates - Periodic reviews of academic progress and ongoing updates to the IEP based on visual assessments and educational performance.	programs designed for typically developing students, and both legal and educational definitions apply. Partial blindness: Visual acuity, at the best, reaches 6/60 or less in the better eye. Low vision: A partial loss of vision in the better eye that cannot be corrected by visual aids, contact lenses, medication, or surgical intervention. The degree of low vision varies from one person to another.
Training families in sign language or communication strategies to enhance effective communication between the child and their family	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - A detailed plan specifically designed to meet the student's communication needs and academic objectives. - Developed collaboratively with the student (where appropriate), parents, teachers, audiologists, and hearing specialists.	Hearing Impairment A partial or total loss of the hearing sense that affects an individual's ability

both inside and outside home. • Providing early intervention services for young children upon entering school to ensure their auditory, linguistic, and social readiness. • Collaborating with speech-language pathologists outside the school or cochlear implant centers, to ensure continuity of support and integration between educational and therapeutic services.	Access to communication support • Providing sign language interpretation during lessons and school events. • Speech-to-text services or real-time captioning. • Use of alternative communication methods such as Cued Speech, lip-reading, or other strategies based on the student's individual needs. Assistive technology • Hearing devices and assistive listening systems such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, or FM/DM systems integrated with classroom audio systems. • Sound field systems in the classroom to enhance audio clarity for all students. • Videos and digital materials with captioning to support visual access to auditory content. • Visual alerts for school bells, fire alarms, and other auditory notifications. Support from a teacher of the deaf, audiologist, or speech and language therapist • Specialized instruction in listening skills, speech development, and language acquisition tailored to the needs of students with hearing impairments. • Providing consultations and cooperation with public education teachers to modify teaching methods in a way that considers the needs of students and enhances their active participation in the classroom. Accessible classroom environment • Assign preferred seating arrangements that allow students to clearly see the teacher and better hear instructions (e.g., front seating or away from sources of noise). • Use supporting visual aids (such as images, charts, and presentations), with clear, structured instructions that are repeated as needed to ensure understanding and comprehension. • Reduce ambient and background noise within the classroom, and work – whenever possible – to acoustically prepare the rooms (such as using soundproofing materials) to provide a suitable classroom environment that supports attention and auditory perception.	to use hearing for communication or learning in a public educational environment. This condition includes hearing loss, and individuals affected require specialized services to support the development of language, speech, and oral communication. Hearing impairment may be conductive, sensorineural, or mixed. Hearing impairment includes the following: Deafness: A dysfunction of the auditory nervous system whereby the auditory mechanism is not effectively used, limiting the use of spoken communication, and individuals rely on alternative methods of communication such as (sign language). Hearing thresholds typically exceed 90 decibels
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	Modified assessments - Adapting tests to align with language comprehension or visual presentation needs without compromising learning objectives. - Providing additional time or alternative test formats (such as oral, digital, or visual-based tests). - Supporting the student during tests through sign language interpreters or captioning services, as required. Social and emotional support - Peer support groups to enhance social inclusion and promote positive identity among deaf and hard-of-hearing students. - Counselling services to support social integration and the development of self-expression and self-advocacy skills. - Awareness programs to promote understanding of hearing impairment among peers and school staff, fostering an inclusive and supportive school environment. Training of educational staff - Ongoing professional development for teachers and school staff on hearing impairment awareness, inclusive strategies, and effective communication methods with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. - Training on the use of assistive listening technologies (such as FM/DM systems) and effective collaboration with sign language interpreters in the classroom. Inclusive participation in school life - Full access to extracurricular activities and school trips, with appropriate communication support as needed. - Inclusive physical education and arts programs with necessary adaptations. Ongoing progress monitoring - Regular review of the IEP, including assessment of auditory access and the student's academic and social progress. - Continuous collaboration with audiologists or hearing support services to ensure an appropriate learning environment and the provision of necessary accommodations.	(profound hearing loss). Hearing Impairment: A permanent or fluctuating hearing loss that affects communication, with the individual relying on hearing devices, as a source of hearing and requires a hearing aid. Hearing loss ranges from 26 to 90 decibels. It may present in various forms, including (unilateral or bilateral loss, symmetrical or asymmetrical loss, and progressive, sudden, or stable hearing loss).
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Peer support systems to enhance the practice of communication skills in a natural and interactive environment. Social skills training groups supervised by a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) to support social interaction and the use of language in real-life situations. Workshops for parents on developing speech and language skills, enabling them to effectively support their children at home. Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices when needed; the school should provide or support the use of appropriate AAC tools, such as: • Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) • Picture-based communication boards. • Speech-generating devices. • Electronic communication applications on tablets.	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) • A customized individual plan outlining objective related to the development of speech, language, and communication skills, tailored to the student's needs. • This plan includes the necessary accommodations and details of service delivery, such as the type and frequency of speech and language therapy sessions, to ensure continuity of support and achievement of the specified objectives. Speech and language therapy services • Providing direct intervention by a qualified Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), based on the student's needs. • Sessions may be delivered individually or in small groups, depending on the student's level and specific needs. • Areas of intervention shall focus on: ▪ Speech: Such as articulation (producing sounds correctly), fluency (e.g., stuttering), and voice disorders. ▪ Language: Development of expressive and receptive language skills. ▪ Social/pragmatic communication skills: Supporting the student's ability to use language appropriately and effectively in social contexts. Assessment and progress monitoring • Comprehensive assessment of speech and language skills upon referral to identify the student's needs and develop an appropriate intervention plan. • Regular monitoring of progress and periodic re-evaluation to adjust goals and intervention strategies based on the student's response. • Documentation of improvement in communication, academic, and social skills as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. Classroom accommodations • Using simplified or visual instructions to facilitate understanding of content and directions. • Providing additional time for oral responses, in line with the student's language and communication abilities. • Using visual schedules or graphic organizers to support expressive and receptive understanding.	Communication Disorders Communication disorders involve impairments in language, speech, and communication. Speech is the expressive production of sounds and includes articulation, fluency, voice, and resonance quality. Language includes the form, function, and use of a conventional system of symbols (e.g., spoken words, sign language, written words, and pictures) subject to specific rules for the purpose of communication. Communication includes any verbal or nonverbal behavior (whether intentional or unintentional) that influences the behavior, thoughts, or attitudes of another person. The diagnostic category of communication disorders includes: Language disorder, speech and sound
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	- Providing alternative means of participation such as signs, writing, or using AAC tools to enable effective expression and participation. Collaboration between the Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and classroom teachers: - Adapting teaching strategies to meet the student's language and communication needs. - Providing in-class interventions to support communication skills within the daily educational context. - Reinforcing therapy goals within academic activities to ensure generalization of acquired skills. Family involvement and training - Involving parents in setting the goals of the IEP and reviewing progress achieved. - Providing practical guidance to parents on how to support their child's communication development at home. Inclusive participation in school activities - Supporting student participation in classroom discussions, presentations, group activities, and school events, with the necessary accommodations provided. - Encouraging interaction with peers through structured and guided opportunities that promote communication and collaboration. Training for educational staff - Identifying communication challenges and indicators within the classroom. - Supporting the achievement of speech and language goals within the educational environment. - Effective use of AAC tools when needed.	disorder, childhood-onset fluency disorder (stuttering), social communication disorder, and other specified and unspecified communication disorders that emerge during or after the developmental period.
Providing psychological counselling or support for emotional regulation, within a comprehensive support plan that promotes the student's mental well-being and behavioral adjustment. Providing opportunities to participate in clubs	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - A specially designed plan that addresses the student's needs in communication, social, academic, and behavioral domains. - The plan is developed collaboratively with parents, special education teachers, therapists, and other professionals involved with the student. Specialized Education - Using structured teaching approaches such as the TEACCH model, aligned with the student's needs.	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) A neurodevelopmental disorder in children resulting from dysfunction in the nervous system, characterized by deviations and delays in the

based on individual interests or autism-friendly extracurricular activities, to enhance social engagement and a sense of belonging. Collaborating with external therapy centers, where available, to ensure integration of services provided to the student inside and outside the school.	- Supporting understanding and predictability through visual aids such as visual schedules, social stories, and visual cues. - Adapting the curriculum based on the student's strengths, interests, and current level of performance. Behavioral support - Developing and implementing a BIP, where necessary, to promote positive behavior and reduce behavioral challenges. - Using positive reinforcement strategies and structured routines to encourage appropriate behavior within the classroom and school environment. - Conducting an FBA to identify triggers and develop effective support strategies based on the results. Speech and language therapy - Supporting expressive and receptive communication skills to enhance the student's ability to interact inside and outside the classroom. - Providing social communication skills sessions to support the use of language in social situations. - Using AAC tools when verbal communication is limited, to enable the student to express their needs and emotions Occupational therapy and sensory support - Providing OT services to improve fine motor skills, daily living skills, and sensory integration. - Students shall have access to appropriate sensory support tools, such as fidget tools, weighted vests or cushions, and noise-reducing headphones, to support self-regulation and attention within the classroom environment. - Providing a quiet or sensory space within the school, used as needed, as part of the behavioral or sensory support plan, to enable the student to regulate emotions and promote positive responses to educational and social situations within a safe and supportive environment Social skills training and implementation of structured programs to teach social communication skills, including: - Turn-taking, eye contact, and conversation skills.	development of core functions related to social and communication skills, including attention, sensory perception, and motor development. The ASD typically appears within the first three years of a child's life and is defined by two main features: - Deficits in communication (verbal and non-verbal) and social interaction. - Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities.
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	- Understanding emotions and interpreting social cues. - Cooperative play and group work. Inclusion in public education with appropriate support - Ensuring placement in the LRE in line with the student's individual needs. - Providing in-class support from a special education teacher or teaching assistant to enhance participation and academic understanding. - Using a peer-support (buddy systems) to promote social inclusion and interaction with peers. Training for educational staff - Awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). - Behavior management strategies. - Communication approaches and sensory regulation strategies Transition support and life skills - Focus on developing independence, functional academic skills, and vocational training, particularly in upper grades. - Provision of structured support during transitions between activities, classes, or educational stages Family involvement and communication - Regular meetings and ongoing updates with families within a multidisciplinary team framework. - Using continuous home-school communication systems such as daily logs and electronic applications. - Providing training opportunities for parents, such as understanding behaviors and supporting daily routines at home.	
Enrollment in individual counselling programs or daily monitoring systems (Check-in/Check-out) to support behavioral and emotional stability and enhance ongoing communication with a	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Behavior Support Plan A formal plan developed based on a comprehensive assessment, including: Specific behavioral objectives. Individualized academic accommodations. Strategies to develop emotional and social skills. The plan shall be developed with the participation of teachers, counselors, behavior	Psycho/Emotional Disorders This category falls under mental health disorders and includes various terms such as (emotional disorders, behavioral disorders, or mental

designated member of the school team. • Peer support groups to promote positive social relationships and develop interaction skills within a safe environment. • Referral to clinical psychologists or external behavioral therapy centers when more specialized support is required, in coordination with the family and relevant authorities. • Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, including: - Development of self-awareness and self-management skills. - Enhancement of relationship-building and positive interaction skills. - Making responsible decisions in daily situations. - Involvement of students in group sessions or structured activities within the framework of social and emotional learning.	specialists, and parents, within a multidisciplinary team. Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) • The purpose (function) of the student's challenging behavior. • The triggers and consequences that contribute to the continuation of the behavior. • The results shall be used as a basis for developing an effective, data-driven BIP. Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) shall include: • Strategies for reinforcing positive behavior. • Preventive procedures for crises and severe emotional outbursts. • Specific interventions and appropriate reinforcement systems. • Clear procedures for managing challenging behaviors, ensuring the student's safety and dignity within a safe and supportive learning environment. Access to school counselling and psychological support services • School counsellor to support emotional regulation, social skills development, and conflict resolution. • School psychologist or social worker to provide more in-depth support when needed. • Providing crisis intervention services when necessary to ensure an immediate and supportive response. Classroom accommodations to support emotional and mental well-being • Adjusting seating arrangements, such as providing a quiet space or separate desk when needed. • Providing breaks or sensory tools to support emotional regulation during the school day. • Modifying workload or extending time limits when the student's emotional state affects performance. • Using behavior tracking charts or positive reinforcement systems to encourage constructive behavior and support progress. Specialized Education	illness). It refers to a complex emotional condition accompanied by distinct physiological and bodily responses, in which emotional reactions are inappropriate, either excessive or insufficient. These conditions are characterized by one or more of the following features over a prolonged period and to a significant degree, negatively affecting academic performance and daily functioning: - Inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health-related factors. - Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or adults. - Inappropriate types of behavior or emotions under normal circumstances.
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	• Delivering education in public or private education settings, depending on the student's individual needs. • Individual or small-group support in social skills, behavior, or academic areas. • Implementing trauma-informed teaching practices that promote positive teacher-student relationships. Safe and supportive learning environment • Clear daily routines and behavioral expectations to help the student anticipate and feel secure. • Staff trained in de-escalation strategies to manage emotional or behavioral challenges in a respectful and effective manner. • Provision of a quiet space or “calming/reset room” that students can use when needed to regulate emotions and return to learning intently. Collaboration with parents/caregivers • Regular and effective communication between school and home to support behavioral and academic stability. • Family involvement in behavior planning and progress monitoring as part of an integrated individualized plan. • Providing guidance or training to families on how to support the student's behavioral and emotional needs at home. Training of educational staff • Positive Behavior Support (PBS). • Trauma-Informed Care. • Managing impulsive and emotional behaviors in a respectful and non-confrontational manner. • Building trust-based relationships with students with emotional and behavioral challenges.	- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. - A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or educational problems. This term shall include conditions such as schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder, severe phobic reactions, major depression, anxiety disorders, trauma- and stress-related disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and neurocognitive disorders, etc. Due to the wide variety and complexity of these disorders, reference can be made to the fifth edition of the DSM-5 for each disorder and its diagnostic criteria.
- Providing psychological support or behavioral counselling sessions to enhance	Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Developing an individualized learning plan in collaboration between the family, teachers, and	Intellectual Disability Including three categories based on

students' mental health and social adjustment. - Developing a comprehensive transition plan to support the student's movement from school to community life or the labor market, focusing on independence and vocational skills. - Implementing peer mentoring or buddy programs to enhance social support and positive interaction among students. - Collaborating with relevant external entities, such as vocational training institutions or organizations involved in the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, to ensure the integration of services provided to students. *Speech and Language Sessions - Supporting receptive and expressive language communication skills through specialized therapy sessions. - Using visual supports or AAC tools to enhance the student's ability to express and understand, especially in cases of verbal communication challenges.	specialists, based on a comprehensive assessment of the student's needs. The plan shall include: • Measurable academic and functional objectives. • Modifications in teaching methods, assessment approaches, and the classroom environment. • Development of behavioral skills and daily living skills. • Transition planning (for older students) to ensure early preparation for new educational or life stages. Curriculum modification and differentiated instruction • Adapting educational content to match the student's current level of performance. • Focusing on functional academic skills, life skills, and effective communication. • Using multi-sensory teaching strategies, including hands-on activities, visual supports, and interactive tasks. • Simplifying language and providing clear, sequential instructions to enhance understanding and comprehension. Teaching in small groups or individually • Providing specialized support by a special education teacher, either in small groups or through individual sessions, to meet the student's specific educational and behavioral needs. • Using repetition, structured routines, and continuous reinforcement to support concept acquisition and strengthen positive behaviors. • Providing additional support from teaching assistants or learning support staff to provide individualized assistance within the classroom environment. Classroom accommodations and environmental adjustments • Using visual schedules and behavior charts to help the student understand daily expectations and support self-regulation. • Providing quiet areas or low-stimulation environments for rest or sensory and emotional regulation. • Extending time for tasks and assessments as needed.	defined intellectual abilities and age: 1. Intellectual Disability: Intellectual abilities shall be determined based on standardized intelligence tests. 2. Global Developmental Delay (GDD): For children aged 5 years and below; not specified by a particular level of intellectual ability. 3. Unspecified Intellectual Disability: For individuals above 5 years of age; not specified by a particular level of intellectual ability. Intellectual abilities shall be determined through standardized intelligence tests. Intellectual disability is defined as a disorder that begins during the developmental period and is characterized by deficits in both intellectual functioning and
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*Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) - OT shall be provided to support the development of fine motor skills, student independence in self-care activities, and sensory processing regulation. - Physical therapy shall be provided in cases of physical disabilities or gross motor challenges to support safe movement and mobility inside the school environment.	• Using assistive technology (such as tablets or adaptive tools) when necessary to facilitate learning and communication. Training in functional and adaptive skills • Developing daily living skills such as hygiene, cooking, and safety. • Enhancing social and communication skills required for effective interaction. • Training in money management, time awareness, and self-care. • Inclusion of older students in vocational training or community-based learning programs to prepare them for post-school independence. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) inclusion • Participating in mainstream education classrooms and school activities, and providing appropriate support to ensure access and engagement. • Promoting peer interaction during recess, lunch, and inclusive extracurricular activities. • Adapting physical education and arts programs according to the student's individual abilities and needs. Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring • Conducting regular assessment of academic, behavioral, and functional progress using reliable, data-based tools. • Review and adjustment of the IEP as needed, based on assessment results and classroom observations. Family involvement • Active participation of the family in planning, reviewing progress, and making educational decisions for the student. • Providing training and guidance opportunities for parents to support the student's learning and independence at home by trained staff. Educational staff training: • Differentiated education strategies to meet diverse student needs within the classroom. • Positive and constructive communication and behavior management approaches.	adaptive functioning across conceptual, social, and practical domains. The following three criteria must be met: (Deficits in intellectual functioning, deficits in adaptive functioning, and onset of these deficits during the developmental period).
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	Concepts of inclusion and disability awareness to promote a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.	
*Dual enrollment in secondary school and university courses to enable high-achieving students to accelerate their academic progress. *Establishing partnerships with universities or industry experts to provide advanced, future-oriented learning experiences. *Providing academic and career guidance aligned with the student's abilities and personal interests to support early planning for university or career pathways. *Providing parent support groups and specialized workshops in gifted education to strengthen the family's role in developing and nurturing their children's abilities. *Social and emotional support through counselling sessions focusing on: Managing perfectionism or underachievement. Peer relationships and differences in emotional	Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) or Individual Enrichment Plan - A tailored educational plan outlining the student's strengths, learning goals, and appropriate enrichment pathways. - Developed collaboratively by teachers, parents, and the student (where appropriate) to ensure alignment with their abilities and interests. Differentiated instruction within the classroom - Using tiered tasks that vary in levels of complexity. - Providing activities that focus on higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. - Independent or student-led projects to foster initiative and self-directed learning. - Flexibility in learning pace and acceleration of content as needed to match the student's level. Curriculum enrichment and extension - Providing opportunities to explore topics beyond the core curriculum, fostering curiosity and critical thinking. - Integrating creative thinking, innovation, and problem-solving skills into learning activities. - Linking theoretical knowledge with real-world applications through integrated interdisciplinary projects. Accelerating curriculum acceleration appropriate - Enabling the student to advance in one or more subjects (such as mathematics or science) in line with their cognitive level. - Participating in more advanced coursework or higher grade-level classes. - Early access to advanced classes or assessments based on performance and readiness. Pull-out programs or specialized programs - Partial and temporary withdrawal from the mainstream classroom to participate in targeted enrichment activities.	Gifted and Talented They are students who demonstrate exceptional ability or high levels of competence in one or more areas of creativity or academic achievement. These students demonstrate performance that is significantly advanced compared to their peers of the same age group. They may show particular talents and abilities in areas such as poetry, visual arts, sports, drama, etc.

and cognitive development. Developing self-advocacy skills and psychological resilience. Providing safe spaces for dialogue about feelings of difference or isolation.	• Workshops, research groups, or academic and artistic competitions (such as STEM, debates, arts). • Access to gifted education specialists or academic mentors to support individual development. Opportunities for creativity and leadership • Participating in school leadership programs or student councils to foster initiative. • Integrating areas such as arts, drama, public speaking, and entrepreneurship into enrichment activities. • Providing platforms to showcase talents and innovations (such as exhibitions, performances, science fairs). Inclusive participation in competitions and events • Encouraging and supporting students to participate in academic competitions, Olympiads, and artistic contests. • Assist with application processes and training. Teachers professional development shall include: • Methods of identifying gifted students (including those with disabilities and twice-exceptional learners). • Differentiated instruction strategies for high-ability learners. • Managing classroom interaction with gifted students in positive and motivating ways. Ongoing monitoring and program review • Regular review of the student's development and participation in educational and enrichment activities. • Updating the Advanced Learning Plan based on progress achieved or emerging interests to ensure continuous development and challenge.	
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Note: Special education categories do not include cases of academic underachievement unrelated to a disability, or those resulting from social deprivation, economic conditions, or where Arabic is not the student's first language. However, support may be provided to such students based on the recommendations of the school support team and the special education team, where necessary.