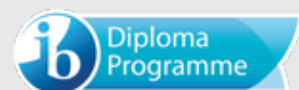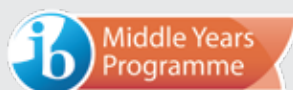# International School of Curaçao

# Guide to Student Services at ISC

**Revised April 2023**

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# Glossary

**Accommodations:** offer alternative ways for students to acquire information or share what they have learned with you. Accommodations do not lower the difficulty level nor expectations for the student's achievement, although there may be changes in teaching materials used, testing materials, or even in the instructional environment. Examples are allowing a child to take a test in a quiet room with limited distractions or allowing extra time to complete tests, reading aloud directions in a test, allowing use of a calculator or number facts chart during a test, using recorded audio books, changing seating in the classroom to minimize distractions or to allow a student to be more accessible to the teacher, using organizational tools (e.g. assistive software) or providing a helper for organization or behavior.*

**Modifications:** are more intensive changes to the difficulty level, the content and/or the quantity of material to be learned. Modifications also may, in fact, change the way material is presented and the nature of testing. Modifications create a different standard for children whose disabilities require more intense adjustments.   Examples include reducing the number of words to be studied for a spelling test, simplifying or reducing the number of questions answered in assignments or during tests, simplifying vocabulary, using lower grade level textbooks, or providing other instructional material at a lower grade level.*

*EAL/LR departments provide a list of modification and accommodation strategies to all teachers.

**Monitored Students:** refers to students who have a diagnosed learning disability/disorder, an emotional or behavioral concern, or other special need, but are not currently enrolled in a student support program. Teachers are aware of their diagnosis and recommendations for accommodations or modifications. In EAL it refers to students who exited the program. For EAL the monitored status lasts for a period of 24 months.

**Special Needs:** the special educational requirements of those with learning difficulties, emotional or behavioral concerns, or physical disabilities

# 1.0  INTRODUCTION

## What are Student Services?

Student Services at ISC offer support for the physical, behavioral and academic success of all our students. The purpose of Student Services is to provide quality support, services and instruction to all students in order to prepare them for their future. These services include:

- Learning Center: Learning Resource, EAL, Reading Program
- Health Center
- School Counselor
- Media Center

## What is the purpose of this Guide?

The purpose of this guide is to provide additional information to parents of students who require the above services, whether this requirement is identified through the admissions process or while the student is already enrolled in the school. It provides important information on the role of parents in the support service process. It outlines the resources and support available through the above services, as well as the referral process, role of the Student Support Team and the Student Support Plan.

## What is the policy of the ISC with respect to students with special needs?

Students with mild physical or academic needs can be accepted as long as it is determined that the school can positively serve their special needs and counseling support for students with mild emotional/social needs. The International School of Curacao is not equipped to handle students with severe academic or physical handicaps. If a student requires additional support – including but not limited to external assessments, occupational therapy, speech & language therapy, or tutors – services are at the parents' expense.

# 2.0  STUDENT SERVICES

## Learning Center: Learning Resource Program (LR)

### What is the Learning Resource Program and what are its objectives?

The Learning Resource Program is a program designed to support classroom teachers and their students. Generally, learning resource teachers at ISC provide services to students who have mild difficulties in learning and adjustment (Reading Disorders such as dyslexia, ADHD, autistic spectrum disorders, others). The learning resource teacher provides collaborative consultation, assists with pre-referral intervention, and works closely with teachers and the Student Support Team to plan for, organize and access support services for students with special needs.

### What services are provided in the Learning Resource Program?

After students are referred to the Learning Resource Program, the Learning Resource teacher develops a Student Support Plan in cooperation with the student's teachers. The student will receive instruction in small groups to work intensively in the areas identified. Learning Resource Services include (but are not limited to):
- Direct corrective, or skill-building instruction for the student
- Accommodations to how information is presented and to how a student is assessed
- Adapted, modified or supplementary curriculum and materials
- Alternate instructional and/or evaluation strategies
- Learning strategies

### What can I expect if my child is referred to the Learning Resource Program?

Students are pulled out of the classroom, in consultation with the teachers, to attend Learning Resource classes. The learning resource teacher may also work with students in their classrooms (plug-ins). Students in the Learning Resource program shall be regularly evaluated using multiple measures (Quarterly Reports, Standardized tests, writing samples, observations by the teacher, and coordination and collaboration with regular classroom teachers). Students enrolled in LR receive quarterly progress reports.

**What can I do to support my child?**

- Read to your child or have him/her read to you daily
- Practice basic math skills by using flashcards or playing card or dice games
- Make sure your child has a quiet place where he can sit at a table to do his/her homework
- Set aside time after school or in the evening to have your child complete his/her homework and/or practice skills
- Make it a habit to ask your child to see his/her agenda and, if possible, assist your child in completing his/her work
- If your child needs help with organization, create a check-list with his/her input to prioritize and act as a reminder of things to do
- Communicate with class teachers and the Learning Resource teacher about your child's progress

# Learning Center: Reading Program

## What is the Reading Program and what are its objectives?

The Reading Program is designed to improve the reading performance of students and to foster a love of reading. Students are not required to have an SSP or be in the Learning Resource Program to receive reading services. Another component of the reading program is to be a resource for the staff, parents, and students. This is accomplished by sharing information such as reading strategies and materials. The Reading Program also aims to bolster students' self confidence by providing successful reading experiences that encourage growth and enjoyment.

## What services are provided by the Reading Program?

The Reading Specialist works in small groups with students who have reading difficulties or who have a diagnosed reading disorder and need additional support. In Elementary school students receive support in the areas of phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. In Middle School, the Reading Specialist may work with students on a needs basis either in a plug in or pull out setting, depending on the situation. The Reading Specialist collaborates with teachers of core classes to stay abreast of the to better serve the students. The Reading Specialist is also a resource for faculty and parents.

**What can I expect if my child is referred to the Reading Program?**

The first step in this process is to identify and assess students who are experiencing reading difficulties. A reading plan is developed based on the outcomes of the initial evaluation. Reading plans are monitored and revised according to student achievement. If a student is in the Learning Resource Program because of reading difficulties, the reading plan becomes part of the SSP. Students work with the Reading Specialist weekly and progress is assessed by observation, timed fluency tests, comprehension questions, sight word drills, phonemic awareness activities, etc. A quarterly progress report is sent home and parents are welcomed to meet with the Reading Specialist to review their child's progress throughout the year.

**What can I do to support my child?**

Beginning Readers (Suggestions from *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists,* 4th ed.)

- To develop sequencing skills play "Before and After". For example: "Do you put your shoes on before or after your socks? Do you get a bowl before or after you pour your cereal?" Have your child ask you before and after questions also.
- Encourage your child to "read" signs for favorite fast-food restaurants, stop signs, stores, labels of items in stores, etc. This helps them develop the idea that print is all around and it serves a purpose.
- Help your child focus on sounds that begin or end a word. Ask "What other word starts like Sam?" Give two words; one that starts with the sound and one that does not. Have your child pick. Later have your child suggest a word that begins or ends with the same sound without providing choices.
- Use a book character as the theme for a birthday party or other appropriate celebration.
- Discuss the difference between real and make believe. Can animals talk like people? Are there really magic stones? Cartoons provide a wonderful opportunity for this conversation also.
- Encourage response to stories by providing different kinds of art materials and ideas for creating after-reading artwork.

Older Readers
- Use movies to develop literary concepts such as plot, setting, characters, and theme. After watching a movie ask your child about their favorite and/ or least favorite character and have them tell why they like or dislike the character. This builds vocabulary and the habit of supporting their opinions with evidence. Be careful not to use this too often or it might turn movie viewing into an unpleasant experience.
- Play family word games such as Scrabble or Boggle (Boggle Jr. for younger ones).
- Encourage your child to communicate via email with relatives who live far away.

- Allow your child to assist in planning the family vacation. Maybe he or she can research fun things to do in the place you are going to visit, or research an interesting fact about the city or country.

The following suggestions were taken from *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists,* 4th ed.

- Encourage and respond to children's interests by helping them pick out books on special topics; for example, pets, bugs, building things, cooking, etc.
- Use a book to begin a conversation about a difficult life topic like bullying, divorce, the death of a relative, etc.

## Learning Center: English as an Additional Language (EAL formerly ESL) Program

**What is the EAL Program and what are its objectives?**

The English as an Additional Language Program (EAL) is targeted language instruction that focuses on both the social and academic aspects of the English language. The program plays a vital role in the instructional program of the school and its goal is to ensure that students whose mother tongue is not English become fluent and functional enough for them to be able to succeed in the mainstream classrooms. The purpose of this program is to enable students to acquire communicative competence in English, and to sharpen their academic language skills which they will need in order to succeed in an English-speaking school.

**Which students are enrolled in the EAL Program?**

The placement of students in the EAL Program is determined by their proficiency level in English as well as other entering criteria. The following students must enroll in the EAL Program:

- Student whose native language is not English
- Students studying in English for the first time
- Students who have not attended a school with English language of instruction for 5 consecutive years

Students who are not served directly through the EAL Program are still eligible for support services and monitoring status. This means that monitored students can still receive modifications in instruction and assessment on a needs basis. Monitored status is from 12 to 24 months, and is assigned on a needs basis.

**What can I expect if my child is enrolled in the EAL Program?**

- EAL students receive intensive language instruction during the course of the school day. This is done by "pull-out "to the EAL classroom, or "plug-in" and in collaboration with the classroom teacher.
- Although placement is strictly individualized some general rules apply:
  - **Novice students** in their first year automatically qualify for a second year of direct services.
  - **Intermediate students** in their first year can exit the program if exiting criteria is met (Placement of first-year students into a foreign language will be decided on an individual basis depending on proficiency levels in English and recommendation of the EAL and classroom teachers).
  - EAL students in their **second year who qualify** to exit can join a foreign language class.
  - EAL students in their **second year** who do not meet exiting criteria qualify for a third year in the program.
  - EAL students in their **third year** will exit the program and be closely monitored.
- All language skills are targeted and developed by means of a rich content-based curriculum which moves students from early to advanced levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Instruction is integrated and incorporates all these skills as well as academic content in its approach to language teaching.
- EAL students shall be regularly evaluated using multiple measures (Quarterly Reports, Standardized tests, Language Proficiency Assessments, writing samples, observations by the teacher, and collaboration with classroom teachers).
- Based on these evaluations, placement decisions are made at the end of every school year (Elementary and Middle School) and end of the second semester for High school students.

EAL/Learning Resource Program:
- Students might join the program before, during and after their enrollment in EAL as long as the LR referral process has been completed.

EAL/Reading Specialist:
- First year EAL students will not be taken in the Reading Program.
- Second year EAL students at ISC can participate in the program after referral by the classroom teacher.
- Exited and monitored students qualify for Reading support after referral by the classroom teacher.

## What can I do to support my child?

- Celebrate their efforts as they learn a new language.
- Please make sure that reading is a part of your child's daily routine at home.

- Encourage your child to read in English, but more importantly, to read in your native language. It is essential that students do not lose their first language as they are developing their proficiency. A strong foundation in the first language will help students carry over their knowledge and their skills into the new language.

## School Counselor Program

### What is the School Counselor Program and what are its goals?

The ISC School Counselor Program supports ISC's mission by enhancing the learning and growth process for all students through an integration of services. The goal of the school counseling program is to help children succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. We achieve our goal by working together with teachers, parents, and outside agencies to create a positive and supportive learning environment and strengthen the connections between home, school, and the community for all students.

### What services are provided by the School Counselor?

The School Counselor will work closely with students, parents, and their families to assist in the students' well-being. The School Counselor may work individually with a student or in a group or family setting. The School Counselor will also provide preventative interventions, school-wide interventions, conflict/problem resolution, and overall support. For these services, explicit parental consent will not be obtained as it is part of the curricular offerings at ISC. Students may be advised and directed to see the counselor. Students are also able to self advocate and request to see the counselor as well.

ISC's School Counselor will work with students to:
- Provide individual and/or small-group counseling
- Provide individual/family/school crisis intervention
- Provide intervention, instruction, and mentoring for those struggling with social, emotional, and behavioral problems
- Promote wellness and resilience through reinforcement of communication, social-skills, problem solving, anger management, self-regulation, self-determination, and optimism
- Enhance understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Education on understanding self and others such that students can positively and respectfully contribute to their community (Peer relationships, healthy boundaries, cooperation, the effects of social injustices and effective social skills)
- Promoting substance abuse awareness
- Advocate for a safe school environment

The School Counselor will work with students and their families to:

- Identify and address learning and behavior problems that interfere with school success
- Evaluate eligibility for Student Support Services (within a multidisciplinary team)
- Support students' social, emotional, and behavioral health
- Teach parenting skills and enhance home–school collaboration
- Make referrals and help coordinate community support services

The School Counselor will work with teachers to:
- Design and implement progress monitoring systems
- Design and implement academic and behavioral interventions
- Create positive classroom environments
- Motivate all students to engage in learning
- Provide support to the other specialties within Student Support Services on an as need basis
- To assist with student support and evaluation

ISC's School Counselor can help when students:
- Feel afraid to go to school
- Have difficulty organizing their time efficiently
- Lack self-discipline
- Display behavioral challenges
- Worry about family matters
- Feel depressed or anxious
- Face difficult situations
- Are in need of conflict mediation

**What can I expect if my child is referred to the School Counselor?**

- If your child has been referred to the Counselor, you can expect that in most cases, the teacher will have spoken to a parent first to have addressed the concern, unless it is a small issue that arises and is addressed in the moment. The Counselor will then meet with the child to assess the severity of the concern and may meet individually or in a small group to address the concern.
- If the severity of the concern is high, parents will be informed and may be provided a referral to external services.
- Parents will be involved when counseling concerns persist.
- Respect for confidentiality of the student's interaction with the counselor will increase as the student's age increases.
- Please be advised that if there is a concern for the immediate safety or well-being of a child, the school will work in the best interest of the child, which may override the need for parental permission. Parents can expect that the plan of action will be formulated with their cooperation and collaboration in order to ensure that the goals for their child's interventions meet their expectations.

**What can I do to support my child?**

- Develop a healthy collaboration with the Counselor and your child's teacher(s) about any concerns and progress.
- Encourage open communication with your child and be supportive of the counseling.

# Health Center

The Health Center is located on the Elementary School side of campus and has a School Nurse on duty from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm each school day. Objectives for the Health Center include:

- Ensuring health, safety and comfort of students
- Providing information and guidance on health promotion/protection and disease prevention
- Providing developmentally appropriate health lessons within the elementary classrooms

The Health Center offers first aid, medications, and advice on health matters to the ISC community. Parents should fill out the Student History Health Form for each child when applying for enrollment. The School Nurse will keep these for additional information on your child's health. If parents request the nurse to dispense medication to their child while at school, they should fill out the Medication Procedure Release Form available on the website or from the School Nurse.

# Media Center (formerly known as the Library)

The Media Center is divided into three rooms: an Elementary Library, a Middle/High School Library and the ChromeBook Lab. The Media Center administrator is available to work with teachers, selects and purchases Media Center materials and ensures the efficient running of the Media Center on a day-to-day basis. There is a fully developed K3 to 5th Grade Media Center curriculum in place and all elementary students receive Media Center classes.

There are approximately 16500 items, which are fully cataloged using the Follett Destiny Media Center management system, with a WebOPAC link. In addition to print materials, there are about 7 print periodicals (EBSCO). There is a Curacao Collection; books in Dutch and Spanish; Story Collections; and resources for parents and teachers. Furthermore,

there is a collection of DVDs and audio Books. The Media Center subscribes to Questia School for Middle School Grade 7 & High School students.

In the Media Center there are 8 desktop computers, with access to printers and copy machines. In addition, the Media Center has permanent use of 5 laptop computers, 8 Ipads and an LCD projector with screen.

Uniform shirts are also sold in the library.

Media Center opening hours:   7:30 am - 12:30 pm
                              1:00 pm -  2:00 pm
                              2:15pm -   3:30 pm

On Wednesdays the Media Center will close at 2:00 pm

# 3.0 STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM AND THE REFERRAL PROCESS

## What is the Student Support Services Team (SST) and what is its goal?

When teachers have a concern about a student, they will first inform the parents about this. If the concern persists, they will refer the student to the Student Support Team. Student concerns are brought to the attention of the SST through a referral process as stipulated by the Policy for Students with Special Needs. The SST consists of the Director of Student Services, School Counselor and the appropriate Principals. Teachers or specialists may be invited to meetings to discuss specific students who were referred. The goals of the SST are to process all referrals, to monitor students who need special attention, and to ensure that they receive the help they need.

## What is the role of the SST?

All referrals for students to receive support from the Learning Center, School Counselor and/or external resources should be sent to the SST. The SST meets regularly and reviews the referrals, gathers further information about students, discusses possible interventions, meets with teachers and parents, makes recommendations, and monitors progress/outcome and makes recommendations for follow-up. The SST communicates with teachers and parents to inform them and consult with them on the preceding steps.

## When are students referred to the SST?

Teachers who have concerns about particular students will refer these students to the SST. Reasons for referral can be, but are not limited to:
- A drop in student's academic performance
- Slow acquisition of the English language
- Student not showing the expected effort
- Suspected learning disability
- Behavioral, social and/or emotional problems
- Health concerns
- Excessive absences
- Student needs to be referred for special services (e.g. speech therapist, occupational therapist, counseling, psychologist, psychiatrist, physical therapist)
- Students who are on academic probation and might be in danger of failing

## What is the referral process for a new student with a pre-existing special need?

Applications for special needs students enrolling into ISC must be accompanied by complete evaluation reports from specialists and from previous teachers in order to be considered. Once admitted to the school, the Director of Admissions and Student Services summarizes the information and recommendations from these reports and shares this information with the student's teachers, specialists, principals, and the School Counselor. Students with a need for individual support are referred to the appropriate support program. Students who have a diagnosis of a learning disability or a disorder and are not enrolled in a support program are in a "monitor status". Teachers are aware of their diagnosis and recommendations for accommodations or modifications.

## What is the referral process for an existing student who is newly identified as having a special need?

If teachers have concerns about a student's academic progress and/or behavior, they will discuss this with the parents first. If the concern persists, they will send a referral to the SST. The SST will discuss the concerns with the class teacher and gather available data on the student. This may be followed by a recommendation for the student to be enrolled into one of the support programs to receive individual support. Parents will be informed about this. A Student Support Plan (SSP) will be written, documenting the support and possible accommodations and/or modifications your child will receive at ISC. If there is no previous testing information available, the SST may also request that you take your child for a psycho-educational evaluation in order to obtain valuable information so that the school can make informed decisions about your child's academic program.

## If I suspect that my child may require special assistance, who should I talk to?

Parents should first speak to the child's teacher about their concern, as the teacher may already be aware of the student's special needs. The teacher will discuss possible interventions for the classroom and for parents to follow up with at home. If the concern persists, the class teacher will inform the parents that he/she will send a referral to the SST.

# 4.0  STUDENT SUPPORT PLANS (SSP)

## What is an SSP and what is its goal?

Learning Resource teachers will develop Student Support Plans (SSP) for students enrolled in the Learning Resource program. The purpose of the SSP is to document the support the student receives and to help LR teachers, class teachers, the Student Support Team (SST), and the student's parents communicate about this support. **Which students will receive a SSP?**
The SSPs will be used mainly for students who are receiving direct services in the LR.

**What will the SSP include?**
The SSP will include information about the student's testing and special needs, academic and functional goals, services the student is receiving, and accommodations and/or modifications used by the teachers. Note that accommodations and modifications are further defined in the glossary of this guide.

## Who is responsible for preparing and updating the SSP and who will have access to my child's SSP?

The SSP is prepared by the LR teacher in collaboration with the student's teacher(s), learning center teacher(s), and other faculty involved with the student (e.g. School Counselor, Principal). The LR teacher will send the SSP to the student's parents to review the SSP. Parents are invited to meet with the teacher to give their input. The SSPs are shared with the student's teachers after this.

## How are modifications and accommodations documented?

If a student receives special accommodations and/or modifications, this is recorded on the student's quarterly report card. For students enrolled in EAL, language modifications are indicated by placing an L on the report card. For students documented as having special needs and receiving special accommodations and/or modifications, this is indicated by placing an M next to the subject on their report card.

# 5.0  EXITING PROCEDURES

The learning center programs have exiting criteria and procedures that are specific to each program. These are available from the respective specialist teachers of these programs. In general, the following criteria are considered when making a decision to exit students: standardized test results; diagnostic skills assessments; specialist and class teacher recommendations and feedback; report card grades; samples of student work; student effort and motivation and consultation with parents. EAL students are exited based on similar criteria, including Language Proficiency Assessments, teacher recommendations and overall progress and performance in the classroom which are evaluated at the end of each school year.

When the decision has been made to exit a student, the student services specialist will inform parents. Exited students will remain in a monitored status.

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