



ST STITHIANS
COLLEGE

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POLICY: LEARNING AND TEACHING
ADDENDUM: PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Introduction

1. The St Stithians College Policy: Learning and Teaching outlines the overarching educational philosophy and practices of teaching and learning embraced by all schools under the St Stithians College banner.
2. Addenda to this Learning and Teaching Policy might include additional procedure documents related to specific areas of learning and teaching, such as assessment procedures, language procedures or academic support procedures (for example).
3. This Addendum Procedure on Academic Support aims to outline the educational practices regarding inclusive and academic support practices at St Stithians College.

Definitions

4. 'Student Support' refers to the services provided which address the social, emotional, developmental and academic needs of students at the College. 'Academic/ Learning Support' refers to student support services which involved in supporting learning and teaching, and meeting the educational needs of students. 'Social-emotional support' refers to counselling, psychological services and pastoral care services which address the social and emotional needs of students. This is guided by the St Stithians College campus policies on Psychological Services and Pastoral Care.
5. 'Inclusion/ inclusive education', according the Education White Paper 6 (2011) and the Department of Education's Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes (2005), refers to the educational philosophy of embracing and welcoming students along a spectrum of learning needs into age-appropriate, mainstream classes. These students are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.
6. 'Barriers to Learning', according the Education White Paper 6 and internationally accepted literature, is a broad term which refers to factors which hamper or negatively influence a student's learning and teaching. This term encompasses a broader systemic view of factors affecting learning and teaching and thus includes factors within the child as an individual, within his/ her family, and social factors, and difficulties that arise within the education system which prevent both the system and individual from succeeding in learning and teaching.
7. 'Categories of Support' refers to the six categories of support which are outlined in the College's Learning and Teaching Policy. These serve as practical indicators of the support needs of students and services offered by the College along a spectrum of learning needs which range from Category 1 (full participation, with extension) to Category 6 (participation not possible).
8. 'Academic Support Director' refers to the staff member who co-ordinates the Academic/ Learning Support programme within each St Stithians school. The primary role of this staff member is to ensure that the inclusive philosophy and learning support services remain a part of the daily educational practices at the school. The Academic Support Director for each school is represented on the campus Learning and Teaching Committee, along with each school's respective Head/s of Academics. The title

'Academic Support Director' is used instead of 'Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator SENCO)' as the role involves a broader focus in meeting a spectrum of learning needs at the College.

9. 'Individual Support Plan (ISP)' refers to the documented intervention plan (or academic contract) for support which is drawn up for an individual student to address their unique learning needs and which is agreed upon by all stakeholders working with the child. This includes plans for both internal, school-based, and external support services required to address the child's barriers to learning. This may include agreements to modify (Modified Learning Programmes) and individualise (Individual Education Programme) a student's participation.
10. 'Modified Learning Programme' (MLP) refers to a form of support where adaptations are made to a student's participation in the standard educational programmes and curriculum. This includes any modifications to the student's worksheets, test presentation, and curriculum which allows the student to engage with the material in a way that maximises learning outcomes. Importantly, the core curriculum remains unchanged, but the modifications make the curriculum material more accessible and assessment expectations are adapted to address the student's learning needs (e.g. re-phrased tests or simplified worksheets). This may form part of the interventions agreed upon in the student's Individual Support Plan (ISP).
11. 'Individualised Education Programme (IEP)' refers to a more intensive form of support where specialised programmes are implemented to address and accommodate a student's barriers to learning by making adaptations to the standard curriculum and educational expectations. This is typically implemented for a child who is unable to cope with the expectations of the standard curriculum and who requires specialist instruction. This includes programmes such as completing the IEB's Endorsed National Senior Certificate or a Saints' Matric certificate. This has longer term implications for meeting grade promotion requirements and attaining NQF levels of education. This may form part of the interventions agreed upon in the student's Individual Support Plan (ISP).
12. 'In-Class Support' refers to support practices in which a specialist (such as the Academic Support teacher or a facilitator) goes into the classroom to assist in supporting students with barriers to learning through individual instruction, small groups and in-class interventions. The specialist works in close collaboration with the class teacher as the aim of this type of support is to ensure that students are receiving full access to the general education curriculum, while limiting disruption to their daily schedule. Essentially the focus of these interventions is to cover *the same content* as scheduled in the classroom.
13. 'Withdrawal Support' refers to support practices where a specialist (e.g. Academic Support teacher, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, psychologist, remedial therapist) removes an individual or group of students from the main classroom to work on specific skills. In this type of support, it is believed that the child requires intensive skills support to assist them in keeping up with the classroom instruction. The support is focused on remediating and consolidating the development of core skills, rather than teaching or re-teaching the same curriculum content as would take place within the general classroom by the subject teacher.

Inclusive Education and Academic Support

14. St Stithians College embraces the principle of inclusive education outlined in Education White Paper 6 (2001), and other relevant international and national legislature, and functions as an academic, mainstream school with student support services.
15. St Stithians acknowledges that every student is unique, with individual strengths, challenges, interests, abilities, and learning needs. The College is committed to diversifying its educational programme to consider a spectrum of learning needs, according to available resources and the best interests of the child.

16. St Stithians College believes that through appropriate curricula, technical teaching strategies, use of resources (such as technology) and partnerships within the community, students have equal rights to an all-encompassing education of the highest standard that accommodates diverse abilities through individualised and/or differentiated educational practice.
17. However, as indicated in Learning and Teaching Policy's section on Categories of Support (below), there may be circumstances in which St Stithians recognises that it might not be in the best interests of students (for example, those with severe barriers to learning) to receive their education in the St Stithians environment. Where this condition obtains, a student's participation in the College's educational context may not be possible.
18. Parents have a responsibility to share information about the learning needs, strengths and challenges of students for individualised and/or differentiated education and support to be provided (this includes previous assessments, psycho-educational reports, and history of remedial interventions, for example). When information is withheld from the school, this prevents effective teaching and learning, and appropriate support cannot be provided. Under these circumstances the student's position in the school might require review.
19. It is the responsibility of all College staff to implement and uphold the frameworks of individualised education as laid out in this document.

Practical indicators in Educational Practice

20. We will know that the aims of individualised and/ or differentiated education have been met when:
 - 20.1. A community of belonging is fostered to promote positive participation in a just, equitable and democratic society.
 - 20.2. Co-operative learning and teaching between students and staff aims to create an environment in which students with varying abilities and interests can realise their potential in shared educational experiences.
 - 20.3. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are aligned to meet the needs of diverse groups of students.
 - 20.4. Professional development opportunities are provided to staff to enhance their understanding of diversity and the factors that contribute to educational disadvantage.
 - 20.5. Consultation and communication between stakeholders occurs to plan, implement and review programmes and interventions for students when necessary.
 - 20.6. The link between a student's academic achievement and social and emotional well-being is acknowledged in the design of educational experiences and the creation of a safe learning environment.
 - 20.7. Learning experiences are designed to promote the development of relevant skills to enable further opportunities for success through the development of students' strengths and talents.

Categories of Support

21. Support is understood to be a key indicator of the provision of individualised and/or differentiated education.
22. The College recognises that students require different types of support along a continuum of learning needs. The College has therefore identified six such Categories of Support (adapted from the Department of Education's Draft National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support, 2014). These include extension, remediation and recommendation for transfer to an alternative specialised educational environment when participation in the College's educational context is not possible.

23. These Categories of Support serve as practical indicators to guide planning, resource allocation and interventions for individual students, as well as to gain insight into the broader resources required to fulfil the philosophy of individualised education and academic excellence at St Stithians College.
24. Importantly, the Categories of Support are indicators of resources and intervention required to support learning and teaching. Although it is acknowledged that there might be an association between intensity of support and academic achievement, the level of support is categorised according to the resources and interventions required for a student’s learning processes and not their academic achievement.
25. All students at St Stithians College can be placed along this continuum of support and their individual progress is tracked according to the Categories of Support as an indicator of their learning needs. Students may move between Categories of Support at different stages in their school career as individualised education and support is such that it changes over time.
26. The categories of support are:

Category	Category description
1	<p>Full participation, with extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Participation is understood to mean that students are not removed from lessons for any interventions and engage in the full curriculum expectations without modification or adaptation. • Students are extended above and beyond the standard curriculum and achieve at the level of academic excellence. • Extension is planned and managed at the teachers’ discretion. • This might include taking Advanced Programme subjects, Olympiad involvement, additional extension activities within a subject, and participation in the Socratic Club.
2	<p>Full participation, no support needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no learning and teaching support interventions needed. • The students in this category are able to manage their learning and academic needs independently within the standard curriculum, without any additional support interventions.
3	<p>Full participation, with mild support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some barriers to learning or areas of development have been identified, which are mild in nature. • Some short-term additional support is required to maximise learning outcomes for student to achieve their potential. • Support is planned and managed by the teachers, with some input from Academic Support specialists. • This might include extra lessons, tutoring, and skills support interventions (e.g. study skills, time management, and organisational skills).

4	<p>Modified full participation, with moderate support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full participation, with moderate levels of support to maximise learning outcomes and address identified barriers to learning, which are mild to moderate in nature. • Adaptations and support are planned and managed by Academic Support specialists, with regular review and case management for interventions. • This includes any examination/test accommodations, remedial interventions, additional therapies (e.g. Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Remedial Therapy), as well as skills support interventions agreed upon in the student’s Individual Support Plan.
5	<p>Modified participation, with high support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in most activities with high levels of ongoing assistance and support to address identified barriers to learning, which are more intensive in nature. • Requires a specialist programme and additional support in several areas, including ongoing monitoring and adaptation of curriculum and assessment practices to facilitate participation and maximise learning outcomes. • Adaptations and support are planned and managed by Academic Support specialists, with regular review and case management for interventions. • This might include the adaptation of assessments and/or curriculum requirements, exemptions from subjects, Individualised Education Programmes (IEP), Modified Learning Programmes (MLP), the use of an in-class facilitator, as well as more intensive support interventions agreed upon in the student’s Individual Support Plan.
6	<p>Participation is not possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The school is unable to offer the level of support required to meet the specific academic needs of the student and/or adequately accommodate the severe nature of their barriers to learning within the College’s available resources and educational structures. • The decision that participation is not possible is made at the discretion of each school on the St Stithians College campus and considers national legislation and policies, including the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), the Children’s Act (Act 38 of 2005), the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1999) and the Department of Education’s national policies and guidelines. • Based on the above Acts, the guiding principles for exclusion are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The best interests of the student. ○ The school’s inability, as a mainstream school, to create an ‘enabling environment’ to respond to the special needs a student might have so that dignity, self-reliance and active participation in the community are ensured. This includes limitations/ restrictions on the College’s resources and the College’s ability to provide appropriate educational outcomes for a student with significant and severe barriers to learning. ○ An approach has been followed which is conducive to open communication and problem-solving, and which is free from discrimination. • The decision that participation in the College’s educational context is not possible is made in consultation with professionals working with the student, and consideration of the recommendations by these professionals for school

	placement is noted. This includes recommendations from psycho-educational assessments made by educational psychologists, for example.
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Addendum approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee: 20 March 2018
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