# STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION POLICY

| Safe and supportive learning environment for students with special needs | |
|---|---|
| PERSON RESPONSIBLE | SHIBINI MADATHIL |
| REVIEW DATE | APRIL 2026 |
| REVIEWED BY | SHIBINI MADATHIL |
| APPROVED DATE | 01 MAY 2026 |
| APPROVED BY | SLT |
| DATE OF NEXT REVIEW | APRIL 2027 |
| RELATED POLICIES | - |

Ameer English School, Ajman, as an educational institution, complies with the UAE Disability Act and the Federal Law No. 29 of 2006, which guarantees the rights and protection in health, education, work entrepreneurship and public services for students with special needs and believes that all children should have equal access to a decent education.

In the light of UAE Ministry of Education "Education for All" program, the policy was reviewed include all categories of students who may face a barrier to learning either temporary or permanent. The policy therefore allows for meeting the needs of all students who require support to reach their full potential by identifying and removing or mitigating barriers to learning whether they are physical, intellectual, or social, emotional, cultural and language.

## Al Ameer English School's approach to Students of Determination

Al Ameer English School is dedicated to positive growth of its students in all areas of life. We believe that every child is unique and strive to provide a well-rounded educational program that is suitable for the diverse intellectual, social, emotional and physical needs of all our students.

## Our Aim

The AAES SOD policy aimed at creating general provisions for students with special needs to promote a safe and supportive learning environment, to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. It also included students at the other end of the spectrum, the gifted and talented. We aim to create a nurturing and positive learning environment, where each student has easy access to a quality education and becomes independent, valued, competent, skilled members of the school as well as the wider community.

## Our Objectives

- To identify pupils with SOD and disabilities and ensure that their needs are met.
- To ensure that children with SOD and disabilities are fully included in all school activities.
- To ensure that all learners make the best possible progress.
- To implement different teaching and learning strategies to maximize achievement.
- To ensure that there is effective communication between parents and school and that the parents are kept informed of their child's special needs and provision.
- To ensure that learners express their views and are fully involved indecisions which influence their education in higher classes.
- To identify the roles and responsibilities of all staff to work with students with SOD and other disadvantaged groups. To promote a team approach involving the student, parents, classroom and specialist teachers, SODCO, administrators, and the school counsellor when needed.
- To ensure that all staff including non-teaching staff are provide with support and opportunities to develop their professional knowledge to work with such students.
- To comply with the UAE Federal Law 29(2006)

## AAES and Federal Law definition of SOD

Definition of STUDENTS OF DETERMINATON According to the Federal Law 29 (UAE), a Person with Special Needs is defined as: "Every person suffering from a temporary/permanent, full/partial deficiency or infirmity in his physical, sensational, mental, communicational, educational or psychological faculties to an extent decreasing the possibility of satisfying his ordinary requirements in the conditions of people without special needs." In line with Federal Law (2006) and Law No. 2 (2014), improving the education and outcomes of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) remains a priority.

## AAES-Definition of Students of Determination (SOD)

"Educational needs that are different from those of the majority of students and which arise from the impact of a disability or recognized disorder."

## AAES further states, SOD could mean a child has difficulties with:

- Reading, writing, Numerical Work or understanding information
- Expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
- Making friends or relating to adults
- Behaving appropriately in school;
- Organizing themselves, completing tasks or focusing on activities OR
- Some kind of sensory or mobility needs that may affect them in some or all school activities

## AAES SOD TEAM

The team comprises of:

- SODCO,
- Counsellor,
- Special educator,
- Principal, Vice Principal, Academic coordinator,
- Supervisors are also part of the discussion on specific cases
- Volunteers.

## Range of SOD services at AAES:

Placement in regular class room with:

- Regular Teacher support
- Buddy support
- Special educator Support
- Out of school support for additional academic instruction/ specific therapies.

## SOD Admission

There are two ways in which we identify students with SOD during admission:

- Parents approach the school and present a diagnosis of their ward, Initial interaction with the Learning Center team is arranged to assess and decide the next steps of intervention and appropriate placement.
- If the student is facing challenges at the entrance test, then the admission team arranges an Interaction with the Learning Center.

Whilst we endeavor to be fully compliant with the regulations stated in the Federal Law 29 (UAE), there may be certain extenuating factors that may influence admission decisions for SOD students at AAES. such as, submission of the latest assessment documentation (less than 2 years), type and level of difficulty, expert's recommendations and type of support required and full disclosure of medical history

## Some other factors that could influence admission of students with SOD are:

- Facilities/resources available in school to meet the child's specific needs
- Type/area of disability/ difficulty e.g. in cases of autistic children the level of autism may play a significant role
- Recommendations provided by the external medical experts.
- Child's readiness to be included in the mainstream school Parental support and compliances to specific recommendations from school

## SOD Procedure

AAES School has a continuous cycle of identification, assessing, planning, teaching and making provisions, which takes into account the Individual needs of students. We recognize that the process is a continuum and cannot be dealt in isolation or in parts.

Identification

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Referral

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Observation

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Review Support

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Team Meeting

## Identification

- During admission- parent referral or identified by teacher
- Identified in the class by teachers due to behavior or academic concerns
- Identified by screening -Entry level test

The following are some of the ways in which we identify a student with SOD

1. Parent may directly approach teacher or school administration during admission and present the diagnosis and request for Learning Center services.( Parent referral)
2. Parents may choose to not disclose the child's condition. Subsequently, teacher may identify in class and get in touch with the Learning center. While being empathetic here, we help parents overcome denial. This may take few sessions for the counselor or special educator with parents.
3. Teachers may spot a child with SOD, parents may not be aware that their child has an additional need. In such situations we help parents understand and create awareness. (teacher referral)
4. We can also identify students with additional needs by the Entry Level Tests which are conducted at the beginning of term 1.

## Referral

- Self-referral ,Teacher referral, Parent referral
- Teacher to share observation with parents and take consent to involve SODTEAM
- Fill referral or consent form
- Special educator will observe the student and respond by 2 weeks

## Referral process

- Teachers may notice problems in terms of academics or behavior.
- Teachers will provide differentiated activities, make their observation, anecdotal notes for two to three weeks depending on the child's need.
- Special educator/counselor can be consulted to confirm /clarify if there is a genuine problem before approaching the parents, Learning Center to respond within a week. Sometimes if requests are more Learning Center can take extend to two weeks.
- If the problem is severe, class teacher will immediately inform parents and call for a meeting with parents. In this initial meeting with parent, teacher to include special educator or counselor based on need.
- Teacher will fill in referral form will get consent from parents to work with the signing the consent form.
- After referral is placed, special educator or counselor will complete observation in two weeks. It may extend to three weeks depending on the caseload and student need.
- Parent referral or self-referral will proceed for intervention by just signing in the consent form.

## Observation:

- Student's level is assessed by team.
- Signs of specific disorders or behavior challenges are identified.
- School may request for assessment by external professionals, if needed.

1. Before we set out to provide intervention the student's level is determined by observation by the special educator, parent and teacher feedback.
2. Special educator may conduct a functional assessment. The Learning Center has adapted checklists for learning difficulty, autism, ADHD and Grade wise curriculum expectation.
3. The school may request parents for an assessment by external professionals for which this above-mentioned checklist can be shared.

## Team meeting

- Team includes parents, teachers, special educators, counselor, Principal, curriculum head.
- Meet periodically for IEP/IBP/IAP/ILP Planning, end of term review and need based.
- Aim is to have a common understanding of student's needs and support.

1. We recognize that for our special needs students to achieve their maximum potential, the key is to establish and build on successful partnerships with the team- Parents, SODCO, Special Educators, Counselor, Learning Support Assistant, Teachers, SLT and external professionals

2. We have scheduled meetings with the team for IEP (Individualized Education Plan)/1BP (individualized Behavior Plan)/ILP (individualized Learning Plan/IAP (Individualized Action Plan) planning by two to three weeks at start of term and end of term review meeting.

3. Scheduled meetings with teachers and SLTS are also held to ensure best support in classrooms.

4. We work closely with parents and teachers by providing information on provisions and arrangements for special educational needs, including ways in which they can participate in the process.

## Support

| SOD graduated response | | How do we support |
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| Differentiation support | → | Based on student level, placement in appropriate |
| School action | → | IEP, IAP, IBP,ILP Classroom Accommodation, Curriculum Modification, Provisions, Exemptions are provided as per need. |
| School action plus | → | Progress tracked |

### Support to students with SOD

When a SOD student is identified, he/she is provided with appropriate additional support within and all children learn in different ways and can have different types and level of educational needs. Class teacher and subject teachers are responsible for working with the student on a daily basis, with support from the Learning Center team.

### Push in sessions

SOD students are also supported by Special Educators in the class and work closely with the teachers to initiate suitable teaching strategies, activities and classwork to ensure progress of students with SOD.

### Pull out sessions

Students who require more individualized attention will have a one-on-one session with respective special educator at the Learning Center. The session will focus on the IEP goals.

## Support through SOD graduated response

### Differentiation

- This is a whole school approach which is already being followed in the school.
- Special educators will discuss with teachers and suggest ways to modify teaching styles, content/ material and assessment to suit each individual SOD student.
- Student will not be in the SOD register at this stage.
- However, parents will be informed and the student will be observed for a term before we decide the need for intervention.
- Suggestions, strategies, home program may be given as per need to parents.

### School Action

- Student placed in School action may or may not have diagnosis. Student will be placed in the SOD register.
- Student can have IEP or IAP depending on the need.
- IAP (Individual Action Plan) is a document providing strategies to the teachers to work with Suggestions for differentiation, modification and accommodation will be given the student.

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3. Scheduled meetings with teachers and SLTS are also held to ensure best support in classrooms.

4. We work closely with parents and teachers by providing information on provisions and arrangements for special educational needs, including ways in which they can participate in the process.

- Suggestions for differentiation, modification and accommodation will be given.
- There may be push in or pullout session by the special educator based on the student need.

## School Action Plus

Students with a diagnosis will be placed in School Action Plus. IEP (Individualized Education Plan) will be prepared which will provide detailed support for

- Differentiation, modification and accommodation.
- Sometimes the student will need a modified curriculum.
- Push in or pull out session will be provided by the special educator as per need of student.

## Behavior Intervention

Behavior intervention is provided by the counselor for those with challenging behavior. In the primary school an Individualized Behavior Plan (BP) is provided which will provide strategies to handle the behavior. In the middle and senior school a Behavior Contract is worked along with the student. The A B-C (Antecedent-Behavior Consequence) and the frequency of challenging behavior are recorded to help plan the IBP.

## ILP-Individualized Learning Plan

The middle and senior school students may have an ILP which aims to provide organizational and study skills. The special educator will coordinate the plan along with the student, parents and subject expert teachers.

## Provisions

Provisions and exemptions may also be provided as per the need of the student. The following is the list of provisions available.

- Modified curriculum-curriculum is simplified at the student's level
- Modified assessment- tailored to concepts that the student has been taught
- Exemption from languages-second language from CBSE council and Arabic from MOE
- Learning Support Teacher (shadow) in class

## Exam provisions (in lines of CBSE council)

- Separate seating during examination
- Additional time during examination
- Enlarged fonts
- Use of writer/scribe to write answer paper
- Use of calculator, Use of computer/laptop to write exam
- Condone spelling error
- Accept answers in key points
- Learning Support Teacher (shadow) in class and during assessments

## Review

- Review progress as a team every term
- Place the student at appropriate level of support and continue planning process

At the end of term, scheduled IEP/ IAP/ILP meeting with the team (parents, teachers, special educators, LSA) student progress is evaluated and goals are either reset or carried on for maintenance or new ones are introduced.

## Tracking of goals

- Student may have goals in the classroom environment to be handled by the teacher, TA, LSA or special educator depending on the need.
- Weaning off Learning Center support Criteria.
- Student may be weaned off support services if found to be making consistent progress in IEP goals and grade marks over a period of 3 terms.
- The aim is to make the student an independent learner and avoidance of prompt dependency. The cut off mark for goal achievement is 50% in class grades and 70% in IEP goals.
- The student may also be placed in the appropriate level according to the SOD graduated response - Moving from School Action to Differentiation, School Action to School Action Plus or vice versa
- However, they will be closely monitored for any regression and appropriate support will be provided by the team-parents, teachers and special educators.
- Goals are tracked on a tracking sheet with the keys WT-Working Towards, ME- Met Expectation, EE- Exceeding Expectation by the respective personnel.

## Support to teachers

- Teachers are supported at three levels to ensure consistent and effective support to the students with SOD.
- Whole school CPDS are conducted at the beginning and end of term to impart knowledge on different categories of SOD that the teachers can expect in class and the SOD policy giving details on the intervention process.
- Grade wise teacher meeting along with the respective SLT (School Leadership Team) are conducted to discuss and coordinate individual student's needs.
- Transition meetings are held during the beginning of academic year to handover student files and information is shared to help prepare the new teacher to welcome the student.
- Individual teacher-special educator meetings are held on a need basis other than the scheduled ones to help with any challenges like behavior, accommodation, modification or exam paper modification.
- Scheduled SOD class observations are conducted to provide feedback and suggestions to teachers

## Support to parents

We strongly advocate the role of productive parental involvement in the education of their child. Parents are welcome to get in touch with the Learning Center at any time other than the scheduled meetings. Synergy is the creation of a platform where all parents can be actively involved in child development, so that it becomes a three way partnership-child, parent and educator. "Synergy' is a step in this direction with the intent of meeting periodically to work towards the following objectives -

- To enhance the progress of students through better understanding of the processes implemented.
- To develop mutual support systems for the parents that will be facilitated by professionals in school.
- To share and seek information which will facilitate the development of the students we work

## SOD COMMITTEE

The AAES SOD policy aimed at creating general provisions for students with special needs to promote a safe and supportive learning environment, to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. It also included students at the other end of the spectrum, the gifted and talented.

We aim to create a nurturing and positive learning environment, where each student has easy access to a quality education and becomes independent, valued, competent, skilled members of the school as well as the wider community.

The Management hence decided to form a SOD COMMITTEE for the academic year 2024-2025.

## AAES SOD TEAM

The team comprises of:

- Principal
- Vice Principal
- Academic Coordinator
- SODCO
- Counsellor
- Supervisors
- Volunteers

# SOD FRAME WORK

Teacher's Observation

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Teacher's Referral to Concerned Supervisors

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Supervisor Referral to SODCO

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Parent Meeting with SOD Committee for Medical Referral

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Medical Report Submission by the parent

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Parent Concern Meeting with SOD Committee IEP, ILP

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BLP. ALP Meeting (SOD Committee + Class teacher + Subject teacher)

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Review of IEP, ILP, BLP, ALP

## REFERRAL CHANNEL BY CLASS TEACHER

Class Teacher

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Supervisor

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SODCO

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SOD COMMITTEE

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PARENT

## REFERRAL CHANNEL BY SUBJECT TEACHER

Subject Teacher

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Class Teacher

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Supervisor

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SODCO

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SOD COMMITTEE

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PARENT