



Special Education Needs Policy



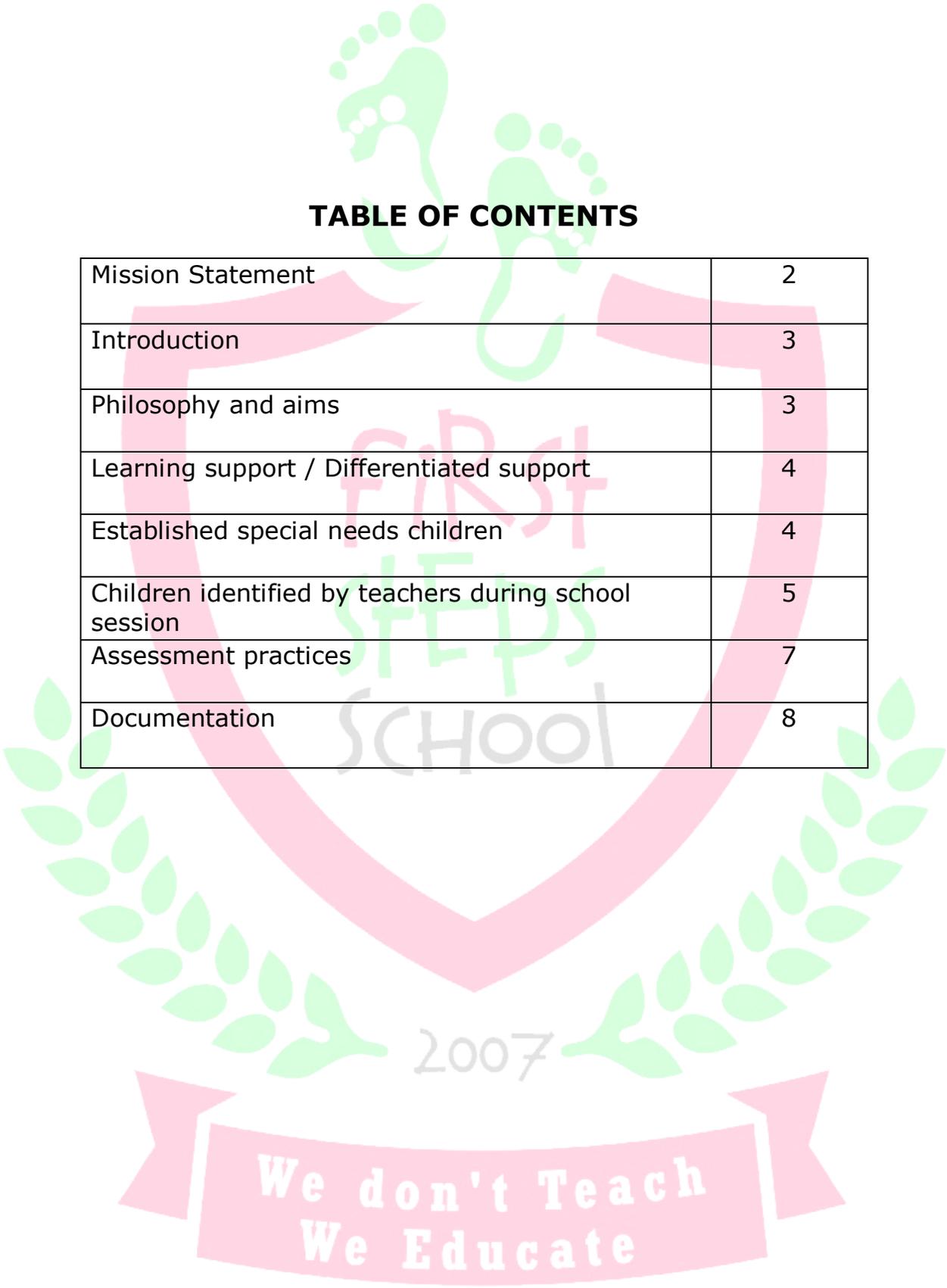


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MISSION STATEMENT OF FIRSTSTEPS SCHOOL

FirstSteps School aims to move forward with the already adopted motto "We don't Teach – We EDUCATE" and the Mission "INDIA FOR WORLD"

- I** Inculcate universal brotherhood and values
- N** Nurture innocence, uniqueness and creativity
- D** Develop concern for environment in particular and the Planet Earth in general
- I** Imbibe entrepreneurial skills & international mindedness
- A** Acquire habit of inquiry
- F** Foster international education system
- O** Open mind for the development of intellect, self-esteem, self-confidence and critical learning
- R** Respect one-self and others
- W** Welcome the change and develop it with a positive attitude and vision
- O** Organise self-discipline
- R** Right environment to develop inquisitiveness for learning and to dissipate learning beyond the classroom
- L** Learners for life time and leaders of tomorrow
- D** Develop the virtue of understanding others' perspective

**We don't Teach
We Educate**

Introduction

We at FirstSteps recognise that all students are capable of learning and we support all learners to access the full curriculum as much as possible. Teachers and support staff strive to meet the educational needs of all the students by utilizing a variety of teaching, learning strategies and methodologies. The FirstSteps student population also consists of students who have been identified as differentially abled /special, prior to admission or were identified later on during the school session. The purpose of this document is to clarify the understanding of Special Educational Needs within Firststeps School.

Philosophy and Aims

The support Firststeps School provides for students with special needs is based on the following beliefs:

- All students are able to learn
- There is a broad continuum of special educational needs that includes
 - Cognitive impairments
 - Emotional impairments
 - Learning disabilities
 - Physical disabilities and or other health impairments
 - Speech impairments and or communicating disorders
 - Sensory impairments –vision, hearing
 - Multiple disabilities
 - Giftedness
- Firststeps School has the responsibility to provide a holistic, differentiated and inclusive class environment for all students.
- All facilitators share the responsibility of recognizing and providing support for students with special educational needs.
- Students are ultimately responsible for their own learning and are therefore expected to play an active role in their own learning process, including recognizing their own specific needs and abilities and seeking support and guidance accordingly.
- The parent community also shares the responsibility of helping their children to receive a holistic education that meets their special needs.

Accordingly, parents of students with special educational needs are expected to inform the school of any special needs they are aware of, maintain

frequent communication with the school regarding their child's progress and/or any changes in his/her needs, and support the school's effort to help their child at home.

Learning support / Differentiated support

Our school recognises the value of Differentiated learning for students with special needs. Students with special educational needs will receive individual support in all the activities undertaken during a session. Differentiated strategies enable students to meet outcomes or to have learning outcomes extended. The manipulation of additional variables such as time, organisation and evaluation or assessment techniques will also be necessary to meet diverse student needs. However, specific individualized adaptations may become necessary to enable a student to meet the curriculum outcomes. Adaptations are defined as strategies and or resources to accommodate the learning needs of an individual student. They are planned, implemented and evaluate to enable a student to achieve the school curriculum outcomes.

Established special Needs Children

- For the children who had already been identified as special needs prior to the admission to the school, a complete plan is chalked out for an entire semester.
- FirstSteps decides the grade and the teacher best suited for the child. This is decided in a meeting between the headmistress, school coordinator and the special educator/school psychologist.
- The chosen mother teacher is then guided through the plan and her recommendations considered. After which, in a combined meeting with the headmistress, special educator/psychologist, teacher and parents, the parents are informed about the chosen plan.
- Once the parents understand and approve, the various adjustments (e.g. location of the class, size, extra attendant / shadow etc.) are considered and made.
- All the other subject teachers are also made aware of the adjustments and the requirements of that student which are mainly
 - Supplemental activities tailored to the child's need
 - Curriculum modification on case-by-case basis
 - Classroom modification like peer assistance, additional time etc.

- In case the student goes for therapies outside the school, complete support is given to the parents with regards to attendance and flexibility of the school hours.
- The school curriculum then works in tandem with the therapy requirements and the progress achieved there.
- The special educator/psychologist observes the student as well as helps the teacher with him/her at least twice a week then on.
- Weekly updates are given to the school coordinator and headmistress and as the session progresses; any changes if required in the plan are considered and dealt with.
- During the Exams, extra rooms with invigilators are organized, scribes made available, special educator/psychologist made available to guide and prompt the student and time is extended in compliance with the recommendations for special consideration.
- The question paper is set and grading done according to the abilities of the student.
- The parents are then informed of the progress during the parent-facilitator meetings and future plans are discussed with them.
- On need basis, the special educator/school psychologist visits the therapy centre and discusses the challenges and progress with the student's therapist.

Children Identified by teachers during school session

- When a learning challenge is experienced by the mother teacher, it is brought forward in a meeting with the headmistress, school coordinator and special educator/school psychologist.
- The special educator/school psychologist then observes the student in the learning environment and formally identifies it as a challenge.
- After which it is brought forward in a face to face meeting with the parents, who are then guided about the future steps.
- The identified students are recommended for diagnostic testing through an outside agency. The school provides the parents with a list of certified and reputable institutes for the purpose. The school does not provide any diagnostic testing at this point. The school will, however, support the parents in their efforts to obtain diagnostic testing by providing supportive documentation and, if necessary, granting the student a temporary leave of absence in order to be tested.

- As a result of the recommendations of the diagnostic testing, various modifications in the curriculum and the class are made.
- These modifications are discussed with the parents and their approval sought.
- All the other teachers and support staff are made aware of these modifications and any special requirements of the child.
- In case the student goes for therapies outside the school, complete support is given to the parents with regards to attendance and flexibility of the school hours.
- The school curriculum then works in tandem with the therapy requirements and the progress achieved there.
- The student is also visited by the special educator/psychologist at least twice a week and weekly updates given to the school coordinator and the headmistress.
- During the Exams, extra rooms with invigilators are organized, scribes made available, special educator/psychologist made available to guide and prompt the student and time is extended in compliance with the recommendations for special consideration.
- The question paper is set and grading done according to the abilities of the student.
- The parents are then informed of the progress during the parent-facilitator meetings and future plans are discussed with them.
- On need basis, the special educator/school psychologist visits the therapy centre and discusses the challenges and progress with the student's therapist.

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Assessment Practices

Teachers will utilize a variety of formative assessments and provide feedback for all students. Formative assessment results from challenged students will be used to tailor instruction and, if needed, modify the curriculum for the said students.

Teachers will provide differentiated summative assessments that leave room for student choice and will correspond to any curriculum modifications for challenged students.

Documentation

Any documentation that identifies a student's special educational needs will be kept in the student's file.

Teachers will keep record of any accommodations and modifications made for student with special educational needs. These records will be placed in the students' file on a monthly basis and will be reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of the modifications and accommodations used.

The evaluation will determine whether the modifications and accommodations should be continued, stopped, or adjusted to best meet the individual needs of the student.

All teachers will provide a progress report on all students with special educational needs four times a year. These reports will be kept in the students' file.