



# **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy**

**March 2018**

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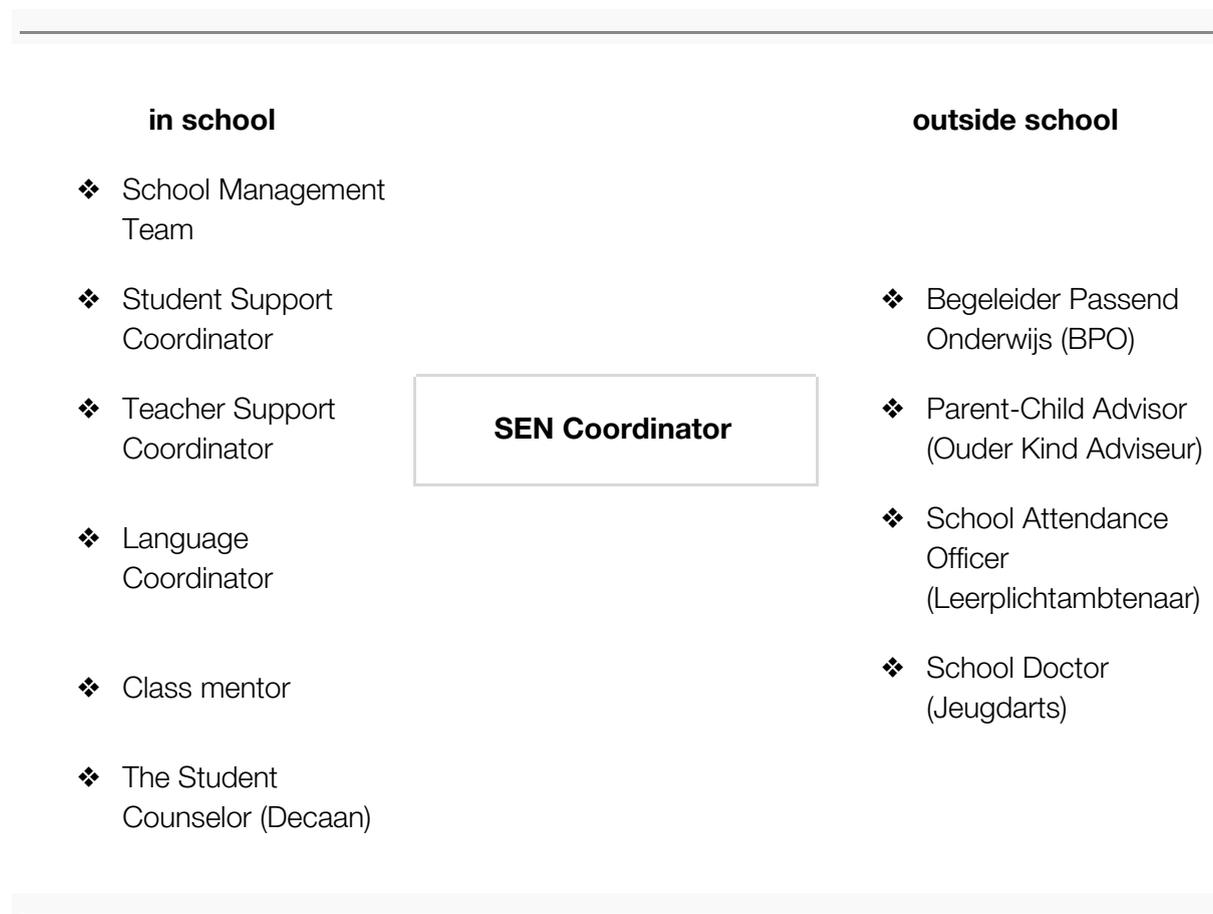
## **1. Introduction**

De Nieuwe Internationale School Esprit (DENISE) in Amsterdam offers high quality, widely accessible, modern, international education that raises awareness of the collective responsibility for the world we live in. We provide a broad international curriculum as well as an anchor for life in the Netherlands. DENISE is a school for all students with an international mindset. In every program DENISE offers, we place high value on intercultural competence and personal development. Through intercultural & personal goals, students learn to interact and cooperate with each other, to be respectful and open towards others, to solve problems together and to consider issues from multiple perspectives.

This SEN policy describes how DENISE deals with students with special educational needs such as social-emotional problems, medical conditions, physical problems (such as hearing, speech or vision impairment), autism and related conditions, dyscalculia and dyslexia. For problems concerning language skills, the DENISE Language Policy describes how we deal with students for whom Dutch is not their first language.

## 2. Structure and Roles

The SEN coordinator (in Dutch: zorgcoördinator) is accountable to the School Management Team and is responsible for the planning, implementation and quality control of the SEN policy. In 2017-2018, the SEN coordinator at DENISE is Ms. Wijk. The SEN coordinator works in cooperation with stakeholders in and outside the school community



### School Management Team

The School Management Team currently comprises:

Principal: Mr. Veldhuyzen

Team Leader Primary Education: Ms. Colson

Team Leader Secondary Education: Mr. Sluijsmans

Management Assistant: Ms. de Weerd

### Student Support Coordinator (leerlingbegeleider)

The student support coordinator is accountable to the SEN Coordinator and is responsible for the planning and implementation of student guidance, and works most of the time in Secondary Education.

*In 2017-2018: due to the modest size of the current school population, the SEN Coordinator is also the student support coordinator (Ms. Wijk).*

### **Begeleider Passend Onderwijs (BPO)**

The student support coordinator is supported by the 'Begeleider Passend Onderwijs' (BPO) from the organisation, Altra. The BPO is responsible for the following activities:

- speaking to students about absenteeism.
- coaching individual students in planning, organisation of schoolwork, concentration and providing support outside the classroom (every Monday morning between 8.40 - 9.30pm).
- providing advice to mentors on managing behaviour.
- providing 'reducing fear of failure' workshops, together with the student support coordinator.

*In 2017-2018: the Altra BPO is Mr. Goutier.*

### **Teacher Support Coordinator (Intern Begeleider)**

The internal teacher support coordinator guides teachers in the field of classroom management, pedagogical climate and didactics and works most of the time in Primary Education. The internal teacher support coordinator is accountable to the SEN Coordinator and is responsible for quality planning, implementation and support of staff in their classroom management, pedagogical climate and didactic skills.

*In 2017-2018: the internal teacher support coordinator is Ms. Brescia.*

### **Language Coordinator (Taalcoördinator)**

Some SEN revolve around language issues. The language coordinator (in Dutch: taalcoördinator) is accountable to the Team Leader and is responsible for the planning, implementation and quality control of the DENISE Language Policy.

*In 2017-2018: the Language Coordinator is Ms. Kroese.*

### **Class Mentor**

The mentor meets his/her mentor group several times a week in the mentor lessons (8.15-8.40pm). The mentor will discuss planning of achieving learning goals, school activities and pays attention to group dynamics. The mentor is the first person who deals with SEN of the students. When the mentor (or teachers) notices SEN, he or she will contact the SEN Coordinator. They discuss if the help of the student support coordinator is needed.

*In 2017-2018: every class has two mentors (ideally male and female), see school website.*

### **The Student Counselor (Decaan)**

The student counselor is accountable to the School Management Team and is responsible for managing external relations with schools. The student counselor discusses with student and parents, further options post-DENISE. For students, Career Orientation and Support (Loopbaanoriëntatie en Begeleiding, LOB) is of daily importance. During LOB lessons students work on different assignments to make the best choice for their future education and profession. During the lessons students will explore their preferences and their ability to discover the consequences of their choices. During subject classes students will be introduced to professions related to the subject. The student counselor organises information meetings for parents.

*In 2017-2018 we have two student counselors: Ms. Hooiveld and Ms. ten Cate.*

**Parent-Child Advisor (Ouder Kind Adviseur - OKA)**

The Parent-Child Advisor is part of the Youth Child Care (Jeugdgezondheidszorg) of the City of Amsterdam. The OKA speaks with students and parents who experience problems in the social-emotional or relational area. If necessary she will speak with parents/guardians at home. The OKA will also advise the SEN coordinator and she supports any reference to an institution for assistance.

*In 2017-2018: Ms. Duijfs*

**School Attendance Officer (Leerplichtambtenaar)**

The School Attendance Officer is responsible for supervising the Compulsory Education Act. When DENISE reports unauthorized school absence, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents/guardians to investigate the reason for the absence.

*In 2017-2018: Ms. Mohammadi.*

**School Doctor (Jeugdarts)**

When students miss class for long-term health reasons, the student will consult the school doctor. The school doctor will assist in finding alternative solutions for the student to continue school. In case of frequent absence due to sickness, the school will register the student for M@zl. This is an intensive collaboration between the School Attendance Officer, the school doctor and the SEN coordinator to prevent or minimize school absenteeism.

*In 2017-2018: the school doctor is Dr. Stuurman.*

### **3. SEN Team Meetings**

The SEN coordinator, the parent-child advisor (OKA), the school doctor, the school attendance officer, and in some cases, a local Youth Protection officer (Jeugdbescherming Amsterdam), together form the SEN Team (Zorgadviesteam). They meet six times a year to discuss students with extra special educational needs. Information exchanged at SEN team meetings is treated as confidential. Parent/guardians must give permission to discuss their son/daughter at ZAT meeting. The school doctor and the confidential counsellor (in Dutch: vertrouwenspersoon) can also be consulted by parents/guardians or students.

#### ***SEN team meeting schedule: school year 2017 - 2018***

- 26 September 2017
- 28 November 2017
- 23 January 2018
- 20 March 2018
- 15 May 2018
- 03 July 2018

## 4. Types of SEN and Actions

When a student enrolls at DENISE (see Admissions Policy) pertinent information is collected via student and parent interviews. We obtain references from previous schools, conduct relevant tests and observe student behaviour in class. All collected information is registered directly in our digital student monitoring system, Magister.

Students living in the Netherlands for more than one year, conduct a SON-R test with a psychologist. This test gives an indication if a student has special educational needs. In case of SEN, the student support coordinator will conduct research about what kind of help the student needs. These needs are addressed in a development plan (Ontwikkelingsperspectiefplan).

The way to ensure success for students with special educational needs is to

1. recognize that this is a joint endeavour between student, home environment and school.
2. ensure all parties agree and are accountable for any plan of action.

Table 1 describes different categories of special educational needs and the DENISE response.

**Table 1: Categories of SEN and Related Actions**

<b>Types of SEN</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Autism and related conditions	Diagnosis psychologist / psychiatrist	via health insurance	Copy in school file via parents.
Dyslexia / dyscalculia	Dyslexia / dyscalculia statement from a specialist institution	300-1000 euro depends on type of tests.  Primary education: for free Secondary: costs for parents/guardians. In case parents cannot afford the costs the school will discuss what they can contribute (funding).	Students with learning support needs must submit documentation written by a qualified and registered professional. Based on the documentation provided, students may qualify for special conditions in exams and tests. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra time to complete assigned work</li> <li>• Enlarging texts.</li> <li>• Simplifying complex instructions</li> <li>• Breaking long assignments into smaller parts</li> <li>• Assisting students into setting short term goals</li> <li>• Pairing oral instructions with written ones</li> <li>• Repeating instructions</li> <li>• Permitting assignments to be typed</li> <li>• Permitting video reports or oral delivery</li> </ul>
Communication and /or language disorders	Speech therapy statement  Language development disorder research and guidance	Referral via general practitioner or specialist institution	See f actions in DENISE Language Policy
Fear of failure	Observations teachers/mentor  Questionnaire student	x	DENISE offers individual counseling sessions with the student support coordinator.  DENISE offers 'reduce fear of failure' training: a course given by the student support coordinator and Altra BPO. Students learn strategies to deal with fear of failure.
Medical problems or trauma	Statement from treating doctor.	via health insurance	Via SEN coordinator or referral to school doctor, GGD or family doctor.
Second language barriers	see DENISE Language Policy	see DENISE Language Policy	see DENISE Language Policy
Social and emotional support needs	Statement from treating psychologist / psychiatrist, GGZ	via health insurance	Via SEN coordinator or referral to parent-child advisor (OKA) or emergency services, such as GGZ.  Copy in school file via parents.
Serious behavioral problems	Statement from family doctor, GGZ	via health insurance	Via SEN coordinator or referral to a specialist.

## **5. SEN Training for Teachers**

All teachers at DENISE are class mentors, and are strongly connected to the wellbeing of their students. In order to support teachers, it is important to foster understanding of potential issues within such a diverse student population, train them on how to recognise potential issues and standard protocols. Teachers at DENISE receive training in special educational needs. In 2017, the focus was on how to deal with highly gifted and talented students. Further topics to be planned include autism, ADHD, depression/fear, eating disabilities, post-traumatic stress.

### **Intercultural Competence (ICC) & International Mindedness (IM) Training**

At DENISE we offer international education to students from all around the world. Students from different backgrounds, cultures, religions and languages come together in one class. Teachers and mentors have to deal with a lot of differences. Therefore it is important that teachers are internationally minded and develop their intercultural competence.

An ICC & IM work group has been formed and is focused on how to integrate ICC & IM within the whole school. This group aims are:

- to develop a unified, school-wide approach to ICC & IM
- ICC & IM values become visible across the school
- ICC & IM values are adopted by the whole school community

The ICC & IM work group initially conducted a school-wide survey involving the School Management Team, teachers, VO students and parents. From the results a clear picture was formed of the school-wide situation, revealing best practices and highlighting areas for improvement which were incorporated into an action plan.

## 6. Protocol to Prevent Bullying

### Aims

The aims of the DENISE anti-bullying protocol are that all students feel secure at school and are able to optimally develop through communication skills, thoughtfulness, cooperation, resilience, a sense of ethics, respect for each other and the environment.

We achieve these aims through ICC/IPC/IMYC lessons, supported by the Kwink-program, through which we teach our students to:

- communicate and cooperate with each other
- be respectful and open
- solve problems together
- look at problems from different perspectives

### Code of behavior

At DENISE, the code of behavior code is used to evaluate the way we behave:

*At DENISE we treat everybody with respect: parents, students, teachers and anyone who is our guest. We treat each other as we want to be treated ourselves. We don't judge each other, but rather go in dialogue. We ask questions and listen. We confront each other and offer help. Together, we are responsible for the atmosphere of the school and shaping the eight core values of DENISE.*



Figure 1: Eight core values of DENISE

### **How do we define bullying?**

Bullying is present at almost every school in one form or another. At DENISE bullying is defined as: the systematic psychic or physical violation by a student (or group of students) towards one or more classmates who are incapable of defending themselves.

The key points that distinguish bullying from playing are:

- Bullying is systematic, repeated and deliberate.
- There is a difference in power between the bully and the bullied.
- Bullying has serious consequences for the bullied.
- The bullied cannot stand up for him/herself.

### **In what ways do we see bullying at school?**

- Name calling
- Unpleasant remarks about background, belief or personal circumstances
- Hateful remarks about looks and clothes
- Pushing and pulling, kicking and hitting or other physical assault
- Exclusion, isolation
- Stealing personal property
- Telling lies or spreading malicious gossip about students

Examples of digital bullying are:

- Name calling or vindictive teasing via Facebook, e-mail or SMS
- Posting photos on the internet without permission
- Sending threatening e-mails.

In cases of resolving bullying issues, the following parties may become involved:

1. The bully
2. The bullied
3. Other students in class
4. Teacher
5. Parents
6. School management

Other students in class can be divided into sub-groups:

1. Active, frightened: those who join the bullying out of fear (afraid of being bullied themselves if they don't join in).
2. Active, calculating: those who join the bullying to be better off themselves.
3. Passive: those who do not join the bullying but also do not take action to avoid it.
4. Unaware: those who do not see what is happening (most have their own group of friends apart from the rest of the class).
5. Protectors: Those who (try to) protect the bullied.

To treat bullying it is important to know which students belong to which sub-group..

### **The causes of bullying**

Where bullying takes place, the blame can not be solely placed on the bully. Students' personal problems and social-emotional development are also important factors to be addressed, both for the bully as well as the bullied. Research has shown that bad relations between students and a non-democratic environment at school makes bullying possible. At a group level, the balance of power or insufficient teacher supervision also makes bullying possible.

### **The effects of bullying**

Bullying can have a major long-term impact on students. Victims can become very unhappy, fearful, suffer from low self-confidence or low self-esteem, withdraw and become isolated. Victims are afraid to stand up for themselves and feel responsible for being bullied. Their behaviour changes over time: they may become nervous, stressed, physically stiff or clumsy. Symptoms include hyperventilating, headaches, physical pains and ailments, bed wetting. Social and emotional development is disrupted. Without treatment, victims can be affected for life.

### **Signals of bullying**

Early recognition of bullying is essential. Students tend not to speak about bullying in class. While some may know bullying is taking place, nobody dares to tell the teacher out of fear to be the 'snitch'. Parents often do not know how to bring the subject to the teacher's attention. For that reason it is important to agree with students and parents that telling someone about bullying is never wrong. It is always important that the teacher knows. Students have to be aware that they can talk to the teacher safely and that they will be heard. Parents need to realize that bullying will not be tolerated by the teacher and that cooperation between parents and teacher is important.

The teacher always has to be alert to signs of bullying in the group. Anytime there is a sign of bullying the teacher must investigate what is going on immediately.

### **How to recognize bullying?**

In addition, the following warning signs may indicate bullying at school:

- a student standing alone during the break
- a student seeking regular contact with a teacher rather than other students
- a student doesn't want to leave the classroom
- a student seeks friends in a lower class
- a student has fewer friends over time and is often alone
- unpleasant reactions in the group when a student shares something during lessons
- when everything a student does make others react unpleasantly
- students not welcome to join a group
- gossip about a student circulates in the group

### **Signs for parents:**

- a student does not want to go to school
- a student complains about all kinds of pain which disappears during holidays
- a student does not want to wear certain clothes to school
- a student is irrationally bad tempered and angry
- a student has regular nightmares
- a student starts wetting the bed
- a student is never invited to join social activities.

### **Prevention of bullying:**

In a climate with clear expectations of how we treat one another, where differences are accepted and problems are solved through dialogue rather than violence, bullying is less likely to occur. Teachers must be positive role-models and DENISE is proactive in the prevention of bullying. Therefore we work on the social-emotional development of students in a safe group environment even when there are no signs of bullying. Furthermore we:

- Talk about class rules and how we communicate
- Participate in the Kwink-program
- Address social-emotional topics via ICC/IPC/IMYC and drama lessons
- Teach about taking part in the global multi-cultural society we live in
- Offer special training programs for students who need help.

### **Bullying is a subject to be discussed**

The teacher talks about bullying throughout the year, including when bullying is not taking place. The teacher ensure that students:

- know they are all co-responsible for the atmosphere in class
- know how and when to contact a teacher
- are aware that it is alright to talk about bullying and that they should always speak with a teacher should it occur.

### **Response to bullying**

If bullying takes place, the school will take the following actions:

1. Help students to resolve their problems together.
2. If students are not capable of resolving the problems themselves, they go to the teacher.
3. The teacher facilitates dialogue and help to stop the bullying. New agreements will be made.
4. The teacher will evaluate results. If they are not satisfied, a plan will be made with parents, student support coordinator and teacher to resolve the issues.

### **The 'stop-method'**

In all classes we use the 'stop-method': when ever a student says 'stop' to another person doing 'something' the student does not want, the person has to stop. Any student or teacher can make their boundaries very clear by using the 'stop-method.' Anytime a student crosses the boundary, the teacher will act in an appropriate way.

## **7. Conclusion**

As teachers at DENISE we aim to offer the best possible education to our diverse student population. Looking after the special educational needs of our students is an important aspect of this. Teachers recognise the importance of continuous education on this topic and we have a SEN policy in place for when issues become too complicated for a mentor to deal with. We recognise that the way to ensure success for our students with a need for learning support is in the first instance to recognize that this is a joint endeavour between the student, his home environment and the school.