



UNDERSTANDING SIAS

The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy

In 2014, the Department of Basic Education issued a policy document – *The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (SIAS)* – to provide a framework with which to standardise the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.

The SIAS policy is aimed at improving access to quality education for:

- Vulnerable learners who experience barriers to learning, including learners in ordinary and special schools. Barriers may include family disruption, language, the impact of poverty, learning difficulties, disability, large classes and an inflexible curriculum.
- Children who are of compulsory school-going age and youth who may be out of school or have never enrolled in a school due to their disability or other barriers to access.

The policy includes a protocol as well as a set of official forms to be used by teachers, School Based Support Teams (SBST) and District Based Support Teams (DBST).

1 THE SIAS PROCESS

STAGE 1 The Initial Screening guided by the Learner Profile

Teacher screens all learners at admission and beginning of each phase; records findings in Learner Profile; captures on Learner Unit Record and Tracking System (LURITS).

STAGE 2 Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Learning and Development at School Level

When a learner is identified as vulnerable, the teacher assumes the role of case manager and, in conjunction with the learner and parent, on the basis of the information gathered, formulates a reviewable intervention plan.

If the learner needs further support, the teacher completes Support Needs Assessment Form 1 (SNA 1) and approaches the School Based Support Team (SBST), who will then develop an Individual Support Plan (ISP) for the learner. The SBST will use SNA Form 2 for this purpose. This plan must be reviewed regularly. If a higher level of support is required for the learner, the District Based Support Team (DBST) is approached.

STAGE 3 Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Learning at District Level

The Support Needs Assessment 3 (SNA 3) form guides the District Based Support Team (DBST) in their intervention strategy, which is informed by the teacher and SBST's support plans for the learner. The DBST develops a Support Plan which includes:

- Planning and budgeting for additional support programmes determined in SNA 3
- Resource and support service allocation to school and learner
- Training, counselling and mentoring of teacher and parents/legal caregivers
- Monitoring support provision
- Using the various tools included in SIAS to help carry out their decisions

All decisions made about the placement of a learner have to be done in **consultation with the parents.**

2 UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF SUPPORT

A support package for a learner may consist of a range of additional support provisions. Depending on the level of intensity and frequency of support required, the support will be assessed to be of a low, moderate or high level. This will in turn determine where and by whom support will be provided.

SIAS identifies five specific support provision areas:

- Specialist support staff
- Assistive devices, specialised equipment and teaching and learning support materials
- Curriculum differentiation to meet the individual needs of learners
- Initial and on-going training, orientation, mentorship and guidance
- Environmental access (once-off and not necessarily on-going).

The nature and extent of the support needed to address the barrier are determined by evaluating:

- The existing resources or support available to the learner and the school
- The additional support that is still required
- What is available within the province or district that could reasonably be made available at school level through a range of means.

Placement at a Special School is only considered once all other options for supporting a learner at his/her local school have been explored.

3 WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SIAS TO BE IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY?

- **Training:** For the SIAS policy to work effectively for the benefit of all children experiencing barriers to learning, teachers will need to be familiar with the policy and be able to implement the process. This will require regular training and support beyond the initial orientation.
- **District support:** A good relationship between the School Based Support team and the District Based Support Team is vital to the successful implementation of SIAS. Endorsement and involvement from the district will ensure prompt and effective engagement by the School Based Support team and well-supported teacher intervention.
- **Seamless coordination of all directorates and state departments:** Successful implementation does not rest with one directorate, but depends on the coordination of various directorates in education, and other state entities, to deliver services to learners to support effective teaching and learning.

Remember

- ▶ Placement at a special school is only considered as a last resort.
- ▶ It is not permanent and will be reviewed periodically.
- ▶ It is deemed best to first look to support a learner at his ordinary neighbourhood school.



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Desmond Tutu

RELATED POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

- ▶ Education White Paper 6 (2001)
- ▶ Integrated School Health Policy (2012)
- ▶ Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Framework (2008)
- ▶ Guidelines for Full Service Schools (2010)
- ▶ Guidelines for Special Schools and Special School Resource Centres (2014)
- ▶ CAPS Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom Grade R–12 (2011)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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