Inclusion Policy Draft 2023

St Dominic's International School (SDIS) is an inclusive International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum school that offers a holistic education from the ages of 3-18 for international students and Portuguese students who wish to study in the English language.

The heart of the SDIS mission is to nurture people and cultivate international mindedness to develop the intellectual, social, physical, emotional, moral and spiritual characteristics inherent in each person. We believe that at SDIS we will support all individuals in developing the necessary skills to make a meaningful contribution to create a better and more peaceful world.

Philosophy

SDIS has an open access policy and welcomes diversity, aiming to meet the learning needs of all students.

SDIS believes every student is entitled to demonstrate their knowledge and level of attainment no matter what personal or social barriers they may experience. The school believes that all students have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum, that the curriculum should be relevant and differentiated and that it should demonstrate progression and coherence. SDIS recognises that all students can learn and make progress in diverse ways and at different rates. A continuum of provision is available to meet the range of needs.

SDIS acknowledges that students come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, and that they have their own learning styles, strengths and challenges. The school is responsible for working together as a team to harness this diversity and accommodate all learners, including removing barriers that may interfere with learning. Barriers to learning can come in many forms including: the learning environment, the approaches to teaching and learning, the physical aspects of the school, the organization of the school, and the way in which individuals within the school interact with each other. It is the responsibility of all staff at SDIS to positively respond to and support everyone's unique needs.

The learning requirements of most students can be met within the mainstream classroom using inclusive teaching strategies and differentiated activities and materials. By implementing inclusive teaching and learning methods adapted to diverse needs and learning styles, having a flexible curriculum responsive to diverse needs, and providing professional development to

teachers, we appreciate diversity. Together with parents and guardians, we aim to identify and help all students to thrive.

Purpose

By implementing this policy SDIS aims to achieve inclusion by following the IB guidelines:

Affirming Identity and building self esteem

- We value all students.
- We value each student's knowledge, strengths and interests.
- We consider that all students come from diverse backgrounds.
- We see students' differences to promote international mindedness and enrich their learning.

Scaffolding

- We promote students' independence.
- We ensure all students develop the IB learner profile.
- We reinforce our students' strengths.
- We use teaching principles to build up learning.

Extended learning

- We ensure students are accepted as they are.
- We remove learning barriers.
- We promote positive learning environments.
- We incorporate technology into our learning to support our existing curriculum.
- We plan our teaching to ensure variability is accounted for.
- We understand mistakes as a key part of learning.
- We include students in decisions about their learning.
- We encourage collaborative learning.
- We use approaches to learning that benefit the development of the IB student profile.
- We access our students during the learning and teaching process so we can provide regular feedback and adapt our teaching styles.
- We teach all students no matter what specific difficulty they might have, making learning accessible to all.

Valuing prior knowledge

- We ensure we connect with students' prior knowledge to build up their full potential.

- We clearly understand that diversity includes all members of community.
- We recognize there are gaps and overlaps in learning for everyone.

Defining Inclusion

At SDIS, inclusion is a culture embedded in the school that appreciates the diversity and differences of each community member. We work to overcome barriers to facilitate the growth of all school community members. The aim is to create a supportive environment. Our objective is to support the IB belief that "Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community." www.ibo.org/programmes/equity-and-inclusive-education-in-the-ib

According to the IB Learning Diversity and Inclusion Policy, "inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for **all** students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organization paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire."

Access refers to providing equitable educational opportunities in learning teaching evaluation/assessment and all other aspects of school life to all students by making space and provision for the characteristics that each person brings.

According to the Portuguese Decree-Law nº 54/2018, July 6, …"the need of each school to recognize the added value of the diversity of its students, finding ways to deal with that difference, adjusting the teaching processes to the individual characteristics and conditions of each student, mobilizing the means at its disposal so that everyone learns and participates in the life of the educational community."

Inclusive education is the process of reinforcing the capacity of education systems to welcome and reach out to all learners. (UNESCO, 2017: 7). More specifically, it is 'a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centres of learning to cater for all children. (UNESCO, 2008: 5). Inclusive education is an effective way to provide all children an equal chance to go to the same school, learn, and develop the skills they need to succeed during their lifetime (IIEP-UNESCO, 2019).

To achieve an inclusive education, it is recognised that some students have additional requirements beyond the standard support offered by class teachers. These are known as Special Educational Needs.

Defining Special Educational Needs -

A student is deemed to have special educational needs (SEN) if difficulties that are a barrier to learning are displayed, and which call for special educational provision to be made to support their learning requirements.

Special education is defined as an 'education designed to facilitate the learning of individuals who, for a wide variety of reasons, require additional support and adaptive pedagogical methods in order to participate and meet learning objectives in an educational programme' (UIS-UNESCO, n.d.).

Portuguese Education law considers special education needs to be any barrier that limits communication, learning, mobility, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, social relations and emotional state.

Special Education Needs can be categorised into:

- specific learning difficulty
- moderate learning difficulty
- severe learning difficulty
- profound and multiple learning difficulty
- social, emotional and mental health
- speech, language and communication needs
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- multi-sensory impairment
- physical disability
- autistic spectrum disorder
- other difficulty
- SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need
- gifted/talented students

Appendix 1 – Inclusive Education Procedures

1. At the start of each year GLL and JS classroom teachers complete a Grade/Class inclusion report that includes the following information:

a. Nº of students
b. New v returning students
c. Teachers of the grade level
d. New or returning students
e. Nationalities
f. Religions
g. Learning Support
h. Academic achievement levels
i. Social patterns and Group influences

2. Students in Senior School complete a Student Passport document

3. Inclusion support for new students requires:

a. GLL reviews student documents – prior to start of school
b. GLL meets with students – induction day. Language tests etc. and Student portrait document* given to student for completion
c. Counsellors and GLL's meet with new students – first weeks of school and discuss student portrait document.
d. Counsellors monitor students until mid-term break.
e. LS and GLL review Mid-term reports – flourishing scale/settling grades

4. Inclusion for in-year starts requires:

a. Language tests etc. Completed prior to first day of start. Student portrait document* given to student for completion
b. GLL reviews student documents – prior to start of school
c. GLL and counsellors meet with the student to discuss and get to know them. Student portrait documents are discussed.

5. Inclusive Curriculum reflection - Guiding questions to be completed in annual curriculum review:

a. To what extent does your curriculum reflect the diversity of your student body?
b. Are there any students who may feel excluded by any activities or content?
c. Is there any topic that may lead to a lack of engagement from any students because of teaching content or styles?
d. What steps could you take to model inclusive behaviour?
e. How have you promoted international mindedness during your teaching?
f. Is your classroom organised in the most effective way to encourage inclusive learning?
g. What strategies are you using to help to remove barriers to learning?

Appendix 2 – Learning Support Procedures

Learning Support new student screening procedures

1. New students reports / documents re collated by Head of Learning Support.
2. Parents contacted if potential support is required.
3. LS, EAL and/or GLL meet with student(s)
4. Learning support team and GLL(s) meet to discuss support plan.
5. Contact made with parents.

Admissions

Admission decisions for students with learning differences are made by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Learning Support department and be based on the information provided to SDIS from previous school(s). Please see the Admissions Policy.

If details from a potential student's previous schools are not provided or unclear, SDIS will determine if or how the school can meet the student(s) requirements.

The annual re-registration of a student's contract depends on the review of the student's progress in school, the school´s ability to meet the student's needs, and the parent's agreement to work with the school.

Identifying and Referring Students

Where there is cause for concern, class teachers will work alongside the Learning Support staff in the identification of the individual learning requirements for the referred student. Please see Referral and Support Procedures for further details.

Access arrangements

The Learning Support Department will become involved when a possible learning need has been raised. In most cases teachers need to support the adaptation of access by providing learning materials and resources.

Learning Support services are personalized to meet the distinct needs of students' unique learning requirements. This may include individual or small group instruction, inclusion, resources, self-contained, consulting and in some cases, with the agreement of parents, the hiring of an aid to support learning or the contracted specialized outside services e.g., physical, occupational, speech therapy and mental health counselling.

The IB Inclusion Policy states that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions (please see the Assessment Policy for further details). Access arrangements must not only apply to students during summative IB assessments but also be available throughout the course of study. This includes all classroom work and formative assessments that are part of everyday learning.

When a student has been diagnosed with a specific learning requirement, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide (or work with the Learning Support Dept to establish) the necessary accommodation(s) or differentiation to ensure the needs are met.

Learning Support Plans

Students with identified learning differences will have a learning support plan, a Student Passport and IEP. This should include:

- Academic information
- Targets
- Strengths and interests
- Strategies to be used by student, parents and teachers
- A review date(s)
- Achievement criteria
- Outcomes

Targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and set within a specific time period. Targets will be drawn up by members of the Learning Support team in consultation with the class teacher(s), students and parents.

Targets and strategies will be formally communicated to the parents at a meeting where parents will be given their own copy of the student's learning support plan and will be asked to sign a copy which will be kept in the student's file in the Learning Support Department.

The targets set in the learning support plans will be used as part of the measure of student progress against their personal targets and recommendations and will be reviewed at least twice each academic year.

Learning Support personnel produce or review individualised plans in the first and second term and communicate student progress and new targets to parents at a meeting with the class teacher in attendance.

A written report will be sent home at the end of the school year.

Referral Procedure - Junior School

Stages	Responsibility
Stage 1 • Discuss concerns with student's previous teacher or in the case of a new student, obtain reports from previous school. • Check with Learning Support (LS) team if any concerns have been raised previously. • Discuss concerns with grade level teachers and specialists and SLT and LS team as appropriate. • Review student's file available from Admin, which includes previous reports, assessment data, In-class results, etc.	Class Teacher
Stage 2	Class Teacher
• Collect evidence to support concerns, including work samples, anecdotal notes, formal and informal assessments, etc. • Complete referral form, available from the LS Department. • Discuss concerns, supported with evidence and referral form, with member of LS team.	
Stage 3 • Observations pertinent to the concern area will be done by an LS team member.	Learning Support

Stage 4 • Implement in-class strategies as suggested by LS team, to provide a more supportive learning environment including differentiation of activities, in-class accommodations, increased support from class TA (Teaching Assistants), etc.	Class Teacher
Stage 5 • If there has been little/no positive impact of in-class strategies after an approximate timeframe of one month, Class Teacher to meet with parents to discuss concerns and gather further background information. The meeting may include a member of the LS team; this is at the Class Teacher's discretion; however, the LS dept. needs to be informed of information and results of the meeting.	Class Teacher
Stage 6 • LS to assess student's needs, either with in-school assessments or recommended specialists outside of school. • At this stage, the decision will be made by the LS team whether a student has a learning difficulty that requires specialised provision and if so, the student should be added to the school's LS Register. • Within the Early Years and lower Junior School, due to the complexities of and diverse opinions about formally assessing younger children, a re-assessment will take place of all evidence provided by the Class Teacher.	Learning Support
Stage 7 • A follow-up meeting will take place between Class Teacher and member(s) of the SLT and LS teams to collate all information and to make final decisions on the student's support. • Create an IEP that aligns with Portuguese legal requirements	Class Teacher and Learning Support

*Note: Allow new students an appropriate amount of time to adapt.

JS Learning Support Referral Form

Student: _____ Class: _____

D.O.B: ___/___/___

Concern raised by: _____ Date: ___/___/___

EAL Support: Yes: (Beginner / Intermediate) No

Student's background information (family history/languages spoken/previous school, etc.)**:**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Indicate Area/s of Concern:

( ) working below expectations
( ) reading
( ) writing process
( ) organizing work
( ) speed of work
( ) short or long term memory
( ) gross or fine motor skills
( ) more able

( ) comprehension
( ) verbal skills
( ) listening
( ) speech or articulation
( ) concentration/ attention
( ) hyperactivity
( ) math skills
( ) handwriting

( ) personal organization
( ) social skills / emotional regulation
( ) attitude towards self
( ) relationships
( ) behaviour towards others
( ) self esteem, sadness
( ) anxiety
( )
Other:_____

What are the student's strengths or positive traits?

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

What evidence has been attached?

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

Has the concern been discussed with the LS team?

Yes No

Class teacher's signature: _____

Part 2: To be completed during meeting with Learning Support

Date of meeting: ___/___/___ Member of Learning Support team:

_____

Recommended in-class support/accommodations:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Review meeting to be held on: ___/___/___

Referral Procedure - Senior School

Stages	Responsibility
Stage 1 • Check with Learning Support (LS) and/or GLL team if any concerns have been raised previously on that student.	Class Teacher
Stage 2 • Collect evidence to support concerns, including work samples, anecdotal notes, formal and informal assessments, etc. • Complete referral form, available from the LS Department. • Discuss concerns, supported with evidence and referral form, with member of LS team.	Class Teacher Grade Level Leader

Stage 3 If justified: • Observations/screening, pertinent to the area of concern, will be done by an LS team member. • LS team, together with GLL, will contact student's teachers for further information.	Learning Support/ GLL
Stage 4 • Implement in-class strategies as suggested by LS team, to provide a more supportive learning environment including differentiation of activities, in-class accommodations, etc.	Class Teacher
Stage 5 • If there has been little/no positive impact of in-class strategies after an approximate time of one month, Learning Support to meet with parents to discuss concerns and gather further background information. Meeting includes GLL.	Learning Support GLL
Stage 6 • LS to assess student's needs, either with in-school assessments or recommended specialists outside of school. • At this stage, the decision will be made by the LS team whether a student has a learning difficulty that requires specialised provision and if so, the student should be added to the school's LS Register.	Learning Support
Stage 7 • LS will create a student passport and share information with teachers and SLT. • Create an IEP that aligns with Portuguese legal requirements	Learning Support

*Note: Allow new students an appropriate amount of time to adapt.

Referral Form - SEN and Counselling

Student: _____ Class: _____ D.O.B**:** ___/___/___

Concern raised by: _____ Date: ___/___/___

EAL Support: Yes: Beginner / Intermediate or No

Indicate Area/s of Concern:

( ) working below expectations	( ) speed of work
( ) reading	( ) short or long term memory
( ) writing process	( ) gross or fine motor skills
( ) organizing work	( ) more able
( ) comprehension	( ) personal organization
( ) verbal skills	( ) social skills / emotional regulation
( ) listening	( ) attitude towards self
( ) speech or articulation	( ) relationships
( ) concentration/ attention	( ) behaviour towards others
( ) hyperactivity	( ) self esteem, sadness
( ) math skills	( ) anxiety
( ) handwriting	( ) Other:_____

What are the student's strengths or positive traits?

What support and accommodation have been put in place?

What evidence has been attached?

Teacher's signature: _____

Supporting Documents: - Admissions Policy and Assessment Policy