

Inclusion Policy

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 have the opportunity 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 different 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, backgrounds, and that they have their own learning styles, strengths and challenges. It is the responsibility of the school to work together as a team to harness this diversity and accommodate all learners, including the removal of 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 each individual's unique needs.

The learning requirements of most students can be met within the mainstream classroom by the use of inclusive teaching strategies and differentiated activities and materials. By implementing inclusive teaching and learning methods adapted to different needs and learning styles, having a flexible curriculum responsive to diverse needs, and providing professional development to teachers, we welcome 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 different backgrounds.
- We see students' differences as a way to promote international mindedness and enrichen their learning.

Scaffolding

- We promote students' independence.
- We ensure all students develop the IB learner profile.
- We reinforce our student's 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 assess 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 each individual.

Defining Inclusion

At SDIS, inclusion is the educational strategy that helps teachers provide teaching and assessment across abilities while delivering the same content. The aim is to create a more supportive environment for both teachers and students.

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. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community."

UNESCO states inclusive education means that all children - no matter who they are - can learn together in the same school. This entails reaching out to all learners and removing all barriers that could limit participation and achievement.

According to the Portuguese Decree-Law n° 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.”

Defining Special Educational Needs

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

The UK's Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice outlines four 'broad areas of need' which should be planned for. The *Code of Practice* acknowledges that individual children or young people often have needs that cut across all these areas and that their needs may change over time. The four areas of need are:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- sensory and/or physical needs

These four areas are reinforced in the Portuguese Education law, as it 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 and able students

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The school reviews mandated policies on a regular basis to ensure that they are cohesive and are aligned with IB Standards and Practices.

Appendix – Procedures

Access arrangements

Where necessary, intervention might include adaptation of the curriculum, inclusive (in class) or withdrawal support and in some cases, with the agreement of parents, the hiring of an aid to support learning. The Learning Support Department will become involved when a possible learning need has been raised. 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 contracted specialized outside services e.g. physical, occupational, speech therapy and mental health counselling. Please see Referral and Support Procedures for further details.

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. Therefore, when a student has been diagnosed with a specific learning requirement, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide the necessary accommodations or differentiation to ensure the particular needs of every learner are being met.

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.

Admissions

Admission decisions for students with learning differences are made by the Principal in consultation with the Learning Support team. The annual re-registration of a student's contract is dependent upon the review of the student's progress in school and the school's ability to meet the student's needs as well as the parent's agreement to work in conjunction with the school. Please see the Admissions Policy for further details.

Learning Support Plans

Students with identified learning differences will have a learning support plan. This should include:

- Academic information
- Targets

- Strengths and interests
- Strategies to be used by student, parents and teachers
- A review date
- 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. In senior school students and parents will be involved in this process. 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.

Supporting Documents:

Admissions Policy

Assessment Policy

Referral and Support Procedures