

Inclusion Policy 2022/23

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.

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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."

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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 nº54/2018, 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

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- other difficulty
- SEN support but no specialist assessment of type of need
- gifted and able students

This document will be reviewed and revised by June 2025.

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