

ABROAD INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OKAYAMA



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International School

# Inclusion Policy

Review Date: 11/16/2022

Next Review: 11/16/2023

## Vision

Our vision is to help shape the future for a better world by using leading educational practices to nurture internationally minded learners who show caring, respect, and compassion through their actions.

## Mission

Our mission is to develop confident lifelong learners who are;

multilingual,

inquiring,

open-minded and

Respectful of all cultures.

Through balanced reflection, and risk-taking, our learners will be able to communicate, develop knowledge and pass on positive principles for the benefit of both themselves and others.

## Learner Profile

**Inquirers:** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable:** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers: They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators: They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled: They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded: They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring: They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers: They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced: They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective: They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

## Introduction:

The importance of acknowledging differences among people is clearly indicated in the IB Mission Statement. This mission statement emphasizes the importance of encouraging “students across the world to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who understand that *other people, with their differences, can also be right*”. This document aims to communicate to all of our stakeholders – parents, students, teachers and administrators – the expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all our IB students as required by IBO and supported by AIS Okayama. Inclusion is defined as an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment (Learning diversity and inclusion in the IB Programmes, 2016,p.1)

## Our philosophy regarding inclusive education

AIS Okayama is organized in such a way that student diversity can be included as a resource, seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriched learning. Diversity is a positive resource with regard to what it means to be internationally minded and interculturally aware (Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate Programmes, p.2). The following IB Standards and Practices define the requirements regarding inclusive education at AIS Okayama:

- The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy.
- The school develops and implements policies and procedures that support the programmes.
- The school provides support for its students with learning needs and support for their teachers.
- Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students’ learning needs and styles.

- The written curriculum provides opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.
- Teaching and learning addresses human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives.
- Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.
- Teaching and learning fosters a stimulating learning environment based on understanding and respect.
- Teaching and learning encourages students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
- Education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student.
- Learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities.
- All learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning.
- Full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge.
- Assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated.
- Multilingualism is recognized as a fact, right and resource.
- All students in the school community have a voice and choice that is acknowledged so that their input and insights are taken into account.
- All students in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- Diversity is understood to include all members of a community.
- All students experience success as a key component of learning. (Learning diversity and inclusion in the IB Programmes, 2016, p.5).

At AIS, we acknowledge that our students have different educational and learning needs, abilities, and goals, and that their learning processes are diverse in terms of learning styles, means and rates at which they acquire knowledge and develop skills. Thus we aim to provide learner-centered instruction so that all students receive the necessary resources, guidance and accommodations, but also the challenges needed for personal growth and success. This process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals is defined as differentiation and we are aware that it can be attainable if we nurture a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving.

## Principles of good practice

### Affirming identity and building self-esteem:

An affirmative model of identity ensures that all students are visible and valued. It is a model that challenges the model of disability where learners recognize that it is possible to make a difference in their own lives and society.

### Valuing prior knowledge through:

- Meaningfully assessing existing knowledge, strengths and interests recognizing that there may be gaps or overlaps in learning.
- Working with students to construct individual learning profiles to inform teaching and learning.
- Explicitly activating learners' prior understanding to promote new learning.
- Taking into account prior learning when designing, differentiating and planning for new learning.

## Scaffolding

A strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be impossible or much too difficult to accomplish. By breaking down the learning process into smaller steps, we aim to achieve understanding for all learners. This may include: graphics, visual aids, demonstrations, dramatization, small, structured collaborative groups etc. to develop ideas and initial plans.

## Students with Special Education Needs

AIS Okayama strongly believes that all of its students, regardless of their differences, should be provided with authentic learning opportunities. The school will, at its best, utilize its resources and facilities to maximize student access for this provision. AIS Okayama promotes the IB principle to "encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong

learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right" (IB mission statement 2004). AIS Okayama implements the following policy with special educational needs.

#### Definition of SEN:

The term Special Educational Needs refers to students who;

- Have academic competency below grade/age level.
- Are physically, mentally or developmentally less able students with regards to their grade/age.
- Have limited or no background in English and Japanese languages.

#### Admission of Students with SEN

At Abroad International School, we believe that every child is unique and has the right to the same education as their peers. We do not expel students because of their needs after they have registered at our school. At any stage, when we notice that a child is with SEN, we take the following steps:

1. Have a meeting with the homeroom and co teachers to discuss and evidence the reasons why they think the student is with SEN.
2. Organize a meeting with the parents or caregivers of the child and share the findings and concerns with them.
3. Recommend the parents or caregivers take the child to a specialist.
4. Discuss the suggestions of the specialist with the teachers.
5. Recommend the parents or caregivers get support for the child outside of school.

#### Identification and assessment

Children with SEN are identified at the application stage through the initial application and the following screening procedure. Throughout the school, we monitor and track the progress of all children by an ongoing process of planning, teaching and assessment. Students with SEN may be identified at any stage of this process during their school life.

For the EAL students, pull-out or in-class support is provided from preschool to kindergarten.

## Involvement of outside agencies

For those students who may not be helped adequately by the available school resources and staff, the school reserves the right to suggest agencies outside of the school, which may include:

- A specialist educator in the identified area of need
- Medical service (e.g. Speech Therapist, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist)
- An Educational Psychologist

The relevant expenses of such services are to be met by the family of the student.

## Monitoring the success of the SEN Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be attested by:

- In-class observations
- Differentiated planning by the teachers
- Student portfolios
- Behavior book
- Student's self-assessment
- Parent or caregiver assessment
- The assessment of the out-of-school agencies

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Responsibilities of the School

- Raising staff awareness of the learning support requirements of our students.
- Providing resources for the implementation and continuation of the Inclusion Policy.



- Communicating with the parents about the students' development, and organizing meetings with the teachers and parents.

#### Responsibilities of the Teachers

- Identifying struggling learners and referring the student to the counsellor or IB coordinator as needed.
- Making use of various differentiating scaffolding strategies suggested as good practices in this document.
- Communicating the students' progress to the members of the school administration.
- Participating in all required training when available.
- Maintaining discretion and confidentiality in providing special education needs services.

#### Responsibilities of the Parent

- Communicating to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's learning support requirement.
- Communicating with the school regarding any changes in their child's learning support requirement and special educational needs and any other issues that may affect their learning.
- Playing an active role in their child's education.

#### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed when needed by the representatives from school admission, teaching staff, students, parents and other stakeholders.