

ISA GZFLS Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Rationale:

The importance of a school inclusion policy is embedded in the IBO Programme Standards and Practices (2022) specifically Standard: Culture through policy implementation (0301) and Practice 0301-02 *The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential.*¹

ISA GZFLS, in line with IB philosophy, believes that education should be an inclusive practice and that “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”.²

We are committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to remove barriers to learning. Through the concepts of shared responsibility and respect ISA GZFLS believes in a learning environment that allows each student to experience success and build on their strengths in order to fully participate in their education and develop into life-long learners.

IB programmes “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). The International Baccalaureate embraces inclusive practices where all teachers and specialists of a school share the development of learning of all students. Difference and diversity are central in IB World Schools where all students enrolled in IB programmes should receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum. Enhancing the motivation to learn from multiple perspectives, through collaborative teaching approaches, can lead to positive outcomes for all students. These outcomes include improved academic and social skills, increased self-esteem, and more positive relationships with others in the community.

The IBO sets high standards which are embodied throughout its programmes. This policy directly links to the learner profile of being open-minded and caring which aligns with the school value of being compassionate.

The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education. These are:

1. Education for all is considered a human right
2. Education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and overall development and growth for every student
3. Every teacher is responsible for the education of all students

¹ Programme Standards and Practices, IBO, 2022 p11

² *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes* IBO, 2016 p.5

4. Learning is considered from a strength-based perspective
5. Learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities
6. All learners belong and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning
7. Full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge
8. Assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated
9. Multilingualism is recognised as a fact, a right and a resource
10. All students in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as global citizens
11. All students in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are taken into account
12. 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
13. Diversity is understood to include all members of a community
14. All students experience learning as a key component of success.

(Learning Diversity & Inclusion in IB Programmes, 2016)

Inclusion Policy Context

ISA Guangzhou Foreign Language School IB Programme (ISA GZFLS) recognises that students come from a variety of cultures, backgrounds and that each has their own strengths and areas in which to develop. It is the responsibility of the school to work as a team to remove barriers that may impinge on student 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 organisation of the school
- how individuals within the school interact with each other.

It is the job of our staff to positively support each individual's unique needs. There are students who may have recognized special educational needs which have been recorded and sent to school via our Admissions Office. However, in many cases, there will be some students that may have learning variability that have not yet been diagnosed. There are many different types of need, examples include:

- Specific learning disabilities (such as dyslexia and dyscalculia)
- Language and communication disorders
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Physical difficulties affecting mobility
- Sensory impairments (such as visual or hearing difficulties)
- Medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy and diabetes)
- Health conditions (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders and anxiety)
- Gifted and talented students who may underperform if needs are not met

ISA GZFLS implements inclusive teaching strategies so that all students can engage in meaningful learning experiences. Teachers use differentiated instructional strategies to support student learning styles and to further enhance student potential. Where possible, students with special educational needs are supported by teachers and support staff. Learning experiences are designed to allow all students, including those with learning variability, to experience the Diploma Program according to the philosophy of the IB Program. The school has ensured that the entire campus is available to wheelchair users and other students with mobility issues. Students are not excluded from the program due to special needs.

Academic support at ISA GZFLS is offered to students in grades 10 – 12. The focus for our support is meeting student needs within the context of the classroom (tier 1). Services include, but may not be limited to:

- assisting students in content areas,
- teaching, study and organizational skills
- providing learning strategies to students having difficulties with reading, writing and mathematics.

Classroom teachers and the Academic Affairs Office collaborate so that academic support will be integrated allowing for students to be successful. Where possible, learning support services are individualized to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, and for those with higher level needs (Tier 2), an Individual Education Plan will be produced and shared with the respective staff supporting the student. This support may include additional individual or small group instruction, inclusion, additional resources.

Identification

Where a student is not making progress as reasonably expected in class, the teachers will refer them to the academic coordinator. The referral procedure then involves all the relevant teachers collaborating on a plan for that student to gain a picture of where support is needed. Parents and/or Guardians have the final approval on whether their child will be assessed externally for any perceived learning need.

The graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review is used. Screening and assessments in an educational context (where approved by parents) will take place to establish the extent of the learner's difficulties, the extent to which these difficulties disadvantage the learner and to advise how the learner's special needs might be met. Below is an outline of the stages of this procedure:

Stage 1: Identification of need

- Learner's name will be registered with the relevant Coordinator.
- The Year level Coordinator will inform parents of the possible educational and/or behavioural concerns of the learner.
- Parents will provide permission for the school to proceed in gaining a full picture to implement support.

Stage 2: Gaining a picture of the student

- The Academic Office assesses information that has been collected from teachers and parents. This will include information about the learner's early development, family background, medical history, activities/behaviour and educational history.
- If deemed appropriate, an assessment will take place privately and recommendations of support for the learner would be made.
- If need requires significant support, an Individualised Educational Plan will be designed.

Stage 3: Support in place

There are three tiers of intervention:

- Tier 1 – Additional in-class support from the class teacher
- Tier 2 – In-class support plus focused individual work including counselling and an Individualised Education Plan
- Tier 3 – Private individual or small group support on a regular basis including counselling

Responsibilities

There are many facets to ensure students are included and cared for. These are details below:

Responsibilities of the School

- Provide training and instruction to teachers and staff to support individual learning requirements to reduce barriers to success.
- Raise teacher and staff awareness of the individual needs of students with learning support requirements.
- Provide appropriate resources for the implementation of the policy.

Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team / Year level Coordinators and IBDP Coordinator

- Work collaboratively with faculty to support students with learning support requirements
- Plan for any student with learning support requirements
- Collaborate with teachers on any Individual Educational Plan for students with learning support requirements or students who are struggling
- Maintain accurate records
- At enrolment, advise parents of the rigorous programme requirements to ensure appropriate placement.

Responsibilities of the Teachers

- Comply with all school policies.
- Educate in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, disabilities, age, ancestry or place of origin.
- Highlight educational needs for students referred to the Coordinator, prescribing and implementing instructional programs and evaluating the progress of students.
- Report any concerns and to follow the advice given through IEPs including implementing recommended strategies, accommodations and/or modifications as required.
- Gather evidence of student work
- Gather methods of differentiation or additional scaffolding that has been used
- Proactively collaborate with the Coordinator in the support process.
- Homeroom Teachers will spend at least 40 minutes each week with the class to maintain pastoral care. When the need arises, individual appointments can be scheduled to meet with student personally to provide support for in-school learning.

Responsibilities of the Parents

Parents of children with learning support requirements are treated as partners. They should be supported so as to be able to:

- Recognise and fulfil their responsibilities as parents and play an active role in their child's education
- Have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the school
- Have access to information, advice, and support.

To make communication effective with the school, parents should:

- Communicate to the school all documents regarding their child's learning support requirements
- Communicate with the school any changes regarding those requirements.

Responsibilities of Students

The views of all students are always valuable. In order to participate in decision making, students (with adult encouragement) can work toward:

- Expressing their feelings and their needs
- Participating in discussions
- Indicating choices.

Responsibilities of the Counsellor

- Conduct class observations.
- Counsel – carrying out individual and/or group counselling when the need arises or when a student is referred.
- Conduct programmes and workshops to inform the school stakeholders on inclusive education.
- Conduct talks for students (e.g. self-awareness, body image and/or other suitable topics).
- Maintain confidentiality and storage of documentation regarding counselling sessions and class observations.
- Collaborate with the Programme Coordinators and Deputy Head of Programme to curb student issues.

How does this policy link to other policies at ISA GZFLS?

Admissions Policy: We admit students who we believe will benefit and be successful in our educational programs. Once admitted, all students will be treated on an equitable basis with all other students. Each admission is based on the identified learning and physical challenges of the applicant, the level of professional external and school-based student support available, and the understanding and support provided by parents or guardians.

To best serve the interests of applicants, we may require as a condition of entry a psychoeducational or medical assessment from a licensed educational psychologist or medical doctor respectively, which was made within the previous two-year period of the date of application. We may also require parents or guardians to supply the results of any previous testing, which must be communicated at the time of application. In some cases, parents or guardians will be required to commit to providing supplemental resources for the education of their child.

Assessment Policy: If it is observed that any of the following circumstances can reduce or minimize barriers to student learning, then inclusive access arrangements may be applied in the following circumstances:

- long-term learning support requirements
- temporary medical conditions
- additional language learning (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2018)

In order for students to show what they know and can do; it may be necessary to adapt assessments to the needs of students not only for externally assessed coursework but primarily for everyday teaching and learning. For students with more challenging learning support requirements, the DP provides guidance for access arrangements to accommodate their needs, and these will be followed in lessons, so it becomes a normal method of working. However, the student will still require meeting the same criteria to be awarded grades.

In the IBDP, there are formal processes to recognize inclusive access arrangements made to externally moderated assessment. This relates not only to physical challenges but also to cognitive issues such as dyslexia. All requests for inclusive access arrangements for externally moderated assessment must be submitted through the IBDP Coordinator.

Inclusive Assessment: According to the Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures Section C6.1, *“The IB believes that all candidates must be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard examination conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage and prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of access arrangements may be authorized. Candidates eligible for inclusive assessment arrangements are those with individual needs such as:*

- *Learning disabilities*
- *Specific learning difficulties*
- *Communication and speech difficulties*
- *Autism spectrum disorders*
- *Social, emotional and behaviour challenges*
- *Multiple disabilities and/or physical, sensory, medical or mental health issues.*³

In addition to the standard list of arrangements, reasonable adjustments that are uniquely planned for a candidate based on individual need can also be considered (Section C6.3)⁴

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the specific requirements which are described in the IB Access and Inclusion Policy (Feb 2022) are followed so that we remain compliant with IB processes for examinations. Some arrangements are permitted without authorization while other arrangements will require authorization prior to the examination. Examples of inclusive accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- Extra time
- Use of a calculator, spell check or dictionary
- Readers and scribe
- Use of memory aids.

For arrangements requiring authorization, the IBDP Coordinator will complete and submit the request for access arrangements on IBIS at least six months prior to the examination upon receipt of the required documentation and approval from parents. Medical documentation from

³ *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures, 2023 p131*

⁴ *Diploma Programme Assessment Procedures, 2023 p133*

the parents and/or guardians will be required along with educational evidence. The IBDP Coordinator will work with the family to provide assistance in gathering the necessary documentation.

Academic Integrity Policy: The school will apply the same expectations for students with regard to academic malpractice. Students are expected to adhere to guidelines to prevent academic malpractice as support will be given to ensure they can meet the assessment criteria with integrity.

Language policy: ISA GZFLS recognises that second or additional language learning needs may provide a barrier for students to appropriately access the course. The scope of the Inclusion Policy extends to all students and should be used alongside the Language policy protocols where necessary.

How is this policy reviewed?

This policy is under continuous review from the ISA GZFLS Leadership Team on an annual basis to ensure current practices are being followed and there is compliance from all stakeholders. The policy is also subject to a detailed review in line with the ISA GZFLS policy review cycle every 2-3 years (dependant on need) incorporating the views of all stakeholders.

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Board committee responsible for oversight:	Academic Leadership Team
Board Leader of committee:	Joe Caruso
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Bibliography

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