



Learning Diversity, Access, and Inclusion Policy

IC Vision

The vision of International College (IC) is to empower learners of today to be global citizen leaders of tomorrow.

IC Mission

The mission of International College is to empower learners to take initiative, think critically, and serve as role models in a global society. The curriculum aims for excellence at all levels and embraces the education of the whole person. Graduates of IC will have developed self-confidence, problem-solving and decision-making abilities as well as self-discipline, social and environmental responsibility, and an awareness of and respect for the connected nature of our global community.

School Background

International College is an internationally competitive private school situated on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Lebanon. It has two campuses: one in Beirut and another in Ain Aar. As one of the region's most highly regarded educational institutions, admissions are competitive, and vacancies are limited. IC is an equal opportunity school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, social standing, religion, or national origin. In addition, IC has limited capacities to accommodate students with severe learning difficulties.

There are four diploma programs offered at IC: IB - International Baccalaureate (Primary Years Program - Diploma Program), the Lebanese Baccalaureate, the French Baccalaureate, and the American College Preparatory Program. All programs require students to study three languages: Arabic as the host country language, a language of instruction (French or English), and an additional language (French or English). The secondary school offers additional languages based on the program chosen.

The rigorous academic environment at IC contributes to the almost 100 percent acceptance rate

to top universities in Lebanon and abroad, including Europe, North America, and Canada.

Philosophy

At IC, we believe that young people can only reach their full academic, social and physical potential in an inclusive environment that fosters a culture of understanding, mutual respect, equity, and support. It is a culture where students, faculty, administrators, staff, and parents feel they can contribute to the school and where diverse views are welcomed.

We believe in developing our students' critical thinking and self-agency skills, ultimately enabling them to make choices, act with a sense of purpose, and take an active role in shaping their future rather than being influenced by surrounding circumstances.

IC aims to develop a desire for lifelong learning in each of our students. At the heart of our high-quality learning is the development of our students' characters. We strive to instill international mindedness and understanding, respect for others, a sense of responsibility, ethics, problem-solving skills, teamwork, and creativity.

Policy Aim

While IC does not cater to students with severe learning disabilities, it does give equal access and opportunities to all learners who need mild learning support by providing them with student-centered accommodations.

Inclusion at IC covers a wide range of student support, including counseling, a child protection policy, special language programs, hybrid/online learning, a student support department, assessments, and an admissions policy.

Purpose of Accommodations and Statement of Privacy

IC strives to do its best in accommodating students with mild learning disabilities and provides several student-centered approaches to learning. Accommodations are approved after a thorough, confidential evaluation.

Accommodations may include and are not limited to arrangements that support the students in class or, as needed, outside of class.

Policy Objectives

- To have students learn, work, participate, and be assessed in a safe and supportive environment.
- To facilitate a culture of learning with dignity, fairness, and respect, free of discrimination.

- To have all students feel valued, respected, and heard.
- To empower students to work toward academic, emotional, and social growth.
- To advocate for fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all students, faculty/staff, and parents.
- To provide transparency about equity and access to the Learning Support program at IC.
- To encourage students to take an active role in their education.
- To cultivate a culture of shared responsibility and tolerance.
- To highlight universal human rights and their importance.
- To respect and value each student for his/her individuality and uniqueness.
- To support each child's desire and potential to achieve and succeed, regardless of specific challenges and needs.
- To engage each child to have freedom of choice and the right to equality and accessibility.
- To promote the holistic development of each child.
- To promote the philosophy that diversity enriches the social and educational environment.

Child Protection

Child protection is a vital concern in schools throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are a violation of a child's human rights. They create obstacles to his or her education and affect the child's physical, emotional, and social development. The IC Child Protection Policy is based on international standards and on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Lebanon is a signatory and is in line with Lebanese law 422/2002.

These laws and standards protect children from abuse, neglect, and sexual exploitation. Reporting of child abuse is a requirement under Lebanese law.

IC has child protection officers in each school division and works closely with school administration and the School Climate Committee to support vulnerable families. IC is committed to following international standards and norms regarding child protection, counseling, and academic accommodations. This policy is updated frequently to align with shifting international standards and practices.

Special Arabic

IC offers Special Arabic classes for students whose first language is not Arabic. A student requires a foreign passport or an exemption from the Lebanese Ministry of Education to be

eligible for the Special Arabic program. Parents and guardians are responsible for seeking an exemption. The program's overall aim is to offer the student additional help in building language skills and developing confidence in Arabic.

French as an Additional Language (FLE)

IC offers additional French classes for any student whose primary language of instruction is not French. The FLE program aims to help students build language skills to develop confidence in French.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

IC offers additional English classes for any student whose primary language of instruction is not English. The program aims to assist students with additional help in building language skills to develop academic confidence in English.

Student Support Team (SST)

IC supports the policy of inclusion and accepts students with mild learning differences on the condition that they can meet the educational program's academic requirements with support, as outlined in this policy. IC has a Student Support Team (SST), comprised of support teachers and counselors, to provide services for students who require more specialized interventions and accommodations. The SST of each school has its own methodology depending on the age and level of the student.

IC is hoping to expand its Learning Support program as the need increases. The SST may include learning support teachers, directors, classroom teachers, and counselors at the school level. In each school, the SST operates under the guidance of the division's administration. In exceptional cases, the School Climate Committee may also be involved.

Student support may be necessary to promote access and inclusion in academic programs and assessments due to:

- Learning requirements
- Medical conditions
- Additional language learning
- Social/emotional needs
- External diagnosis that may impact learning
- Hybrid or online learning

Referral Process

Exceptional needs can arise at any time. When exceptional learning needs are suspected, the teacher will inform the appropriate director and SST. Families may also refer their children. The director, in collaboration with the SST, will study each case separately. This may include the following methods:

- Liaison with parents
- Liaison with teachers
- Review of previous education history
- Observations in the classroom
- Collecting data on academic abilities
- Referral requests/requirements to parents for formal assessments by outside specialists to identify needs, if necessary

As soon as evidence has been collected, the director may call and chair a meeting to discuss further steps or a plan of action. The meeting may be attended by:

- The student
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Teacher(s)
- Department head
- IB Coordinators
- Counselor
- Learning support teachers
- IC medical staff
- External specialists.

During these meetings, the team may review and draft a plan to better meet the student's needs. This plan will specify the student's learning objectives, the methodology to be used, assessment arrangements, the staff/faculty responsible, and the time frame for evaluation and review - as guided by the Assessment Policy and IB requirements. The plan is subject to IC's staffing, material, and physical limitations. Details of these accommodations/support will be kept in the student file and handed to the upper grade and subsequent school division.

Learning Support

IC recognizes the importance of having an up-to-date learning support program with trained personnel to assist students with exceptional learning needs. IC endeavors to do its best within its resources to promote excellence with students with exceptional learning needs in all IC programs.

- IC administrators and faculty acknowledge their obligations to identify students with

learning differences early in their education and work conscientiously with them and their families to help them succeed academically and socially at IC. When it is determined, after taking into account all relevant circumstances, that IC is no longer the right school for the student, IC administrators and faculty members will work with the parents and the student to identify educational or training alternatives. The objective is to be as helpful and compassionate to the student and his/her family in the difficult transition to a new setting.

- IC faculty members and administrators appreciate that each student has distinct strengths and weaknesses. It is their responsibility to endeavor to develop the potential of each student to the fullest, within the parameters of IC's standards.
- Because IC offers a challenging academic program and will continue to do so, it admits students who are expected to perform well through the entire duration of their education.
- The indefinite retention of a student whose performance record shows that he or she cannot keep pace does not serve, generally, any positive purpose in a competitive environment such as IC's and may even be harmful to the student.
- IC administration and faculty must render a complete and honest judgment to parents about the capability of their child to keep pace and benefit from the progressively more challenging program at IC.
- IC faculty and administrators expect each student enrolled to keep pace with the school program. Beyond the lower levels, it is expected that students with an earlier identified learning difference will have received adequate remediation or have developed sufficient alternative learning and coping strategies so that they will be able to advance successfully with their class.

Counselors

IC school counseling practice is based on the International Model for School Counseling and an adapted Danielson Framework for school counselors. A school counselor is a professional mental health specialist who works with students, parents, and staff to help enhance the child's social and emotional well-being.

A student's social and emotional wellness directly impacts their academic success. As such, counselors will work closely with the IC community in providing a supportive learning environment. This will boost a student's sense of self-esteem and confidence. It will also help him or her acquire the attitudes, knowledge, self-management, and "life skills" necessary for

success in school, learning, and life. This is done through classroom observations, interventions, and one-on-one sessions upon need. A necessary clarification is that school counseling is not therapy, and counselors do not serve as therapists. In other words, counselors do not diagnose students. The primary goal is to assist students in dealing with issues that affect their ability to function successfully in and out of school. When counselors detect a problem that may need further assessment or professional intervention, they refer students to out-of-school professional services.

Counselors work closely with IC Learning Support Teachers and parents to identify any family issues that may affect the child's ability to learn.

Counselors may support students through disciplinary matters. They assist students in becoming aware of their actions and help them process the associated feelings. Student follow-up may involve supporting students in modifying thoughts and behaviors that initially were the cause of the problem.

Teachers

The teacher's goal is to increase access and engagement by identifying and eliminating barriers preventing learning. Classroom teachers should be familiar with learning needs and prepare individual plans for their students. Accommodations/modifications and targeted goals should be consistent and, when appropriate, written into lesson plans, visible during instruction, accounted for in assessments, etc.

IC provides its faculty with regular professional development opportunities to stay updated with the best teaching practices. The four principles of good practice identified by IB as promoting equal access to the curriculum for all learners are: affirming identity and building self-esteem, valuing prior knowledge, scaffolding, and extending learning (Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate Programs), and providing the basis for successful implementation of inclusion. The Danielson Framework for teaching also guides teaching practices. The teacher's role is to identify, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals.

Hybrid and Online Learning

An online learning plan covers the teaching strategies, communication rules, devices, solutions, and policies supporting online or hybrid learning in the school community. IC aims to be aligned with IB and Lebanese requirements. Each school division has a hybrid and online learning framework to best support all learners at their developmental level. These frameworks vary from school to school and level to level.

Schoolwide Tech Integration

IC utilizes various EdTech programs on a schoolwide basis to connect all students and faculty. This will ensure and optimize educational continuity and facilitate learning regardless of location or circumstances.

In addition, the school strives to make sure that all faculty and students have access to the necessary technological tools and devices, and provides the training required.

Admissions

IC admissions procedures in each school division set out the criteria for admitting students (Admissions Guiding Statement in the handbook). IC may not be able to meet the needs of all learners due to a lack of resources (ex., material, space, support, etc.). The Admissions Department will consult with the preschool/elementary and middle/high school directors before accepting students with known exceptionalities into the school's academic programs.

Admissions files of students with known exceptionalities will be shared with the school SST.

Last updated: May 2022