



Kodaikanal International School
Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, India
Founded in 1901

Design '18

I. Preamble

This document is the successor to the 1994 Project Design, which in turn succeeded the guiding statements first envisioned in 1974. It is worth noting that the school mission, as laid down in now three successive Design documents, has remained remarkably consistent over the previous four decades, and remains a key source of strength and identity for an institution which has faced changing---and indeed in some ways challenging---circumstances over the course of time. As was true for the previous Design, the process that led to the current document was an opportunity to re-examine the core school philosophy “in...light of 20 years of refining, testing, growth, and change.” It is our objective that this second revision ensures that KIS remains true both to its proud heritage and enduring mission, but even more importantly, as an institution dedicated to educating young people from around the world, that the clarity and expansiveness of our mission is placed in service to current and future generations of KIS students. To that end we have added a statement of vision: an ideal that will continue to lead us toward a higher purpose.

As stated in the preamble to Design '94, “this new document is developed as part of a long-range planning process for the purpose of stating directions and designs that may guide and instruct those who undertake the next period of this school’s evolving life.” It is our further hope that Design '18 will be both a guide and inspiration to all those who serve at KIS.

What we continue to envisage is a residential school where students and staff of various nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and diverse experiences can learn from one another while they live and study together. The fact that the school is set in an Indian context provides a particular focus for the learning process. We affirm the Christian tradition and identity of this school. We hope that Christians from a variety of traditions, as well as those from other religious and non-religious traditions, will be spiritually challenged and strengthened through living in this community.

In ancient times, India was famous for her seats of learning, such as Taxila and Nalanda. Kodaikanal International School seeks to follow in this tradition, to be a school where students “live together and study together, yet without losing their identity; for, on completion of their education, they will be able to go back to their own countries and assume the diverse responsibilities that are required of them.” Our task remains to welcome students from around the world, enrich them and be enriched by them, and send them out equipped to serve humanity.

II. Philosophy and Objectives

A. Vision Statement

We strive to be a school the world needs: Our graduates will be transformative leaders, caring humans and thoughtful ambassadors for a just, sustainable and peaceful world.



B. Mission Statement

Kodaikanal International School (KIS) is committed to empowering young people from diverse backgrounds with vision, knowledge, compassion and cross-cultural understanding. We are a community that welcomes everyone and seeks our purpose in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

C. Definitions

1. *College-Oriented Education*

KIS is an educational institution, first and foremost. Education is what we do, and we seek to do it with excellence and transparency, both with regard to our practice and as measured by our outcomes. This entails that our students, teachers, and leaders are instilled with a commitment to lifelong holistic learning and critical thinking. We affirm that learning is valued in and of itself, but also for its ability to help students find their way into appropriate higher education and vocations.

2. *Christian Self-Definition*

We are a Christian institution. By “Christian” we mean an identification of the school with beliefs and principles derived from our understanding of the life, person, and teachings of Jesus Christ, and the Christian traditions that have followed. These beliefs and principles are found in scripture, and understood through tradition, reason and experience. These principles are, we believe, basic principles for leading a true, just, and peaceful life, and as such they are the grounds upon which we inform our decisions regarding every aspect of life at KIS.

We recognize that there are many and diverse Christian traditions in the world today, and our community, being intentionally multicultural, must avoid culturally bound interpretations of religious or spiritual identity. Rather, our faith requires that we endeavor to live and work in peace and a commitment to dialogue with other faith communities and traditions. Our interpretation of Christian teachings should be sensitive to our Indian context and relevant to our global ideals. Our understanding of the role of Christianity in our life together should be broad and inclusive, spiritual as well as moral, seeking to define the center, rather than the periphery of Christian faith and practice.

3. *Multicultural*

The mission of KIS is based on a particular understanding of the concept “multicultural.” Religious beliefs, including those that are central to our identity and faith, are part of the rich fabric of culture and cannot be critically separated from a broader understanding of culture and its many contexts. Our various cultural backgrounds inform, help us interpret, and mediate our understanding of faith and religion, just as our faith and beliefs inform our understanding of culture. In no way does our multicultural identity imply a relativistic approval of all elements of all cultures. We seek instead to first be inclusive, open-minded, and reflective in our understanding of faith and culture.

“Multicultural” means, primarily, that we welcome students and staff from all cultures to this community, and that this community should stand against all forms of narrow chauvinism, be that chauvinism of a particular religion, culture, nation, gender, or race. Where possible, the school should draw on the richness of all its constituent cultures, and members of the community should be supported in developing their understanding of their own cultures and beliefs and those of others. We believe that a diverse community is a rich community, and that living in such a community will prepare our graduates to live and make a positive difference by being adept, thoughtful, and creative problem solvers in an often complicated and globalized world.



4. *Residential*

KIS is a residential school. Its entire program is built on the presumption that students learn from their whole experience in this community: in the classroom, on the playing field, in activities, and in the residence halls, and that faculty teach not just in the classroom, but in all these areas.

A residential school requires special commitments from its staff and students. Staff are required to devote time to activities and to individual students beyond what would be required in a day school. Students are encouraged to take seriously every aspect of their lives in the community as part of their total learning experience.

KIS will strive to provide appropriate counseling and adult support for every student. This is increasingly important, both because of our status as a residential school and because of societal changes that increasingly impact all young people. To live our vision we must place crucial importance on the emotional and psychological support of all of our community members.

5. *Community Life*

KIS is an intentional community. It is a created community, self-regulating and dedicated to living out particular values in its daily life. The community has a particular ethos, which is, to some extent, given by our surroundings and the backgrounds from which we come, but it is also intentionally created by our value commitments and the way we structure our community life. Thus, all major aspects of our community life should be open to possible improvement if they affect the quality of our life together.

6. *In India*

This school is not just an international school that happens to be placed in India. India is a part of what we are and we are committed to being a constructive part of the life of this nation. Our commitment to Indian society undergirds our desire to educate and educate well in this setting. We are committed to education that takes the richness of Indian history and culture seriously and that takes a progressive stance on positive social change in this context.

D. General Objectives

The school shall strive to be a healthy microcosm of the global societies in community. It shall recognize and encourage the distinctive differences in persons, nations and cultures, and at the same time affirm the unity of humankind. The lifestyle of the school will therefore reflect this healthy tension. Here, students and staff shall learn together in theory and practice how to bridge differences between themselves and others, which is the difficult art of peacemaking, and central to our vision as a school.

E. Specific Objectives

1. To give each student the opportunity and freedom for the fullest possible development as a whole person: academically, spiritually, emotionally, morally, socially and physically.
2. To provide a creative, high quality, academic program with a curriculum that values learning as an end in itself and is acceptable to colleges and universities worldwide.
3. To explore and adopt independent curriculum designs that facilitate learning in this setting. Where possible, the school would be a center for sharing appropriate educational models and designs with other schools in India and around the world.



4. To provide an intentional learning environment within which students and staff are encouraged to:
 - a. develop respect for the dignity and worth of others as fellow human beings;
 - b. develop greater appreciation for cultural traditions, both one's own and others', and learn critically to discern the strengths and weaknesses in each of them;
 - c. contribute actively and responsibly to the whole life of the community and participate in its mission and vision.
 - d. develop a respect for the environment, both in terms of understanding their individual and collective impact, and as agents of change toward a healthier and more sustainable planet.
5. To develop a concern among staff and students for other global issues such as the distribution of natural resources, the dynamics of poverty, issues of development and colonialism, and identification of social and political forces that contribute to justice and peace.
6. To intentionally develop partnerships and coalitions with other institutions and organizations, be they educational, religious, or secular, with the intention of infusing our learning with broader understanding, enriching our students' experience at KIS, and building relationships with others who share our vision.
7. To promote particular awareness and understanding of the cultures, societies and peoples of Tamil Nadu, India, and South Asia.
8. To encourage the spiritual development of each member of the community, to promote spiritual understanding among the religions of the world, and, through our example of community, service, and love, to present Christianity as a positive and valid option of faith.

F. School Values

Kodaikanal International School values the following guiding principles as pre-eminent for all aspects of its community life:

- **Accountability:** All the members of the community should be able to justify their actions according to the effective pursuit of the mission and vision of the School and the particular requirements of their roles.
- **Appreciation:** Individuals of all groups will appreciate all other members of the community for their individuality, their gender, and their specific cultural identity.
- **Concern for Others:** All members of the community will care for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all other members of the community to the best of their ability.
- **Consistency:** Policies will be justly applied to all members of the community and to the pursuit of the school's mission and goals.
- **Contextuality:** The school, without losing its global and Christian character, will be engaged with its local, Indian and South Asian contexts in all aspects of its program.
- **Cooperation:** All members of the community will work together and resolve conflicts effectively.
- **Integrity:** Truthfulness and the open sharing of information are the accepted standards of the school.



- **Openness:** The school consistently draws on the best resources, research, models and ideas available in the world in pursuit of its mission.
- **Performance:** The school expects that each member of the community will pursue the highest possible level of achievement.
- **Reverence:** All members of the community will seek to develop their own inner spiritual life and respect the spiritual efforts of others.

III. Management & Administration

A. Administrative Structure

1. Kodaikanal International School will be an independent school, not controlled by any other school system, government agency, or other outside body.
2. The school shall be governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Management that will determine and maintain the school mission and vision, its broad policy objectives, and adopt the annual budget. The Principal shall be the Executive Officer of the Board, and shall have full authority and responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school in accordance with the policy objectives of the Board of Management as defined in the Constitution.
3. The daily operation of the school shall be governed by policies and procedures based on the broad policy objectives adopted by the Board of Management. A policy manual and a procedural manual shall be maintained and regularly evaluated.

B. Philosophy of Administration

1. Governance and administration shall consistently be in accord with the mission and values of the school.
2. The administration shall maintain a strategic plan based on these guiding statements, specifying actions to be taken, criteria for successful completion, and with reference to how all plans align with the school's mission and vision.
3. The administration will coordinate, provide resources for, and evaluate the performance of the school in its total educational task as defined in its mission and objectives.
4. The administration will carefully manage the financial, property and human resources of the school to best serve the school's mission.
5. The administration of the school's human resources will be organized in such a way as to assure that:
 - a. each employee has a specific job description on the basis of which he or she shall be supported, advised on how to improve performance, and evaluated on a regular basis;
 - b. the division of staff duties is clear, consistent and logical;
 - c. collegiality and shared decision-making is the norm.
6. The administration will be responsible for the interchange with the international educational community necessary to keep the school community informed of and challenged by new developments in education



that apply to our work and setting.

IV. Curriculum

A. Character

1. The curriculum will be designed to provide maximum learning benefit to each individual student.
2. The curriculum will intentionally include affective as well as cognitive learning outcomes so that values and skills for living in community are emphasized, both in course content and in the methods of instruction.
3. The curriculum will be flexible enough to provide for exploration of new curricular designs, and such explorations will be encouraged to the extent that they fit with the school's mission, values and context.
4. The curriculum will be such that students will be able to relate without major disadvantage to the educational systems of any part of the world, while recognizing that some educational systems are inconsistent with the basic principles of our curriculum.
5. Given the mobility of staff and students, special attention will be given to maintaining continuity and high standards for instruction.
6. The method and style of teaching shall seek to incorporate proven pedagogical methods, striving to excite and enthuse each student with the love of learning as a lifetime challenge.

B. Accreditation

1. The curriculum will support diplomas of high standard accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (USA), the Council of International Schools, and the International Baccalaureate Organization, and which can be accepted by other schools and by institutions of higher education internationally.
2. The KIS high school diploma is recognized by the Association of Indian Universities, and a large number of individual Indian institutions, as equivalent to a pass in the +2 stage of the 10+2 pattern of education for admission to professional and degree courses of India.

C. Organization

The organization of the curriculum will be a cohesive and integrated plan that will:

1. Be specific in its basic educational goals for each grade level, and in the horizontal and vertical articulation of its instruction.
2. Encompass play school through Grade 12.



D. Distinctive Elements

The curriculum will include:

1. A broad and balanced selection of liberal arts courses in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, math, arts, practical skills and physical education.
2. An individualized program of student advising will assist students in creating and maintaining an appropriate individual program from among these offerings.
3. Courses in religious education at all levels.
4. Emphasis on the responsibility of all people for the societies in which they live. This emphasis will be embodied in a strong "Social and Environmental Experience" curriculum, courses targeted at social and environmental concerns, relevant course content across the curriculum designed to make students aware of their role in and responsibilities to both their native societies and the global society, and integration of field work and service opportunities into all appropriate areas of the curriculum.
5. Coordination with a diverse program of co-curricular activities designed to support the educational goals and values of the school.

E. Evaluation

Provision of a structure, adequate personnel and resources will be made for on-going evaluation and revision of the curriculum.

V. Student Body

A. School Profile

1. The student body shall reflect the Christian definition of the school, its international intention and its geographical setting.
2. KIS is a college-preparatory institution and students with academic promise are enrolled.
3. KIS shall strive to maintain its essential nature as a residential school by limiting day scholars (including staff children) to twenty-five percent of the total enrollment.
4. Ideally, sixty percent of the enrollment shall be committed to Indian nationals.
5. Likewise, ideally, forty percent of the enrollment will include students other than Indian nationals, balance representations from various geographical regions.
6. The fact that the school is a Christian school, intentionally and historically, shall direct the inclusion of Christian students.
7. The composition of the student body shall reflect an attempt to balance socio-economic, cultural, gender, nationality and religious factors at each level of the school, aiming at a 50% balance: male/female, and Christian/other religions.



8. Specific consideration will be given to refugees and victims of war, terrorism or other such circumstances, as appropriate.
9. Children of professional staff, by birth or by legal adoption, will be included in the student body, if qualified and in good standing.
10. Target groups will be actively and intentionally recruited by the Admissions Office and sufficient staff to accomplish such recruitment will be provided.

B. Admissions Criteria

1. Students will be chosen on the basis of an application process that considers previous scholastic reports, references, statement of intention, interview, standardized placement tests, history and the tension between open seats and balances (nationality, gender, religion) desired at each level.
2. Students who are capable and interested in the life-long adventure of learning and whose life goals include higher education as a prerequisite for career choices are encouraged to apply.
3. Curiosity, enthusiasm, and an emotional as well as intellectual concern for human beings and the environment are qualities rated high in the criteria for admission.
4. Total enrollment shall take into consideration the existing facilities, the available “common” space necessary for high-quality education, optimal class sizes, the ability to recruit competent staff, and all other factors that contribute to the achievement of the goals of the school, as reviewed and determined by the Board of Management from time to time.
5. The school shall, at the same time, be large enough to provide the facilities, educational and residential support, stimulus and interaction desirable for the best education to take place.
6. Sufficient budgeted financial aid (10%) will be provided to maintain the desired balances in the student body.
7. The school is not currently equipped to provide education of an appropriate level of excellence for students who have serious educational or physical disabilities.
8. All students admitted are expected to ascribe to the school’s mission and vision statements.

VI. Staff

A. Selection Criteria

1. The administrative officers shall be Christians and shall be recruited with regard to gender and nationality balances within the administrative team.
2. Taking into consideration both the international intention of the school and its geographic setting in South Asia, the administration shall intentionally recruit staff of various nationalities and cultures.
3. Because this is a Christian school, historically and intentionally, the administration shall seek staff from the



Christian community in India and from around the world.

4. A high level of professional qualifications and experience will be required of all staff, in keeping with the high standard of education demanded of the students.
5. Qualified and experienced volunteers will be welcomed as part of the staff on a limited basis, dependent upon need of the school and the decision of the administration as to the value of their services.
6. Contributed staff (with salaries paid by other organizations) will be welcomed dependent upon the need of the school, the strength of their qualifications, and the decision of the administration.

B. Expectations

The staff shall:

1. Work wholeheartedly as a team in support of the mission and vision statements and the objectives of the school.
2. Be expected to appreciate and make the commitment required to educate students at a residential, community school.
3. Maintain high standards of professional conduct and quality of instruction, subscribing to the curriculum objectives stated in this document, and to the policies as found in the staff handbook.
4. Perform assigned duties and responsibilities in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, as this is a residential school.

C. Provisions

The basic salary structure will be transparent, equitable and fair; reviewed on a regular basis; and with benefits and provisions competitive with those found in similar educational institutions.

VII. Evaluation

Provision will be made for periodic assessment and evaluation of the steps (measures) taken to achieve the mission and objectives of the school.

1. Annually, at the first Staff Workshop of each academic year, the Principal shall provide a clear assessment of the undertakings of the past year, and issue a challenge for the year ahead in light of the mission of the school as laid down in this document. This assessment shall also be included as an Appendix to the Principal's Report to the Board of Management at its next meeting.
2. The school will follow the evaluation procedures laid down by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, USA, for its accreditation.
3. A reconsideration and review of this document and a new planning process shall be undertaken not later than 20 years hence (that is, 2038), and a protocol for assessing the alignment of the strategic plan with the mission and vision will be undertaken at five-year intervals.



4. If it is found, upon evaluation that the school no longer is fulfilling the purpose for which it was established, steps will be taken to disband the school. (Cf. Constitution.)

VIII. Ethos

A. Christian Witness, Worship and Environment

Kodaikanal International School is a Christian school by tradition and intent. The expression of this Christian character is found in required Religious Education courses and regular assemblies, the worship of the school-related Church and its programs, and the spiritual environment where students and staff of various backgrounds, religions and nationalities share together in a living, loving and learning community.

Affirming Kodaikanal International School as a Christian school includes the following:

1. Christian ideals shall guide all aspects of its life and direct all its activities.
2. All senior administrators will be Christians. A majority of members of the Board of Management and the teaching and residential staff will be Christians.
3. The school community shall strive to create a climate that is marked by:
 - a. a sense of God's presence and action in the world;
 - b. a creative, effective and self-giving response to student needs; and
 - c. a consciousness of the vital importance of social justice to resolving both personal, societal and international problems.
4. Christian witness entails teaching the effectiveness of Christian values so that graduating students will be able to go back to their communities and be actively engaged and involved in developing the structures of their society, and learn to live with and for others.
5. Provision will be made for regular Christian worship, religious education, retreats, youth programs and other spiritual life programs.
6. The school will retain close and supportive ties to the Church at the Kodaikanal International School and shall maintain the Margaret Eddy Memorial Chapel. The school's Chaplains will serve as Pastors of the Church.
7. Regular attendance of all Christian students is encouraged at the Sunday morning services. Attendance of other students at Christian worship will be most welcome.
8. Curricular courses in religious education will be required at all levels of the academic program, and will present the Christian tradition as well as other world religions.
9. Sunday mornings will generally be kept free from scheduled events, and students not attending worship on campus are expected to be in their residences during worship time.



B. Multicultural Features

The commitment of Kodaikanal International School to respect and affirm those of varied cultures and religious traditions includes the following:

1. Kodaikanal International School is concerned for the spiritual growth of all its students and staff, and seeks to meet the needs of that growth.
2. Staff and students of faiths other than Christianity are of significant importance to the mission of this school as a diverse and cooperative community. All staff and students, however, whatever their religious background, shall be expected to have ideals that are in harmony with the objectives of the school.
3. Where possible within the school program, freedom will be granted for students to participate in religious devotion of their own tradition off-campus.
4. Where possible within the school program, assistance will be given to students of other faiths to enable them to follow customs of their religion, such as fasting for Ramadan.
5. Recognition of religious holidays of other traditions and cultural celebrations of all cultural groups will be made in assemblies, with special meals, or other special events, where possible.
6. Dialogue between those of different religious faiths and other beliefs will be supported both formally and informally. The search for spiritual and ethical values common to all faiths will be strongly encouraged.

C. Personal Expression in Community

Lifestyle in all its dimensions is dynamic and difficult to define. Lifestyle definitions must be constantly re-examined and modified according to prevailing codes of behavior and standards of expectations. But certain principles of lifestyle hold true regardless of time or place. Some of these timeless and more important aspects of lifestyle are outlined below as guidelines for life in community at Kodaikanal International School.

1. The lifestyle of the school will be such that it will affirm and support varied cultural lifestyles. Students will be encouraged to be tolerant of a wide variety of culturally based behaviors, and varieties of lifestyles will be encouraged within the limits of socially constructive behavior.
2. "Constructive social behavior" shall be defined in accord with school values.
3. Every encouragement will be given to develop student responsibility for constructive, respectful group and individual behavior. The philosophy of the school in this area is that students should be given enough freedom to assume genuine responsibility for their behavior, but should also be protected from persons, habits or behaviors which may endanger them physically, emotionally, morally or spiritually.
4. Outward expressions of lifestyle, such as style of dress, type of language, behavior on and off campus, relationships with peers and adults, use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs, and response to the rules and restrictions of a residential school will be expected to be within standards formulated by the school.
5. Understanding that this in an international school that accepts diverse lifestyles, behavior that shows lack of awareness of or disrespect for local cultural norms in Kodaikanal will be strongly discouraged.



6. All members of the community will be expected to show respect for the common property of the school, the school's environment, and the personal property of others.
7. The school will strive to create among the student body a climate that induces self-discipline and shared responsibility for maintaining a healthy community life.

D. Service Orientation

1. All members of the community will be expected to do for themselves what they can without undue dependence on the labor of others.
2. The lifestyle of the school will endeavor to encourage an attitude of service to others in every aspect of school life, as well as through intentional emphasis in the curriculum on social awareness and social involvement.