



An International Baccalaureate World School

Inclusion Policy

Updated May, 2021

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IB Mission

Casita's inclusion policy reflects a shared understanding of and commitment to the IB mission:

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These 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.

The culture of Casita Center is grounded in the philosophy, standards, and practices of the International Baccalaureate program, as well as our shared view of equity within the Vista Unified School District.

Our Mission

The mission of Casita Center is to develop a community of compassionate, responsible life-long learners who respect people's differences and take action to create a more peaceful world.

Our Values

The values of Casita Center are characterized by a collaborative community and a dedicated staff who educate the whole child in a 21st century learning environment.

Our Vision of Inclusion



At Casita Center, we believe that promoting and developing inclusion means to understand, respect and celebrate diversity through international-mindedness. Our learning community aims to create a sense of belonging through reflection, collaboration and communication. Casita Center is a safe space for people of all ages, social status, economic status, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, learner variability, and culture. By nurturing our community's unique strengths, challenges, and learning styles, we encourage active contributions to make a positive difference in our world.

Removing Barriers: Practices and Procedures

At Casita, our school is organized to best leverage our resources and environment to maximize student learning.

School Organization & Resources

Diverse Representation & Distributive Leadership

Our school has designated leadership teams that meet regularly to ensure a diverse representation of our learning community. All collaborations begin with Essential Agreements that ensure respect, equity, a commitment to our community and moving our thinking forward. Voices are heard from the following:

- **Grade Level Leadership Team** - including one representative from each grade level, an education specialist, our principal, and our IB coordinator
 - Reviews overall form and function of complexities of school system to streamline, tailor to learners, and share grade level perspectives.
 - Implements and provides feedback on school-wide ideas.
 - Represents grade level to make site-based decisions.
- **Pedagogical Team** - including one representative from each grade span, an education specialist, our principal, and our IB coordinator
 - Research inquiry-based pedagogy
 - Plan professional development



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- Consider feedback from all stakeholders in our annual policy review cycle
- **English Learner Advisory Committee** - including elected representatives from our English Learner families and our principal
 - Reviews and provides input for our School Plan for Student Achievement, IB policies, school handbook
 - Conducts annual needs assessment to inform our support for English Learners
- **Parent Teacher Association** - including elected parents, our principal, and teacher representatives
 - Engages in conversation with our parents and teacher representative to partner in events, fundraisers, and opportunities for all students at Casita.
- **School Site Council** - including elected parents, teachers, our principal, and our IB coordinator
 - Review school needs, consider input from multiple stakeholders, use data to make informed recommendations, and approve expenditures directly related to the school's strategic plan (Single Plan for Student Achievement)

Weekly Faculty Collaborations

Our school designates weekly collaboration on our program of inquiry:

- Classroom teachers meet with our IB coordinator once a week to reflect on the effectiveness of our teaching and learning, study the IB program and practices, and improve our units of inquiry to invite increased engagement and choice.
- Our magnet specialists meet weekly with our grade level teams to plan how the subject-specific disciplines can support the central ideas and transdisciplinary themes of our units of inquiry.



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- Grade level teams meet weekly to ensure that all students are able to access the California Common Core State Standards
- Team Impact collaborates regularly to align expectations, share best practices for what is working with push in and pull out minutes, and address any challenges that may arise with our students in reaching their IEP or 504 plan social, emotional, and academic goals.

Team Impact

Casita follows a multi-tiered system of support model (MTSS) for identifying and supporting student needs, both academically and emotionally. Tier one includes high quality general education instruction and support, screening and benchmark assessments, regular data collection and monitoring. Tier two includes interventions based on data, that target specific skills, and more frequent monitoring. Tier three includes intensive interventions targeting individual student needs and is designed to ensure maximum acceleration of student progress.

Casita's Team Impact supports our MTSS model by collaborating with our whole school community to provide a least restrictive environment, remove barriers and increase learning and participation for all students. Our team continually assesses, reflects and implements supports to increase access and engagement and remove barriers to learning.

- Educational specialists evaluate and collaborate with grade level teams to provide input and help improve curriculum, planning and approaches to learning to support access for all students. They also help coordinate and communicate expectations and progress among students' parents/guardians, school counselor, teachers and other staff members.



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- Our School Counselor provides counseling and consultation to our Casita community, valuing each individual with unique needs, in the following areas
 - Facilitate school-wide social and emotional learning (SEL) program for all students
 - Facilitate and document Triads, Student Study Team, 504 collaborations with parents/guardians, teachers, psychologist, administrator, and/or student.
 - Provide individual counseling for students: Divorce/Separation, Emotion Regulation, Grief, Worry, Self-Esteem
 - Facilitate small social groups targeting specific behaviors: Social Skills & Friendship Groups
 - Provides crisis intervention and referral services to families: Grief, Homelessness, Separation/Divorce
 - Support families through outreach, including home visits: Homelessness, Job Loss, Chronic Illness
 - Groups and Individual sessions are created as the need arises.
- Our School Psychologist provides counseling and consultations to our Casita community, valuing each individual with unique needs, in the following areas
 - Pupil progress, response to interventions, potential, achievement level, personality traits, social skills and learning difficulties
 - Crisis & therapeutic interventions as well as referrals to community resources
 - Guidance to special education students' families, and to teachers regarding the most supportive learning environment
 - Understanding of a student's cultural background and experiences, attitudes, and values as influential to psychological processes, services and supports.



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- Our Speech and Language Pathologist assists in developing speech and language skills to facilitate the personal, social, and intellectual development of students while supporting a positive learning environment for the individual needs of students. Areas of support include
 - prevention of communication disorders
 - identification of students at risk for later problems
 - assessment of students' communication skills
 - evaluation of the results of comprehensive assessments
 - development and implementation of IEPs.
- Our school nurse supports student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. The school nurse addresses the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and supports their achievement in the learning process.
- Adaptive physical education specialists, individual instructional assistants, occupational therapists, and social workers are available to support students to maximize student participation in the learning environment.

Physical Environment

Our physical environment supports inclusion in our school layout, use of flexible furniture, and outdoor spaces. Our school is organized in grade level pods, with common spaces for collaboration. Students benefit from flexible seating policies and non-traditional furniture such as hokki stools, bicycle or kneeling tables, lap desks and tables for group work. In addition, student learning may happen in our backyard habitat, our pollinator or vegetable gardens, our kitchen lab, or our news studio. For our students with mobility challenges, we have ramps leading to classrooms, and paved walkways for outdoor spaces.

Culture and Policies

Our school culture reflects inclusiveness and is guided by our policies.



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- Admissions policy - "strives to provide a clear, fair and balanced admissions procedure. The District's magnet schools accept students without regard to disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or English Language Learner status. Both District students and students residing outside of the District will be considered for admission."
- Language policy
 - All students are teachers of language
 - Language instruction is provided all day, across the curriculum and in every class
- Academic Integrity policy
 - Commitment to fair and transparent practices
 - Authentic learning opportunities supported through differentiated instruction and relevant content
 - Student perspectives are valued in instances of misconduct
 - Restorative practices approach to grow from mistakes
- Assessment policy
 - Transparent, collaborative and inclusive process
 - Assessment capable students through personal goals, self-assessment, self-monitoring and self-adjustments
 - Assessment serves to inform instruction, including accommodations and differentiated instruction

Communication

Our school values the voices of our learning community, and is committed to promoting positive and regular communication with our entire learning community. Families receive a weekly parent newsletter, that is translatable, highlighting happenings within the school, explaining and asking for input on our policies, informing families of upcoming events, inviting them to view short video clips explaining the IB program, as well as to attend evening IB workshops.

Families are encouraged to attend World Cafes with our IB coordinator, and



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coffees with the principal. We welcome our families to participate in celebrations such as Read Across the World, Jog-a-thons, and Maker Nights. We ask for experts and contributions from families to support our transdisciplinary units, including our Exhibition journey.

Equal Access for All Learners

At Casita, students are at the center of teaching and learning. Our approaches to teaching and learning are rooted in the IB standards and practices, and are supported by the research of how people learn, taking into account individual and cultural variability.

Approaches to teaching

- **Inquiry-based** - students are encouraged to construct their own meaning by accessing their prior knowledge & experiences, building on current understandings through experiential learning, reflecting on new knowledge, extending their new learning through application, and evaluating their growth.
- **Conceptual** - Subject area content is taught under the umbrella of transdisciplinary themes and through the lenses of cross-cutting key concepts, allowing students to build conceptual frameworks for continual reference.
- **Contextual** - Teachers encourage students to connect new learning to situations that are personally significant to them, and to then think about how this might look in a global context. Teachers recognize that culture influences our understanding of the world, how we learn and our experiences.
- **Collaborative** - Teachers identify and teach specific self-management and social skills to support collaboration with peers, mentors, families and teachers.
- **Designed to remove barriers** - Teachers value each student as a unique contributor to our diverse learning community. Teachers use students'



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strengths, interests, and learning styles by providing multiple avenues for engaging with and expressing ideas. Scaffolds are provided with the goal of increasing access to learning and developing independence over time.

- **Involves continuous feedback** - Teachers continuously provide feedback to students from formative and summative assessments. Students identify current understandings, and are encouraged to set, self-monitor and reflect upon personal goals.

Approaches to Learning

Casita students are empowered learners. Students learn specific skills, called the IB Approaches to learning, that give them the confidence to become agents of their own learning.

- **Thinking Skills** - Students learn to think critically and creatively, transfer information through application, and reflect on their thinking.
- **Research Skills** - Students learn media and information literacy skills, as well as how to evaluate multiple perspectives and determine credible sources.
- **Communication Skills** - Students learn how to effectively receive and communicate information verbally and in writing, as well as evaluate appropriate digital communication platforms depending on purpose and audience.
- **Social Skills** - Students learn intrapersonal skills such as self-control and emotional regulation, as well as interpersonal skills such as respecting and supporting others, and how to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- **Self-management Skills** - Students learn to plan and organize their time, set and monitor goals, and use mindfulness techniques to reflect, regulate and motivate themselves.

Teaching through the Learner Profile



Students connect to the IB Learner Profile attributes to better understand themselves and their rights and responsibilities in our world. These connections are made in developmentally appropriate ways according to each grade level. By building a strong and clear sense of self, students feel confident to demonstrate agency in their learning, and take action.

Open-minded Appreciate different perspectives; Value our own and others' unique cultures & histories	Thinker Problem solve using creative and critical thinking; Make reasonable & ethical decisions	Principled Are honest with ourselves and others; Act with integrity; Fair & respectful of the rights of others	Inquirer Are curious and strive to always learn more; Share our investigations with others	Balanced Seek intellectual, physical and emotional balance for well-being; interdependence with the world
Knowledgeable Learn through concepts; local and global issues	Communicator Value multilingualism; Collaborate; Listen to multiple perspectives	Risk-taker Explore new ideas; Resourceful & resilient through change	Caring Show empathy, compassion, respect; Initiate positive change	Reflective Consider our strengths, challenges of ourselves and the world around us

Legal Requirements

Casita adheres to local, state and federal policies and laws regarding inclusion.

- Vista Unified School District's BOARD POLICY No. 0410: NONDISCRIMINATION IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ensures all students are provided equal opportunities, equitable treatment, and freedom from discrimination in our programmes and activities.
- California's Education Code Section 200 states that all students be given equal educational opportunities.
- The United States federal measures to support inclusion include Civil Rights Acts, Every Student Succeeds Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

IB Standards and Practices for Inclusion



Casita is guided by the following IB standards and practices in our continual, reflective process of being an inclusive school.

- 0301-02 The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential.
- 0403-05 Teachers remove barriers to learning to enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve challenging personal learning goals.
- 0202-02 The school identifies and provides appropriate learning support.
- 0202-01 The school provides relevant human, natural, built and virtual resources to implement its IB programme(s).
- 0404-01 Students and teachers use feedback to improve learning, teaching and assessment.
- 0301-01 The school secures access to an IB education to the broadest possible range of students.

Cycle of Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by Casita staff, School Site Council, and English Learner Advisory Committee. The policy will be presented to the larger Casita learning community at the beginning of every school year. For students new to Casita, this policy will be shared with families during registration to review with their child.

References

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