

High-Quality Learning & Teaching Policy

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

A POLICY CREATED BY TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS SINCE 2018

This policy will be next reviewed in June 2025.

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Rotterdam International Secondary School

High Quality Learning and Teaching (HQLT) Policy

Purpose

This document is a commitment by all teachers, support staff and leaders to promote HQLT practices, standards and instructional tasks for all students at RISS. This will enable them to achieve, be their best and progress within an inclusive, diverse and equitable environment. Therefore, this document explains RISS principles and practices during our day-to-day interaction with our students.

It also serves to emphasise the importance of teachers as experts and leaders of instruction, who take pride and responsibility that celebrates High quality Learning and teaching as a professional and expert venture. Based on our school values, this policy seeks to strengthen the relationship and partnership between students and teachers in the process of negotiating the challenges of learning.

Mission and Vision

This policy has been revised to demonstrate our resolute commitment to deliver an education in line with our vision: “Educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity in a changing world” and contributing to further embed our mission “for every student to enjoy their youth.” They reflect our school's central business, which is to deliver high quality learning, teaching, and our commitment to care for all students entrusted to RISS.

This document also seeks to align our high-quality learning and teaching (HQLT) and student welfare practices with our accrediting bodies: International Baccalaureate ([IB](#)), [Cambridge IGCSE learner’s code](#), the Council of International Schools ([CIS](#))— via its [Code of Ethics](#)—and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges ([NEASC](#)).

This policy serves to foster high levels of performance within our practice led by our key strategic drivers: leadership, curriculum, community, wellbeing, professional development and organisation. Ultimately, the school seeks to become an exceptional example of an international school by educating and positively challenging our students to become global citizens.

Values

Our values represent our principles as well as our strengths and stay as ethical models. They lead our actions and moral purpose to elevate our educational goals by motivating students and staff to act with **respect, responsibility, courage** and build positive **relationships**. The same values inspire our provision, practices and plans for students’ learning and their wellbeing.

As a values-led institution, we aim to establish a culture of learning and wellbeing in line with an international education that believes in the importance of an inclusive, diverse,

child-centred, inquiry-driven provision. This one does not only prepare young people for university and life beyond, but ensures they regard themselves as global citizens and contribute to build, restore, and lead the kind of global community that we all dream of.

Global Citizenship (GC) and Intercultural Learning

At RISS, we strongly believe that Global Citizenship—or international mindedness— and intercultural learning is about growing our capacity to recognise that we are all part of one world. A world whose inhabitants are interconnected as one community with values, aspirations and faiths better served by focusing on our commonalities rather than our divisions.

As global members of a community, we understand that Global Citizenship and Intercultural Learning bring the challenge, uncertainty and complexities of our current world to our practice and provision for students. However, we feel ready, enthusiastic and committed to learn, plan and provide instructional opportunities that enhance student wellbeing, inclusion and learning to withstand a fundamentally undefined future with hope.

As a culturally diverse community, we seek to relate, respect, take responsibility and have the courage to embrace all community members, whilst retaining a strong sense of self and pride in our cultures, languages and identity.

RISS wants its students to be inclusive, work together, be involved and actively fight for the ideals that matter. Global Citizenship is about us all and our planet. Our students will truly enjoy their youth and their future if this is achieved!

As a CIS member and values led school, we develop GC via our school values and are inspired by [CIS key commitments to develop GC](#).

RISS Values alignment with CIS GC	RISS GC Commitment to promote a provision of	This means
<p><u>Respect</u> Respect is fundamental at RISS, promoting intercultural dialogue, empathy, and inclusivity to create a global society that embraces diversity, equity, and anti-racism.</p>	Sustainable lifestyle	A personal commitment to a lifestyle which supports local and global sustainability displayed through example and advocacy.
<p><u>Courage</u> We value courage at RISS, empowering students to challenge biases, embrace diversity, and create a fairer world by speaking up and respecting different perspectives.</p>	Leadership	The acquisition and refinement of the skills of leading and following within different cultural contexts.
<p><u>Responsibility</u> At RISS, we foster responsibility by encouraging students to acknowledge historical barriers, break them down, and contribute to fairness and equality as global citizens.</p>	Ethics	Research about, discussion of, and action related to issues of principle of personal, local, and global importance.
	Service	The development of the understandings, skills and dispositions to serve the local and global community through engagement in meaningful service learning.
<p><u>Relationship</u> Building positive relationships at RISS fosters global citizenship, as students collaborate across cultures, learn from diverse perspectives, and promote diversity, equity, and anti-racism globally.</p>	Diversity	The understanding of and respect for the similarities and differences of a range of individuals and peoples.
	Communication	The development of fluency in multiple languages, including mother tongues (home language), used to communicate within and across cultures,
	Global issues	The understanding of multiple perspectives of local and global events and issues.

[\(CIS, 2023\)](#)

Definition of High-Quality Learning and Teaching (HQLT)

Firstly, and put simply, learning is change and growth.

At RISS, we endorse the view that learning is a change in an individual's conceptions, knowledge and competencies that then affect their relationship with themselves, others, and their understanding of the world they inhabit. This change is shaped by the values and commitment of supportive and caring adults that guide student learning.

We also recognise that learning is complex, personal, and conditioned by students' personal circumstances. We recognise that the challenge for any practitioner is that there is never certainty of how much learning takes place in our students. However, we believe that we can expertly optimise and contribute to the conditions that make this process achievable.

Teachers contribute to this process by collaborating with each other, connecting with students, and creating first-hand experiences that make learning accessible, manageable, and enjoyable.

At RISS, **high-quality learning and teaching (HQLT)** is our service promise to promote pedagogical wellbeing and competencies that foster cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills in our students, aligning with our guiding statement. This practice enriches students' lives through a holistic and current education, supporting their aspirations to become fulfilled and happy individuals. We encourage a genuine passion for life, empathy towards others, and a strong sense of responsibility towards the environment. Through our HQLT service promise, we guarantee an unparalleled commitment to high-quality learning and teaching, ensuring our students receive the best educational experience possible.

RISS High-Quality Learning (HQL) Manifesto

- a) We believe in pedagogical wellbeing, namely that peer interaction, teacher-student interaction, family life, academic and extra-curricular mastery are key contexts to understand and optimise for students to feel empowerment, joy and satisfaction (Kirsi, 2010)
- b) We all work together to ensure the best emotional health for the whole community to enjoy to the fullest our learning and personal growth.
- c) We believe in the importance of critical hope that is driven by people that set goals, have agency, and overcome obstacles by seeing pathways to solutions (Barnett, 2023). We aim to instil this in our students.
- d) We can enrich students' sense of critical hope with "high-quality teaching and learning experiences to help (...) [them] gain a sense of control in their lives; examining the realities of injustice, oppression, and marginalisation they face; and standing alongside them to share their pain, suffering, and successes" (Barnett, 2023, p. 610).

- e) Learning is about student group participation, involvement, and discussion, where they construct knowledge (factual, conceptual, and provocative) in partnership with teachers.
- f) We firmly recognise and value our entitlement to learn languages to celebrate diversity, cultural identity, and unity.
- g) We appreciate the benefits from our reflections, criticality and thinking that becomes increasingly and expertly performed as we journey through the school.
- h) Learning happens anytime and anywhere; but it is at school where HQLT critically is conceived and organically considered in its content, need and scope.
- i) As an international school we welcome students throughout the school year. Students will be supported to integrate and transition both academically and socially.
- j) We provide a forum for students to demonstrate their understanding, knowledge, skills, and values to become confident individuals.
- k) We provide space for creativity, ethical development and real action-led experiences.
- l) We integrate learning [technologies](#) that transform and maximise our opportunities to learn further and, in so doing, we become confident digital citizens.
- m) We are challenged by exploring the unfamiliar, considering diverse viewpoints, asking the right questions, and taking informed risks.
- n) We appreciate that mistakes and failure are an essential part of learning. It is during this process when our students learn the most and grow.
- o) Our learning is guided, transferable and inspirational. This allows us to negotiate its content, to apply it to different circumstances and to enable us to continue learning further.
- p) We have opportunities to develop the dispositions for thinking, communication, social competence, self-management, and research skills, to reflect, plan and consider our next steps as we grow as independent learners and thinkers.
- q) Our learning is varied, diverse and inclusive. We have many different approaches to learning and this is recognised by our community.
- r) Our practice recognises that it is stage, not age that defines progress in our students, but they will always be challenged enough to progress and achieve.
- s) We recognise that we are unique as an international community school in Rotterdam. Our core values are clearly stated and lived as our intended identity to prepare us to become Global Citizens.

RISS High-Quality Teaching (HQT) Manifesto

At RISS:

- a) We will meet our vision and mission via our core values, our inclusive culture and performance targets centred around inquiry, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- b) We believe that we add value to the student learning experience via Inquiry-Based Learning ([IBL](#)), a focus on conceptual understanding ([CBC](#)), the development of effective teamwork and collaboration and the recognition of differentiated (Adaptive Teaching) strategies, all informed by assessment in its various forms.

- c) Our provision requires the preparation of High-quality instructional tasks as mediators for students' opportunities to learn. They should offer productive social and intellectual exchanges that include reviewing ideas, making connections and evaluations via collective conversation in small groups.
- d) We believe in a provision that it is guided by interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive needs in line with pedagogical wellbeing.
- e) We recognise that our students have many different approaches to learning; we will respond to their strengths and needs within lessons and beyond with the support of our [Learning Diversity policy](#).
- f) We will deliver with Teaching and Learning ([ATL](#)) in mind in line with an IB education, its principles and practices.
- g) We will foster [language learning](#) as a tool to reach and engage with others and their communities within our commitment to Global Citizenship and Intercultural Learning.
- h) We believe that we must promote a culture of high expectations, good progress and outcomes that inspire and challenge all our students. Thus our practice will move from [pedagogical](#) to more andragogical teaching strategies as the student progresses through the school.
- i) We believe that we must be continuously updating our practice, skills, and subject knowledge to confidently deliver our very best to our students.
- j) We believe that much care should go into planning, preparing, and designing learning scenarios that have a meaningful impact on student progress.
- k) We believe that feedback needs to be both formative and summative and given regularly and promptly for students to respond and progress in their learning.
- l) We believe that teachers and students share the responsibility to engage in learning opportunities in which everyone is aware of their role, purpose, and participation.
- m) We believe that student data plays a strong role as the start of a conversation in student progress. We will build learning, mentoring, and counselling programmes for the effective use of data for parents and students.
- n) We believe that learning happens in a safe and secure climate. We will manage behaviour fairly and consistently with high expectations, strategies and praise/rewards that enable students and teachers to maintain positive relationships and model social behaviours that support student growth via restorative practices where appropriate.
- o) We believe that we all make a positive contribution to the school vision, mission, and values. When it comes to teaching, seeking appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues and developing effective relationships with all school members fosters a culture of collaboration, joy, and pride in our school community.
- p) We believe that students need to become self-aware about their learning, progress, and new understandings and how they can relate to this new knowledge and skills to support them and their communities and develop the courage to act.
- q) We believe that learning is a process whereby teachers and students have the courage to take risks, self-reflect for personal growth, gain knowledge/skills, and make connections with real-life events while having fun doing it.

- r) We believe that learning involves appreciating the world from different perspectives, through a process of experience, interaction, and discovery.
- s) We believe that learning is a process in which curiosity, self-motivation, and resilience are encouraged through positive relationships and experiences, leading to an appreciation of the world from different perspectives and the courage and capacity to solve problems and face challenges.
- t) We believe that lessons should be an authentic, innovative, and dynamic step-by-step process in which teachers use approaches that enable students to acquire skills, knowledge, behaviours, and ways of processing the world around them.

IB Learner profile plus!

We are an IB Diploma Programme School, and we have a duty to develop the Learner's Profile from early on and across the school to secure appropriate transition, continuation, and progression for our students within the principles and practices of the programme. The learners profile plus applies to teachers and students.

- ❖ **Inquirers** - We develop our natural curiosity. We are skilled in inquiry and research and show independence in learning. We enjoy and are engaged in our own learning, and this will be sustained throughout our lives.
 - Students: "I ask questions to help my learning."
- ❖ **Knowledgeable** - We explore ideas and issues that have local and global significance. We acquire in-depth knowledge and understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
 - "I try to learn many things."
- ❖ **Thinkers** - We exercise initiative in thinking critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems. We make reasoned, ethical decisions as a consequence.
 - "I try to connect the things I know."
- ❖ **Communicators** - We are confident, creative, and fluent in expressing complex ideas in a range of ways and languages. We work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
 - "I share my ideas with others."
- ❖ **Principled** - We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. We take responsibility for our actions.
 - "I try to do what is right."

- ❖ **Open-minded** - We understand and appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. We are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and are willing to grow from the experience.
 - “I listen and accept other points of view.”
- ❖ **Caring** - We show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. We have a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
 - “I help others and I am nice.”
- ❖ **Risk Takers** - We approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought and have the independence of spirit to embrace new roles, ideas, and strategies. We are enterprising individuals.
 - “I try new things that add value to me as a person!”
- ❖ **Balanced** - We understand the importance of intellectual, physical, economic, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for ourselves and others and we are in control of our own lives. We can act independently but we understand our responsibilities as citizens.
 - “I work and play hard!”
- ❖ **Reflective** - We reflect deeply on our lives, knowledge and experience in ways which may be profoundly spiritual and emotional.
 - “I think about what I do and how that can help me.”
- ❖ **Leaders** - We show character and have vision and can motivate others to achieve it. We are brave and articulate in defending our beliefs. We understand and take responsibility for others in the process.
 - “I believe that this is the right path for me and my community.”
- ❖ **Adaptable** - We have the attitude and skills to respond to and take advantage of changes in an increasingly technological world.
 - “I know what and how to do this in this case.”
- ❖ **Global minded** - We understand that we are citizens of the world. We understand global interdependence and appreciate diversity and have the confidence and skills to relish the challenge of the future in a global society and workplace.
 - “I feel that the misfortune of others is my own and I want to do something about it!”

RISS Global Citizenship alignment with the IB Learner profile plus!

RISS Values	RISS GC Commitment to promote a provision on	IB Learner Profile Plus!	
Respect	Sustainable lifestyle	Communicators Open-minded Caring	Global minded
	Courage	Leadership	
Responsibility	Ethics	Knowledgeable Principled Adaptable	
	Service		
Relationship	Diversity	Inquirers Communicators Balanced Reflective	
	Communication		
	Global issues		

Progression and Assessment

RISS seeks to provide a curriculum that is coherently and purposefully built around curriculum, co-curriculum and extra-curricular activities. This is established via formal and written scope and sequences that represent the learning for students within their year and across their years in the school.

The curriculum is mapped and aligned with the school's guiding statements and the accrediting bodies it adheres to. These actions identify a clear progression for students from foundation to senior years. This enables us to map our programmes across the school and determine skills and content with a coordinated connection for quality assurance.

RISS seeks to develop a culture of assessments that measures the effect of learning on our students. It includes qualitative and quantitative criteria and creativity in its conception, planning and delivery. This includes the different facets of assessment to establish progression. They are *Assessment **for** Learning*—or a continuous observation of a child's progress that influences instructional practice; *Assessment **of** learning*—or a snapshot in time that informs students, parents and teachers of progress and *Assessment **as** Learning*—or students as their own assessors of their progress that encourage ownership and lifelong learning.

The assessment needs to consider the learning stage of our students, their needs and how this represents genuine progress for them. In this regard, our school seeks to communicate effectively with parents with respect to student achievements and well-being, ensuring that a culture of partnership develops with families to maximise student progress.

Learning environment

Although the teacher is the most significant external influence on a student's learning in the classroom, there are other factors at play too. This includes the physical learning setting, (known as The Third Teacher), the culture and ethos generated and demonstrated by the relationships and interactions within a school and its community. This also extends to the learning stimuli and inspirations taking place outside the classroom and even beyond the school, especially and increasingly those thrown up by modern technologies. Therefore, we will seek to make a provision that goes beyond the classroom setting and explores the potential of [technology](#), the school and the community of Rotterdam and beyond to enhance the learning experiences of our students.

The school governance, leadership, teachers, students, and parents support, embody and promote this document to confirm and approve our day-to-day practice and principles in line with our stated guiding statements.

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