



Convent & Stuart Hall

Schools of the Sacred Heart San Francisco

Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco IB Programme Access and Inclusion Policy

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Within this Access and Inclusion Policy, we articulate several foundational tenets as a Sacred Heart, college preparatory, independent, IBDP school. As follows:

First, as a Sacred Heart school, we are committed to educating each student so they may discover and reveal their unique gifts. We recognize that the learning process may also reveal challenges, and in the face of challenge, the school is committed to supporting the student to succeed. As a Sacred Heart school, we stretch the capacity of each student, believing in their potential and developing innate gifts while supporting challenges.

Also, as a college preparatory school, we are committed to the imperative to educate each student to be college ready, prepared for tertiary education at selective colleges and universities. With this college goal in mind, the school admits and supports a diverse group of learners who are prepared for admission to highly selective post-secondary 4-year colleges and universities. The school supports students with diagnosed learning differences who can participate fully in a college preparatory curriculum.

As an independent school, we design a curriculum to inspire a range of student interests, while foundationally committing to teach the content and skills that the school deems essential. We believe that the IB Diploma Programme contributes significantly to the relevance of the school's curriculum. While it is within the independent school's purview to self define curriculum that prepares students for admission into the California university system, we believe that external metrics of AP, IB and other standardized test measures are important standards for students to reach.

We are committed to ensuring that students reflect on their learning and feel a sense of ownership and purpose via their studies. Goal 2 of Sacred Heart education is the commitment to "educate to a deep respect for intellectual values" and the ethos of Sacred Heart education is to inspire in students a sense of personal connection and responsibility to their education. The education is not "done to" students, but includes them as active, reflective participants.



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In service of the goal to include students as key stakeholders in their education, the school engages a system of academic advising led by grade chairs in each grade from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Specifically in the high school years (grades 9-12), the grade chairs act as academic and extracurricular advisors who help students navigate the school's program. Grade chairs meet with students and with their families to invite reflection and discussion on their school experience, including class experience, assessment, relationships with teachers and peers, and to address any concerns or needs. This feedback-rich system ensures that students have a direct voice in their education and also invites them to articulate their relationship to their learning: to identify needs, and to accept responsibility for what they could do better moving forward.

The foundational 9th and 10th grade curriculum prepares all students to consider the IBDP. Academic counseling ensures that students who opt to take the Diploma Programme are well informed of the opportunities and challenges they may face in light of their learning profile as well as both demonstrated and potential achievement. As such, the majority of our students elect to pursue the full IB Diploma and achieve success.

Throughout the school program, the school provides reasonable accommodations for students with a current psycho-educational report that supports a diagnosed learning difference. Where a student may not have a current psycho-educational report, the school may extend school-based accommodations in consultation with the student, the student's family, the grade chair, the learning strategist and the student's instructors. In the high school setting and within the IB Diploma Programme, the most common school-based accommodation is extended time and word processor access. The school generally follows the standards and practices of The College Board and ACT, with some students benefiting from assistive technology (e.g., calculator, computer for word processing). The need for a current psycho-educational report by external testing agencies, including the ACT, College Board and the IB, means that a student who receives in-school accommodations without a psychological educational report is encouraged and supported to pursue testing so that they may receive accommodations on external assessments and in their college years.

Students and families are required to provide consent for application at the start of the testing year (typically Year 2) in the IB Diploma Programme so that students may be able to apply for inclusive access arrangements in the External examinations. Students and families receive communication from the IBDP Coordinator and Learning Support Specialist on the



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application process and subsequent inclusive access arrangements that may be afforded to the student in the External examinations.

Should families engage an outside tutor to support their child's learning, the tutor is not permitted to work on campus with the student and work with outside tutors is not permitted during the hours of the scheduled school day. We believe that the school's provided support systems serve student needs.

Teachers deliver instruction in the school's curriculum via inclusive educational practices. Learning support professionals (learning strategists) provide additional interventions when needed. Regardless of whether the student has a diagnosed learning difference or not, the school keeps an individual learning profile for each student. Additionally, the learning strategist communicates directly with teachers the profiles of students with diagnosed learning differences and the accommodations they require. For the most part, these accommodations are:

- Extended time (25-50%)
- Quiet testing environments
- Use of a laptop for essays; use of a calculator
- Alternative test formats
- Testing over sequential days

Within the classroom, teachers differentiate instruction for all learners, and are expected to be aware of the learning profiles of all students, and attend to specific accommodations of those students. Schools of the Sacred Heart - San Francisco respects and supports the diversity of learning styles that are present in the classroom. We believe that teaching strategies designed to accommodate students with learning differences (such as multimodal instruction and scaffolding) benefit all students in a classroom. Teachers assess students in multi-modal ways. (See the school's Assessment Policy.)

Diverse approaches to teaching and learning that support and enhance the academic experience supports all students. Engaged, small-class instruction with multi-modal assessment practices (see assessment philosophy) ensures each student's participation and achievement. Teachers use formative assessment practices to assess gaps in content or skills, and are able to scaffold instruction appropriately by using assessment tools to inform new avenues of learning. Students report that they feel a strong sense of connection to their



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learning and to their teachers – the classroom operates as an inclusive and highly participatory environment where students are encouraged to thrive.

Communication between teachers and students is a core element of the learning process. (See assessment policy.) We believe that the inclusivity of the educational environment is based on an honest and helpful exchange of information between teacher and student. If a student is under performing in some way, it is expected that the teacher will be in active communication with the student directly, first in person and in written follow up that includes the student's parents or guardians. Essential components of the communication of progress is the clear identification of the issue or concern accompanied by suggestions for improvements that involve active participation from the student in conjunction with the support of the instructor.

Overall, we believe that access and inclusion in the school's program is assured by:

- Highly engaged and committed instructors who know their students well
- A system of support (via grade chairs) that invites student participation and reflection on learning
- The recognition that the student is the key stakeholder in the learning experience – students at the center of the experience, not on the periphery
- A networked resource team that includes grade chairs, teachers, learning strategists
- Ongoing communication with students and families that engages learning and any learning challenges