



Academy of International Studies Elementary School

Access and Inclusion Policy



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“The International Baccalaureate (IB) is committed to equity and inclusive education, which is part of the fabric of an IB education. All IB World Schools (IBWSs) are expected to follow inclusive practices and develop inclusive education. Inclusive education, however, is an umbrella term, and what it means will differ from one context to another. At the heart of the principle is that every student has fair and equal opportunities to fully participate as an IB learner and feels they fully belong in the learning environment.”

The school inclusion policy should be dynamic; it should be continuously reviewed and grow as the school makes progress on inclusive education. The policy should be a true reflection of the authentic school philosophy, principles, practices and processes related to equity and inclusive education. It should also include any legal or local requirements with which the school may need to align. The policy must be easily available to the whole school community, preferably with a student version that is easily comprehended by young learners.”
ibo.org “Developing and aligning a school inclusion policy with the Programme Standards and Practices.”

Philosophy

As our mission states, at Academy of International Studies Elementary School, we aim to develop internationally minded global citizens who take action for a better, more peaceful world. We are committed to providing equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services. To meet this goal, it is important that every student has fair and equal opportunities to fully participate as an IB learner and feels they fully belong in the learning environment. This can only be achieved in a culture that supports collaboration, respect, and problem solving.

Inclusion is the learner profile in action. We demonstrate the traits of the Learner Profile through our work by:

- affirming and celebrating our identity (Caring, Communicator)
- building self-esteem (Balanced, Reflective)
- valuing prior knowledge (Thinker, Knowledgeable)
- having opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom (Inquirer, Thinker)
- experiencing diverse learning communities (Risk-taker, Open-minded)
- being active, compassionate, lifelong learners (Principled, Balanced)

Defining Access and Inclusion

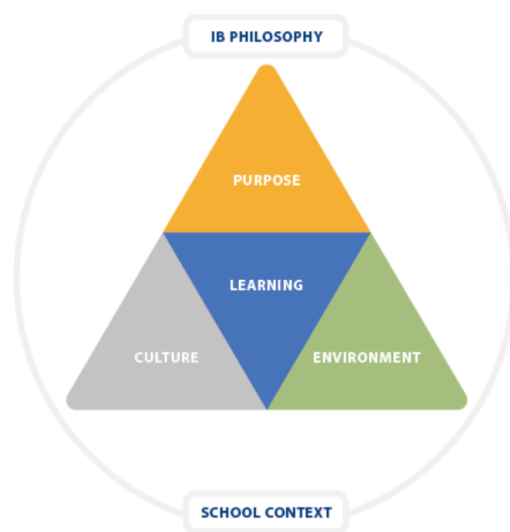
The International Baccalaureate defines inclusion as:

“an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.

Inclusion is an organizational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire.

Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community.”

https://resources.ibo.org/ib/works/edu_11162-38434?root=1.6.2.2.7&lang=en&odd=ibo.odd&view=div



At CREC Academy of International Studies School, we are committed to building a diverse and inclusive learning environment where every individual has the opportunity to contribute. Our mission is to foster a culture of respect and understanding, where each person's unique perspectives and experiences are valued and seen as essential to our collective growth and learning. Our vision is to create a community in which every individual feels empowered to contribute their unique talents and abilities to our shared learning environment. Through this policy, we aim to highlight the importance of access and inclusion in creating a vibrant, respectful, and collaborative learning community. We believe that every individual, regardless of their background or abilities, should have equal opportunities to learn and contribute to our community. We encourage everyone in the Academy of International Studies School community to embrace this policy in their daily interactions to help us achieve our mission of a truly inclusive learning environment.

Strategies to Support Access and Inclusion

Special Education

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that all students, including students with exceptionalities, are unique and influenced by cultural, linguistic, intellectual, psychological, health and economic factors. (Excerpt from the State Board of Education's Position Statement on the Education of Students with Exceptionalities)

Special Education is provided to children with identified exceptionalities who are in need of a specially designed and individualized education program. The goal is to meet the unique needs of the child and to enable the child to access our units of inquiry and our Math and Language Arts curriculum. It may include specialized instruction, programs, accommodations, modifications, or related services. Families work with a team of educators and specialists to determine the needs of the child in order to design the most appropriate and inclusive program that addresses the student's educational needs.

Programs and Services

The services that are provided by AISE include:

- Special education services
- Speech and Language
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Co-teaching model
- Counseling services
- Multi-language learner services

We also have a variety of providers and specialists:

- Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessionals
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Social Worker(s)
- Instructional Coach(es)
- Multilingual Instructor

Collaboration

All members of the school community collaborate to ensure that all students with diverse learning needs are provided access to the same learning experiences and opportunities.

Differentiation

Transdisciplinary units of inquiry provide a variety of ways for teachers to collaborate, assess, and understand the unique learning needs of each child. Teachers across disciplines utilize a variety of tools, strategies, materials, and assistive technology. This serves to ensure that all students are given an opportunity to reach their potential in every area.

Early Intervention Process

At AISE, we take a collaborative, team approach to reviewing whole school data, analyzing progress (or lack thereof) and making necessary changes to continually enhance the EIP process to maximize student growth while receiving tiered supports. In addition to ongoing adjustments to tiers two and three, the team will also identify tier one needs for school-wide initiatives and/or professional development. Finally, the team also serves a gatekeeping role of accepting new intervention referrals and informing parents, or clarifying additional data that needs to be collected to make such a determination, or making the necessary recommendations to support students and their teachers in a tier one environment.

Communication

The Support Services team meets weekly to collaborate and plan for students' needs. They also have the opportunity to collaborate with classroom teachers during monthly grade level or staff meetings. Plans are communicated to families through the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Process. This process includes:

- PPT meeting including family members, teachers, and related service providers
- Sharing classroom progress including strengths and areas for growth
- Sharing of assessment results
- All decision making regarding assessment, evaluation, and determination of services is discussed with all stakeholders during the PPT meeting
- Development of Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Annual PPT meetings to review the IEP

Assessment

In addition to any universal screens, additional measures can be used to gain more information. The PPT team determines the best measures to gain specific information in order to identify individualized strategies. The team strives to conduct comprehensive assessments that measure skills across all domains.

Students, teachers and parents are encouraged to seek clarification on any issue related to access and inclusion. This policy was reviewed during the 2023-2024 school year.

The Access and Inclusion Policy will be reviewed every three years to reflect best practice and the needs of the AISE community.

Works Cited

- Access and Inclusion Policy, 2023.
https://resources.ibo.org/ib/topic/Access-and-inclusion/works/edu_11162-53587?lang=en&root=1.6.2.8.5
- Developing and Aligning a School Inclusion Policy with the Programme Standards and Practices, 2023.
https://resources.ibo.org/ib/works/edu_11162-425786?lang=en
- The IB Guide to Inclusive Education: A Resource for Whole School Development, 2022.
https://resources.ibo.org/ib/works/edu_11162-37963?root=1.6.2.2.7&lang=en&odd=ibo.odd&view=div
- <https://portal.ct.gov/sde/special-education/bureau-of-special-education>

We also gathered information from the following International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme school Access and Inclusion policies:

- Whitby School, Greenwich
- Thomas O’Connell Elementary School, East Hartford
- Charter Oak Elementary School, West Hartford

Access and Inclusion Committee

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Jonathan Ramos, Special Education Teacher
Patrick Robitaille, Principal
Sara Rosati, Special Education Teacher
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