



Kazakhstan International School

Inclusion and Special Needs Policy

Mission Statement

At KIS, we nurture international mindedness within our multilingual school community by providing an inquiry-based curriculum focused on the development of the whole child as a caring, open-minded, lifelong learner.

Philosophy

We believe that all learners have unique needs which need to be considered in order to help each individual fulfill his or her potential. To provide access to the IB programs in our school, we endeavor to apply approaches and offer forms of support that cater for the different needs and learning styles of individual students.

In line with the IB philosophy, KIS has a strongly inclusive ethos. We view inclusion as aiming to increase access to and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers to student success. Inclusion is an ongoing process of responding positively to each individual's unique needs by creating a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving.

In this policy, the phrase 'special educational needs' includes cognitive, social, emotional, and physical difficulties that require special provision to be made. We also recognize that some students will have a combination of difficulties and that their phase of English language acquisition can affect their individual needs.

Admissions

Our Admission Policy states that admission is open to students of all nationalities who demonstrate the ability to access and benefit from the challenging IB curriculum. KIS is an inclusive school and serves the needs of the international and local community. Nonetheless, given the rigorous nature of the academic program and the practical limitations of the resources we can provide, KIS may not be able to accept or support students who have special learning needs which are deemed by the school to be severe.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable children with special educational needs (SEN) in our school to make progress and grow in confidence in their own abilities, so that they become independent, motivated, and life-long learners.

Objectives

The implementation of this policy begins with leadership from the Board, the Director, the Principals, and IB Coordinators, in supporting the achievement of the following objectives:

- ensuring that the SEN policy works towards goals related to the core beliefs of the school
- maximising students' access to the curriculum according to their potential, e.g. through differentiation
- encouraging all academic staff to share responsibility for supporting the SEN policy at all levels of education, and supporting academic staff in achieving this objective through training, coaching and other methods

- ensuring that academic staff provide equal opportunities to students with special educational needs, take responsibility for the learning of all children in their class, and have high expectations for all students
- providing a warm, supportive and inclusive learning environment in which students' self-confidence and self-esteem can grow, and in which all students feel valued and able to take risks and make mistakes
- ensuring that support is tailored to individual students' needs, so that they can attain their personal goals and those of the curriculum
- encouraging co-operative planning and teaching by academic staff in support of the SEN Policy
- allowing the counselor access to school decision-making processes through PYP and MYP staff meetings
- developing partnerships with outside agencies and skilled individuals to identify, assess and assist in providing support for students with SEN

Rationale

- Students make more progress when teachers work as a team to support them
- Assessment tools help teachers, parents and students in setting appropriate goals and activities in line with each student's needs and abilities.
- A differentiated curriculum addresses students' learning needs and helps to fill gaps in their learning
- All stakeholders (the Board, teachers, parents and the students) have a shared understanding of students' learning needs
- Relevant information on student progress is communicated promptly
- Teaching and learning is multi-sensory and practical and takes account of individual profiles and learning styles to the fullest extent possible.

Principles of Best Practice

According to the IBO guide *Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom*, we follow the IB's four basic principles of good instructional practice that promote equal access to the curriculum for all learners:

1. *Affirming identity and building self-esteem*
2. *Prior Knowledge*
3. *Scaffolding*
4. *Differentiation*

These practices are particularly relevant to those with special needs.

Affirming identity and building self-esteem

Affirming identity and building self-esteem are crucial to education. Students' self-esteem and confidence as learners is boosted by creating an environment where different languages, cultures and identities are valued and respected.

Prior Knowledge

Previous experiences and prior knowledge are taken into consideration when planning the next steps in students' learning.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be too difficult.

Differentiation

Differentiation is the process of identifying the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals with each learner. Differentiation can help learners access and respond to content at an appropriate level through a variety of resources and outcomes.

To this end, KIS can support students by:

- using educational strategies and materials that support a diversity of learning styles
- accommodating individual needs during class time and assessments, e.g. allowing extended time for assessments, and modifying summative assessments
- helping students plan and set goals
- modifying students' schedules
- promoting the use of technology to support learning needs
- making it easy for teachers to work together
- communicating regularly with parents, teachers and students
- helping parents arrange testing or other support beyond school, when possible
- providing assessment of progress as well as achievement
- creating and developing individual learning plans

Currently, KIS is unable to provide:

- a self-contained learning resources education program
- an alternative curriculum
- specific support services such as speech or physical therapy
- educational or neuropsychological evaluations
- guaranteed enrollment through continuous grade levels

We regret that we are unable to enroll students with severe disabilities, e.g. those with limited intellectual capacity or mobility, or with severe physical disabilities. Such decisions are always made in the interests of the child.

Academic excellence is viewed in terms of each student fulfilling his or her academic and social potential. Differentiation is necessary to ensure that we provide learning opportunities which meet the variety of needs among our students. This includes differentiated tasks and assessments as well as accommodations, modifications, adaptations, alternative resources, and specialist teachers. All students should thereby have access to a curriculum that is "relevant, engaging and challenging" and developmentally appropriate to their individual needs.

Admissions Policy and Special Educational Needs Students

The KIS Admissions Policy sets out the criteria for admitting students to the school. With our current programming and resources, KIS can admit and offer an IB program for students with moderate learning difficulties. This includes students receiving counseling, academic support (inside and beyond the classroom), and limited modifications to the curriculum or to the physical learning environment to accommodate their physical, emotional, sensory, or medical needs.

The Director and relevant Principal will be consulted before accepting students with known special educational needs into the academic programs offered by the school, so they can decide whether KIS has the resources to effectively work with the student. Parents must share all relevant information regarding their child's special needs and medical history (including a complete medical report of the child), to allow

the school's Senior Leadership Team to make an informed decision about the appropriateness of the child's placement at KIS. Each individual with special educational needs will be reviewed on an individual basis at the time of application. The review will look at the resources the child will require in terms of human resources, financial, material and space resources as well as the parental commitment to supporting their child's educational program at home and school.

The Senior Leadership Team will consult with the counselor and the relevant curriculum coordinator before accepting a student with special educational needs as a candidate for the IB program.

If a student with special educational needs is accepted into the IB program, careful consideration will be given to how the student will be effectively included and supported so that they can access the program successfully. The school has an ethical responsibility to families and applicants in cases where we do not have the resources or facilities necessary to provide educational access to the IB program for a student.

Identification Process

Identification upon Entry

For students transferring to KIS from other schools, previous school records and an entrance test of cognitive abilities are the main sources of information to help to identify students with individual needs. KIS reserves the right to contact previous schools directly if there are queries regarding the school records of any applicant. The results of any psychological and educational evaluations and formal assessments of academic achievement will help identify any specific needs.

Identification of special needs can be more difficult for students entering KIS as their first school. Evidence may be taken from developmental checklists where applicable. It is important that the progress of students in their first few years of school is monitored closely so that special needs can be identified as early as possible. Early identification and intervention can help to reduce the impact of learning difficulties.

Identification of Needs for Existing Students

Academic screening takes place regularly each year. In addition, students in the PYP have their reading progress monitored on a regular basis. In general, if a student scores two or more years below his or her grade level group on any component of a standardized test of educational achievement, this should be seen as an indicator of a possible learning difficulty and further investigation is warranted.

Addressing Special Educational Needs

Learning difficulties can arise at any time as a result of new curriculum demands, changed rates of learning, absence from school, settling into a new educational environment, or a specific learning or language difficulty. There also is a need to challenge talented students and stimulate a higher level of achievement in a particular area, or across subject areas.

When such special educational needs are suspected, the teacher should inform the counselor, the learning support teacher, and the appropriate administrator for assistance in meeting those needs. The counselor and learning support teacher, in cooperation with the appropriate administrator and subject teacher(s), can identify specific needs of individual students (including the highly able) by the following methods, as required:

- liaising with parents
- liaising with teachers
- reviewing previous education history
- documenting observations in the classroom

- obtaining formal assessments by educational psychologists
- seeking expert advice from educational psychologist and professional consultants.

As soon as evidence has been collected, the counselor, learning support teacher, or appropriate principal will call and chair a meeting. Attendees may include:

- subject teacher(s), including EAL where appropriate
- administrator(s)
- parents
- the student (especially older students)

During this meeting, the team will review and draft a copy of a plan to meet the needs of the student. This plan may specify the student's learning objectives, how they will be achieved, the staff responsible, and the time frame for evaluation and review. A record of the plan will be placed in the student's cumulative file in the main office.

If KIS is unable to meet a student's special educational needs, a recommendation of transfer to a different educational institution may be the most appropriate course of action.

Expectations of Stakeholders

Families

Open communication with parents is essential to the successful integration and support of students with special educational needs. To help KIS provide the right environment for a child with special educational needs, we request the following:

- an evaluation of the student by a psychologist, neurologist, or other related specialist within two years
- frequent and open communication with school
- on-going communication from any outside agency or specialist working with the student
- parental support for educational testing, consultations or other services thought by the school or outside specialist to benefit the student's opportunity for success
- an understanding that in the event the child's needs cannot be met by differentiated instruction and other interventions provided by mainstream classroom teacher, it may be necessary to seek placement in another school
- if the classroom teacher and teacher assistant (where available) are not sufficient to give a student the attention they require, parents may be asked to fund a one-to-one aide
- an understanding that students with special needs require long-term commitment on the part of parents and school, and that regular informal evaluation is necessary to ensure adequate progress is being made.
- any formal evaluation, therapy, or tutoring recommended by the school and conducted by outside specialists must be financed by the parents.

Teachers

The teacher's goal is to increase access and engagement by identifying with each learner the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Classroom teachers should be familiar with the content to be taught, and with strategies for differentiating that are both transparent and consistent for all students. These strategies should be written into lesson plans, visible during instruction, and accounted for in assessments. The previously mentioned four principles of good practice identified by the IB as promoting equal access to the curriculum for all learners provide the basis for successful inclusion.

Procedural Steps

If a student shows signs of needing extra support, teachers should refer to the following procedure.

If the concern regards what is known to be an isolated incident, or a situation requires immediate support, referrals should be directed immediately to the relevant principal.

In all other cases, teachers should:

1. check student support services to see if there is a history of issues
2. seek verbal feedback from other teachers
3. record observations of student in the form of anecdotal notes and work samples
4. use a variety of differentiated instructional techniques
5. implement interventions and document results
6. request student observation from other teachers, principal, counselor, or other relevant colleague
7. meet with parents to discuss learning difficulties; keep a record of the meeting
8. fill in the Referral Form and send it to the relevant principal.

The principal will direct the referral to one or a combination of the following people: the Director, relevant SLT members, EAL Coordinator, homeroom teacher or form tutor, counselor, and any other relevant member of the pastoral or academic student support systems.

A meeting will be scheduled with parents and key relevant staff, to discuss the concern and make recommendations. The school may decide to initiate an intervention such as a behavior plan or learning plan if the concerns persist. Relevant staff should determine a timeline for interventions and inform the principal. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled throughout the school year to monitor progress, review goals and discuss expected progress.

Other Support Services

School Medical Team

The school doctor and nurse care for and advise students who fall ill during the school day. They run regular screening checks and work with families over health issues that arise. The school doctor and nurse also help with preventative measures such as providing information, vaccines, and providing first aid kits for field trips. There is always at least one medical staff member on duty during the school day and in attendance at school sport events.

English as an Additional Language

Throughout the school, the EAL Department works with students whose level of English requires special instruction. Students can enter the younger grades with little to no English. Accessing the later grades of the PYP, or the MYP, requires at least some English. The EAL Department may support students through separate, additional lessons in English language, e.g. during foreign language lessons. Students who attend EAL classes will usually attend mainstream classes for all of their other lessons. EAL support may also be given by having an EAL teacher in the mainstream classroom working with students who need extra help with English. The EAL Department works closely with classroom teachers to make lessons more accessible to students whose English is still developing.

School Counselor

The school has a full-time counselor. The counselor supports the transition process by meeting with new families and with departing students. The counselor also works with individual students who may be

experiencing emotional, social or behavioral difficulties. These meetings may be the result of self-referral by the student, or referral by a teacher or parent. For younger students the focus is on enabling positive attitudes towards themselves and their peers. For older students the focus is on enabling self-advocacy and respect for themselves and others, and helping students to deal with emotional and behavioral issues through making positive decisions.

Confidentiality

Children have a right to privacy. In the interests of maintaining confidentiality and showing respect for students who are experiencing difficulties in school, all involved parties must avoid casual and informal discussions of those students. Discussions about students with parents or other staff members must be held in private and with due consideration for the student's rights.

Staff must maintain confidentiality by not referring to any child outside of the classroom by name or identifying features, not referring to social or learning difficulties in front of other students or members of the KIS community, and being sensitive about making comments or drawing conclusions about a student's behavior or learning profile.