Inclusion Policy at the International School of Iceland

ISI Mission Statement

The mission of the International School of Iceland (ISI) is to create an adaptive environment that is academically stimulating and supportive. As an international program with an English and Bilingual Stream, we value multilingualism and encourage international-mindedness.

IB Mission Statement

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.

(International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014)

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Purpose, Principles, and Objectives of the Inclusion Policy

Purpose

Inclusion of all students in an educational environment is a matter of human rights and social justice.
(International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016)

The principle **purpose** of an inclusion policy at ISI is to provide a framework for creating a learning environment that supports the ongoing process of:
- Increasing student **engagement and access**
- **Removing barriers** to learning

This policy serves as a guide to how the objectives of the inclusion policy will be put into practice through the collaboration of a dynamic learning community at ISI. This ISI policy takes into account the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate as well as international and local legislation regarding inclusion policy in education.

Guiding Principles of an Inclusive Education

- **Learning diversity** is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive communities.
- Every educator is an educator of *all* students.
- Education is enhanced by the creation of **affirmative, responsive environments** that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student.
- Learning is considered from a **strengths-based perspective.**
- *All* learners belong and experience **equal opportunities** to participate and engage in quality learning.
- Full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge.
- **Multilingualism** is recognized as a fact, a right, and a resource.
- **All** students in the school community have a **voice** and are **listened to** so that their input and insights are taken into account.
- *All* students experience **success** as a key component of learning.

(International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016)

Objectives

By developing and implementing a policy of inclusion in this educational setting, ISI aims to:
- create a learning environment that responds to the diverse educational needs of all students,
- address commonality, diversity, and multiple perspectives,
- differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning styles and needs,
- engage students in reflecting on how and why they are learning,
- identify students with additional needs as early as possible,
- ensure that additional needs are identified, assessed, and supported with the available resources ISI provides,
- train staff on differentiation in general classroom instruction and assessment,
- connect students with additional needs that require support beyond what is available at ISI to external resources in the community,
- identify the roles and responsibilities of staff members regarding students with additional needs,

Key Definitions

Differentiation (differentiated instruction)	"Differentiated instruction is the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals so learning opportunities can be created that enable every student to develop, pursue and achieve appropriate personal learning goals." (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016)
Dynamic learning communities	The idea that the school community is a whole that includes learners, parents and caregivers, support staff, and non-teaching staff.
ILP	Individual Learning Plan, a plan outlining intervention support that will be offered to the student. The ILP is created by the learning support team in collaboration with parents, teachers, and administrative staff.
Inclusion	A broad understanding that embraces the diversity of learners and all minority groups. Inclusion is achieved through a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving.
Learner variability	Recognizes that all students may experience barriers to learning at some point in their school career.

Admissions Policy and Inclusion

ISI is a school committed to inclusion and admits students with diverse needs as described above. The ISI admissions policy outlines the documentation required for all students when submitting an application for enrollment at ISI. Careful consideration is given to each student with different or additional learning needs, and admissions decisions are made by the administration team in consultation with the well-being team and learning support staff. Each application is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and all decisions are made with the best interests of the student as the highest priority.

Additional Educational Needs

Identifying Students with Additional Educational Needs

It is the responsibility of every teacher, as a teacher of all students, to ensure that each student is exposed to instruction and learning opportunities that are accessible to them as individual learners. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2016)

Learner variability recognizes that all students may experience barriers or challenges to accessing the curriculum. ISI uses a strengths-based perspective when considering the diversity of all learners. Instead of using deficit-based labels, ISI considers areas of challenge that a student may experience. Possible **additional educational needs** (areas of challenge) can be categorized in the following **four broad areas of development:**
- Cognition & Learning
- Communication (Speech and/or Language) & Reading
- Behavior, Social/Emotional
- Physical/Sensory

Collaboration and Responsibility

Every educator is an educator of all students. ISI implements a multi-tiered system of supports in order to identify and meet the needs of all students. Teachers ensure high quality universal instruction in TIER 1 (see Appendix A). They incorporate differentiation strategies as they plan lessons taking into account the diverse needs of their students. They work closely together with parents, the student support team and use an evidence based approach to developing resources, teaching strategies, and approaches.

Parent involvement

At ISI, parents are partners in their children's education journey and a vital member of a child's support team. As parents know their children best, they are an essential part of the ongoing support process from the beginning steps of need identification. Parents will be

sought for consultation when identifying additional educational needs and determining a plan for support.

Homeroom and Subject Area Teachers

Homeroom teachers are essential for the learning success of all students. They are the link between the student's school and home life. Homeroom teachers have a primary role in tracking student progress, schoolwork, social relationships, and personal development. When concerns emerge about a student's academic, social, emotional, or physical well-being, the homeroom teacher is the first point of contact for parents, school staff, and community partners.

If a subject area teacher has a concern in any area (academic, social, emotional, physical), they are responsible for bringing the concern to the homeroom teacher in order to collaborate and submit a referral to the student support team.

School and Administrative Team

The school and administrative team have the responsibility to establish processes that serve to remove barriers to learning for all members of the school community. Barriers to learning can arise from their cultures and policies, approaches to learning and teaching, the way the school is organized, the resources provided, and the interactions between members of the learning community. The administrative team must be aware of the different needs of the students enrolled. Confidentiality of all student's information must be respected. (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2015)

Student Support Team

- ● Student Support Specialists

  Student support specialists support the ISI teaching staff with responding to student concerns and referrals, creating resources, advising on differentiation practices, assessing students, and providing both direct and indirect learning intervention. The student support specialists also review data on a regular basis to ensure all students requiring additional support are identified.

- ● ISI Well-being Team

  The Well-being Team (Lausnateymi) is responsible for the on-going proactive support for and monitoring of well-being in the school, as well as for reactive responses to any reports or referrals for support, diagnosis-support, and reports of abuse or neglect.

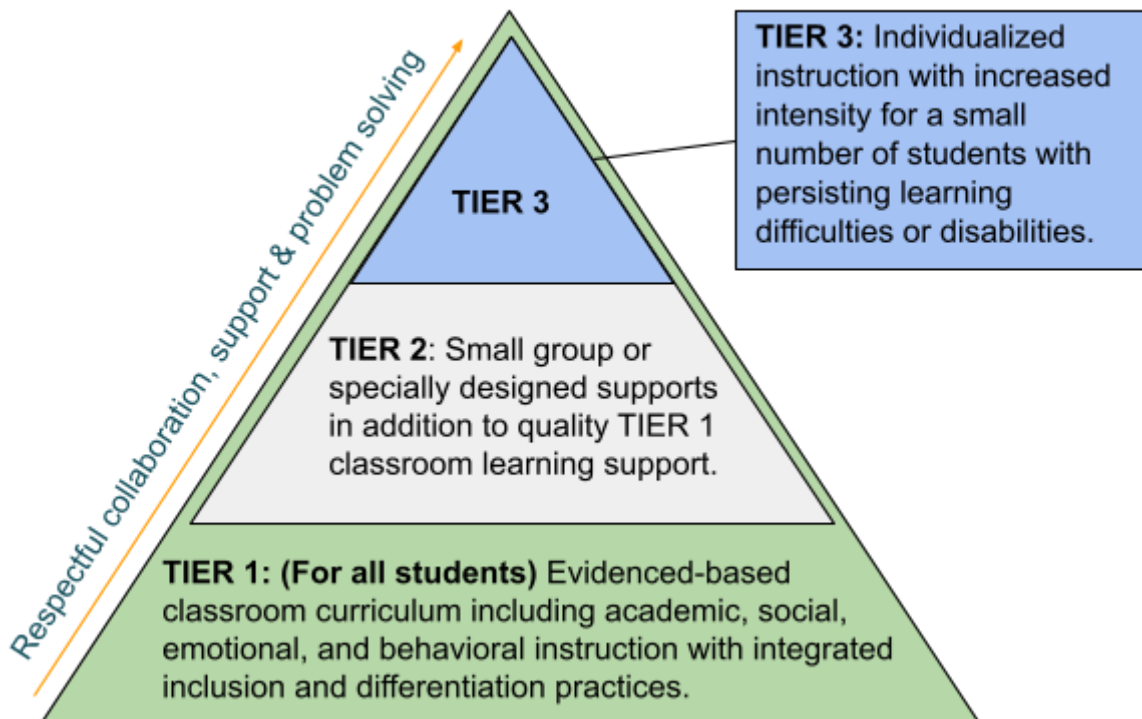- ● School Speech Language Pathologist

  The school speech language pathologist (SLP) provides screenings and individual assessment of all communication areas related to speaking, listening, reading, writing, and social interaction. The school SLP provides specialized instruction and intervention to students who are identified as having more complex communication needs.

Supporting Students with Additional Education Needs

A Continuum of Learning Support

Instruction and intervention for all students with additional educational needs is based on a **continuum of support** delivery model.

As described in the diagram below, our support delivery is organized into a **three tiered** continuum of supports. This model provides students with instruction and intervention for students with additional educational needs at increasing levels of intensity based on the complexity of their needs.

TIER 3: Individualized instruction with increased intensity for a small number of students with persisting learning difficulties or disabilities.

TIER 3

TIER 2: Small group or specially designed supports in addition to quality TIER 1 classroom learning support.

TIER 1: (For all students) Evidenced-based classroom curriculum including academic, social, emotional, and behavioral instruction with integrated inclusion and differentiation practices.

Respectful collaboration, support & problem solving

For a more detailed outline of the tiers of support, please see **Appendix A**.

Differentiation

In the classroom, differentiation is a necessary practice for all teachers to promote access and engagement for diverse learners. Teachers can receive support in differentiation from ISI learning specialists and the school speech language pathologist.

The International Baccalaureate Organization identifies **four principles of teaching** that promote inclusive learning and equal access to the curriculum for all learners. Those principles are:

- **Affirming identity and building self-esteem:** educators use an affirmative model that ensures all students are visible and valued.
- **Valuing prior knowledge:** educators meaningfully assess existing knowledge, strengths, and interests.
- **Scaffolding:** Teachers use access to prior knowledge to identify smaller steps that can be incorporated into the learning process.
- **Extended learning:** Includes IB approaches to teaching and learning, teaching to learner variability, creating optimal learning environments, assessment, collaboration (co-teaching), and technology.

Appendix A

Continuum of Learning Support

TIER 1: Classroom Support

All students benefit from TIER 1 instruction and support, which takes place in the general classroom. At this level, the core curriculum is taught to all students using high quality teaching methods and standards-based instruction. Teachers design instruction and utilize differentiation strategies in order to increase student engagement and remove barriers to learning. At this stage, teachers monitor student's progress on a regular basis to identify and address needs in academic, behavioral, and social-emotional areas as soon as they arise. All educators, in collaboration with the learning specialists and support staff, differentiate instruction to meet the emerging needs of students. Parents receive information on how the student is progressing in report cards and in contact with teachers. Most students will experience success given this level of support.

It is at TIER 1 that identification of students with additional educational needs begins. Early identification and early response to emerging additional needs is crucial to providing those students with opportunities for more specialized instruction. Teachers or student support staff identify students that demonstrate emerging educational needs, and **submit a referral to the student support team.** Homeroom teachers then meet with the learning specialist and support coordinator to determine next steps including increased TIER 2 support.

TIER 1 instruction and support is the foundation for all students, including those who are accessing intervention support at TIER 2 and TIER 3.

TIER 2: Small-Group, Specialized Instruction

At times, a student's emerging learning difficulties persist with TIER 1 instruction as indicated by performing below grade level standards without meaningful progress. This student will be offered TIER 2 specialized instruction in addition to continued TIER 1 classroom support. TIER 2 includes a more systematic gathering of information, assessment, and ongoing progress monitoring. Interventionists and teachers collaborate to provide TIER 2 targeted instruction. TIER 2 targeted instruction is typically provided in small groups within the classroom depending on the needs of the students. TIER 2 interventions are skill-focused, evidence-based, short term (typically 6-8 weeks) and include ongoing progress monitoring. Students continue to receive TIER 1 support as all tiered supports are cumulative.

TIER 3: Individualized Interventions

If a student's additional educational needs persist without meaningful progress at TIER 2, the student will receive increased intensive support with TIER 3 intervention. The frequency,

setting, intensity, and duration of the interventions are determined through collaboration with all members of the support team and based on the complexity of the student's needs. A student's areas of need, goals, accommodations, and support services will be documented with an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP). Depending on the complexity and type of additional needs a student is demonstrating, there may be a need to involve external specialists from outside of the school such as: psychologist, psychiatrist, neurologist, etc. Students continue to receive TIER 1 and TIER 2 support as all tiered supports are cumulative.

(American Institutes for Research, 2021)

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