THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL YANGON INCLUSION POLICY

Definition of Inclusion

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all ISY students by identifying and removing barriers. This is successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is about responding positively to each individual’s unique needs. Inclusion is not marginalizing students because of their differences. (“Learning Diversity in the IB Programmes,” 2010)

ISY Inclusion Philosophy

The International School Yangon is committed to supporting the individual needs of students in an academic environment. We believe that students should have the opportunity to grow and develop, emotionally, physically and intellectually, in order to realize their full potential in an environment that promotes success. Through an academically rigorous, yet nurturing educational setting, all students receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum and are encouraged to become independent, lifelong learners in a global society.

Guiding Principles and Beliefs About Inclusion

At ISY we believe that—

- Differentiation of instructional practices is inclusion put into practice.
- All students learn in different ways and have unique learning styles, therefore, all students benefit from a personalized, differentiated approach to learning.
- The meaning of differentiation is “a teacher’s response to the to the diverse learning needs of a student.” (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2008)
- Based on findings, students with special educational needs are best served through all teachers and the school working collaboratively to meet the needs of a student, as opposed to specialist teachers working in isolation and solving issues. Recent research has found that “certain individuals or groups of children may benefit from adaptations to general teaching approached, but in general pupils with special education needs do not need qualitatively different pedagogy.” (Kershner, 2007)
- The uniqueness and diversity of the ISY community is valuable and enriches the experience of all students.
- Incorporation of research-based effective instructional practices provides equal access to the curriculum for all students.
- Differentiation is most successful in a culture of collaboration.
- Student success is amplified with partnerships forged between the school, teachers, parents, and students.
**Instructional and Differentiated Practices**

- Teachers provide a variety of activities, strategies, and approaches as part of the differentiated process.
- Teachers allow time for students to reflect on their learning, and they help students foster an understanding of who they are as learners so that students may take an active role in their learning.
- Teachers, in the unit development process, plan ways to help students gain access to content, skills, and learning targets.
- As stated in the ISY Assessment Policy, “Teachers provide students with a range of assessment tasks and activities to ensure students with varying learning styles opportunities to attain achievement of learning outcomes.”
- According to the IB, there are four instructional practices that have the greatest impact for all learners, particularly those with special needs, in promoting equal access to the curriculum: 1) affirming identity and building self-esteem, 2) valuing prior knowledge, 3) scaffolding learning, and 4) extending learning (“Learning Diversity in the IB Programmes,” 2010).

Teachers implement the following related strategies:

- Use a variety of cultural perspectives and plan ways to show the value of the diversity of the ISY student body in the classroom—from the variety of learning styles, to the variety of languages spoken, to variety of perspectives and cultural backgrounds present.
- Activate students’ prior knowledge; use prior understandings to differentiate tasks in order further build prior knowledge; and incorporate strategies that build prior knowledge into unit planning and development.
- Utilize scaffolding strategies that enable students to accomplish tasks that would otherwise be impossible or more difficult to complete and that promote increasing independence (such as graphic organizers, teacher modeling, cooperative groupings, the use of visuals, the use of students’ mother tongue, etc.).
- Provide high expectations and opportunities for students to extend their learning via cognitively rich tasks and resources.

**Schoolwide Practices**

**Environment**

- The school creates a safe, friendly, and caring school environment where students are encouraged to take on new challenges.
- The school promotes an environment that embraces cultural and individual diversity.
- ISY provides a student centered learning environment with high expectations for all learners.
- An atmosphere exists where positive self-advocacy skills are promoted in all students.
Communication

- The school communicates the philosophy, practices, and beliefs of this inclusion policy to the ISY school community.
- It is the responsibility of the school to communicate consistently, promptly and clearly with parents and students with specific social, emotional, and/or academic needs.
- The school liaises and collaborates with parents to help accomplish shared objectives.
- Each school division, elementary and secondary, follows specific procedures for communicating to parents regarding specific social, emotional, and/or academic needs of students.
- During new teacher orientation, all ISY policies, including the ISY Inclusion Policy, are shared and communicated with newly hired teachers to enforce consistency of practice.
- To ensure continuity of a child’s learning from year to year, each school division follows specific procedures for communicating pertinent student information from grade level to grade level.
- The elementary school principal and counselor communicate information regarding grade 5 students with specific social, emotional, and/or academic needs to the secondary school counselor, the principal, and grade 6 teachers to ensure a smooth transition for students moving to middle school.

Professional Development

- Through professional development and collaboration, the school ensures that teachers understand the factors that affect student learning, the benefits of differentiation, and how to best respond to student needs.
- ISY provides teacher training and professional development to support the needs of all ISY learners, including differentiating and matching instructional strategies to individual student needs, learning styles, and goals.
- ISY promotes a culture of collaboration to enable teachers to discuss, develop and plan for the learning needs of students.

Resources

- The school provides the instructional resources needed to maximize access to the curriculum for all ISY students.

Confidentiality

- Actions are taken to ensure protection and confidentiality of student data and information.
- Student information contained in documents such as the ISY application, report cards, schoolwide testing reports, and any external evaluation reports are physically kept in the elementary and secondary office files. The division principals, with viewing access given to teachers and counselors, manage these confidential files.
• In the secondary school, external evaluation reports, intervention plans, learning plans, progress reports, and report cards are digitally stored within the student management system (ISIS). Classroom and Intensive Studies teachers, the counselor, and secondary principal have access to these confidential files.

• Student intervention plans, parent communication records, and informal documented teacher communication relevant to assisting students with academic, social, or emotional needs, are also stored in confidential files located in the elementary and secondary offices and on ISIS.

Division Specific Procedures

Elementary School

• Individual student needs are addressed through differentiation in the classroom, through counselor support, and/or English as an Additional Language (EAL) in the elementary school.

• Child Study Team (CST) Meetings comprised of the elementary principal, elementary counselor, and homeroom teacher, provide a forum where every student is discussed to ensure their social, emotional, and academic needs are being addressed. Each classroom teacher has a CST meeting every other week.

• An intervention plan is developed for students identified as needing particular attention or assistance in the social, emotional, or academic realms. In all cases, all relevant data points and noted observations are considered when making educational decisions about a student.

• Actions of the intervention plans are communicated with relevant individuals: students, parents, classroom teacher, and specialist teachers as appropriate.

• Students with intervention plans are monitored and discussed regularly via CST meetings. Student progress is documented and communicated with parents each trimester.

• Students identified as benefitting from EAL support, are enrolled in the EAL program where they receive support in both a ‘pulled’ out setting as well as within the student’s regular classroom.

Middle School

• Individual student needs are addressed in the middle school through differentiation within the classroom, teaching organizational skills in the advisory program, social emotional counseling support, and individual English language or academic support via the Intensive Studies course.

• Grade Level Meetings (GLMs) occur weekly in the middle school for the purpose of discussing students of concern. Middle school teachers and the Intensive Studies teacher participate in the GLMs.

• The Student Study Team (SST) develops an intervention plan for students identified as needing particular attention or assistance in the social, emotional, or academic realms. In all cases, all relevant data points and noted observations are considered when making
educational decisions about a student. The SST members include the student’s teacher(s), the secondary assistant principal, the secondary counselor, the Intensive Studies teacher, and the parents and student when appropriate.

- The Intensive Studies course provides specialized instructional support for students identified by the Student Study Team (SST) with particular needs to ensure that they develop skills that allow them to have full access to a rich curriculum across disciplines. Intensive Studies supports students in the transition years between elementary school and high school, where students move from a single core teacher to increasing personal responsibility for learning.

- Students who are identified as benefiting from EAL are also enrolled in the Intensive Studies class where the content of the curriculum is used as the vehicle through which students develop their knowledge and skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

- The Intensive Studies teacher liaises with middle school teachers to collaborate and plan to ensure coordinated support of students, including providing teachers with information and understanding as to how to best address individual student needs.

- For students enrolled in Intensive Studies, their learning targets are individualized and monitored throughout the year to determine progress.

- A range of factors are taken into consideration to determine a student’s entrance into and exit out of the Intensive Studies course. These include: teacher referrals, MAP and ISA testing data, report card data, school application information, report recommendations, and conversations with a potential student and his or her family. Although there is a documented school process, balanced judgment among a team of professionals is the main tool used for identifying students who would benefit from the Intensive Studies course.

- Progress of students with intervention plans in the middle school is reviewed twice per year in collaboration with the subject area and Intensive Studies teachers. Review of progress is communicated with students and parents and via the middle school report card.

**High School and IB**

- Individual learning needs are supported by differentiated instruction, the development of learning strategies, and after school support.

- Teachers, the counselor, and IB coordinator share responsibilities to create a learning environment that supports the academic and emotional needs of all students.

- Provisions are made for students with specific needs according to IB expectations and regulations, and as the school is able to accommodate students given the available resources.

- The International Baccalaureate Diploma Program at ISY supports the definition of learning support as outlined by the International Baccalaureate Organization: “Support and/or access required to enable some candidates, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, reach their full potential in learning and assessment” (“Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements,” 2012.).
• ISY also supports the policy of the International Baccalaureate Organization regarding students with learning support requirements and assessment access requirements: “The IB believes that all candidates must be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard examination conditions and assessment procedures would put candidates at a disadvantage and prevent them from being able to demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately, reasonable forms of access arrangements may be authorized.” (Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme)

Roles and Responsibilities

Classroom Teacher

• Review student assessment data (diagnostic, formative, summative, MAP, and ISA) as an ongoing process to identify students in need of differentiated instruction
• Attend and participate in grade level, SST, and CST meetings
• Collaborate with other teachers, the counselor, and/or principals to develop and review individual learning plans
• Follow through with any established plans of support.
• Participate in professional development focusing on instructional strategies relating to engaging, motivating, and supporting all learners
• Communicate with parents as student concerns arise
• Embrace and reinforce the practices and beliefs outlined in this policy

Student Support Team (SST) / Child Study Team (CST)

• Facilitate formal meetings to discuss students of concern and their outcomes of assessment, attainment of learning goals, actions to be taken by the school to help students better meet those goals, and ways to support the student at home
• Document, monitor and review progress of students with individual learning plans
• Facilitate the implementation of actions to be taken as outlined in individual learning plans and ensure delivery of individualized programs
• Follow through with any established plans of support.

Counselors

• Participate as a member of the SST or CST
• Have a working knowledge of students within each division who have specific academic, social or emotional needs
• Assist students in understanding their social, emotional, or learning challenges and how to self-advocate
• Follow through with any established plans of support.
• Liaise with teachers regarding students identified with specific social, emotional, and/or academic needs
• In the high school, work with the IB coordinator in the selection of IB courses and ensure that the necessary accommodations are provided for students who require additional support to access the curriculum.

Curriculum Coordinator and IB Coordinator

• Assist teachers in planning and providing differentiated instruction
• Ensure teachers understand the philosophy and practices of the ISY Inclusion policy and of the International Baccalaureate (IB) regarding inclusive practices
• Facilitate professional development opportunities for teachers that support differentiated instruction
• Provide guidance to teachers and parents in cases where students would benefit from accommodations or modification of assessment task or administration

Principals
• Encourage and support differentiated instruction
• Foster an inclusive learning environment as defined by the ISY Inclusion Policy
• Facilitate and foster the collaboration necessary to support the needs of all learners
• Participate as a member of the SST/CST
• Follow through with any established plans of support.
• Actively monitor and review the needs of students in regards to the resources required to support student learning

Parents
• Maintain open communication with teachers to support the learning of their children
• Liaise with the school and attend necessary meetings to ensure student success
• Follow through with any established plans of support
• Encourage and support their children’s learning at home

Students
• Be self-advocates and seek assistance when needed
• Take on new challenges and view practice, mistakes, and perseverance as integral to learning and development
• Understand that all students learn in different ways and have areas of strength and areas in which to improve
• Follow through with any established plans of support.

Inclusion and Admissions
All admissions decisions are informed by and contingent upon a match between the student’s needs and the level of services provided by The International School Yangon.

The International School Yangon believes that all students should be successful in the ISY program. To that end, ISY provides some testing and on-going professional assistance and limited support to students with mild learning disabilities only (on a temporary basis). The term “mild learning disabilities” is used to describe students with average or above average intelligence who display a discrepancy between what is regarded as the student’s potential and the level at which the student is currently functioning. Mild learning-disabled students must be able to participate in the regular academic program, with some assistance from the classroom teacher (if available) in the elementary or middle school. In certain instances, mild learning-disabled students may benefit from slightly modified approaches in the classroom, on a temporary basis. However, ISY does not have the capacity to accommodate significant or multiple modifications.

Admissions and English as an Additional Language (EAL)
The International School Yangon provides English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in
grades kindergarten through grade eight (8). All prospective non-English speaking applicants will be evaluated for an appropriate level of support. If a student is unable to make the progress necessary for successful assimilation to an appropriate level after one year, the student will be reassessed. To better ensure student success, admissions will not be granted to students whose English language proficiency level does not allow them to be mainstreamed by grade six (6).

**ISY Inclusion Policy Review**
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**References**


