



Mar Qardakh School

Inclusion policy

Developed in February 2014.

Reviewed in December 2021.

Date of next review: December 2024.

Related policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Admissions Policy

Mar Qardakh School Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower students for life in the 21st century by providing them with a holistic, international education encompassing academic, social, spiritual and personal development.

I. Philosophy

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this document is to clarify the understanding of inclusive learning within Mar Qardakh School, and illustrate how Mar Qardakh School seeks to provide all of its students with equal access to the school's curriculum and other services.

Mar Qardakh School seeks to empower the whole person by providing comprehensive educational methods and means for academic, social, spiritual and personal development.

Philosophy and aims

The support Mar Qardakh School provides for all students is based on the following beliefs:

- All students are able to learn.
- There is a broad continuum of learners that includes gifted students as well as mentally and/or physically challenged students.
- Mar Qardakh School has the responsibility to provide a holistic, differentiated and inclusive class environment for all students.
- Mar Qardakh School teachers share in the responsibility of recognising and providing support for students with special educational needs.
- Mar Qardakh School students are ultimately responsible for their own learning, and are therefore expected to play an active role in their own learning process, including recognising their own specific needs and abilities, and seeking support and guidance accordingly.
- Parents of Mar Qardakh School students also share in the responsibility of helping their children receive a holistic education. Accordingly, parents of students with special educational needs are expected to inform the school of any special needs they are aware of, maintain frequent communication with the school regarding their child's progress and/or any changes in his/her

needs, and support the school's effort to help their child in the home.

- All student records are handled with the utmost confidentiality. Any information is shared only upon approval of the student's parents or guardians.
- The school reserves the right to request updated psycho-educational assessments whenever necessary.

Mar Qardakh School ensures providing education for all students regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, race, social and economic status and abilities as stipulated by the Iraqi constitution, the 1998 Law of Education, the 2009 national plan for inclusive and special needs education (Instruction Reference 4785), and the December 2021 project of law submitted to the Kurdistan region house of parliament for approval. The articles regarding an inclusive education, as mentioned in the project of law, suggested by Kurdistan regional government are:

Article 2: First, education is a guaranteed right that is free of charge in all governmental schools, educational institutions and educational communities, and no one may be deprived from this right under the terms of this law.

Article 33: First, it is the duty of government and non-governmental educational institutions to view students on the basis that each has his or her own way of learning and creativity, and to take into account the abilities and characteristics of each student as an individual.

Secondly, public and non-governmental primary schools have a duty to support and work for students, particularly those in need of further scientific assistance. Also, this support should be more intense in the first grade.

Article 40:

First, students with disabilities under the legal age of education have the right to study, equal opportunities, communicate and continue in educational institutions, taking into account article 41, paragraph 3.

Secondly, students with disabilities must be cared for at all levels of education, in accordance with their differences in capacity and readiness, and by providing special education teachers, in order to support and continue their education.

Third: The ministry's duty is to provide the standards, mind, special equipment, evaluation method and appropriate tests for these students.

Compliance and Practice

Mar Qardakh School is committed to all legal governmental inclusion requirements and has integrated them in its inclusion policy.

Mar Qardakh school is committed to admitting students with mild to moderate special needs only as it cannot cater to the needs of students with severe challenges like cerebral palsy. These students are referred to the ministry of education to be diagnosed and the ministry will provide them with the necessary support.

Mar Qardakh school is committed to instituting a Learning Diversity (LD) department composed of a team of specialists in addition to providing learning teacher support for the students as needed.

Mar Qardakh School's approach to learning for all students is based on the four principles of good practice In the IB learning cycle affirming identity and building self-esteem, valuing prior knowledge, scaffolding, and extending learning (Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, Updated May 2020).

As defined in the "Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes" (May 2020), inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Mar Qardakh School is designed to be inclusive of, and accessible to all students both academically and physically within the boundaries described above. The school embraces diversity and recognizes that every child has different abilities and learning styles and devises individualized plans to cater for their needs.

The school board, leadership team and teachers are geared to focus on learner success and wellbeing and understand that learners demonstrate their comprehension in different ways. Therefore, the student's learning variability, the academic requirements of the school's programmes, the school's resources and the parents' expectations are all considered carefully in planning for inclusion into Mar Qardakh School's learning environment.

II.Responsibilities of the school community

As written in the "Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes" (May 2020), It is the responsibility of the senior leadership team and school board in consultation with educators, learning support professionals, parents, students and all stakeholders to put in place processes to remove barriers to learning for every member of the school community.

Head of School

- Has a common understanding of standards and practices that support an inclusive learning to all students.
- Creates a safe environment in the school where members of the community feel included, respected, safe and experience equal opportunities.
- Provides training and professional development courses for the staff to support programme inclusiveness whenever necessary.

- Promotes learning methods that support and demonstrate international-mindedness.
- Develops strategies to help remove the barriers to learning.
- Provides all the resources necessary to support inclusive learning.
- Meets with the programme coordinator when necessary to discuss the programme that supports student progress and any new matters to solve.
- Ensures the engagement of the whole community toward an inclusive education
- Supports the development and implementation of a strategic inclusive education plan.

Programme coordinator

- Provides guidance regarding the academic, behavioural and social-emotional needs of the students and supports teachers in the selection and use of appropriate strategies/interventions within the classroom.
- Liaises with the school counselor to ensure that the necessary systems are in place to identify and refer students with difficulties and develops initiatives and programmes to promote academic advancement and student wellbeing.
- Collaborates with all grade level teachers from other disciplines to provide the academic support needed for the students.
- Provides guidance for teachers and parents related to students' specific needs.
- Engages the school's local community through a collaborative and constructive relationship.

Teacher

"It is the responsibility of every teacher, as a teacher of all students, to make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners"

(Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, Updated May 2019)

- Promotes diversity through the use of different learning methods and the display of languages, images and books.
- Makes sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that is appropriate to them and thus provides them with equitable opportunities.
- Reinforces desired values, dispositions and behaviours in class and in the playground through discussing and reflecting on cultural, linguistic, ethnic, physical, and social diversity.

- Explicitly teaches students how to make mistakes, fail well and overcome obstacles.
- Explicitly teaches students how to succeed well and how to behave appropriately when others make mistakes, fail or face obstacles that they struggle to overcome.
- Respects the different perspectives of the school community.
- Encourages and supports students to explore multiple perspectives.
- Models internationally-minded values and dispositions.
- Challenges disrespectful or insensitive behaviour and comments.
- Provides a positive and safe environment for learning.
- Identifies and refers students who are struggling to the programme coordinator and the school counselor.
- Plans to cater for students' diversity in collaboration with the programme coordinator and the school counselor.
- Integrates accommodations to assessments in accordance with students' needs and the recommendations of specialists.
- Assesses, evaluates and reports students' progress.
- Reports the students' progress, success of services and any challenges faced to the programme coordinator.
- Collaborates with other homeroom and subject teachers in planning for providing an inclusive learning, removing barriers, differentiating for individual needs and discussing or reviewing action plans.

Learning diversity department

The Learning Diversity (LD) Department at Mar Qardakh is formed of the school counselor and LD specialist. Other specialists may join the department *ad hoc* whenever needed. The LD Department:

- Ensures students with diverse learning needs are identified, assessed and appropriately supported
- Conducts internal and external testing
- Develops effective teaching and learning strategies to address literacy and numeracy
- Constructs and facilitates innovative, effective, Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs
- Effectively manages students' files
- Develops and shares recommendations and accommodations with teachers and parents

- Works with young people to develop successful learning and study habits
- Collaborates with the learning team at MQS
- Liaises with parents and external specialists
- Provides support for families and teachers in dealing with students with LD needs.

Learning support teacher

- Provides direct support for the implementation of targeted intervention as recommended by the Program Development Team.
- Provides direct support to students as required for implementation of the Individual Education Plan (e.g., in class and/or withdrawal assistance).
- Supports the implementation of assistive technology for individual students, groups of students, and/or classroom (use and application to curriculum, teacher awareness, student progress).
- Responds to urgent student needs as directed by administration.
- Teaches alongside class teachers in the classroom

Parents

Parents/legal guardians and students are viewed by Mar Qardakh School as partners in the educational process and they are expected to be fully committed to supporting the school's decision through the commitment to the school's policies and practices and external professional interventions that the school may recommend.

- Attend regular meetings with the school leadership team to discuss their child's progress.
- Support their child's needs at home with the school's guidance.
- Adhere to school recommendations to seek external therapies or assessment.
- Communicate the results of their child's psychosocial and developmental assessments with the school.
- Partner with the school in developing approaches that will support the child's academic development.

Students

- Express their needs and ask for support and clarification.
- Know their rights and responsibilities as students in the learning process.
- Are aware of their rights to access arrangements and express if they are being used in their

learning journey.

- Accomplish the tasks required and be active learners in class.
- Set, work towards accomplishing, and reflect on personal learning goals.
- Listen to the perspectives of others without making judgments.
- Engage with different students in the playground and in inquiry groups.
- Are tolerant and respectful.
- Show empathy by understanding and sharing the feelings of others.

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III. Inclusion Programme

Programme Components

The following programme components apply to all students, including those who have learning barriers:

- Learning opportunities and projects that enable students to develop different attributes of the Learner Profile and foster international mindedness and best practice.
- Inquiry-based learning opportunities on a continuous basis.
- Language acquisition support for acquisition of a second language, as well as home language support for students with learning barriers as needed on a case-by-case basis.
- The completion of all components of their respective programmes. This includes completing the PYP exposition, the MYP personal project, and community service requirements in addition to individual subject requirements.

Learning Support

Students with learning barriers will receive individual support both inside and outside the classroom.

Inside the Classroom

Students with identified learning barriers may receive support as needed in the classroom. Each teacher is responsible for providing such support. Certain modifications and accommodations

require prior approval from the respective programme coordinator (indicated below):

- Supplemental activities tailored to their specific educational needs (gifted students will be given more challenging activities, and challenged students will be given less complex activities that help them strengthen their knowledge base and skills).
- Curriculum modification: learning goals and objectives may be modified on a case-by-case basis to help students with special needs. Goals may be made more advanced to challenge gifted students, or simplified to help academically challenged students. If the curriculum modifications a teacher develops for a student do not meet the minimum learning objectives and standards required by the school, approval from the respective coordinator must be obtained.
- Classroom accommodations, including but not limited to peer assistance, additional one-on-one feedback and guidance from the teacher, additional time for in-class assignments, and other accommodations may be provided for students with special educational needs. Regular classroom accommodations must be approved by the respective programme coordinator.
- Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) are developed, implemented and monitored by the School Learning Diversity Department in collaboration with the student's teacher and parents. IEPs are developed for PYP students whose learning needs are such that they require individualized instruction plans with specific goals.

Outside the Classroom

Students with identified learning barriers may receive the following support outside the classroom:

- Pull out support for language acquisition
- One-on-one support from the appropriate subject specific teachers once areas of difficulty have been identified.
- Individual counseling sessions with the Programme Coordinators or other designated support service.

Assessment Practices

- Teachers will utilize a variety of formative assessments and provide feedback for all students based on formative assessment. Formative assessment results from students with special educational needs will be used to tailor instruction and, if needed, modify the curriculum for the said students. Students with special needs may be required to complete additional diagnostic or formative assessments used to further guide the teacher in making necessary modifications.
- Teachers will provide differentiated summative assessments that leave room for student choice. Summative assessments will be tailored for students with special educational needs when

necessary to correspond to any curriculum modifications.

Identifying special needs

Mar Qardakh School will offer special educational support to students based on the presence of one or both of two factors:

- Former documentation provided by the parents or previous school indicating the presence of special needs and the cause of such needs.

- Documented observations of Mar Qardakh School teachers based on student performance.

Mar Qardakh School does not require students to go through formal testing in order to receive special educational support, as long as the said support does not require intensive curriculum and assessment modification that would prevent the student from succeeding academically in their respective programme. Mar Qardakh School does communicate with the parents when a student seems to have special educational needs and will be receiving additional support. Parents are informed of the perceived challenges and may then choose whether or not to pursue diagnostic testing. If the parents would like diagnostic testing, they are responsible for making all necessary arrangements; the school does not provide any diagnostic testing at this point but may request diagnosis to be done. The school will support the parents in their efforts to obtain diagnostic testing by providing supportive documentation and, if necessary, granting the student a temporary leave of absence in order to be tested.

Special Needs in MYP

Parents of MYP students that seem to have special needs but have not been diagnosed are informed that the students will only qualify for special accommodations for the final MYP assessment if they are formally tested and diagnosed with a disability.

Parents of MYP students are also informed that if a student's special needs prevent them from being assessed on required objectives and skills, the student will not be eligible for the MYP Certificate although they may still participate in the MYP programme and receive an MYP record of achievement.

Documentation

- Any documentation that identifies a student's special educational needs will be kept in the student's file and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

- Teachers will keep record of any accommodations and modifications made for a student with special educational needs. These records will be placed in the students' file on a monthly basis, and will be reviewed every three months to track progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the modifications and accommodations used, and determine whether such modifications and

accommodations should be continued, stopped, or adjusted to best meet the individual needs of the student.

- Teachers will keep record of any additional services a student receives to support special educational needs outside of the classroom.
- Minutes will be kept of all meetings pertaining to a student's special needs. This includes the following meeting types:
 - Meetings between teachers and the student.
 - Meetings between the teachers and leadership team regarding a student's special needs.
 - Meetings between the respective coordinator, Head of School and parents.
 - Other meetings that directly address the special educational needs of a particular student.
- Students with a diagnosed learning difficulty or other disability will receive an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) that indicates what special services will be granted, and what responsibilities pertain to the school, the student and the parents, in implementing the IEP. All IEPs will be kept in the student's files and revised on an annual basis in order to best serve the student's needs.
- All teachers will provide a progress report for all students with special educational on a regular basis or upon request. These reports will be kept in the student's files.
- When students' progress from one IB programme to the next, their comprehensive file, complete with all documentation regarding their special educational needs will be transferred to the new programme. If a student transfers out of Mar Qardakh School, a copy of all records pertaining to the student's special educational needs may be released to the new school at the request of the student's parents.

IV. Faculty Professional Development

- All faculty members learn about the importance of classroom inclusion when they receive new faculty orientation, and when they receive IB professional development pertaining to their specific programme.
- Teachers have designated times in their regular schedule for collaborative meetings. One of the purposes of these collaborative meetings is for teachers to collaboratively discuss the special educational needs of students and ensure that, as a team, they are providing each student with the services needed. These collaborative meetings also include curriculum alignment and give the teachers time to make sure their methods of instruction and assessment leave room for student choice and include differentiation that enables students with special educational needs to succeed.

- Each year, the school provides training workshops on inquiry-based learning and assessment techniques. These workshops give teachers the opportunity to continue developing a greater understanding of how to incorporate special educational needs into the classroom, and learn more about scaffolding and other techniques that provide additional support for students with special learning needs.

Appendix I: Glossary

Special Educational Needs: Any student that requires additional support, accommodations or modifications is defined as having special educational needs. This includes gifted and exceptionally talented students, as well as students with learning disabilities, and/or other psychological and emotional disturbances.

Inclusion: All students, including those with special educational needs, will receive equal access to all components of the IB programmes offered at Mar Qardakh School.

Appendix I: Glossary

Special Educational Needs: Any student that requires additional support, accommodations or modifications is defined as having special educational needs. This includes gifted and exceptionally talented students, as well as students with learning disabilities, and/or other psychological and emotional disturbances.

Inclusion: All students, including those with special educational needs, will receive equal access to all components of the IB programmes offered at Mar Qardakh School.

Differentiation: The written, taught and assessed curriculum will be modified to meet the individual needs of students.

Learning Diversity: *“Learning diversity’ refers to the infinite variety of life experiences and attributes a child brings to their formal learning at school. All students with diverse learning needs have a right to access a full and engaging education on the same basis as their peers. Catholic schools seek to empower learners by celebrating difference and providing educational opportunities aimed at eliminating discrimination and focused on growth and progress for all.”*

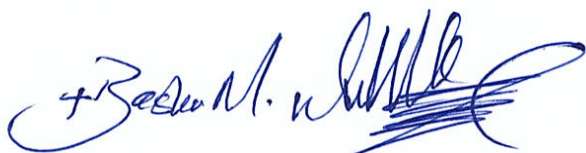
(Excerpt taken from CECV Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Learning Diversity in Catholic Schools, 2017)

This policy was written based on:

WLC inclusion policy

ISH inclusion policy

Approved by:



Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda

Mar Qardakh School Governor



Hala Warda

Head of School