



Mar Qardakh International School

Inclusion Policy

Originally developed	February 2014
Previous review	December 2024
Current review	August 2026
Next review	August 2030

Related policies:

This policy should be read alongside the Admission Policy, Assessment Policy, Language Policy, Academic Integrity Policy, Safeguarding/ Child Protection Policy and the School Ethical Code.

Mar Qardakh International School Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower students for life in the 21st century through a holistic and internationally minded education that nurtures inquiry, academic excellence, spiritual formation, leadership, and service.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the understanding of inclusiveness and how the school gives every student fair access to curriculum, assessment and school life. It applies across the school, including Early Years, the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and High School.

1. Philosophy and aims

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

- All students are able to learn and make progress.
- Our school serves a diverse range of learners, including gifted and talented students, students with physical disabilities, and students with intellectual, developmental, or other learning support needs.
- MQIS has the responsibility to provide a holistic, differentiated and inclusive class environment for all students.
- MQIS teachers share in the responsibility of recognising and providing support for students with special educational needs.
- MQIS students are active partners in their own learning. They are encouraged to understand their strengths and needs and seek support when they need it.
- Parents of MQIS 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 at 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.

2. Legal and IB Framework

MQIS ensures providing education for all students regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, race, social and economic status and ability, in accordance with the Iraq Constitution, the education laws and regulations of Iraq

and Kurdistan Region, and the instructions of the Ministry of Education on inclusive and special needs education. The school follows all applicable government inclusion requirements and updates its practice when these requirements change.

The school also follows IB guidance on learning diversity and inclusion, and the IB Access and Inclusion Policy for access arrangements in IB assessment. For further details, refer to the MQIS Assessment Policy.

3. Admission and Capacity

Students with learning support needs are welcome to apply. In with the Admission Policy, a need for learning support does not by itself determine an admission decision. Parents are expected to share relevant reports and information during the admission process so that the school can understand the student's needs.

Each applicant is considered individually. The school reviews whether it has the staff, expertise and resources to meet the student's needs and to support their success in the programme. Where the school can not provide the level of support a student requires, it will explain this to the family and guide them towards suitable services, including those provided through the Ministry of Education.

4. 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.

4.1 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 coordinators 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.

4.2 Programme coordinators

- 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.

4.3 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.
- 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.

4.4 Learning Diversity Department

The Learning Diversity (LD) Department is made up of the school counsellor and the Learning Diversity specialist, and other specialists join when needed. The department:

- makes sure that the students with diverse learning needs are identified, screened and appropriately supported.
- Carries out internal screening and assessment and liaises with external specialists for formal diagnostic assessment.
- Develops, monitors and reviews individual plans with teachers, parents and where appropriate the students.
- Shares recommended strategies and accommodations with teachers and parents, and supports literacy, numeracy and study skills.
- Manage learning support records and support families and teachers.

4.5. Parents and Guardians

- Share any known learning, developmental, health or emotional needs and relevant reports with the school and inform the school of any changes.
- Attend meetings about their child's progress and take part in developing and reviewing support plans.
- Supports their child's learning at home with guidance from the school.
- Follow school recommendations for external assessment or therapy where needed, and share the results with the school.

4.6 Students

- Express their needs and ask for help and clarification.

- Know their rights to support and access arrangements and tell their teachers whether these are working for them.
- Take an active part in lessons, set personal learning goals and reflect on their progress.
- Show respect, empathy and openness towards others and work with a wide range of classmates.

5. Identifying Learning Needs

The school offers learning support based on one or more of the following:

- Reports or documentation from parents, previous schools or external specialists.
- Teacher observations and classroom assessment information.
- Screening and assessment carried out by the LD Department.

When a teacher has a concern, they discuss it with the programme coordinator and refer the student to the LD Department, which gathers information and agrees on next steps. The school informs parents when a student appears to need additional support. A formal diagnosis is not required for a student to receive classroom support.

Where formal diagnostic assessment is needed, the school explains the reasons to parents and recommends suitable external specialists. Parents are responsible for arranging and funding external assessment. The school provides supporting information and may approve a short absence for the assessment to take place.

6. Levels of Support

Support is provided at three levels, depending on the student's needs:

- **Level 1, classroom support:** high-quality, differentiated teaching for all students, including extension and enrichment for gifted and highly able students.
- **Level 2, targeted support:** short-term support for students who need extra help, such as small-group or individual sessions, language support, or support from the counsellor.
- **Level 3, individual support:** an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students with significant or diagnosed needs. The IEP sets out specific goals, the support and accommodations to be provided, and the responsibilities of the school, the student and the parents.
- IEPs are developed by the LD Department with teachers and parents and are available in all programmes. They are reviewed at least every term and fully revised every year.

7. Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations change how a student learns or shows their learning without changing the learning goals. Examples include extra time, seating arrangements, breaks, reading support, assistive technology, adapted

materials and additional one-to-one feedback. Accommodations agreed in an IEP or by the LD Department are applied consistently in lessons and assessments.

Modifications change what a student is expected to learn. They are used only when necessary and must be approved by the programme coordinator, particularly when they fall below the minimum learning objectives of the programme. Gifted and highly able students may receive more challenging goals and tasks.

8. Assessment

Teachers use a variety of formative assessments to understand each student's progress and adjust teaching. Assessments are differentiated and allow student choice where possible, and are adapted for students with agreed accommodations or modifications. Students with learning support needs may complete additional diagnostic assessments to guide support. All assessment practice follows the school's Assessment Policy.

9. Access Arrangements at MQIS

MQIS is committed to providing equitable access to learning and assessment for all students in accordance with IB principles of inclusion. Appropriate accommodations are provided based on students' individual learning needs to ensure fair opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and skills. All students are encouraged and supported in completing required programme components. For further details, please refer to the MQIS Assessment Policy.

All students take part in the core elements of their programmes, including the PYP exhibition and MYP Personal Project, and service as action, with appropriate support. If a student's needs prevent them from being assessed against the required objectives, the coordinator explains to the family how this may affect IB results or certification. High School access arrangements for external examinations follow the requirements of the relevant examination body.

10. Language Support

Students who are learning in English as an additional language receive language support, which may include in-class support and small-group or withdrawal sessions. Home languages are valued, and home-language support is considered case by case. Language support is not, by itself, treated as a learning difficulty. Further details are set out in the Language Policy.

11. Well-being

Inclusion includes students' social and emotional well-being. The school counsellor provides individual and group support, and works with teachers and families when well-being affects learning. Concerns about a student's safety are handled under the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy.

12. Documentation and Confidentiality

Documents relating to a student's learning needs are kept securely in the student's file and are shared only with staff who need them to support the student. Information is shared outside the school only with parental consent, unless the law or the Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy requires otherwise.

- Teachers record accommodations, modifications and additional support given to students. These records are reviewed every term to check progress and decide whether support should continue, stop or change.
- Notes are kept of meetings about a student's learning needs, including meetings with the student, teachers, the coordinator, the Head of School and parents.
- Teachers provide progress reports for students receiving support on a regular basis and on request.
- When a student moves from one programme to the next, their learning support file moves with them. When a student leaves the school, copies of relevant records may be sent to the new school at the parents' request.
- The school may request updated specialist assessments when needed to plan support or apply for access arrangements.

13. Professional Development

All new staff learn about the school's inclusion practices during their induction, and all staff take part in IB professional development relevant to their programme. Teachers have regular collaborative planning time, which includes discussing students' needs, reviewing support, and planning differentiated teaching and assessment. The school provides regular in-school training on topics such as differentiation, scaffolding, inclusive assessment and supporting specific learning needs.

14. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed every three years, or sooner if there are changes in legal requirements, IB requirements or school practice. The review is led by the Head of School with the programme coordinators and the LD Department, with input from teachers and parents.

Appendix: Glossary

Learning diversity: The wide range of experiences, strengths, interests and needs that students bring to their learning.

Inclusion: An ongoing process that increases access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers.

Learning support needs: Needs that require additional support, accommodations or modifications for a student to access learning. This includes students with learning difficulties or disabilities, social, emotional or behavioural needs, and gifted and highly able students.

Differentiation: Adapting teaching, materials, tasks and assessment so that each student can access learning and make progress.

Accommodation: A change in how a student learns or is assessed that does not change the learning goals.

Modification: A change in what a student is expected to learn or how they are assessed against the learning goals.

Access arrangements: Changes to IB or external assessment conditions, approved in advance, that allow students with learning support needs to show what they know.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A written plan that sets out a student's learning goals, the support they will receive, and the responsibilities of the school, student and parents.

References

- International Baccalaureate, Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes.
- International Baccalaureate, Access and Inclusion Policy.
- CECV, Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Learning Diversity in Catholic Schools (2017)
- WLC and ISH inclusion policies, used as models for the original policy.

Approved by:

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda

Mar Qardakh International School Governor

Date: / /

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Head of School

Date: / /

