



# TIS Inclusion Policy

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## Rationale:

The IB promotes the idea of “caring”; an environment in which *“we show empathy, compassion and respect (and, in which) ...we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others...”* One of the common goals identified by a student-led panel at TIS is to *“persevere through challenges”*<sup>(i)</sup>, whilst two of the five TIS Stars encourage *Open-mindedness* and *Risk-taking*. The IB speaks of *holding respect for others regardless of (variable characteristics) and stepping outside of (one’s) comfort zones to try new things... even when there may be risk of failure*. These ideas combine to encapsulate the TIS Inclusion Policy, and to drive the view that all students, regardless of strengths, challenges, beliefs, age, social status, economic status, language, gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality are able to equitably share in our mission; empowered to both inspire and “influence tomorrow”. TIS acknowledges the importance of understanding a student’s interests and social and emotional needs. It should be noted that the TIS Inclusion Policy exists within the context of a private school, and is thus subject to the rights and realities of such.

## Inclusivity Mission:

That - within budgetary and existential constraints; within the scope of what is physically possible - all people, regardless of given characteristics, are provided equitable opportunities to share in the mission statement of TIS, and to reach their full academic potential. *cf. Pg.10 for TIS Mission Statement*

(i) TIS - *TIS Common Values*

## Admission to TIS:

[Admissions Policy Document.](#)

By nature of being the first step on a journey, the admissions process is fundamental in defining the direction of what will become an ongoing journey of inclusion at TIS. There are things within our Admissions process which relate directly to our Inclusion Policy.

- The Admissions Policy states that
  1. *Special Needs cases are evaluated and accepted on the basis of available resources required to service the student.*
  2. *A student whose performance during the Entrance Interview differs considerably from what was expected from their submitted school reports may have their admissions subjected to criteria.*

It should be noted that these “needs” or this “considerable difference” may be due to special circumstances or characteristics which fall within the purview of the Inclusion Policy.

Most importantly, at this early stage, it must be recognised, that - within the purview of inclusivity and equity - TIS maintains an awareness of operating within the constraints of pre-existing architectural and budgeting concerns.

## POST ENROLLMENT PRACTICES:

All School:

- Through collaborative teaching practices (both intra and inter year), the individual needs of students can be accommodated through both horizontal and vertical alignment.
- **Student Observation Records (SOR)** are used to monitor a student's evolving needs, and to smooth the transition from ES to HS → This allows Collaboration between ES and HS teachers so that documentation is passed and transparency exists throughout the school.
- **Individualised Education Plans (IEP)** → To individualise a student's access to equity within the school environment, where necessary, IEPs are designed and implemented collaboratively by core teachers, specialists and the leadership team. An IEP is usually initiated by - and based upon the observations of - the classroom teacher. From here the collaborative process can begin. [IEP Template](#)
- TIS is working on the (collaborative) design and implementation of an "Identification & Tracking" system, through which unique needs are both identified and monitored for evolving academic desideratum.
  - Currently we identify needs through such apparatus as:
    - Elementary - Student Observation Records (SOR)
    - Secondary - Student Observation Records (SOR)
    - Discussion time at Staff Meetings
    - TIS conducts yearly health checks for both staff and students.
    - During the COVID pandemic, TIS continues to monitor student temperatures through an on-line database.
- If and when necessary, Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) are developed
- The EAL Programme enables students from various linguistic backgrounds to reach their academic potential.
- A culture of differentiation within both teaching and assessment enables student agency. Assessment should inform both teaching and learning for both students and teachers.
- Regarding the needs of special education, TIS provides professional development to staff members (through media such as EduCare and in-service training).
- TIS has an in-house certified counsellor for social and emotional support needs.

## Elementary:

- TIS will continue our supportive relationship with the local SEN school (Komyo Shien Gakkou 光明支援学校) and seek advice when needed.
- ES is developing a system for identifying types of learning difficulties that may challenge students. This will help teachers to invoke tools and strategies to assist in the removal of those barriers which may prevent students from reaching their fullest potential.
- If TIS determines that a student is not able to fully access the curriculum through existing physical and human resources, TIS will work with the family in seeking professional advice and other alternatives. It may not always be the case that an effective remedial action is forthcoming.

## The Diploma Programme:

From the 2021-2022 school year, Tohoku International School intends to offer the IB Diploma Programme (DP) to Grade 11-12. The DP is a rigorous program requiring the ability to communicate clearly in English.

### Course Certificate Track →

At TIS all 11th and 12th graders are expected to attempt the full IB Diploma. For individuals who are realistically unable to attain the IB Diploma, TIS will guide those students toward the TIS graduation certificate plus IB Certificates.

### Diploma Track →

At TIS, all students will take classes in order to be ready to attempt the IB Diploma. Support for students with special needs will continue according to their Individual Learning Plan, including accommodations for internally assessed assignments and exams. In the case that a student qualifies for accommodations in any IBDP external assessment, the IB will be notified, and accommodations will be provided in accordance with the guidelines and policies published by the IB.

(See [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#) or most recent version)

### Accommodations for Testing →

The IB lists the following as examples of individual needs for which accommodations may be required:

- learning disabilities
- language difficulties
- specific learning difficulties
- communication and speech difficulties
- autism spectrum disorders
- social, emotional and behaviour challenges
- multiple disabilities and/or physical, sensory, medical or mental health issues.

Subject to staffing, architecture and budgeting, TIS will work to extend equity within accommodations for testing. In accordance with the IB philosophy, TIS will strive to offer assessment which is equitable to everybody without the need for differentiated or modified assessments. This will ensure that the same standards are applied evenly to all and accommodations will not be seen to offer any kind of advantage. Importantly, testing accommodations should reflect the same accommodations which are used for the individual student's day-to-day coursework. Thus, as opposed to micro adjustments for individuals, TIS looks toward a macro approach in the design of assessment which is equitable for all individuals.

*(Source: IBDP Assessment Principles and Practices - Quality Assessments in a Digital Age p.95-98)*

◆ **General considerations** →

Students' individual strengths and weaknesses will inform our guidance toward certain HL and SL areas for an optimum outcome. Further, collaborative planning through vertical alignment facilitates a student's ability to achieve their academic potential within the DP.

## Addressing the IB:

### Four Principles of Good Practices →

The IB identifies four (4) principles of good practice, which are seen to promote equal access to the school's curriculum for all learners across different age groups and backgrounds. TIS' Inclusion Philosophy aligns with these four principles:

1. Affirming identity and building self-esteem,
2. Valuing prior knowledge,
3. Scaffolding
4. Extending learning.

*(Source: Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes p.7)*

## Barriers →

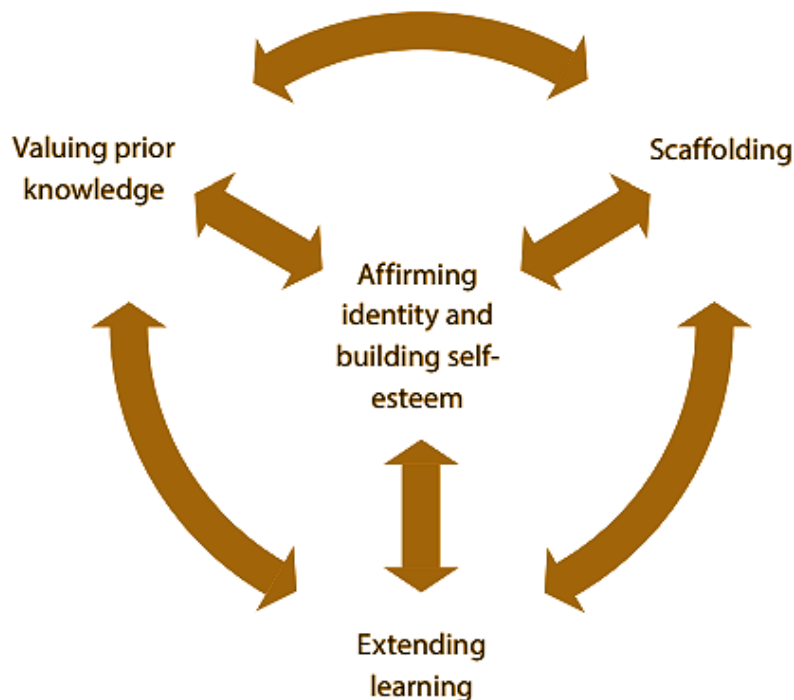
The **IB Learning diversity and inclusion document** lists many barriers to inclusivity\*. Most of these are addressed by TIS policy and procedure. However, examples of some specific cases which we are able or unable to address would include:

- *the human and material resources to support inclusion are not available \**

TIS is aware of its limitations with regard to staffing and budgetary resources.

For example - TIS is neither a \*wheelchair accessible\* campus, nor is TIS able to employ a full-time guidance counsellor or school-nurse. A further example would be the unavailability of non gender-specific restrooms. However, being aware of these limitations, TIS does strive to support however possible, whenever possible.

- *creativity and willingness to reorganize physical spaces, classroom orientation and structure is not encouraged.\**



**Figure 1**

*Visual representation of the four principles of good practice in an IB SEN learning cycle*

Due to existing buildings and budgetary constraints, TIS is not able to make grand scale changes to the physical environment. However, reorganisation within existing classrooms is often undertaken with collaboration between homeroom teachers and students.

## TIS Encapsulated →

Many factors can influence inclusivity, and TIS believes that when planning effective and appropriate support systems, incorporating the views of all stakeholders is essential. The TIS focus on equity embraces such considerations as TIS culture, teaching practices, intra-staff collaboration, dissemination of information, TIS management, TIS routines, physical spaces, and the wider TIS community; all being pertinent with regards to - and being factored into - the fabric of the TIS Inclusion policy. The size of TIS lends itself to a unique relationship between the faculty and student body. Within the school culture, students - regardless of year level - experience the facilitation of growth and the support of all teachers. The close bonds fostered by the small population of TIS not only aid in the prompt detection of individual needs, but ensure that all parties have agency in collaborative efforts in an equitable catering to those needs.

## Specific Areas for Inclusion

- EAL:

- Our EAL Policy aims to promote equality of opportunity for all learners for whom English is an additional language. Of relevance to the EAL policy is the adherence to codes of equality and diversity. Our EAL policy will deliver a broad balanced support programme which reflects the needs of EAL students and enable strategies which will allow for the EAL student to successfully assimilate into the mainstream curriculum.
- EAL POLICY DOCUMENT → [■ EAL Policy Document \(2022\).pdf](#)
- For admissions for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond, students must be at a 'Monitor' level on the TIS EAL proficiency scale or higher by the end of Grade 10 or they will not be eligible for entrance to the Diploma Programme. Students wishing to enrol in Grade 11 and directly enter the DP at TIS will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Students who do not have the English or grades to enter the Diploma Programme can still enrol at TIS and complete a non-DP path to graduation.

### Assessment:

As the goal is for every individual to experience an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential, assessment can be adjusted for different needs. A concrete example would be the differentiation in assessment for some EAL students. Due to broad syntactic differences across languages, elements such as rubrics, submission volumes and time-constraints may be adjusted for a more equitable assessment of the particular learning objectives.

(cf. [■ EAL Policy Document \(2022\).pdf](#) )

## Faculty:

The TIS faculty not only enables, but also participates in an equitable school environment. Special needs (such as medical conditions) are supported through the actions and the cooperation of both the Leadership Team and teaching colleagues.

## Harassment:

At TIS, harassment has a zero-tolerance policy.

- [TIS Safeguarding Policy 2020](#)
- In order to maintain awareness, staff conduct ongoing training (through sources such as *EduCare*).



## References:

- *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning (Published January 2016 Updated December 2018, March 2019, May 2020)*
- *Learning Diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes (Published August 2010)*
- [EAL Policy Document \(2020\).pdf](#)
- [Admissions Policy Document.](#)
- [TIS Safeguarding Policy 2020](#)
- [IBDP Assessment Principles and Practices](#)
- [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#)

## Policy Review:

The Inclusion Policy was initially prepared and developed by the Inclusion Policy Development Committee (*Head of School; PYP Coordinator; DP Coordinator; EAL Specialist Teacher*), and shared with the whole staff in February, 2021. This Inclusion Policy is a fluid document which reflects an on-going process of collaboration and cognitive process. Changes and alterations are informed by practical experience. As such, the document shall be reviewed annually during August. Any updates will be informed by, and shared with the staff, and updated on the school's admissions website. The collaborative nature of the Inclusion Policy, and the mutual respect implied by this process, reflects the same ideals which are seen as goals of the policy.