



# Akal Academy, Baru Sahib

## INCLUSION POLICY

### **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.

### **Akal Academy Mission Statement**

Akal Academy aims at developing young people who have cultivated mind imbued with a spirit of inquiry, thirst for knowledge, respect for diverse world cultures and a keen desire to serve the community in which they live and work, as well as aspire to serve humanity at large through their spiritual values and knowledge acquired through modern education.

### **Akal Academy Vision**

Our vision is to establish permanent peace in the world through value based education and spiritual rejuvenation, creating good global citizens.

### **IB Rules regarding Inclusion/Access**

Rule 5.8 - It is the practice of the IB to make its programmes available to all students enrolled at IB World Schools. No student will be excluded by the IB on the grounds of race, nationality or national origin, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, political beliefs, disability, or any other personal characteristic as prohibited by law. Schools must implement their duties under these rules in a manner that enables this practice to be upheld.

Rule 5.9 - It is the school's responsibility to determine whether it can enroll a candidate with learning support requirements into the programme.

### **Our Inclusion Philosophy:**

At Akal Academy, we believe that each student is a unique individual, and has a unique life trajectory. We also believe that each student has some strengths and needs. The school is a microcosm of the society and as such, represents the society. Diversity is finding greater visibility and expression within the society and so it is must in schools. School is also a catalyst of social change and as such, must also function to acknowledge, embrace and nurture this diversity. Therefore, to create an inclusive society, we must be an inclusive school. Teachers are well-intentioned but they need support, guidance and resources to be able to identify, accommodate and celebrate this diversity. We firmly believe in the axiom – 'If I cannot learn how you teach, can you teach me how I learn'.

-Inclusion is an "organizational paradigm" that involves change. It is an unending process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It is an ideal to which schools can aspire, but which is never fully reached. (Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes, Pg. 3)

-This can only be successfully achieved in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving. Inclusion is the learner profile in action, an outcome of dynamic learning communities.( Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes, Pg. 3)

At Akal Academy Baru Sahib, no student is denied admission on the basis of his physical, cognitive or neurological profile.

### **Legal requirements**

Even though socio-economic inclusion was envisioned as far back as 1966 through the neighborhood schooling concept of the National Education Commission, it was done with a regressive vision regarding the education of students with an intellectual disability. The national education commission has acknowledged that ordinary classrooms in India were primarily designed for the 'average' learner's needs. Therefore, special classes and individual tuition were proposed as solutions for non-average learner's proper emotional and social development.

At Akal Academy, we strongly believe that children with special needs must attend regular schools and provide support in all areas required. It is also important for the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 to be cognizant of the developments in frameworks for 'inclusive' education, and provide for necessary amendments. Presently, there is no mention of special schools or an inclusionary framework for education in the Act.

### **Identification & Assessment**

Typically, students at Akal Academy who need accommodations, modifications and alternative plans are of two kinds -

ELL/ESL - For new students, the admission test is a fair first step for identifying level of language proficiency. During the course of the school year, most teachers are also trained to use checklists to identify the English Language Learners/English as Second Language learners. These students are then referred to Counseling Cell and Guidance for further assessment to ascertain whether it is a developmental delay or just inadequate exposure to English.

Developmental disorders - Historically, the school has been getting students assessed and diagnosed by a Chandigarh-based certified psychologist. The Counseling Department is headed by a School Psychologist and assisted by a group of counselors. One is exclusively for PYP under the leadership of the Psychologist. The school has begun transitioning towards internal testing using standardized tools and test batteries, as deemed appropriate. These are then referred to qualified special education professionals, including Counselors, within the school, for further psycho-educational assessment and programming.

### **Programming for Students**

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers." (Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes, Pg. 3)

- Programming for ELL students, includes collaboration among Special Educator, homeroom teachers, assistant teachers, PYP Library resource teacher and others who are part of a student's education in the learning continuum. At Akal Academy, ELL students are provided individualized and specialized support, within the mainstream class. If required, students may also be sent for more focused support in the Language Support Lab once a week. Using principles of UDL and Differentiation, teachers differentiate content, process, product or environment of learning. There may be Individualized Language Plans (ILP) depending on how severely the language gap impedes the learning of the individual student. Parents are informed about the ILP plan during PTM and updated about progress at every reporting period.

- Programming for students with developmental disorders, includes collaboration among Special Educator, homeroom teachers, assistant teachers and PYP Library resource teacher. At Akal Academy, such students are provided individualized and specialized support, within the mainstream class. Using principles of UDL and Differentiation, teachers differentiate content, process, product or environment of learning using it both for instruction and assessment. There may be Individualized Education Plans (IEP) including accommodations, modifications and alternative program, as necessary. Recent research has found that "...certain individuals or groups of children may benefit from adaptations to general teaching approaches, but in general pupils with SEN do not need qualitatively different pedagogy." (Kershner 2007: 486). Parents are informed about the IEP plan during PTM and updated about progress at every reporting period.

At Akal Academy, Baru Sahib we value the four principles of good practice identified by the International Baccalaureate that promote equal access for all learners across the curriculum:

- Affirming identity and building self-esteem
- Valuing prior knowledge
- Scaffolding
- Extended learning

Based on these pillars, we plan and implement the following to meet learning needs of all students:

### **Universal Design of Learning**

During horizontal, vertical and annual planning meetings, teachers evaluate their plan along the 3 principles of UDL:

- Engagement - The Why of Learning - does the plan stimulate interest and motivation for learning?
- Representation - The What of Learning - does the plan present information and content in different ways?
- Action & Expression - The How of Learning - does the plan differentiate the ways that students can express what they know?

This evaluation of the plan is carried out using a checklist that must be attached and submitted along with the plan.

### **Differentiation**

However, inclusion happens as soon as the process of increasing participation is started (Booth and Ainscow 2002). Thus, differentiation is inclusion in practice.

In education, differentiation is necessary for some and good for all. Therefore, at Akal Academy, all teachers will differentiate content, process, assessment and environment of learning, to maximize students' learning and remove barriers to learning.

Through collaborative planning, teachers will ensure that all students, both in trans disciplinary and disciplinary units of learning, have fair access to the curriculum. There must be adequate evidence of this in Unit of Inquiry and stand-alone planners, transaction of teaching-learning, inquiry journals, assessment folders and student portfolios.

### **Tiered Approach to Learning Intervention (or RTI)**

"Mainstream education will not always be appropriate for every student all the time. Equally, just because mainstream education may not be appropriate at a particular stage, it does not prevent the student from being included successfully at any other stage" (Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes, Pg. 3)

Using the Tiered Approach to Intervention (Response to Intervention), Akal Academy teachers teach all students in their classrooms using sound, evidence-based teaching practices designed to allow all students to succeed in Tier 1 (Universal Programming). If students fail to learn a particular concept, or struggle to learn it, they may be moved to Tier 2 (Targeted Group Intervention), which is intense and focused small group instruction. If a student grasps the concept, they can return to the general Tier 1 learning environment, but students who continue to fail to make progress are moved to Tier 3 (Intensive Individualized Intervention). Tier 3 is typically comprised of individual instruction, “which may be special education in some areas” (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Hauth, & Allen-Bronaugh, 2012, p. 231)

### **Assessment Tools**

At Akal Academy, we use a number of tools for evaluating children at entry level and thereafter, as per subsequent assessment of students by the teachers during the course of regular class room teaching.

Raven’s Progressive Matrices and Color Progressive Matrices along with Malin’s Intelligence Scale for Indian Children (Verbal) are considered powerful and ideal tools for assessing the students at Akal Academy and for subsequent assessment.

#### **1. Raven’s Progressive Matrices**

It is a widely used non-verbal test of observation and clear thinking for 5-65 years of age people. It measures ability to form perceptual relations, reasoning independent of language and formal schooling. It consists of 5 sets of 12 items each. □ Each item contains a figure with a missing piece. Indian norms are available.

#### **2. Colored Progressive Matrices**

It is a simple, easy to administer, rapid non-verbal test which can be used to assess students to obtain a measure related with linguistic, visuo-perceptual, verbal memory and cognitive functioning. It is used in Cerebral Palsy, Spectrum disorder, Learning disability, Mental Retardation, language and psycho-neurological disorders and educability.

It is designed for children aged 5.5 through 11 years-of-age, the elderly, and mentally and physically impaired individuals. This test contains sets A and B from the standard matrices, with a further set of 12 items inserted between the two, as set Ab. Most items are presented on a colored background to make the test visually stimulating for participants. However the very last few items in set B are presented as black-on-white.

#### **3. Malin’s Intelligence Scale for Indian Children (MISIC)**

It is a standardized psychological tool, which is an Indian adaptation of the WISC. It is mainly used younger children. This battery comprises sub-tests, 6 of which form the verbal scale and 5 the performance scale. The tests in the verbal scale include information, comprehension, analogies, arithmetic, vocabulary and digit span. The tests on the performance scale include picture completion, block design, object assembly, mazes and coding. The neuropsychological functions tapped by the various sub-tests include attention, concentration, working memory, vigilance, recall, mathematical reasoning, judgment, visuo-spatial construction and visual integration.

**4. Seguin Form Board:** This is very simple standardized test for very young students. Indian norms are provided. It provides measurement of one’s ability

**5. The DST-JINDIA** is a standardized tool with Indian norms and consists of subtests that focus to evaluate accuracy and fluency in reading, writing, and spelling. These subtests also assess motor coordination, attention span, reasoning ability and vocabulary skill that is vital for attainment of literacy skills.

#### **6. Questionnaire for ADHD as Assessment Performa**

It consists of items and teacher is required to fill-in the same on the basis of adequate information about the child

## **Inclusion, IB Learner Profile & Approaches to Learning**

The learner profile attributes and the approaches to learning (ATL) provide the foundational skills and dispositions for the development of inclusion.

An inclusive learner:

- is a competent communicator
- is open-minded and knowledgeable
- is a caring and principled thinker
- uses his or her curiosity and research skills to inquire about the world
- thinks and reflects critically about opportunities and challenges
- takes action for positive changes (for example, to promote intercultural understanding, foster caring relationships, to care for self and others)
- takes risks to further self-development and understanding of others

## **Inclusion - Rights and responsibilities**

**Students:** Students have access to an inclusive environment. They learn without barriers. They learn to treat everyone with mutual respect, including those who speak a different language, come from a different country or have a different learning need or belief.

**Teachers:** They make sure that each student is exposed to teaching and learning that reaches them as individual learners. 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.

**Parents:** Provide accurate information about the child's needs and history. They partner with the school on developing approaches that will support the child's academic development.

**Counselors / Special Educators:** Plan with Homeroom teachers and leadership to identify problems and design remedial plan/IEP. The school counselor facilitates group and individual sessions geared at building students' self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-confidence and general well-being.

**School Leadership:** Creates a safe school environment where members of the community feel included, secure, respected and trusted to voice their differences. They provide opportunities for the learning community to model, develop and demonstrate aspects of international-mindedness.

## **Connections to other policies**

### **Inclusion and Admissions**

At Akal Academy, no student is denied admission on the basis of his physical, cognitive or neurological profile. During the admissions process, applicants will need to provide complete documentation of their academic history, educational evaluations, and details of extra academic or specialist support they have had or are currently receiving (evaluation reports, individualized learning plans or individualized education plans, documentation of diagnosis, etc) Based on this a detailed note is prepared for the prospective homeroom teacher and PYPC.

### **Inclusion and Academic Integrity**

At Akal Academy, we believe that students and teachers should act with integrity and academic honesty at all times. All students are provided with detailed guidance in developing the skills necessary to uphold academic honesty standards. Subject teachers are responsible for defining and instilling academic honesty skills within their subject group and hold seminars on related topics (plagiarism, copyrights, etc.).

### **Inclusion and Language**

Students wishing to be admitted to PYP must take an English screening test before entry. The English screening test is also used as a language placement test to ensure accurate phase placement. Students with identified learning difficulties are granted inclusive access arrangements (e.g. additional time, assistive technology, etc.)

### **Inclusion and Assessment**

Students with identified learning difficulties are allowed inclusive access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (e.g. additional time, use of assistive technology, breaks etc.) for all assessments in one or more subjects throughout the year, as appropriate to their needs.

## **IB Standards and Practices for Inclusion**

**Culture 2: The school implements, communicates, and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)**

Culture 2.1: The school implements and reviews an inclusion policy that meets IB guidelines. (0301-02-0100)

Culture 2.2: The school identifies in its inclusion policy all of its legal requirements and outlines the school's IB structures and processes for compliance. (0301-02-0200)

Culture 2.3: The school describes in its inclusion policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and clearly states the school's vision for implementing inclusive programmes. (0301-02-0300)

**Culture 6: The school implements, communicates, and regularly reviews its IB mandated policies to ensure they are cohesive and reflect IB philosophy. (0301-06)**

Culture 6.1: The school implements processes with consideration of the relationship between its IB mandated policies. (0301-06-0100)

Culture 6.2: The school documents its IB-mandated policies and communicates them to the school community. (0301-06-0200)

Culture 6.3: The school considers physical and virtual spaces in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0300)

Culture 6.4: The school articulates a planned integration of human, natural, built, or virtual resources in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0400)

Culture 6.5: The school considers the learner profile in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0500)

Culture 6.6: The school considers international-mindedness in all of its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0600)

Culture 6.7: The pedagogical leadership team uses the school's IB-mandated policies in decision-making and curriculum development. (0301-06-0700)

### **Review Cycle**

Following a full review by Teachers, Mentors, Library Teacher, Counselors, SEN staff and the Pedagogical Leadership Team, this policy was first adopted in 2017 and is reviewed and updated annually in February / March with updates wherever necessary.

The policy was last reviewed in March 2022.

### **References:**

Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes (2016)

IB Access and Inclusion policy (2018)

IB Learner profile booklet

Inclusion policies of other schools

The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development

Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom (2013)

Program Standards and Practices (2020)