

Birla Open Minds International School

Inclusion Policy (2022-23)

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Approved by:	School Governing Body
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Table of Contents

Sl. No.	Title	Page No.
I.	Vision Statement	3
II.	Mission Statement	3
III.	Philosophy	3
IV.	Introduction	3
V.	Our Beliefs on Inclusion	5
VI.	Guiding Principles	6
VII.	Learning Support	8
VIII.	Process followed for learning support	8
IX.	Role and Responsibilities :	
	Curriculum	10
	IBCP Coordinator	11
	Behavioural Counsellor	11
	Remedial Educator	12
	Mentors	13
	Facilitators	13
X.	Anti-Discriminatory Policy	14
XI.	Promoting Inclusion at School	15
XII.	Inclusive Access Arrangements:	
	● Students with Special Assessment Needs on IB Assessments	15
	● Standards And Practices In Accordance To IB Guidelines	
XIII.	Policy Review	18
XIV.	Bibliography	19
XV.	Annexure 1 - Letter of Undertaking	20
XVI.	Annexure 2 - Consent Form	21

Vision Statement

Our vision is to provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment where children and teachers will recognize and achieve their fullest potential, so that they can make their best contribution to society.

Mission Statement

The school strives to be a community of open-minded global learners. All members are the flag bearers of the peaceful world and care about one another, value and respect intercultural and individual differences. Encompassing the learner profile of collaboration and creativity by engaging in challenging skill based competencies, pushing the boundaries to maximize the potential of the learners.

Philosophy

The School, firmly reiterate and restore what Tagore called the hallmark of childhood-joy of Learning' and the 'Creative Spirit'. Birla Open Minds believes in the uniqueness of each child thereby fostering holistic development through integrated learning opportunities. Our philosophy is based on the constructive approach where the learners are actively involved in their learning in a self-governing environment. Learning experiences are interactive, student-centered and progress from known to unknown, concrete to abstract and local to global.

The teachers are aware of each student's emotional, social, psychological and physical development as well as their cognitive growth. They provide a motivational framework for each learning opportunity. A learner at Birla Open Minds develops global perspective and life skills to help and excel in his or her desired field and become a life-long learner.

Introduction

The Hyderabad City is a cosmopolitan city and is having vibrant demographic. There is a diverse population not only in terms of nationality but also in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity and socioeconomic factors.

We focus on the well-being and progress of every child; recognize, respect and value difference. We understand that diversity is a strength. We believe that diversity should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit the school.

All students share a common entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets their social and learning needs. We want all students to feel a sense of belonging within the school and to know that they are respected and able to participate in all events and activities in School.

Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's education. At Birla Open Minds International School, we ensure that parents are involved in regular follow-up with the school regarding the identified needs of the student, collaborative support of parents and school required by the student and in updating progress of the child.

We understand that most of the students speak in their mother tongue at home and may be at different levels of comfort with the English language owing to different factors. Keeping this in mind, the school and teachers are extra vigilant that such factors do not lead to any sort of discrimination or disadvantage to the students.

We strive to ensure that students who experience SEND (special education needs and disabilities) will be provided with the support, accommodations and curricular modifications required to enable equitable access to educational opportunities.

As mentioned in the school's Admissions policy, the Admission Counsellor, Student Counsellor, and IBCP Coordinator actively participates in the parent/child interaction at the time of the admission process. The student Counsellor evaluates if the child has any Special Educational Needs.

At Birla Open Minds International School, we conduct screening of the students for understanding educational need during entry to the school at the time of admission. The school is only equipped to support and facilitate the students with mild or moderate special needs.

Our Beliefs on Inclusion

We acknowledge that every learner is unique and we celebrate the diversity. We understand that every student has a preferred learning and thinking style and we encourage different approaches to learning.

We believe in extending equal opportunities to all learners, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, attainment and background. The special educational needs of the students will be met, where appropriate, in mainstream settings.

Birla Open Minds International School strongly believes in providing quality education to all children with a learner-centred approach to education. Keeping this in mind, it recognizes the need for a coherent and strong guiding policy for students with special learning needs, and ensures that they have the opportunity to access learning and be integrated into mainstream classrooms without any discrimination.

We believe that all students of Birla Open Minds International School should have meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum offered. The pedagogical framework of the school supports for student diversity and respects individual learning differences and their unique way of learning. This framework allows learners a greater degree of autonomy and independence.

We strongly advocate the concept of 'strengths in our differences' and we believe that integrating students with special needs with the mainstream classroom serves the following purposes.

1. It fosters good social skills in the learners.

2. Learners develop meaningful peer relationship.
3. It enriches the other learners in the classroom with an acceptance, understanding and appreciation of their differences.
4. It promotes empathy and compassion towards differently able learners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Learning Diversity: At Birla Open Minds International School, we understand that owing to the students' differing identities, social situations, learning abilities and language backgrounds, the learners will have different needs. We do our best to ensure that our learners receive a quality education that meets the high standards of the International Baccalaureate and support the learner to meet those particular needs.

Parents taking admission for their child at Birla Open Minds International School needs to respect and promote the diversity of our learning community. Our school policies are intended to embrace and encourage our diversity.

In accordance to IB philosophy we strongly believe that the educational programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, have the right to express their thoughts and emotions. They need to be culturally tolerant and emotionally resilient to value the perspectives of each and every individual irrespective of the skills and competencies.

Inclusion: At Birla Open Minds International School, every learner has an equal right to education. We strive to increase access and engagement in learning programmes for all learners by identifying and eliminating hurdles. We follow the following principles to an inclusive education as laid out by the International Baccalaureate (IB).

The IB supports the following principles of an inclusive education where:

- education for all is considered a human right.
- education is enhanced by the creation of affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety, self-worth and whole growth for every student.
- every educator is an educator of all learners.
- learning is considered from a strength-based perspective.
- learning diversity is valued as a rich resource for building inclusive learning communities.
- all learners belong to and experience equal opportunities to participate and engage in quality learning.
- full potential is unlocked through connecting with, and building on, previous knowledge.
- assessment provides all learners with opportunities to demonstrate their learning, which is rewarded and celebrated.
- multilingualism is recognized as a fact, a right and a resource.
- all learners in the school community fully participate in an IB education and are empowered to exercise their rights and accept their responsibilities as citizens.
- all learners in the school community have a voice and are listened to so that their input and insights are taken into account.
- all learners in the school community develop the IB learner profile attributes and develop into inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- diversity is understood to include all members of the community .

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning support will be extended to the student if it is observed that the student is facing / faces difficulty in learning the Grade Level concepts or acquiring the required skills as expected for their respective Grade Level; the student is having some disorder, physically or otherwise that is a deterrent for enjoying the educational facilities and learning opportunities extended to the students.

The school provides customized learning support to the students who are having some challenges like visual disorder, reading/writing/numerical skills are not age appropriate / Grade Level appropriate, mixed disorder of scholastic aptitude or behavior challenges due to social/ emotional problems.

It is also observed that some students demonstrate high level of learning abilities and intellect exceeding their grade level expectations and demonstrates competency for advanced level study are identified as “Gifted and Talented Learners”. At the beginning of the Academic Year, the Facilitators conducts Bridge Course to observe their prior knowledge and conducts Diagnostic Test to evaluate the conceptual understanding level of the students. An appropriate support programme is planned jointly by the Facilitators in due consultation with the Remedial Educator, Behavioural Counsellor and the Academic Coordinator / Headmistress to design the learning support programme requirements.

PROCESS FOLLOWED FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

1. The observation of the student's performance is observed by the Class Teacher / Subject Teacher and the Observation Report (Referral) is shared with the Academic Coordinator / Headmistress.
2. The Remedial Educator / Behavioural Counsellor then starts observing the students based on the Teachers' Report. Based on their observation, they would probe further to understand the reason and discuss the same with the Academic Head. If required, a joint meeting with the parents will

also be called to understand the student's behaviour at home or to understand the study habits / challenges that the student faces.

3. The school recognizes the importance of early intervention and preventative work in its positive reinforcement approach to behaviour management. The school will take steps to identify students who may benefit from early intervention.

4. Parents / Guardians are contacted promptly to give solutions to overcome the behaviour issues seen in the student. Regular mentoring of the students by professional student counsellors.

6. In case of academic challenges, the Remedial Educator will then recommend the student for a psychometric/ psycho-educational test based on the informal assessment from a registered clinical psychologist, if further investigation / consultation is required.

7. In case the parents are unwilling to get the psychometric/ psycho-educational test, an Undertaking Form must be submitted by the Parent / Guardian declaring their refusal to follow the school's guidelines - (Annexure 1)

8. The parents must submit the Report to the Student Counsellor / Remedial Educator for their reference to design the classroom interventions to support the student's learning.

9. In case, the classroom observation does not match with the psychometric/ psycho-educational test report, then the matter shall be further discussed with the Parent and the Academic Heads with the evidences in support of the classroom observation to probe further.; but in case the parent disagrees regarding the same, the matter will not be pursued further.

10. The Remedial Educator and the Behavioural Counsellor will design the support programme of the students only after a written consent received from the parent(s) - (Annexure 2). The Support Programme will be briefed to the parent (s) by the Remedial Educator and the Behavioural Counsellor.

11. The Remedial Educator will guide all the teachers facilitating the learning programme for the student regarding the Individualized Educational plan (IEP) for the student and classroom intervention.

12. All such reports will be maintained by the class teacher in the student's records.

13. In case of a psychological/ behavioral problem, assistance must be sought from the school behavioral counselor after teachers report the issue to the in-charge.

13 Periodic Joint Review Meetings will be conducted by the Academic Head along with the Remedial Educator, Student Counsellor and the Teachers to discuss the learning progress or understand the outcome of the Support Programme.

14. All discussions to be kept strictly confidential and will not to be discussed with any other person (staff member / parent / student) who are not involved in facilitating the student.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Curriculum

Within the school curriculum, Birla Open Minds International School has made provisions to give the learners the opportunity to learn about cultural diversity.

We aim to endorse and practice new ways of teaching and learning to help students understand and appreciate diversity through intercultural learning that enables the learners to benefit.

We also encourage language learning, be it the mother tongue, the host nation language or an international language to encourage learners to accept and appreciate all cultures and hold them equally important.

At Birla Open Minds International School, we aim to educate the whole child, to develop the learners not only academically but also emotionally, physically and morally to achieve their full potential.

IBCP Coordinator

Birla Open Minds International School holds a firm aspirational vision to create a fully cohesive and inclusive society, where the rights and access to

equitable opportunities for students with special needs are assured and protected.

The IBCP Coordinator ensures that the appropriate information is imparted to students, teachers and families regarding inclusive assessment under conditions, and with accommodations, that are as fair as possible.

The IBCP coordinator additionally ensures that the curriculum provides teaching and learning activities that are accessible so as to reduce barriers to participation in learning. This includes but is not limited to:

- collaborative planning and reflection that incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles
- the written curriculum provides opportunities and encourages the school community as a whole to reflect on human commonality, diversity and to explore ideas from different perspectives.

The IBCP coordinator also provides support in managing the teaching staff and ensures that all teaching staff collaborate to support the needs of the learners within the IBCP learning community.

Behavioral Counselor

- i. The students undergoing different behavioral and emotional issues are counseled by the counselor after being referred to her by the Academic Coordinators / Headmistress/ Head of School.
- ii. After the referral, the counselors observe the students in different settings (formal and informal) - classroom, dining hall, corridors and playgrounds.
- iii. The counselor will discuss with the respective Heads and arrange for a meeting between the parent and school authorities to ascertain if the student needs parental intervention and if such a student needs the help of a special educator.
- iv. If required, the counselor will recommend the student for additional

psychometric/ psycho-educational tests from a government authorized institution after discussing with the parent.

- v. The counselor will be available for discussion in case a parent wishes to do so by giving specific time for appointment.
- vi. The counselor will be working closely with the special educator, parent and Academic Heads according to the planned sessions with short-term and long-term goals to support the learning requirement of the student and make learning accessible to all students.
- vii. The counselor will offer behavioural management counseling support to the students with conduct related issues in the school.
- viii. The counselor will refer the students for external support in case there is a need.

Remedial Educator

1. The Remedial Educator will be responsible for the initial informal assessment of the student, to assess his or her learning style as well as challenges.
2. The report must be shared with and explained to the respective parents after a prior discussion with the Academic Heads.
3. If required, the Remedial Educator will refer the students to a clinical psychologist for a formal psycho-educational assessment.
4. The Remedial Educator will extend customized remedial intervention according to the need of the student.
5. The Remedial Educator must guide teachers to make an individual learning plan for the student to be followed in the classroom to support the learning need.
6. The Remedial Educator will suggest to the Academic Heads about the access requirements, if needed with reference to the respective Board guidelines.
7. The monthly progress of the students to be tracked and suggest necessary modifications in the individual learning plan.
8. The Remedial Educator will be communicating with the parent through emails to provide support, interventions and feedback.

9. The student would be gradually taken off the remedial support once the remedial educator observes that the student is able to cope up with the challenges and has achieved Grade Level competency to follow the classroom instructions and can connect to the classroom transaction. However, the remedial educator will continue to monitor, support and encourage the student for further development in learning progress.

Mentors

We believe in creating a happy learning environment conducive to learning and encourage strong mentor-student relationships to help new students, foreign students or students with special needs to integrate into the school community.

Birla Open Minds International School provides training to all its Facilitators and support staff to ensure that they are equipped to deal with students' problem (s) and challenges in a culturally sensitive and inclusive way.

Facilitators

The IBCP Facilitators are directly responsible in providing support to their learners in the classes as the Facilitators have maximum interaction with their respective IBCP students and receive first-hand feedback or suggestions from students. Hence the Facilitator need to ensure that the developed curriculum supports learning and that they are able to provide accessible teaching and learning activities.

The Facilitators are directly responsible for creating positive classroom environments conducive to joyful learning of all students. Teachers are constantly encouraged to proactively identify and eliminate barriers to learning in diverse student populations and adapt or modify curricula, teaching and learning strategies according to the need of the learners. The Facilitators must never believe that some learners may not be able to learn due to individual challenges but instead need to work on developing

innovate strategies to ensure that all students are given opportunities to learn and meet the expected learning outcomes.

All Facilitators need to build a relationship of trust with their learners that fosters a sense of belonging to the community, where students feel cared for, understood, valued, appreciated and feel safe.

The Facilitators will also need to ensure that all the learners should feel included in decisions regarding them in the context of learning. The learners must also be encouraged by the Facilitators to develop the attributes of the learner profile and to reflect upon themselves as learners.

According to the guidance of the IBCP Coordinator, the Facilitators are responsible for developing teaching and learning programmes through carefully planned curriculum. This curriculum must be inclusive and should provide equitable access to all learners.

The Facilitators who are also the Mentors will be responsible for overseeing the needs of individual students. They will regularly discuss the learning progress and individual learners' needs with the IBCP Coordinator, Remedial Educator, Student Counsellor and if required with the Parent and the Head of School.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Birla Open Minds International School takes discrimination on any ground very seriously. We firmly follow zero tolerance policy on discrimination based on gender, social background, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other factor.

Owing to its geographical location, Birla Open Minds International School has a diverse student and parent demographic. Being the Cosmopolitan City and Capital of Telangana, the learners and the facilitators of Birla Open Minds International School belong to varied ethnicity, religions and

socioeconomic background making it a very vibrant community that always encourage learning from each other and appreciates one another.

Discrimination on any grounds is taken very seriously at Birla Open Minds International School with strict disciplinary consequences.

PROMOTING INCLUSION AT SCHOOL

- Having a comprehensive and cohesive inclusion and special needs policy in place that is reviewed annually and updated timely.
- Regular meetings with faculty members are conducted to verify that all parties have a clear understanding of the IB expectations.
- Regular briefings with the learners, parents / guardians to discuss the importance of and changes to the policy if any. As important stakeholders, parents are always actively involved to assist in successful implementation of this policy.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Students with Special Assessment Needs on IB Assessments

Birla Open Minds International School believes that all learners should have the opportunity to take their assessments under conditions that are as fair as possible. Reasonable modifications and accommodations may be authorized to eliminate assessment bias, which could prevent students with special needs from demonstrating their knowledge and skills.

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusive access arrangements may be made in circumstances where these arrangements could reduce barriers to the candidates in demonstration of their level of attainment.

Inclusive access arrangements may be necessary due to:

- long-term learning support requirements
- temporary medical conditions
- additional language learning

The motive of access arrangements is to eliminate or reduce barriers that learners may face in learning, teaching or assessments. Teachers must continuously monitor student progress and needs so as to ensure that the learner receives the required support to facilitate the level of attainment.

The following table highlights the IB policy for teaching and learning in context to access arrangements and which processes would require authorization from IB. This table also helps outline the arrangements that can be made for students and their corresponding needs.

Flexibility in duration of examination, course or deadline	Authorization required?
Access to additional time	<u>Yes</u>
Extra time (for additional language learners)	<u>Yes</u>
Rest breaks	<u>No</u>
Deferral	<u>Yes</u>
Extensions	<u>Yes</u>
Extra opportunities to retake examinations	<u>Yes</u>
Flexibility in examination location	Authorization required?
Separate room	<u>No</u>
Seating	<u>No</u>
Alternative venue	<u>Yes</u>

Flexibility in presentation of the examination or input	Authorization required?
Access to modification in presentation	<u>Yes</u>
Access to reading	<u>Yes</u>

Reader (for additional language learners)	<u>Yes</u>
Communicators	<u>No</u>
Sign language interpreters	<u>Yes</u>
Aids	<u>No</u>
Clarification of examination directions	<u>No</u>
Colour naming (for students with colour blindness)	<u>No</u>

Flexibility in method of response	Authorization required?
Word processor (for additional language learners)	<u>Yes</u>
Access to writing	<u>Yes</u>
Access to speech and communication	<u>Yes</u>
Access to a calculator	<u>Yes</u>

Use of human assistance	Authorization required?
Care assistant	<u>No</u>
Prompter	<u>No</u>
Communicator	<u>No</u>
Practical assistant	<u>Yes</u>
Reader	<u>Yes</u>
Scribe	<u>Yes</u>
Designated person to clarify examination directions	<u>No</u>
Designated person to name colours (for students with colour blindness)	<u>No</u>

Non-standard flexibility for an individual student	Authorization
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	required?
Access to reasonable adjustment	<u>Yes</u>

It must be noted that inclusive access arrangements should be made early in term so as to meet the learner’s learning needs where applicable so that these methods are incorporated as the usual way to access classroom work and tests.

STANDARDS AND PRACTICES IN ACCORDANCE TO IB GUIDELINES.

- A:9 the school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and the philosophy.
- B2:8 the school provides support for its students with learning and/or special educational needs and supports their teachers.
- C1:6 Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students’ learning needs and styles.
- C3:10 Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students’ learning needs and styles.

POLICY REVIEW

Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Bearing this in mind, this policy is subject to review annually with the participation and contribution of School Governing Body, Head of School, Parents, IBCP coordinator, Remedial Educator, Student Counsellor, Mentor and Facilitators.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Birla Open Minds International School

ANNEXURE 1
LETTER OF UNDERTAKING

To
The IBCP Coordinator
Birla Open Minds International School
Kollur, Hyderabad

Dear _____,

Subject - Psychometric / psycho-educational test for

With reference to the meeting conducted by the school authorities on _____, regarding the psychometric/psycho-educational test suggested by the school, I will not be getting the test done for my child.

I have been explained by the school about the requirement to undergo the test. I undertake complete responsibility of my decision to not conduct the said test for my child. I will not hold the school or the staff members responsible if the learning progress of my child does not match the expectations.

Signature of Parent

Date

ANNEXURE 2

CONSENT LETTER

To
The IBCP Coordinator
Birla Open Minds International School
Kollur, Hyderabad

Dear _____,

With reference to the meeting conducted by the school team on _____, I hereby give my consent to the Student Counsellor / Special Educator to start the counselling sessions / learning support programme for my child as discussed with me.

I also give my consent for the school to apply for access arrangements in the _____ session IBCP examination. I have been informed by the school authorities about the arrangement to be provided and I hereby undertake full responsibility of my decision.

Signature of Parent

Date