



Özel Bilkent Primary, Middle and High School

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

&

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY

## **FOREWORD**

The Özel Bilkent Primary, Middle and High Schools wish to thank the students, parents, academic and administrative staff, who have contributed to the renewal and development of our school policies by participating in the process of formulating and recording our beliefs and procedures in the following policy documents: Admissions Policy; Language Policy; Academic Honesty Policy; Assessment Policy; Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy.

Our schools were founded 25 years ago and, thanks to the support and feedback of our school community, over that time we have witnessed strong growth in the numbers of parents wishing to offer their children an internationally-minded education with us. The latest stage in our development was the authorisation for the Middle Years Programme in 2018, which, by connecting the Diploma and Primary Years Programme, has ensured the consistent application of our curriculum philosophy across the three schools.

We welcome comments and constructive feedback on all our policies in order to contribute to further development and improvement in the delivery of our curriculum.

As a school community we are committed to working together to ensure that these policies are applied effectively, kept up to date, and adhered to within a positive mindset to the benefit of the whole school community.



# IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

## INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

## KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

## RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

## REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

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## **1. Respect and Tolerance to Diversity and Difference – Our Beliefs**

The global community astonishes us daily by confronting us with its creative diversity, thus challenging us to rethink our place within that community, and how we can value that diversity with a view to creating a more tolerant and peaceful world. It is our belief that communities of learners who reach out to embrace and include diversity in their aspirations are more able to work towards a sustainable model of harmonious living and to address the issues which are at the forefront of global concerns going into the future.

An IB education in our view is about establishing a foothold of respect and tolerance in communities, particularly where current practices do not reflect an ideal model, in order to spread a message which recognises the right for all members of any community, be they global, national, local, or familial, to be accepted and valued for their differences. Diversity expresses itself in many ways, including gender, age, race, ethnicity, cultural background, physical and mental ability, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation and language. Our policy recognises that members of the school community should make a constant effort through its educational practices to eliminate prejudice in whatever form so that those who differ in their diverse orientations or personal characteristics can develop as fully accepted members of the communities of which they are a part and reach their full potential.

All members of the community should be accepted for who they are, should feel valued, cared for, understood and trusted. The school makes every effort to ensure that they are valued for their strengths, set realistic expectations yet challenged in their learning, heard and listened to, and provided with an opportunity to participate in decision-making. The school recognises diversity only in so far as it provides differentiated learning opportunities which reflect an individual's needs, but the school does not condone prejudice of any sort towards those who are different in their orientations or capacities. The school actively promotes understanding, tolerance, and inclusion so that diversity is valued as a positive contributor to the culture of the school and community.

This document outlines the practical steps that the school community takes in promoting diversity and tolerance of diversity, and links to other policies and practices outlined in the Admissions, Language, Assessment and Academic Honesty Policies. IDF Özel Bilkent Schools seek to ensure that all student needs are addressed, and provision made available to them throughout their school career. The school acknowledges the right of all students to a broad and balanced curriculum which is inclusive, reflecting diverse needs and facilitating opportunities to create a culture in which such needs are valued.

Özel Bilkent Schools *Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Policy* has been collaboratively developed with students, parents, teachers and administrators, while considering the Rules and Regulations on Special Education and Guidance Services of the Turkish Ministry of Education, the Declaration of Rights of the Child, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and IB documents: Inclusion within the International Baccalaureate Programmes, The IB Guide to Inclusive education: A Resource for whole School Development, Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom, Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, Making the Primary Years Programme (PYP) Happen; Middle Years Programme (MYP): From Principles into Practice; IB Diploma Programme From Principles into Practice guides; and the IB Learner Profile. The policy is accessible through the school's website in addition to other school documents.

## **2. Inclusion in the School Community**

The school works to include any individual who differs significantly from their peers in terms of being exposed to risks associated with age, gender, culture, race, ethnicity, languages, life preferences, life conditions and/or being above or below the norm with respect to learning abilities. This paradigm is a process of participating all students with a culture of collaboration and problem-solving in the school community. Inclusion in practice leads to differentiation for achieving agreed goals with each learner beyond barriers.

### **2.1 Awareness-raising and Celebration of Diversity**

The school considers barriers to learning from multiple perspectives and promotes inclusion of all students. Diversity within the school community does not create a barrier to learning and the school promotes acceptance and celebration of diversity through written and hidden curricula. The leadership team is involved in developing effective strategies to increase access and participation. Daily interactions within the school community create affirmative, responsive environments that promote a sense of belonging, safety and self-worth for every member of the community. The learner profile plays a role in promoting the agency to affirm identity and the school supports access for all students to the IB programmes and philosophy.

### **2.2 Countering Prejudice in the Broader Community**

The school develops and implements policies and procedures to encourage students counter prejudice in their lives and in the broader community. The school provides support for its students with learning needs and support for their teachers.

### **2.3 Inclusion as Reflected in the Curriculum and Inquiry**

The school promotes inclusion in the curriculum and incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles. The written curriculum across the programmes provide opportunities for reflection on human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives. Teaching and learning addresses human commonality, diversity and multiple perspectives. Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles and fosters a stimulating learning environment based on understanding and respect. The curriculum and instruction encourages students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

### **2.4 Actions to Ensure Gender Equality**

Common understandings, policies and practices take into account gender equality, human rights, and diversity. All members of the school community are responsible for developing culture and practices that provide equal opportunities for all regardless of their age, gender, culture, race, ethnicity, languages, life preferences, life conditions and/or being above or below the norm with respect to learning abilities.

## **3. Special Education in Our School Community**

Our school enables members to be productive members of the community who fulfil their social roles, are adapted to their surroundings, and can work cooperatively and harmoniously, equipped with needed life skills in order to live independently and self-sufficiently.

### **3.1 Basic Principles and Beliefs <sup>1</sup>**

Individuals with special needs use special educational services to the extent of their educational needs, interests, abilities, and capabilities and such education is started at an early age, and, to the extent possible, it does not separate individuals from their social and physical environment nor from their peers.

Differentiated plans and individualised education programmes are implemented for individuals with special educational needs in consideration of their personal competencies, attributes, and academic capabilities, and families are educated and active participate in the special education process.

When developing education policies, the school enlists relevant organisations to support with help for the individuals with special educational needs. Special education services are planned to ensure the interaction of individuals within the school and facilitate mutual adaptation.

Individual differences are opportunities to support and enrich student learning and to help students reach their full potential. Cultivating positive attitudes in individuals with special educational needs is a way of eradicating prejudices about differences.

Individual differences / diversity constitute a valuable resource with regard to international mindedness and cross-cultural awareness. Individuals with special educational needs have a right to have a proper and fair diagnosis and evaluation to enable them to get appropriate services to meet their needs.

The learning process of all individuals with special educational needs is planned and implemented through joint membership of the school community which ensures that students are not separated from their social and physical environment to the extent this is possible. All teachers involved in the learning process of individuals with special educational needs have the necessary knowledge and ability to use this knowledge to fit the needs of individual students.

### **3.2 Individuals with Special Education Needs**

There may be students who enrol at the school with a range of possible needs: Individuals with: Intellectual disability due to mental retardation; Hearing Impairments; Visual Impairments; Physical Disability; Speech, Language, and Conversation Impairment; Specific Learning Disabilities (dyscalculia, dyslexia, dyspraxia); Autism; Attention Deficit and/or Hyperactivity Disorder; a Chronic Disease; or, Talented and Gifted Individuals.

### **3.3 Meeting Special Educational Needs**

Objectives targeting students with special educational needs are formulated, implemented, and assessed in the school's strategic plan. Prejudices and attitudes of students, teachers and parents regarding the differences in special educational needs are identified, and planning is carried out to create a receptive and integrative school environment by providing clear information to prevent any prejudices or negative attitudes.

Coordination and cooperation between the administration, parents, students, teachers, support personnel and other relevant organisations are developed to encourage and manage inclusion practices. It is of pivotal importance that environments where students can feel safe in the physical, affective, and academic sense, are created in and around the school to make the school easily accessible to students and that all teachers are aware of the affective and psychological needs of students.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Article 6 of Principles of Special Education in the Turkish Ministry of Education's Rules and Regulations on Special Education Services (official paper dated 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2012 and numbered 28360)

Professional development needs of all school personnel in the areas of special education and inclusion are identified and cooperation of all stakeholders is sought for meeting professional development needs. Parents and students are informed about services offered by the school for children with special needs or disabilities. For this aim, the schools' website, newsletter, bulletin etc. are used to inform the school community.

The school provides information to parents about education and administration through meetings, website, the in-school online reporting system, and the E-School platform (information system of the Turkish Ministry of Education). Information of all students, parents, and school personnel is kept in private personal files. These files are maintained by the related departments: School Management, Human Resources, Student Affairs, and school nurse. Information is only being supplied where there is a need for cooperation.

### **3.4 Adapting Learning and Teaching**

An interdisciplinary approach engaging all the relevant members of the school is adopted using procedures sensitive to an individual's needs. Individualized Education Program (IEP)s are prepared, and in-class teaching is adapted accordingly. Parents can appoint non-teaching staff member be present in the school/classroom to assist a student. Students are encouraged to take part in social, artistic, cultural and sports activities.

Teaching materials vary based on needs, including Information and Communication Technology. Assessment is depends on the IEP, from a variety of aspects and consistent with the school's assessment policy, and results are recorded and stored.

The school's Psychological Counselling and Guidance (PCG) Unit provides counselling services and guides the student and the parent in raising awareness based on the data and observations of the student's progress.

## **4. Administering SEN Education**

Individualized Education Program- Development Unit (IEP-DU) is constituted by the school principal or an assigned assistant principal with all stakeholders of the students with SEN. Responsibilities of the IEP-DU are coordinate the efforts including the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IEPs developed for students with SEN. Students who receive education in the support room, with a SEN needs teacher if appropriate and necessity, are decided upon by offering a Commission of PCG Unit at the suggestion of IEP-DU.

The IEP-DU, with clear duties and responsibilities, meets with parents and /or students regularly parallel with MoNE Regulations<sup>2</sup>. Teachers are inducted into the needs of SEN students in collaboration with the IEP-DU and PCG Unit.

Psychological counsellors develop understanding, positive attitudes, encouragement, and problem-solving approaches amongst staff who teach mainstream SEN students. They ensure coordination between school administration, teachers, students, parents, and students.

Assessment reflects the characteristics of the special education needs of an individual and conforms to the guidelines laid down by the MEB<sup>2</sup>

## **4.1 Identifying and Monitoring SEN Students**

Teachers identify students who are different from their peers in terms of their affective, behavioural and learning attributes and inform the PCG Unit who meets with the classroom teacher and subject field teachers, as well as the special education teacher to discuss the student concerned. Teachers carry out systematic activities to decide whether the student has special educational needs or simply different attributes to others. If identified, a targeted intervention programme (TIP) is designed.

If the TIP does not achieve its objectives, actions taken over the program are documented in a report and the student is referred to the Guidance Research Centre of MoNE or Children's Mental Health Centre of a general hospital for a detailed examination. The reporting process is organized and monitored by the PCG Unit in consultation with the teachers involved in the intervention program. During this process, the 'Educational Evaluation and Request Form' and 'Development Report' forms are filled out by the teachers.

Based on the placement decision made by the Guidance Research Centre, IEP-DU convenes to prepare an Individualized Education Program according to the student's needs. Planned update and information meetings are held with the parents to monitor and evaluate the student's progress.

## **4.2 Awareness Training**

Awareness training for teachers and support personnel of special education takes place, and training needs are determined through survey, interviews and observations. Regular training sessions are offered to the parents of classmates of students with special needs, as well as other parents.

# **5. Admission of SEN children to Özel Bilkent Schools**

## **5.1 Registration Procedures**

Psychological Counsellors interview all students who apply to register in the preschool (Reception and Kindergarten) and grades 1-4. The school principal or assistant principal interviews parents to discuss a student's adaptation to school and ensure the student can make the best use of the education provided. Results of student interviews, as with all students, are presented to the school board for final decision. Once registration is accepted, MEB Rules and Regulations on Special Education Needs and Psychological Counselling and Guidance Unit are applied if any special educational needs identified.

Students applying to register at Grade 4 take an admission examination as outlined in the school's admissions policy. Mainstreamed students graduating from Grade 4 or Grade 8 are oriented to choose a school that will cater to their individual and educational needs. Students wishing to register from other schools follow procedures as outlined in the school's admissions policy.

When individuals with special educational needs are granted admission to IDF Özel Bilkent Schools, the schools do not require a placement decision from the Special Education Services Board of Guidance Research Centre. However, the school can offer parents to seek support from the Guidance Research Centre of MoNE (may include a medical examination) to determine student needs at the school connected with the MoNE Rules and Regulations on Special Education Needs. Individuals with special educational needs who are at the preschool or compulsory primary school age can register with the Guidance Research Centre at any time irrespective of the registration times identified in the annual work calendar.

## **5.2 Newly registered SEN students**

An introduction meeting is organized with a student and parents by the PCG Unit which then works with the classmates of the student to provide them with general information and how to interact with students. In cooperation with the special education teacher and teacher, the student's academic and other developmental goals are specified.

All capabilities (behavioural, academic, social) of the student with special needs are conveyed to all the teachers of the class in writing. An IEP is prepared, and either in-class support and or individual support outside of the class is provided. At least three IEP meetings are carried out in the presence of the parents to evaluate the education progress of the student with special needs.

## 6. References

- Guidance for Writing A Special Educational Needs Policy Post-Primary Development Group. CASS, Schools and Special Education Working in Partnership June 2011.
- Rules and Regulations governing Special Education Services of the Ministry of National Education.
- Rules and Regulations governing Psychological Counselling and Guidance Services of the Ministry of National Education.
- MoNE and EU Project on Strengthening Special Education, School without Barriers Model Road Map, Standards and Performance Indicators, June 2013, Ankara.
- MoNE and EU Project on Strengthening Special Education, Teacher's Guide to Inclusive Education Practices, June 2013, Ankara.
- The IB Guide to Inclusive education: A Resource for whole School Development.
- PYP, MYP; DP and IB Career-related Certificate Meeting Student Learning Diversity in the Classroom, May 2013.
- Special Educational Needs within the International Baccalaureate Programmes, August 2010.
- IB Continuum Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes, January 2016.