



Inclusion Policy

Oakleaf School

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Purpose of the Document

This document outlines Oakleaf School's philosophy, focusing on access and inclusion for the Diploma Programme. This document reflects our commitment to access and inclusion for all members of our school community. It sets out what everyone—students, parents, and staff—can expect regarding rights, responsibilities, and support throughout the DP. Shaped by the most up-to-date guidance, including IB policies, expert recommendations, and best practices, it ensures our approach stays responsive and inclusive.

Scope

To ensure the alignment with the needs of the school community, the given document will be regularly reviewed by

- School Director
- DP Head of School
- DP Coordinator
- Learning Support Team

The policy outlined is directly applicable to:

- Teachers
- University Counsellor
- Parents
- Students

This policy sets out how we support diverse learners at our school. It explains how we adapt teaching for students with special educational needs and disabilities, extend learning for those who need additional challenge, and foster empathy and self-awareness in every student. It also clarifies the criteria for entering or exiting support services and details how we implement IB-approved assessment accommodations in the DP to ensure fair access for all who require it.

IB Mission

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.

School Mission, vision, objectives and values

School Mission

The mission of the school is to nurture free individuals who are equipped with fundamental knowledge and grounded in shared human values. Through engaging in intercultural dialogue, they will develop an appreciation for their own identity and culture, while recognising their place in the world.

School Vision

By 2028, Oakleaf School Ltd. will be a nationally recognized general education hub providing a high standard of education to secondary school students.

School objectives

- To create a student-oriented educational environment based on the modern achievements of education, in which: students become free individuals, bearers of national and social values. They get the necessary knowledge and develop mental and physical skills;
- To help students to develop a healthy lifestyle;
- To form students' civic awareness based on liberal and democratic values;
- To help students to understand their rights and duties before the family, society and the state;
- The school is focused on helping students in career planning, selecting universities and vocational institutions, and helping students to receive co-financing in various universities around the world based on their abilities.

School Values

Focus on continuous development: Care for the professional development of teachers and promotion of access to innovations in general education system;

Teamwork: It is a priority for the school that all interested parties (administration, students, teachers, parents) are involved in the planning/management/evaluation of school's activities and they have a common shared vision of the school's development, which will be focused on the mission and objectives of the school;

Transparency: Regarding to all the processes taking place in the school, the school is open and its transparency is reflected in the relevant rules and procedures, as well as in the information media platforms (website, social network);

Equality and equal opportunities: The school is focused on developing an educational space where each member of the school community feels like a full-fledged representative of society, protected and safe regardless of their race, skin color, gender, origin, ethnic affiliation, language,

religion, political or other views, social affiliation, property or rank status and etc. Each member of the school community will be given the opportunity to develop and realize themselves as much as possible;

Cooperation with external actors: Oakleaf school is open to cooperation with all interested parties. The school is focused on developing mutually beneficial relations, both in Georgia and abroad. The school has signed an agreement with Education Pathways Group Ltd, and has the right to implement the International Foundation Programme – IFG in the territory of Georgia, which offers a successful future for the graduates of the school in the academic direction, offers professional assistance and various opportunities;

Focus on quality: The school is focused on the continuous monitoring/evaluation of its own activities, learning/teaching process and striving for improvement.

Inclusion - General Information

- Oakleaf School LLC (hereinafter referred to as the 'School') is committed to supporting student inclusion and promoting the successful integration of students.
- The purpose of this document is to outline the mechanisms and procedures implemented by the school to support student adaptation to school life, in alignment with its goals and activities.
- This document applies to all school employees, students, and their parents or legal guardians.

Georgian Special Education Statutes

Legal Bases

In Georgia, inclusive education is governed by the legislation and policies established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, particularly in accordance with the Law on General Education and the National Curriculum Framework. Inclusive education is defined as a model that ensures the equal participation of students with special educational needs (SEN) in the general education process, with appropriate support mechanisms in place. The goal is to provide every student, regardless of disability or developmental difficulty, with access to quality education in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment.

According to national regulations, inclusive education includes the integration of students with physical, sensory, intellectual, emotional, or behavioral challenges into mainstream educational settings. Students may receive individualized support plans, including modifications to the curriculum, specialized teaching strategies, and access to support services such as speech therapy, psychological services, or the assistance of a special education teacher. Adaptations may also include technical aids, learning resource materials, or the modification of the physical environment to ensure accessibility.

As a private institution, our school admits students based on prior academic performance, personal learning goals, and their potential to thrive within our educational community. While the majority of enrolled students do not require extensive support, we do admit students with mild to moderate learning difficulties and those with diagnosed special educational needs, such as students with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments, language and speech disorders, or attention-related challenges such as ADHD.

Our school is committed to fulfilling the principles of inclusive education, in alignment with Georgian national standards and ethical practices. The school's Inclusive Education Support Team, led by the Guidance and Counseling Service, is responsible for identifying SEN students, developing and monitoring Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and coordinating with families, specialists, and teachers to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive strategies.

Principles and Key Factors Influencing Student Adaptation to School Life

When supporting a student's adaptation to the school environment, the following factors should be taken into account:

a) Individual Characteristics:

The unique personality traits, temperament, and individual needs of each student must be considered throughout the adaptation process.

b) Sibling Experience:

If the student has older siblings who have attended the school, their experience may influence the younger student's adaptation, either positively or negatively.

c) Academic Load and Curriculum Complexity:

Students may experience difficulty adjusting due to differences in academic load or curriculum content. This challenge should not affect the student's self-esteem or discourage the development of effective academic habits. Teachers and staff must provide support to ensure students are not overwhelmed.

d) Language and Cultural Barriers:

For students facing language barriers or cultural differences, teachers should implement inclusive strategies to actively involve them in the learning process. The homeroom or class teacher plays a crucial role and should use methods such as translation and culturally responsive instruction to introduce aspects of the new culture in an engaging, respectful manner.

e) Role of the DPC:

If a student struggles to adapt, the DP Coordinator should take the initiative to promote peer interaction and social integration. This may include using group activities, cooperative learning tasks, or games that require communication and teamwork among students.

f) Parental Involvement:

Active collaboration with parents is essential. Since signs of maladaptation often appear first at home, timely communication and joint observation with parents can help identify and address challenges early on.

g) Role of the School Psychologist:

If a student exhibits signs of maladaptation, a consultation with the school psychologist is recommended to assess the situation and plan supportive interventions.

h) Orientation Visit:

Before the academic year begins, students should be offered a guided tour of the school environment and provided with essential organisational information to help them feel more comfortable and prepared.

Adaptation of IB Diploma Programme (DP) Students

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) represents a significant academic and personal transition for students, typically beginning in Grade 11. This stage marks a shift from general secondary education to a rigorous inquiry-based, globally orientated curriculum. Students are expected to adapt to a new academic framework, engage with a wide range of subjects, meet high expectations, and assume greater personal responsibility for their learning.

For students joining the DP from other schools or educational systems, this transition may also involve adapting to a new school environment, culture, and community. It is essential that the school provides structured support to facilitate this process and ensure a smooth integration.

The role of the DP Coordinator is critical during this period. Students at this stage are navigating academic pressures, identity development, and increased autonomy. Therefore, the adaptation process must be sensitive, student-centred, and flexible - offering support through whole-class sessions, small groups with shared interests, and individual mentoring as needed.

DPC and teachers should guide students in developing key skills like time management, critical thinking, self-reflection, and ethical decision-making within the framework of the IB Core (Theory of Knowledge, Extended Essay, and CAS). Advisory or tutorial sessions should focus on personal development, international-mindedness, academic integrity, and emotional well-being.

IB DP subject teachers should design learning environments that nurture each student's strengths and interests. Teaching and assessment should be differentiated where appropriate, and educators should provide consistent feedback to help students grow academically and personally. Career and university counselling should be integrated into the adaptation process by helping students identify future goals and pathways aligned with their skills and aspirations.

Adaptation of Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

For the successful adaptation of IB DP students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), it is essential to gather comprehensive information about the student's functional abilities, socio-emotional development, academic background, learning profile, interests, behavioral traits, and personal characteristics. This information should be collected through consistent collaboration with the student's family and a careful review of the student's documentation, including their personal file. An important reference document is the report issued by the Multidisciplinary Team of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, which outlines the student's needs and provides tailored recommendations for modifying the learning process and environment in line with inclusive education principles.

In cases where a student with SEND transfers into the DP from another school, the School must address their specific needs, including the adaptation of the physical environment to ensure accessibility and independence. This is particularly important given the demands of the DP and the importance of creating a supportive learning atmosphere.

If needed, the School will ensure the timely involvement of qualified inclusive education professionals, such as special educators, psychologists, learning support teachers, or other relevant specialists. These professionals should work in collaboration with the DP Coordinator, subject teachers, and tutors to design and implement appropriate support strategies.

The School must ensure that parents and legal guardians are thoroughly informed about the available support services for DP students with SEND. This includes:

- The qualifications and roles of staff supporting inclusive education
- How learning support is integrated within the DP framework
- The development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Adjustments made to teaching strategies, assessment practices, and classroom environments
- The availability of IB-approved inclusive access arrangements, such as extended time, use of assistive technology, or modified formats of assessment components

The School will work in accordance with IB policies on inclusive education and access arrangements, ensuring that all necessary documentation is submitted to the IB for approval where formal assessment accommodations are required. Support measures will be regularly reviewed and adjusted based on the student's ongoing needs and progress.

Reception of IB Diploma Programme Students on the First Day of School

On the first day of the academic year, the start of the IB Diploma Programme is marked by a dedicated orientation event designed to foster a sense of belonging, clarify expectations, and build community among students, parents, and faculty.

A comprehensive presentation about the school and the IB Diploma Programme is delivered, outlining the school's mission, IB philosophy, academic structure, assessment practices, and support services. Special emphasis is placed on the core components of the DP—Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), and the Extended Essay (EE)—as well as the IB Learner Profile attributes.

During the event, students receive welcome kits, which may include symbolic gifts, essential academic materials (e.g., school planners, notebooks), assigned locker keys, and access credentials to digital platforms. This is also an opportunity to distribute course schedules and introduce students to key staff members such as subject teachers, the DP Coordinator, the CAS Coordinator, and school counsellors.

To build a sense of community and ease the transition, the day includes interactive ice-breakers, team-building exercises, and informal activities that promote collaboration and connection among the students. Parents are also invited to attend a segment of the event to understand the expectations of the DP and how they can support their child's success over the next two years.

The primary goal of this reception is to help DP students feel welcomed, informed, and connected—laying the foundation for a successful and enriching learning experience within the IB framework.

Support for Gifted and Talented Students at Oakleaf School

Oakleaf School is committed to recognising and nurturing the diverse talents of students who demonstrate exceptional academic, creative, or leadership potential. Within the framework of the IB philosophy, we strive to create an environment that supports inquiry, independence, and personal growth—ensuring that gifted and talented learners are both challenged and supported throughout their educational journey.

To support these students effectively, Oakleaf School implements the following approaches:

- **Access to Enrichment Opportunities:** Students are encouraged to take part in enrichment programmes such as national and international academic competitions, where they can further explore areas of interest and excellence.
- **Extended Research and Independent Projects:** Students are supported in undertaking independent inquiry-based projects that go beyond the curriculum, including those within the Extended Essay and CAS projects, allowing them to explore topics of personal passion with academic rigour.
- **Mentorship and University Partnerships:** Where appropriate, Oakleaf School seeks to connect students with external mentors, university programmes, and academic networks that align with their specific strengths.
- **Interdisciplinary Challenges and Collaboration:** Opportunities are provided for gifted students to collaborate across grade levels or subject areas, promoting intellectual exchange through interdisciplinary projects, group work, or student-led initiatives.
- **Monitoring and Reflection:** The progress of students identified as gifted is reviewed regularly through collaborative efforts by the DP Coordinator and subject teachers. Student

voice is integral to this process, and learners are encouraged to set personal goals and reflect on their development.

- Leadership and Engagement: Gifted learners are encouraged to take on leadership roles within the school community, such as organising events, leading CAS initiatives, or mentoring peers, fostering both academic excellence and social responsibility.

Oakleaf School believes that supporting gifted and talented students within the IB Diploma Programme is not only about academic acceleration but also about cultivating principled, open-minded, and balanced individuals prepared to make meaningful contributions to the global community.

Indicators of Successful Inclusion

A student who is adapting successfully to the IB Diploma Programme may demonstrate the following characteristics:

- a) Displays a positive attitude toward learning and engages actively in lessons and discussions;
- b) Begins to form supportive relationships with peers, demonstrating collaboration and mutual respect;
- c) Shows interest when reflecting on experiences with subject teachers, peers, and the overall learning community;
- d) Follows academic and behavioral expectations with increasing independence and is receptive to constructive feedback;
- e) Manages their academic responsibilities with growing confidence and organization, including timely completion of tasks and preparation for assessments;
- f) Participates in school life beyond the classroom—such as CAS activities, student initiatives, or collaborative projects;
- g) Feels comfortable seeking help when needed and approaches challenges with resilience rather than avoidance.

Recommendations for Supporting Ongoing Inclusion

When a student demonstrates successful adaptation to the IB DP environment—academically, socially, and emotionally—parents/guardians should be informed during regular communication or conferences. Positive feedback should highlight the student's strengths and engagement with the programme.

Although no additional interventions are necessary for well-adapted students, continued encouragement is important. Teachers and tutors are advised to acknowledge progress and effort through affirming comments, academic feedback, and recognition in both formal and informal settings. This ongoing reinforcement supports motivation and wellbeing throughout the demanding DP journey.

Indicators of Maladaptation

Signs that an IB DP student may be struggling to adapt to the academic or social demands of the programme include:

- a) Frequent or ongoing fatigue that affects focus and participation in class activities;
- b) Expressed reluctance or anxiety about attending school or specific classes;
- c) Repeated physical complaints such as headaches or exhaustion, particularly before or during school hours;
- d) Disrupted sleep patterns, such as difficulty falling asleep or waking, linked to academic stress or emotional distress;
- e) Challenges in forming or maintaining peer relationships within the school community;
- f) Regular frustration or negativity toward academic expectations, assessments, or teacher feedback;
- g) Withdrawal from social interaction, group activities, or collaborative learning opportunities;
- h) Struggles in managing workload, following expectations, or adhering to the school's code of conduct;
- i) Attempts to avoid class time or school attendance, including seeking frequent early dismissals or absenteeism.

Measures to Address Adaptation Difficulties

When early signs of adaptation difficulties are observed, teachers must promptly assess the student's engagement in the school process. Immediate notification of parents/guardians is essential to ensure a collaborative approach in addressing the issue.

The school psychologist should be engaged early in the process. If needed, the psychologist will conduct confidential one-on-one sessions with the student, as well as joint sessions with the student's parents and the class tutor, to identify underlying challenges. Additionally, the psychologist may facilitate group activities to strengthen peer connections and foster a supportive classroom environment.

It is vital to reinforce the student's self-belief from the outset. Teachers and support staff are encouraged to highlight the student's strengths and celebrate small achievements from the very beginning of the academic year.

The class tutor should communicate to parents that early setbacks are a natural part of adjusting to a rigorous academic environment like the IB DP. Emphasising the importance of resilience and a positive outlook, the tutor should reassure parents that continuous encouragement and recognition of progress can significantly boost the student's confidence.

During the adaptation phase, maintaining a well-organised daily routine is particularly important. Teachers and advisors should work with the student to develop a balanced schedule that prevents overload, minimises stress, and supports effective time management.

Parents are encouraged to incorporate regular physical activities into the student's weekly schedule. Consistent exercise can help reduce stress levels, enhance overall well-being, and improve the student's ability to focus on academic tasks.

To preserve the student's self-esteem, parents should avoid comparisons with peers. Constructive feedback should be based on the student's individual progress and past achievements, ensuring that any comparisons are framed positively and supportively.

Rights and Responsibilities

At Oakleaf School, we believe that every member of our learning community—students, teachers, staff, parents—has the right to feel valued, respected, and empowered. Our commitment to inclusion, equity, and well-being underpins all our interactions, teaching, and leadership decisions.

The Rights of Our Community Members

Everyone in our school community has the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and kindness, regardless of background, identity, or beliefs.
- Express themselves freely and respectfully in the languages, cultures, and identities they hold dear.
- Access a learning environment that honours diverse perspectives and supports multiple paths to success.
- Learn and grow at a pace that is appropriate to their current needs, without comparison or judgement.
- Receive feedback and assessment based on clear and transparent criteria, without the influence of unintended bias.
- Share concerns, feedback, and ideas without fear of negative consequences.

Responsibilities of School Leadership and Governance

Leaders at Oakleaf School are expected to:

- Make inclusive decisions that promote access and remove barriers for all members of the community.
- Ensure policies and practices are fair, consistent, and reflective of IB values.
- Provide the necessary support—be it human, material, or financial—to meet the diverse needs of students and staff.
- Model a commitment to intercultural understanding, empathy, and ethical leadership.

Responsibilities of Teachers

Our educators are entrusted with creating meaningful, inclusive learning experiences by:

- Understanding each student's background, strengths, and challenges.

- Designing differentiated lessons that make learning accessible and engaging for all.
- Using assessment and observation data thoughtfully to guide instruction.
- Embracing a variety of teaching and assessment methods that reflect the diverse ways students learn and express understanding.
- Encouraging curiosity, critical thinking, and independence in every learner.
- Cultivating a classroom environment where all voices are heard and respected.

Responsibilities of Students

Students at Oakleaf School are partners in their own learning. They are expected to:

- Communicate their needs, goals, and challenges with teachers and parents.
- Take ownership of their learning journey by actively engaging in support structures and extension opportunities.
- Embrace new challenges and push beyond comfort zones when ready.
- Build the confidence and resilience to gradually become more independent learners.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

Our families are vital collaborators in the learning process. They are encouraged to:

- Work alongside teachers and school staff to support their child's academic and personal development.
- Share important information that may help the school better understand and support their child.
- Be open to professional advice and recommendations aimed at helping their child thrive.
- Reinforce the values of respect, perseverance, and curiosity at home.

Introduction and Accessibility of This Policy

Oakleaf School ensures that all staff members, including administrative, academic, and support personnel, are familiar with the guidelines and procedures outlined in this Inclusion Policy. The school commits to explaining the principles and practices for student adaptation to all interested stakeholders—students, parents, and external educational partners—when needed, ensuring transparency and shared understanding.

Final Provisions

This policy has been developed in accordance with Oakleaf School's mission and inclusive educational philosophy and has been formally approved by the school director. Any revisions or additions to this policy shall be made through a directive issued by the school director, following internal review and, where applicable, consultation with relevant stakeholders.

References

This document's language and grammar were refined with the assistance of *ChatGPT (OpenAI, May 2025)*. All policy content and decisions are the responsibility of Oakleaf School.