

INCLUSION AND EQUITY POLICY

Philosophy Statement

"Inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers."

Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, (2016)

Our mission at Melbourne Montessori School is to:

- provide excellence in Montessori education,
- provide an enriched and welcoming learning community that embodies the Montessori principles of respect for self, respect for all others including the development of intercultural understanding; respect for the environment as well as respect for our country's freedoms and democratic principles,
- nurture, inspire and support each child's individual development,
- foster the growth of self-confidence, independence, self-discipline, an inquiring, active mind and personal and social responsibility,
- foster children's innate love of learning and to make their introduction to education a joyful and purposeful start to a journey of life-long learning.

The IB Learner Profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognising our common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB Learners strive to be Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced and Reflective.

1. MMS is committed to extending access to an IB education for students with a variety of capabilities and from various backgrounds.
2. MMS will ensure that the values of the school and the IB's values and aims are reflected in the school's activities and organization.
3. MMS is committed to recognizing that each student is a unique individual, coming to us with varying aspirations, abilities, interests, and needs.
4. MMS is aligned with the IB definition of inclusion, which is "the ongoing process that increases access and engagement of all learners in learning."
5. The school responds positively to each student's unique learning profile, including students with diverse learning needs through a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem solving.
6. The school is committed to provide ongoing professional development for teachers to improve student learning.
7. At MMS, we believe that every teacher is an inclusive and special needs teacher and that they need to work to remove all barriers to inclusion for every student.

Differentiation

Differentiation is an organised, yet flexible way of proactively adjusting teaching and learning methods to accommodate each student's learning needs and preferences in order to achieve his or her maximum growth as a learner. It is a framework for effective teaching that involves providing a variety of avenues to learning (often in the same classroom) and developing teaching materials, facilities, technology and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively.

Every Montessori journey begins with respect for self, others and the environment. These affirmative values are taught explicitly and are part of every lesson, every day and every learning experience. Every person is seen as being as valuable as every other, with individual strengths and areas in which to improve and Montessori teachers build on the strengths in every child.

Teachers collaborate with other staff, parents and students (as appropriate) to build rapport, understanding and develop the best methodologies to suit every individual student.

From Early Learners to Cycle 3, every Montessori classroom has three age groups in it, so that any student can work with and be inspired by those older and more skilled than they might be. They are able to work with older or more skilled children and learn from them. Our secondary program also reflects this value as most classes have a range of year level included.

Our primary classes revolve around a 3 hour work cycle instead of multiple lessons in a day. This means that all children are able to pursue their own learning to the best of their ability and work for long periods of time on one unit of work. Our policy whereby there is no set homework in the Junior School allows for students to pursue their own interests in depth at school and at home.

Lessons are given in small groups so that children are always taken as far as they are capable in every lesson. Every teacher can teach content and curriculum many years beyond the enrolled year level.

It is expected that some students will work better in different environments, with different technologies or at a different pace to other children. These different modes of learning are supported for every individual.

In the Senior School, project work has in-built choice and students are able to work within a range of age groups so that in-built extension is always possible.

In the Junior School, we have two adults per class so that highly individualised lessons can take place.

The International Baccalaureate values the same individual treatment for every student and although the classes will not have three age groups, the same approach will be undertaken as for Montessori students throughout the school.

Teachers can differentiate in four ways: (Tomlinson, C.A.)

- through content
- through process
- through product or outcome
- through learning environment based on the individual learner.

For the MMS Teacher, differentiation means:

Multiple pathways – Students are provided with varied pathways to reach the same objective(s). Specific learning activities are differentiated to help students prepare for the same summative assessment task. Pathway variations can be based on: stretching students beyond the basics, providing support for specific criteria or skills, offering workshops or stations based on interest, mother tongue or learning style.

Flexibility of products - Summative assessment tasks may be structured to allow students to show their understanding of concepts through alternate modes of delivery (live vs. video, presentation vs. paper). The criteria assessing knowledge and understanding are unchanged but students may select the method of delivery.

Scaffolding - Scaffolding is provided to break down content or the steps in a larger task into more manageable chunks. Teachers provide support and guidance so that all students can complete the same assessment task. Examples include: graphic organizers, writing templates, or planning calendars.

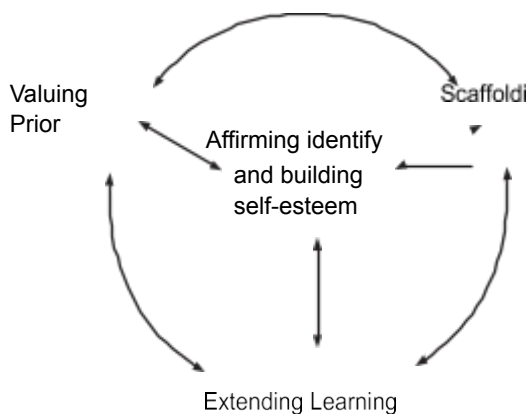
Equality of access

- Access to subject content and support is available to all students, including ESL and ILP (Individual Learning Plan) students. Differentiation supports growth for all students, to help them get from where they are to where we want them to be next.
- Access to all physical areas, facilities and physical resources is provided for all students.

Differentiation can be based on the teacher's knowledge of a student's need, a student's self-assessed need, or a student's personal interest, as appropriate to the lesson and learning goal. Differentiation depends on frequent and accurate assessment for learning, beginning with prior knowledge and tailoring learning experiences to students' needs.

Differentiation of students' learning experiences are guided by clear objectives, a sense of progression, oral and written feedback, and observing the students as they engage with the unit content.

Differentiation does not imply individualised learning or depend on individual learning programs for each student in the class. It does require knowledge of the students' needs and interests. It can take the form of smart questioning techniques, fielding student responses, guided group learning, and intervention for those students who need it.



Learning Support Requirements

Support and/or access might be required to enable some students, who have the aptitude to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, reach their full potential in learning and assessment.

Students who require inclusive assessment arrangements may have learning support requirements due to one or more of the following:

- Autism spectrum
- Learning disabilities
- Medical conditions
- Mental health issues
- Multiple disabilities
- Physical and/or sensory challenges
- Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Specific learning difficulties
- Speech and/or communication difficulties

Modification

Modifications of tasks

Modification involves changing learning outcomes or curriculum to meet a student's identified needs. Only students on ILPs (Individual Learning Plan) are eligible. Modifications will be created in collaboration with the classroom teacher and case manager, with input from the relevant stakeholders (Heads of Cycle/grade, HoD, IB Coordinator, and/or Counsellor). When specified by a student's ILP, teachers are required to comply.

Modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Focusing on only a specific component or criteria of the content, knowledge or skill.
- Modifying the criteria that will be measured (eliminating one or more criteria, changing the maximum possible points, changing the criteria descriptors).
- Adjusting required length or difficulty of text to be written or text to be read
- Assignments might be reduced in number and modified for a student to understand the content in which they are included.

Accommodations

The primary purpose of accommodations is to reduce and/or eliminate the impact of the documented learning need. Accommodations support a student's access to learning through an alteration of the learning environment, lesson delivery, structure of the learning engagement, or equipment which allows an individual with a documented need to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks.

Accommodations allow students with documented needs to pursue a regular course of study. Since accommodations do not alter what is being taught or expected, teachers should be able to implement the same criteria scale for students with documented needs. Accommodations will be developed in collaboration with the classroom teacher and case manager, with input from the relevant stakeholders (Heads of Cycle/grade, HoD, IB Coordinator, and/or Counsellor) Teachers are required to implement documented accommodations.

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

Additional time (50% more)	Colour naming (Colour Blindness)
Alterations to presentation of on-screen exam	Communication devices (Hearing) Aids or adaptations
Text-to-Speech software	Clarification of instructions
Speech-to-Text Software	Prompters Rest break
Human reader	Allow use of notes (1 page-double sided)
Speech-assistive technology	Calculator use
Hearing- assistive technology	Provide checklist for projects Do not penalise spelling
Practical Assistance	
Separate exam room	
Appropriate seating	
Medication	
Care assistant	

Individual Learning Plan

An ILP (Individual Learning Plan) is a written plan developed by staff, parents, students (where appropriate), and/or external providers or specialists. The ILP identifies the learner's strengths, areas of development, and learning styles, and includes records of external and internal assessment data. A student's goals are directly related to their strengths, abilities, identified needs, and demands of the school curriculum.

Parent Support Groups

PSGs are comprised of the Heads of Cycle/grade, HoD, IB Coordinator, and/or Counsellor) Head of Grade, Head of Campus and Learning Support teachers but can also include other relevant staff. The purpose is to take a holistic, proactive approach to students of concern in order to determine next steps.

Care Plan

Care Plans focus on social/emotional support and development. Developing a Care Plan involves the homeroom and specialist teachers, teaching assistants, and administrative team. Outside agencies and professionals involved in supporting a student may also be included. Wherever possible plans are co-written with parents, and in consultation of their child. Their input, and that of their child is essential. A student may have several of the Student Services Team working with them. If this is the case, the care plan explains the support provided by each of the team and how often each intervention should be provided.

Characteristics

- Its focus is holistic.
- It is Student-Centered, and outcome oriented
- It is reviewed and the process evaluated at regular intervals.

Gifted and Talented

- As per the IB definition, is defined as a student who is globally gifted, gifted in specific areas.
- In a Montessori school all teachers are trained to extend children; to understand the depth and direction of a student's interests and to assist and support them to go further. Our entire education system is based on individual tuition and differentiation for every child. This policy and value system continues into the IB Diploma Programme.
- Twice Exceptional is defined as a student who is gifted in some areas but experiences learning challenges in other areas.

Response to Intervention Model

This tiered model of support seeks to meet the needs of all students through data collection, early intervention, frequent progress monitoring, differentiation and/or interventions. RTI is a multileveled approach for aiding all students and is adjusted and modified as needed by the team around the student.

Intervention cycle

An Intervention cycle is a short-term approach to academic and/or behavioural intervention to provide early, systematic, and appropriately intensive assistance to students of concern. The data collected throughout the intervention cycle may be used to determine next steps.

Assessment Planning for the IB Diploma Programme

The same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have learning support requirements.

1. Although a number of inclusive assessment arrangements are available for students with learning support requirements, some subjects may pose difficulties for certain students. Each student needs to discuss their choice of IB DP subjects with their IB Coordinator. The subjects chosen should allow them to demonstrate their strengths and empower them as learners.
2. The inclusive assessment arrangements provided for a student will be carefully individualised, planned, evaluated and monitored. They will be based on current, and not past, requirements.
3. All requests for inclusive assessment arrangements submitted by the IB Coordinator must have the support of the Principal.
4. Before submitting appropriate documentation to the IB Assessment Centre, the Principal's delegate will obtain consent from the candidate, provided he or she is at the age of consent in their country, or from the candidate's parent(s) or legal guardian.
5. The inclusive assessment arrangements that are requested should be a candidate's usual way of working; the IB Coordinator must ensure that a candidate is, or becomes, familiar with those arrangements. The candidate must be familiar with any assistive equipment, including a computer and any software authorised for use in an examination.
6. An application for inclusive assessment arrangements must be submitted on behalf of a candidate by the IB Coordinator using the online request form.
7. The IB Coordinator is responsible for making all arrangements for approving and appointing a scribe, reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator. The person providing support must not be another candidate, a relative of the candidate, or a representative from an advisory service where a conflict of interest may be apparent or perceived.
8. To submit requests for access arrangements, two forms of supporting documentation are required to be uploaded to the online application "Request of inclusive assessment arrangements". The first document is a psychological/psycho-educational/medical report from a psychological or medical service and the second is educational evidence from the teachers and should include samples of work. The evidence also needs to include work from previous years. (See the IB Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements 2014 document.)
9. All requests for inclusive assessment arrangements must be submitted online, six months prior to an examination session. They must be completed 6 months prior for candidates registering for the November examinations session as the IB Assessment centre cannot guarantee modified papers if requests are submitted after this date.

Confidentiality

Definition of:	In consultation with parents, shared with or access given to:	Document Storage, Maintenance and Responsibility
Counsellor Notes (SE counselling) <i>Confidential notes outlining points relating to student wellbeing based on meetings, conferences, and other modes of communication.</i>	Counsellor and SMT (Senior Management Team) access only Additional stakeholders when duty of care is a consideration	PS (private)* Counsellor
Evaluation Reports <i>Including medical notes, psych-ed, psych, etc</i>	Learning support, counsellors, SMT	PS (private)* Case Manager
Individual Learning Plan and Care Plans <i>School documents, but with confidential information</i>	Learning support, counsellors, SMT, Leadership Teams, Heads of Grade/Grade Level Teams, relevant teachers (Elem) With permission from parents, may be shared with new school (transfer)	PS* Case Manager
ILP Snapshot <i>School document, not including confidential information</i>	In addition to those above: Relevant teachers (sec), transfer school	PS* Case Manager
Log Entries <i>Individual teachers and support staff create log entries related to specific behavioral events and academic needs in order to document and track student wellbeing</i>	Learning Support, Counsellors, HoG/GLCs, HoDs Teachers can see their own, previous entries	PS Teachers enter SATs monitor

* updates to PS are in progress and these are working targets

Stakeholders

Learning Diversity Teachers - Specialist staff who provide support to students with learning diversities to support access to the appropriate grade curriculum.

Wellbeing Counsellor – specialist staff who provide social and emotional support, while promoting wellbeing within the school community.

Careers Counsellor – specialist staff who provide guidance and direction to secondary students and parents about possible post-secondary pathways. College Counsellors work closely with staff the HoCP and Cycle Coordinators to ensure successful completion of graduation requirements.

Classroom Teachers – Content area teachers who plan, deliver and assess a school-based curriculum in collaboration with their teaching team and specialists.

Advisors – As part of the pastoral program, these teachers monitor daily student routines, behavior expectations, and support the student assistance team as required. These teachers and/or a 'wellbeing team' also deliver the pastoral program during weekly allocated/or homeroom time.

Classroom Teachers – General classroom teachers who plan, deliver and assess a school-based curriculum in collaboration with their teaching team and specialists. In addition, they monitor daily student routines, behaviour expectations, and support the student assistance team as required.

Support Staff – Teaching Assistants engage in a variety of teacher-directed tasks and activities to support student learning.

Executive Team – Principal and the Board

Senior Leadership Team – which includes Business Manager, Teaching and Learning Leaders,, Heads of Campuss and Principal.

External Service Providers – include non-school-based specialists such as therapists (speech, occupational, physical), Educational Psychologists, Psychiatrists.

ESL Teachers – trained and experienced English Second Language teachers who support ESL students.

Additional Stakeholders – Parents, Legal Representatives of the students, caregivers, and students.

Professional Learning & Development:

Training to support Inclusive Practice and Special Educational Needs

Professional Learning and Development at MMS aims to ensure success for all students through staff development and continuous school improvements in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and the learning environment aligned to the school's Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision and Objectives.

Participation in regional networks, external training and/or the provision of internal training to support and develop strategies to support the whole-child will be part of the Professional Learning and Development plan each school year. Topics that will be considered will include, but are not limited to: ESL, Inclusion, co-teaching, Special Educational Needs, College Counselling, and Well-being. Appropriate resources will be allocated based on the availability of resources and the priorities of each division.

Data Collection, Sharing and Monitoring

A profile of each student is created based on classroom assessment data, standardised test data, language placement information, and log entries. Data collected on students may vary based on grade level and student need. Data for students may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Primary – Classroom assessment data, NAPLAN (Years 3-5), Log Entries
- Secondary – Classroom assessment data, NAPLAN (Years 6-10), Log Entries

A profile of each student is available on the "School information and learning portal" through administrator access, privileges are set for different levels of instruction and care:

- Parents have access to: term grades, classroom assessment information (secondary), language level.
- Primary Teachers have access to: language level, Spelling, Writing.
- Cumulative Grade Information, Attendance, etc.
- Secondary Teachers have access to: Language Level, Cumulative Grade Information, Schedule, past log entries by same teacher, Attendance, and Term Grades.
- **Grade Level Coordinators, Heads of Grade, Heads of Department** have access to: the same information identified above plus the ability to add or edit these entries for all students within the division. Log entries from all teachers and all students are also available.
- Specialists, including Guidance Counsellors, Student Services, and Learning Support have access unique to their roles. Areas for confidential notes are hidden from view in most other views.
- Advanced levels of access above these listed are granted on a case-by-case basis, dependent on the needs and responsibilities of the role.

Admissions Guidelines

See MMS Admissions Guidelines and Policy for more information.

Support Services – what do we offer to students, teachers, parents

Support Services

At MMS we recognize each student as a unique individual, coming to us with varying aspirations, abilities, interests, and needs

MMS provides support across all divisions for students who have learning diversities and/or special education needs and who require support to successfully participate in the school's programs.

Trained teachers and counsellors respond to concerns and referrals to provide support in a range of ways including: ideas for differentiation, student-specific accommodations, modifications to the learning and assessment materials, and individualised plans for learning and/or social/emotional needs.

There is limited access to specialised support services. Contact to external support services (Therapists – Speech, Occupational, Physio, Educational Psychologists) can be facilitated through the Student Services team, However, it is recommended that parents of students with special education needs contact the school before they decide to enroll their children.

Learning Support

A collaborative, student-centered approach is embraced to support students who have learning diversities including those with formal diagnoses. Homeroom, subject and specialist teachers work alongside our learning support teachers, assistants and counsellors. These professionals, together with parents, aim to provide a quality education that meets the needs of individual students.

Support programs are delivered within the mainstream classroom setting to the greatest extent possible. Individual or small group withdrawal/pull-out sessions are implemented as per the needs of a student. In some cases, it may be possible for a student to have their own assistant, provided by the parent to support access to the school curriculum and environment.

A referral process is in place to facilitate the identification and support of individual students. Should individual intervention be required, the team around the student will develop an Individual Plan, either in the form of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and/or a Care Plan.

These Individual Plans are stored in the relevant learning support and counsellor files, in addition to copies held with parents, homeroom teachers, and specialists where relevant.

Assessment and review is undertaken in line with reporting cycles, or on an as- needed basis. Individual Plans are reviewed twice/year, with adjustments made based on progress, need, and available resources.

Record Keeping - Head of Student Services and Secondary Learning Support teachers are responsible for ensuring that relevant documents are stored and updated within their respective departments.

These include but are not limited to:

- Referral Form -From Teacher to Student Support Services.
- Letter of Referral to external agencies – from Learning Support to agency.
- Notes relating to teacher meetings including intervention strategies, modifications, adaptations, checklists and interviews.
- Parent Meetings and any parent written communication.
- Initial observations and data which will act as baseline data
- Correspondence to and from outside professional services.
- Individual Plans (ILP/ Care Plan), where applicable.
- Learning Support staff will keep information confidential as requested by parents.

Philosophy: Counselling is the art of helping people help themselves. An effective school counselling program is one that: serves all students, is preventative in nature, has active staff involvement, provides crisis intervention, and offers short-term counselling.

Individual Counselling: Counselling services are aimed at enhancing understanding and resolving concerns that are affecting the normal functioning and routine of the individual's daily life.

- Information: Self-help brochures, handouts, and reading lists are part of the Self-help.
- External referral: Students requiring more specialised or extended services may be referred to qualified community resources.
- Consultation: Consultation is offered to staff who are concerned about the emotional well-being of students.
- Internal Referrals: All students are able to self-refer at any time to seek help. All students may be referred to counselling by educational staff or parents.

Individual counselling sessions will occur during allocated times such as lunch time, break or after school. When use of class time is required, the subject teacher will be notified in advance when possible.

Personal Counselling

Philosophy: Counselling is the art of helping people help themselves. We believe that an effective school counselling program is one that: serves all students, is preventative in nature, has active staff involvement, provides crisis intervention, and offers short-term counselling.

What is Personal Counselling?

Counselling is a way of working together in a unique and confidential helping relationship, developed between a counsellor and a student. In this relationship, the counsellor acts as a facilitator to help the student to understand more accurately him/herself and the world around him/her.

Why do students seek counselling?

Different students come to counselling for many different reasons. Some of the more common concerns students may have are:

- Low self-confidence
- Finding, helping, or losing a relationship
- Puzzling or distressing emotional states
- Family concerns (conflict, divorce, pressure, etc)
- Getting better grades
- Self-defeating/harming behaviours
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Grief
- Eating disorders
- Decision making
- Sexual assault
- Sexual orientation or gender identity issues
- Alcohol and drug use
- Careers, life planning and development

If a student feels she or he has any of the above issues, or some other troubling situation, and is not sure what to do about it, s/he is encouraged to contact the Wellbeing counsellor, Advisor, Deputy Principal or Principal.

What happens during a counselling session?

Counselling usually takes place in a meeting room where everything being discussed is based on the principle of unconditional positive regard and mutual respect. All conversations are confidential unless the student is in immediate harm. Students will not be judged on what they say, think or feel. If ongoing concerns are noted, the counsellor may seek to develop a plan, in consultation with the student, for further sessions to work on specific issues causing concern.

What about confidentiality and immediate harm?

Part of meeting with the Wellbeing counsellor means having a confidential supportive relationship. Confidentiality means not passing on information to others without a student's consent. But, if a student is in immediate harm – that is: hurting himself or herself, hurting other people, or other people are hurting that student - the counsellor is ethically bound by the school to inform other individuals that may be able to help and protect. Mandatory reporting is outlined in our Child Safe Policy.

How do students see a counsellor?

LDU or the Wellbeing Counsellor are available to all students at MMS. Students are often referred by parents or staff and appointments are scheduled as necessary. Students at all levels may self-refer. Students can set up appointments at the LDU office or contact them directly via email, or meeting. Students in crisis are seen immediately.

Note to Parents:

LDU counselling services for any child can be requested as required. In the Junior School, parental consent is sought if ongoing consultation with a child is deemed necessary.

At the Secondary Level, students are able to self-refer, or be referred by parents, staff or other students. Due to the confidential nature of the counselling relationship, the counsellor will not inform parents of contact with their child unless the student is in immediate harm or it is deemed appropriate.

Record Keeping

The LDU staff or Wellbeing Counsellor are expected to maintain records in accordance with the standards of the counselling profession and in accordance with the expectations of MMS.

A Note on Testing & Assessment

Counselling staff will provide referrals to the relevant staff members and members of the PSG as required. The counsellor will inform parents and provide recommended services when they believe a student may require formal assessment or care from mental health or medical professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Psychiatrists or Medical Doctors.

Linked with the IB Publication:

The Diploma Programme: From Principles to Practice

Linked with:

Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment
 Health and Wellbeing Policy
 Assessment Policy

Responsible Person: Principal, Learning and Teaching Leaders, Head of Campus, Teaching Staff
Approved by: Principal, Board
Reviewed Date: 2017, 2023
Next Review Date: 2024