

OPIS Diversity and Inclusion Policy

OPIS Diversity and Inclusion Philosophy

At OPIS we embrace and celebrate diversity by welcoming families from different cultural backgrounds, languages, experiences, interests, talents and abilities. We believe that diversity creates enriching learning opportunities that promote international mindedness and foster the development of the Learner Profile attributes in every member of our community.

Inclusion at OPIS is a continual process aimed at enriching learning, increasing access and engagement for all students through the identification and removal of barriers to learning. This process is characterised by opportunities and challenges, with the aim of fostering life-long learning skills and a growth mindset with regards to diversity, equity and inclusion in students, staff and parents. Therefore, everyone is responsible for promoting inclusive practices and displaying inclusive attitudes.

In alignment with the IB philosophy and our own views, we foster educational inclusion by continually reflecting on what we do and actively participating in collaborative meetings to engage the following questions:

- What evidence did we gather about students' knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills? Did all our students achieve their best?
- What can be done differently? Where can we innovate for future learning and teaching?
- How effective is the monitoring, documenting and measuring of learning?
- What are we doing for those students who we know are not achieving their best? How do we know that our actions are effective?
- Did we give opportunities for students to share their unique point of view?
- Do we provide students with opportunities to develop metacognitive skills and use them to enhance their learning?

We want all members of our school community to feel a sense of belonging within the school and wider community and to know that they are respected and able to participate in school life to the fullest extent possible. To achieve this goal, we work towards providing learning opportunities to address each student's individual needs, and respect and embrace every OPIS member's cultural and religious background.

OPIS is supervised by the Ministry of Education in Oman (MoE) and complies with its guidelines and requirements regarding Admissions and Assessment Policies. We promote our vision of diversity and inclusion through curriculum, attitudes, admissions and recruitment, whilst working closely with the MoE to better align our views and practises.

Inclusion encompasses all OPIS policies, but the following are an integral part of the current policy:

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Policy

Aims and objectives

All staff at OPIS work towards:

- ❖ Offering equality of opportunity for all our students in all areas of school life.
- ❖ Ensuring individual strengths are recognised and students have the opportunity to achieve their potential.
- ❖ Removing barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual students, or groups of students.
- ❖ Using available school resources and procedures to provide learning support to students with various social and academic needs.

In the classroom teachers strive to ensure that all students:

- feel secure and know that their contributions are valued
- appreciate and value the differences they see in others
- experience success
- use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds, representing (without stereotyping) the diversity of our school community
- have a common curriculum experience that allows for a range of different learning styles
- have challenging targets that enable them to succeed
- participate to the fullest extent possible, regardless of any impairment or medical need.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Learning Support Team have the responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of the systems and procedures in place within the school in order for all students to have the opportunity to make progress.

The Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) contributes to OPIS' vision of diversity and inclusion through the organisation of whole school events that celebrate our community's diversity, as well as through support of students' individual needs by providing a set of helping hands with field trips, reading groups, and learning support as needed.

OPIS After School Activity (ASA) programme

The OPIS ASA programme offers a comprehensive set of activities based around student interests. There is a wide choice for the students to choose from and they have the opportunity

to trial them before they make a decision on which one they would like to take. Once the students have made their choice they will attend the activity for the semester. All students are encouraged to participate in at least one ASA and some of them do two or three. There are activities for everyone and nobody is excluded, such is the range offered.

OPIS Learning Support

OPIS aims to be an inclusive school, currently offering the Early Years, Primary Years and Middle Years Programme. Our student population includes students with diverse learning needs and styles. Some students at OPIS have unique needs to consider when helping them achieve their academic and non-academic potential.

To provide access to our curriculum we use approaches and support systems that address the individual needs and varied learning styles of the students. As OPIS is constantly evolving in its journey to be an inclusive school, we welcome those students with diverse learning needs who can be supported by the school resources and infrastructure available at the time.

At OPIS, our school community believes in

- the right to a safe, secure and successful learning experience for all students.
- the right to a safe, secure and productive teaching environment for all teachers.
- the transparency of information.
- the confidentiality of information.
- the benefits of an inclusive model of education where learning and support is individualised.

OUR PLANET DEFINITION OF LEARNING SUPPORT

At OPIS, Learning Support is defined as that extra support provided to a student, through the use of distinctly different teaching strategies, accommodations or learning targets, than those followed by the majority of the student body.

The need for learning support may arise due to differences in

- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Perceptual or motor development
- Academic development
- Social development
- Emotional development
- Behaviour

- Health - Medical needs
- Language proficiency
- Students that need challenge and extension in their learning.

Students identified with learning support needs are assessed individually in order to ascertain their level and area of need. Types of support are recommended after careful consideration of the individual student needs and depending on the school's available resources. Where the achievement of a student significantly exceeds the expected level of attainment, teachers can provide extension materials for areas in which the student shows particular aptitude.

IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT NEEDS

OPIS encourages its families and teachers to be forthcoming about their student's development, strengths and challenges in order to serve them better.

At OPIS teachers identify various support needs of students during the course of the school year within the context of the school environment. These needs may be highlighted by the students' response to the growing demands of the curriculum and the evolving learning expectations within the classroom.

Sometimes, these needs become apparent during the admissions process, wherein previous school reports are reviewed, and when the student and family are interviewed. As a part of the admissions process, student applicants take entry assessments in English language and Mathematics, which are used to inform considerations of their possible learning support needs. From PYP3 and above, students are assessed thrice a year using NWEA MAP Growth, a standardised data-driven adaptive diagnostic test in English Language and Mathematics.

In other cases, additional or specific information about a student's development may be required in order to make decisions about their areas of learning support needs. In such cases, we may request a further assessment conducted by an external consultant that has an understanding of our school context and resources. This collaboration results in a greater understanding of the resources needed in order for a student to successfully learn and grow at OPIS.

TYPES OF SUPPORT

At OurPlanet, in order to promote academic learning and development across the learner profile, students who require additional learning support may be provided with

- differentiated instruction within the classroom (supported by teacher collaboration)
- environmental modifications or accommodations
- small-group or one-to-one academic interventions
- individualised educational or behavioural plans (IEPs)
- recommendations for professional support (internal or external)
- provision, in conjunction with parents, of Learning Support Assistants (see Parent Partnership section below)

LEARNING SUPPORT PROCEDURES

1. Homeroom Teacher identifies a concern and sends a Record of Concern (ROC) report to Learning Support
2. Learning Support schedules observation (if applicable)
3. Learning Support and teachers meet to plan for intervention (IEP)
4. Homeroom Teacher schedules a meeting with the Parents, Teachers and Student (if applicable) to agree on the IEP.
5. Parents sign the IEP and receive a copy (sent by the Homeroom Teacher)
6. Intervention as per IEP for a period of 6 weeks, involving teachers, parents and Learning Support (if applicable)
7. Learning Support and teachers meet to review the IEP and plan for further intervention.
8. Back to point #4 (if applicable).

NOTE: Process from ROC to Intervention to be completed within a 3-week window. All email communications to include all relevant parties in Cc. The school reserves the right to change the timing or delivery of support provision if there is any health and safety risk, or if directed to do so by the MoE.

WORKING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

At OurPlanet, we recognise the added value of external partnerships in supporting a student. Community specialists such as Pediatricians, Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and other learning and developmental specialists, can be valuable contributors to the growth of some students.

Due to the complex learning needs of some students, or the lack of response to initial interventions in the classroom within a reasonable time frame, we may recommend working with such specialist agencies within the community, who understand the IB philosophy, and are willing and able to support learning within the context of the school and classroom.

This may take the form of:

- Consultations
- Assessments
- Therapies
- Collaboration with the school, the parents and the student (when appropriate) in developing an IEP with a 6 week block review process (or longer if required and agreed upon by all parties)

Some assessments (such as classroom observations, teacher interviews) and therapies are conducted at school. We encourage this on-site collaboration where appropriate, as we believe a student can be understood best by observing them in-situ and communicating with those who interact with them in that environment.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

In order for our students to be supported in an optimal manner, we work in partnership with the student's family. At OPIS, we value this collaborative and cohesive approach to student development. Through this partnership, we encourage an open dialogue and a commitment to internal and/or external support services, should it be beneficial to the student's progress and well-being.

OPIS coordinates with parents so they can efficiently inform the school of any identified student needs, attend meetings to plan student IEPs, and support their implementation.

If agreed upon by parents, it may be recommended that an individual Learning Support Assistant be provided by the parents to work alongside their student and support them under the guidance of subject and homeroom teachers in accordance with any IEPs and differentiation strategies deemed appropriate.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

At OurPlanet, we understand students learn at different rates, and with varying traits.

However, in the event that a student's development results in behaviour which

- results in physical harm to peers and/or teachers
- compromises the safety of himself/herself or others
- compromises the emotional well-being of other students

- significantly interferes with teaching and learning of the group
- results or could result in destruction of property

OurPlanet reserves the right to implement or recommend interventions which may include

- collaborating with external specialists
- in-school support by an external Learning Support Assistant
- alternative placement

The school also reserves the right to suspend enrollment should the family of the student decline the assessment or intervention recommendations made in the best interest of the student and his/her peers.

Policy Development and Review

Policy written in October 2021 by PYP coordinator. Reviewed and approved by OPIS Senior Leadership Team in November 2021.

Shared and reviewed by academic staff February 2022.

Policy reviewed and updated in January 2024 by MYP teaching staff, OPIS Senior Leadership Team.