

# Sarah Rawson Smith Elementary School Inclusion Policy

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## **Philosophy**

All learners have unique needs to consider when helping them to meet/exceed their academic and non-academic potential. To provide access to the IB Primary Years Programme at Smith Elementary, we apply approaches and support systems that address students' individual needs and varied learning styles, including those identified with special needs. By recognizing the diversity of our collective learning community, we support the development of internationally-minded people.

## **Practices:**

At Smith, students with disabilities and students identified as gifted and talented are educated in general education environments with appropriate support and services. Students identified with special needs receive support from special education teachers through a co-teaching model or through a pullout program for part of their instructional day. Students identified as gifted and talented receive support through a cluster and or collaboration model. Gifted standards, strategies, and pedagogy are applied to the core content areas through the PYP units of inquiry. We build positive learning communities in which a culture of collaboration encourages and supports problem-solving for all students.

## **Sarah Smith Vision**

Our Vision is an inclusive community where learning is a passion, excellence is achieved, and the whole child is developed.

## **Sarah Smith Mission**

Sarah R. Smith Elementary School's mission is to promote a safe, nurturing environment grounded in a relevant and comprehensive curriculum. With a commitment to excellence, our staff will ensure that all students become critical thinkers, life-long learners, and responsible citizens in a global community.

## **Sarah Smith Beliefs**

We Believe:

- Students are our focus
- Individuals are unique and valuable and must be treated equally, with dignity and respect.
- Every student has the ability to learn and the right to a quality education.
- A quality education meets the needs of individual learners
- All members of the school community serve as role models by practicing professional ethics
- Learning is a life-long process
- Children are our greatest resource and the key to our future

## **IB: Inclusive of all Learners**

Sarah Smith instills the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in all students, teachers, and parents as we strive to be:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-Minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers

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- Balanced
- Reflective

## **Creating a supportive and inclusive culture**

Our programme is inclusive, and we acknowledge that some students may require additional support to assist them in their learning. Our teachers provide scaffolding and differentiate learning methodologies within the classroom to accommodate learning differences and remove barriers. We also understand that some students need more specialized instruction outside the classroom. We strongly believe that a successful, inclusive program benefits all students.

Supporting students is crucial in eliminating physical, cultural, economic, academic, emotional, and language learning barriers. By collaborating with professionals, students gain access to personalized, evaluated, and monitored learning arrangements. Members of the learning community work together to create an inclusive and equitable environment in all aspects of school life, empowering all learners to reach their fullest potential.

## **Purpose of the Inclusion Policy**

This document outlines the inclusion philosophy of Sarah Smith, an IB World School that provides education to children from Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. The policy aims to reduce and eliminate barriers through well-planned access arrangements.

## **Compliance**

Sarah Smith's inclusion policy is in accordance with federal and state guidelines.

## **Rights and Responsibilities of the Learning Community**

Every student has the right to a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. It is the firm belief of Sarah Smith that every student deserves an educational environment that helps him/her not only reach their potential but exceed it. The following learning community members help support students with diverse learning needs.

## **Differentiation:**

At Smith, all students receive instruction that enables them to succeed within the range of their approaches to learning, abilities, and interests. Differentiation is the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving agreed goals. Dynamic groupings within classrooms, tiered lessons, use of pre-assessments and formative assessments to discover students' strengths and areas to focus targeted instruction on, open-ended learning engagements, and provision of materials (*such as leveled reading materials, enrichment activities, and choice menus*) designed to address students' level of readiness are some examples.

## **Affirming Identity and Building Self-Esteem:**

We provide a variety of opportunities to affirm and support the diverse needs of students:

- Base their learning on real-life experiences
- Celebrate learner profile strengths and target growth for profile weaknesses
- Set learning goals based on their own reflections, goal setting, and expectations
- Use their own learning strategies and build on their own strengths

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- Expand on multiple intelligences to enhance their understanding
- Build confidence in their own work and self
- Express their points of view and understanding
- Understand what their own needs are and how to improve
- Use their prior knowledge to build on and guide the inquiry process

### **Valuing Prior Knowledge:**

When planning units of inquiry, the teachers at Smith incorporate strategies used explicitly to activate and build prior knowledge for all students. Understanding each learner's prior knowledge level determines the differentiated tasks and activities for the learners to deepen their learning throughout the unit of inquiry.

### **Scaffolding:**

Teachers at Smith scaffold learning to foster each student's increasing independence in their own learning. The following are examples of how we scaffold instruction for learners.

- *Graphic organizers*
- *Visual aids*
- *Small group instruction*

### **Extended Learning:**

Learning extension for all students at Smith *occurs* through additional opportunities and resources. Students with disabilities also extend their learning by accessing increasingly sophisticated texts using assistive technology and read-aloud software when needed, as indicated in the IEP. These resources allow our students to extend their academic language and create additional student-centered learning activities. Additionally, students utilize software to assist with writing.