

February 18, 2016

King-Murphy Elementary
IB World School
Special Education Needs Policy



Philosophy

At King-Murphy Elementary School, we believe that diversity within a community of learners is a positive resource that can enhance the learning, inclusiveness, and international mindedness of all learners. We stand firm that students who have a sense of belonging within their school, classrooms, and amongst their peers are more able to develop their sense of community in local and global settings. We strive to meet the individual needs and varied learning styles of all students, including those with special needs (special education and gifted and talented). The King-Murphy community uses a balance of inclusion, differentiation, and the four principles of good practice to develop internationally minded people.

Inclusion

Inclusion at King-Murphy embodies the IB Learner Profile, where all students with unique needs have access to learning and appropriate accommodations, and are encouraged to be active, engaged learners. We strive to identify and remove barriers in order to include all students through our strategies of differentiation, problem solving and collaboration. Students at King-Murphy are provided support and opportunities to reach their potential on a daily basis in a friendly and safe environment.

Differentiation

The construct of differentiation is a best practice that benefits all students at King-Murphy. Differentiation is the process of identifying, with each learner, the most effective strategies for achieving their full potential. It recognizes that learners have the ability to think differently and apply their thinking in different ways. It is essential that all students understand their learning styles in order to take a more active role in the planning, carrying out and reviewing of what is learned. Differentiation requires teachers to increase understanding of whom and what they teach, as well as being flexible in how they teach.

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Ongoing assessment is essential to informing teaching and learning for both teachers and students. It allows for self-reflection and peer review and should be diverse and relevant to the learner. Assessment emphasizes and supports learners in gaining independence as well as gaining the skills necessary for collaboration. This includes the elements of social interaction and personal growth that should be part of the assessment process. At King-Murphy an important piece of the assessment process is progress monitoring. This ensures that the most effective strategies for achieving specific, measurable, relevant, attainable, and timely goals are being implemented. If progress monitoring is not showing adequate growth needed to meet goals, a response to intervention plan would be implemented. This could include more specialized support staff and more intensive support.

Principles of Good Practice

The principles of affirming identity, valuing prior knowledge, scaffolding, and extending learning are particularly relevant, inter-related, and essential for development of the whole child. Affirming the identity of a learner encourages the qualities, attitudes and characteristics identified in the IB learner profile, promoting responsible citizenship and international-mindedness. Affirming identity can be achieved by promoting an environment that embraces the diversity of learners, valuing diversity of perspectives to enhance learning, and by collaborating with parents to achieve goals.

When planning new learning, previous learning experiences and prior knowledge must be taken into consideration. Teachers can access prior knowledge through a variety of ways, such as provocations, pretesting, and formative assessments. Teachers then use this information to differentiate tasks and activities that will build further background knowledge to support new learning.

Scaffolding is a temporary strategy that enables learners to accomplish a task that would otherwise be too difficult to accomplish independently. Scaffolding strategies may provide a more concrete context to build understanding, such as visual aids, demonstrations, dramatization, collaborative groups, academic or domain specific

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language, and mother tongue best language practices. Task analysis can be used to determine the small steps that need to be incorporated into the learning process. Over time the learner can become more independent as they internalize strategies needed for particular tasks.

Once students demonstrate proficiency in a concept, they will have the opportunity to apply the concept in a challenging context that is engaging and meaningful to them, which fosters their individual identity. It is important that students are given choices which nurture their confidence and ownership of their learning. Teachers aid in this process by providing learners with choices that extend their learning at the student's individual level.