

AISA DEIJ GUIDE: PATHWAYS TO TRANSFORMATION

A Guide to Unlocking the Power and Potential of International Schools Grounded in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice & Belonging



ELEMENTS OF A SCHOOL INCLUSION OR DEIJ POLICY

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Developing a school inclusion or Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) policy requires a holistic approach. It is important not to create a DEIJ policy silo but rather connect your school's commitment to equity and inclusion through a policy framework that emphasizes the linkages throughout your policies, systems and programmes. A school Inclusion or DEIJ Policy thus highlights your commitment to DEIJ principals as necessary components of creating a school environment where all students and staff, regardless of their background or identities, feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive. Here are the key characteristics that such a policy should consider:

1. Rationale & Commitment

- **Clear Definition and Commitment:** The policy should define what inclusion and DEIJ mean within the school context and articulate a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all members of the school community.
- **Diverse Representation:** The policy should emphasize the importance of diverse representation among students, faculty, staff, and leadership positions.
- **Support for Marginalized Groups:** Address the unique needs of marginalized groups within the school community, including students with disabilities, students with diverse gender and sexual identities, students from low-income backgrounds, and more.
- **Intersectionality:** Acknowledge the intersectionality of identities and experiences, recognizing that individuals have multiple facets to their identities that contribute to their unique experiences.
- **Cultural Competence and Sensitivity:** Emphasize the importance of cultural competence and sensitivity in all interactions and decision-making processes within the school community.
- **Integration of Student Voices:** Highlight strategies for involving students in shaping and evaluating the school's inclusion and DEIJ initiatives, ensuring their perspectives are considered.

2. Leadership, Policies & Accountability

- **Leadership and Accountability:** Specify the roles and responsibilities of school's board of governors, administrators, staff, educators, and students in implementing and upholding the Inclusion/DEIJ policy. Highlight the accountability mechanisms in place.
- **Conflict Resolution and Reporting:** Provide clear procedures for reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bias experienced by staff or students, and outline how these incidents will be addressed and resolved in a fair and transparent manner.

- **Resource Allocation:** Specify the allocation of resources to fund DEIJ efforts appropriately and in a way that ensures that the overall spend is in alignment with the commitment.
- **Inclusive Policies and Practices:** Address and link specific policies and practices that support inclusivity and address discrimination, such as anti-bullying measures, child protection policy, Code of Conduct, dress codes, and language usage, etc.
- **HR Practices:** Highlight how HR policies and practices address strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff in a way that is consistent with your commitment to DEIJ.

3. Academic Equity & Student Support

- **Safe and Inclusive Spaces:** Highlight the school's commitment to creating safe and inclusive physical and virtual spaces where students and staff can express themselves without fear of discrimination or harassment.
- **Equity and Access:** Outline strategies to ensure that all students and staff have equal access to resources, opportunities, and support services. Address potential barriers and systemic inequalities that might hinder equitable outcomes.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Detail plans for collecting and analyzing data related to student outcomes, discipline, and other relevant areas to identify disparities and address them effectively.

4. Teaching & Learning

- **Curriculum and Learning:** Detail plans for integrating diverse perspectives, experiences, and cultural contexts into the curriculum. Address how the school will promote critical thinking and discussions about social justice and inequality.
- **Staff Training and Professional Development:** Emphasize the necessity of ongoing training and professional development for staff and educators to enhance their cultural competence, address bias, and promote inclusive teaching practices.

5. Community Engagement:

- Explain how the school will engage parents, caregivers, and the broader community in conversations and initiatives related to inclusion and DEIJ.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Outline how the school will communicate the policy to all stakeholders and ensure transparency about progress, challenges, and initiatives related to inclusion and DEIJ.
- **Collaboration with External Partners:** Address collaborations with external organizations, experts, and community partners to enhance the school's inclusion and DEIJ efforts.

6. Continuous Improvement:

- Emphasize the iterative and ongoing nature of the inclusion and DEIJ efforts. The policy should encourage regular assessments, feedback collection, and adaptation based on the evolving needs of the school community.

An effective inclusion or DEIJ policy should be a living document that evolves with the changing needs of the school community. It should serve as a guiding framework for fostering a welcoming and equitable environment for all individuals.