

Inclusion Policy

St Francis School Cospicua & Santa Lucia



1. Rationale

St Francis School Cospicua & Santa Lucia is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all learners are welcomed, valued and supported. Rooted in our Christian ethos, we take every necessary measure to ensure that each child is well-integrated into the school community and that their right to a high-quality, equitable education is upheld.

We are dedicated to supporting children in developing a secure sense of identity, belonging and purpose. Through an inclusive approach, we nurture each learner to become reflective, responsible and inquisitive individuals. This policy is guided by Malta's *Inclusive Education Framework*, the *Education Act (Chapter 327)*, and our commitment to the core values of compassion, dignity and respect.

2. Objectives

The school's main objectives in implementing inclusive practices are to:

- Promote each child's personal wellbeing and self-esteem.
- Help children develop Christian values as the foundation for their character formation.
- Foster empathy, responsibility and a sense of belonging.
- Ensure that every learner feels safe, supported and valued.
- Provide equal access to learning opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability or background.
- Actively involve parents and guardians as key stakeholders in their child's learning journey.

3. Identification of Needs

St Francis School recognises that children develop at different rates and may encounter temporary or long-term barriers to learning. Educators observe and interact with learners regularly to:

- Identify signs of difficulty in academic, emotional or social development.
- Provide timely support and adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Celebrate and validate each child's contributions and cultural background.
- Communicate with parents/guardians to explore whether similar challenges are present at home.

Key reflective questions during this process include:

- Are all children learning and progressing?
- Are there children who require additional support?
- How can we help each child reach their full potential?
- In what ways can parents/guardians support their child's development?

4. Differentiated Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Some children may require differentiated educational provision. This may include learners with a formal *Statement of Needs*, a *Psychological Report*, or those identified by educators through observation and assessment.

In these cases:

- Meetings are held with parents/guardians before or shortly after entry into the school.
- An *Individualised Education Programme (IEP)* and *MAPS (Making Action Plans)* meeting is scheduled within the first few months of the school year.
- Specialised interventions, adapted resources and scaffolded learning objectives are included in the programme.

- The IEP is reviewed termly, and any necessary adjustments are made in consultation with parents, Learning Support Educators (LSEs), and other professionals involved.

5. Provision for Higher-Ability Learners

The school also recognises the needs of children who demonstrate advanced abilities in specific areas. Educators:

- Provide additional learning provocations and enrichment activities within the classroom.
- Communicate with parents/guardians to recommend strategies for home support.
- Encourage the development of leadership, creativity and problem-solving skills.

6. Staff Development and Training

St Francis School believes that inclusive education requires continuous professional development. To support this:

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) regularly reviews staff training needs and organises relevant professional learning opportunities.
- Educators are encouraged to attend self-initiated courses on inclusion, special education and differentiated learning.
- The Head of Department (HoD) for Inclusion is invited to lead discussions or training sessions with the teaching staff when necessary.

7. Collaborating with Outside Agencies

External specialists are welcome to support the learning journey of children who require specific interventions. These may include:

- Speech-language pathologists
- Occupational therapists
- Educational psychologists
- Behavioural therapists

Typically, these specialists are engaged by parents/guardians. Upon request, they are invited to observe the child within the school environment. Follow-up meetings are then held with staff and families to coordinate strategies and monitor progress.

8. Transition of Students with Individual Needs

Effective transition planning is crucial for continuity in support. Transition meetings are held for students with an official *Statement of Needs* or *Psychological Report*:

- From KG2 to Year 1
- From Year 6 to Year 7

Two formal documents guide these meetings:

- *Transition of Students with Individual Needs from Kindergarten to Primary Education* (for students without an official statement)
- *Transition of Students with a Statement of Needs from Kindergarten to Primary Education* (SfCE, n.d.)

Participants in these meetings include:

- The current and receiving class educators
- Learning Support Educators (LSEs)
- Heads of Department for Inclusion
- Parents/guardians

These discussions ensure that support systems remain consistent and responsive to each learner's evolving needs.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Inclusion Coordinator, in collaboration with the SLT, is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of inclusive practices. This includes:

- Classroom observations
- IEP reviews and progress tracking
- Gathering feedback from staff, learners and parents
- Reviewing intervention outcomes

This policy is also reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current educational practices and remains aligned with national frameworks.

10. Safeguarding and Inclusion

Inclusion and safeguarding are interdependent. The school ensures that all staff are trained to identify vulnerable learners and report concerns in line with the *Child Protection Policy*. Inclusive practices are implemented with sensitivity and care, prioritising each child's dignity and safety.

11. Glossary of Terms

Term	Explanation
IEP	Individual Education Programme – a tailored plan for learners with identified needs.
MAPS	Making Action Plans – collaborative planning for student support.
LSE	Learning Support Educator – a professional who supports learners with individual needs.
SEN	Special Educational Needs – learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for a child to learn.

Term	Explanation
HOD	Head of Department - a senior staff member overseeing inclusion and learning support.
Learning Provocations	Open-ended activities or resources that encourage deeper thinking and inquiry.

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