



# INTERCULTURAL LEARNING POLICY

## Guiding Statements

### *Internationalism*

To enhance the international mindedness of all members of the school community by promoting awareness of intercultural understanding and interconnectedness between the local and global community.

## Key School definition:

### *Intercultural Learning*

To foster an awareness, cultural sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation of one's own culture and the culture of others within our unique ACS (International) community of Singaporean and international learners.

### *Inclusion*

All students and adults who learn and serve at ACS (International) are supported, valued, and nurtured in an environment that encourages growth and development.

### *Global Citizenship*

Way of living that acknowledges the nature of our inter-connected and multi-cultural world and the need to work collectively, seek understanding, adapt to and adopt global values to build a sustainable and responsible world.

### *International Vision*

Reaching out to the world with foresight and Christian values while having a respect for perspectives and global issues to develop as a responsible global citizen.

### *International Education*

To ignite an international minded community who have a sense of identity, compassion, skills to learn, diverse experiences and can address global issues affecting our communities at a local and international level.

## The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Due to its unique Singaporean identity and international identity, ACS (International) recognizes the importance of intercultural learning and understanding within its community. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that: "the education of the child shall be directed to ... the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own"

## Ministry of Education (Singapore)

The policy aligns with the Ministry of Education's 21st Century framework which states, "Our society is becoming increasingly cosmopolitan and more Singaporeans live and work abroad. Our young will therefore need a broader worldview, and the ability to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, with different ideas and perspectives. At the same time, they should be informed about national issues, take pride in being Singaporean and contribute actively to the community."

<i>Prepared By</i>	<i>Approved By</i>	<i>Review and Revised</i>	<i>Reviewed by</i>	<i>Next Review</i>

## **What is intercultural learning?**

Intercultural learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that support the ability of learners to understand culture and interact with people from different cultures. In order to develop sophisticated understanding of culture, learners must combine a sense of cultural self-awareness which will form the basis for comparisons and interaction with other cultures. Intercultural learning may be culture specific or culture general. Culture specific deals with a specific culture such as learning French language and culture in a modern foreign language class. Culture general focuses on acquiring and mastering transferable skills (communication skills, perspective taking and dealing with cultural misunderstanding) and attitudes (open-mindedness, inquiry and curiosity).

## **Relationship to ACS (International)**

### **History**

ACS (International) is part of the ACS family of schools. From its founding, the school's aim was to blend Chinese and English-speaking culture. Over time the school's unique blend of cultures evolved as Singaporean identity emerged and Singaporean society embraced multiculturalism. The ACS family's multicultural heritage is reflected in the school's anthem. The school thus sees intercultural learning as part of its history and heritage.

### **Cultural diversity in the student body**

The student body at ACS (International) is diverse with approximately 50% of students holding Singaporean citizenship and 50% hailing from overseas. The school has 30+ nationalities on its roll reflecting a wide range of cultural identities, religious orientations, languages, values and beliefs. ACS (International) views intercultural learning and understanding as key to fostering a sense of community and family within its walls.

### **Cultural diversity staff**

The diverse staff body at ACS (International) reflects Singapore's multicultural make-up. In addition, a significant number of staff at ACS (International) come from overseas. ACS (International) values high levels of staff collaboration and interaction in order to nurture an effective, healthy and happy working environment. As such ACS (International) sees intercultural understanding as essential to maintaining high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school.

### **Linguistic Diversity**

This policy aligns with the school's policy on promoting linguistic diversity at ACS (International). See Language Policy.

### **Goals**

- To respect the cultural identity of the learner through ensuring culturally appropriate and respectful quality education for all.
- To provide all learners with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.
- To provide all learners with opportunities to learn and reflect on cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable them to respect and understand the solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.
- To encourage a spirit of service and nurturing of the planet, contributing to local and global community development through active interaction with different cultural groups.

## **Role and responsibilities**

### **Leadership**

- Acknowledge the importance of cultural diversity and identity in the school's vision.
- Promote the inclusion intercultural learning and understanding in the academic and pastoral curriculum.
- develop intercultural leadership skills and strategically craft the development of global citizenship in the school.
- Promote intercultural understanding within the staff community.
- Ensure the provision of learning environments that are non-discriminatory, safe and peaceful.

### **Staff**

- To willingly adhere to the school's ethos of open-mindedness.
- To build upon the diverse systems of knowledge and experiences of learners within the school community.
- To incorporate a variety of local and international histories, knowledge and technologies, value systems and further social, economic and cultural aspirations; part knowledge about the history, traditions, language and culture of existing minorities.
- To encourage and support cultural self-awareness.
- To aim at eliminating prejudices about culturally distinct population groups through the celebration of cultural diversity in the classroom.
- To involve various cultural systems through the presentation of knowledge from different cultural perspectives.

### **Parents and guardians**

- To willingly adhere to the school's ethos of open-mindedness, international mindedness and global citizenship.
- To value and support the school's guiding statements and language policy by supporting language programmes in school.
- To contribute to the school's promotion of intercultural understanding in the school community (e.g. school events such as international day).

### **Students**

- To willingly adhere to the school's ethos of open-mindedness, international mindedness and global citizenship.
- To develop a strong sense of their own history and culture.
- To value local and international histories, knowledge and technologies, value systems and further social, economic and cultural aspirations; part knowledge about the history, traditions, language and culture of existing minorities.
- To readily refer to the Learner Profile to further their intercultural competences and reflect on their own learning.
- To aspire to be socially responsible citizens ready to challenge bias and stereotyping in and out of the school community.

### **References:**

Convention of the Rights of the Child

[https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/general\\_comments/GC1\\_en.doc.html](https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/general_comments/GC1_en.doc.html)

Ministry of Education- 21st Century Learning

<https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system/21st-century-competencies>

UNESCO "Intercultural Competence- Conceptual and Operational framework"

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000219768/PDF/219768eng.pdf.multi>

UNESCO "Guidelines on intercultural education"

<https://www.ugr.es/~javera/pdf/DB2.pdf>

CIS

<https://www.cois.org/about-cis/perspectives-blog/blog-post/~board/perspectives-blog/post/read-all-about-it-intercultural-leadership>