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Cambridge International School

Program Review Policy





IB MISSION STATEMENT

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.





IB LEARNER'S PROFILE

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.



Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Cambridge Learner Attributes

Confident: in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others.

Responsible: for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others.

Reflective: as learners, developing their ability to learn.

Innovative: and equipped for new and future challenges.

Engaged: intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

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MISSION STATEMENT OF FIRSTSTEPS SCHOOL

FirstSteps School believes in providing a stimulating value-based learning environment based on mutual understanding and respect to develop caring, responsible and lifelong learners. We promote international-mindedness in our school community to nurture global citizens fulfilling our mission **INDIA FOR WORLD.**

- I** Inculcate universal brotherhood and values,
- N** Nurture innocence, uniqueness and creativity,
- D** Develop concern for environment in particular and the Planet Earth in general
- I** Imbibe entrepreneurial skills & international mindedness.
- A** Acquire habit of inquiry.

- F** Foster international education system,
- O** Open mind for the development of intellect, self-esteem, self- confidence and critical learning,
- R** Respect one-self and others,

- W** Welcome the change and develop it with a positive attitude and vision.
- O** Organise self-discipline
- R** Right environment to develop inquisitiveness for learning and to disseminate learning beyond the classroom.
- L** Learners for life time and leaders of tomorrow.
- D** Develop the virtue of understanding others' perspective.

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(I) Purpose

The purpose of the programme review and refinement policy at FirstSteps is to establish a systematic and comprehensive process for reviewing and refining the Primary years and CIE programme. The process of developing and reviewing the school's programmes provides the opportunity for the entire school community to contribute positively to creating relevant and meaningful learning environments and processes.

(II) Goals and objectives

- a. Enhancing student learning outcomes and experiences within the PYP and CIE framework.
- b. Ensuring a smooth transition between curricula and grades through horizontal and vertical alignment of the PYP and using UbD in the CIE curriculum.
- c. Ensuring alignment with the 'Programme standards and practices, 2020' for PYP and the 'Scheme of work' and syllabus for CIE.
- d. Identifying areas for improvement and implementing targeted strategies for enhancement.
- e. Laying down a concrete plan for reviewing and refining the programmes and policies at the FirstSteps IB World School.
- f. Fostering a culture of continuous improvement and reflection among stakeholders.

(III) Programmes at FirstSteps IB World School

a) Primary Years Programme

b) Cambridge International Education

Primary Years Programme

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) aims to develop a transdisciplinary curriculum that is engaging, relevant, challenging, and significant for students aged 3 to 12. The PYP definition of curriculum is broad and inclusive when designing an international education curriculum for primary school children.

Coherent Curriculum

The curriculum is designed and implemented in accordance with the principles and standards set forth by the International Baccalaureate organization. This includes ensuring that the curriculum framework aligns with IB's educational objectives and philosophies.

The curriculum is designed to facilitate interdisciplinary connections and integration of knowledge across subjects. This approach encourages students to

see the relationships between different areas of study and promotes a holistic understanding of concepts.

Teachers work collaboratively to design and refine the curriculum. This collaborative approach ensures that diverse perspectives and expertise contribute to the development of a robust educational programme. The school emphasizes ongoing evaluation and refinement of its curriculum. This involves regularly reviewing student outcomes, feedback from teachers, and data on the effectiveness of teaching strategies. Refinements are made based on this analysis to enhance learning outcomes.

Students as lifelong learners

The curriculum at FirstSteps is designed to embed opportunities for skill development across various subjects and disciplines. This integration ensures that students have consistent opportunities to practice and apply these skills in different contexts. The school outlines specific goals and objectives for developing each of these skills within the IB programme. For example, students may be expected to demonstrate critical thinking through analysis and evaluation of complex issues, or to enhance their communication skills through presentations and debates. The school aligns its efforts with the IB Learner Profile attributes, which include qualities such as being principled, open-minded, reflective, and caring. These attributes guide the holistic development of students beyond academic achievement.

The curriculum allows for flexibility and student choice in selecting topics for inquiry and setting goals. This promotes a sense of ownership and autonomy in their learning process. Students regularly reflect on their progress towards their goals and adjust their strategies as needed. This reflective practice encourages metacognition and self-awareness, fostering continuous improvement.

At FirstSteps, the students have a voice, choice and ownership; therefore they are at the forefront of our planning. Collaborations with students are done in the classroom and throughout the school community. This can be seen in our school through

- Unpacking of central ideas and transdisciplinary themes at the beginning of the inquiry.
- Learning continuums during the inquiry as well as the academic year.
- Feedback and feedforward while the running of a unit of inquiry.
- The school's safety and security policy.

Hence, the learner agency is connected to a student's belief in his/her ability to succeed (self-efficacy).

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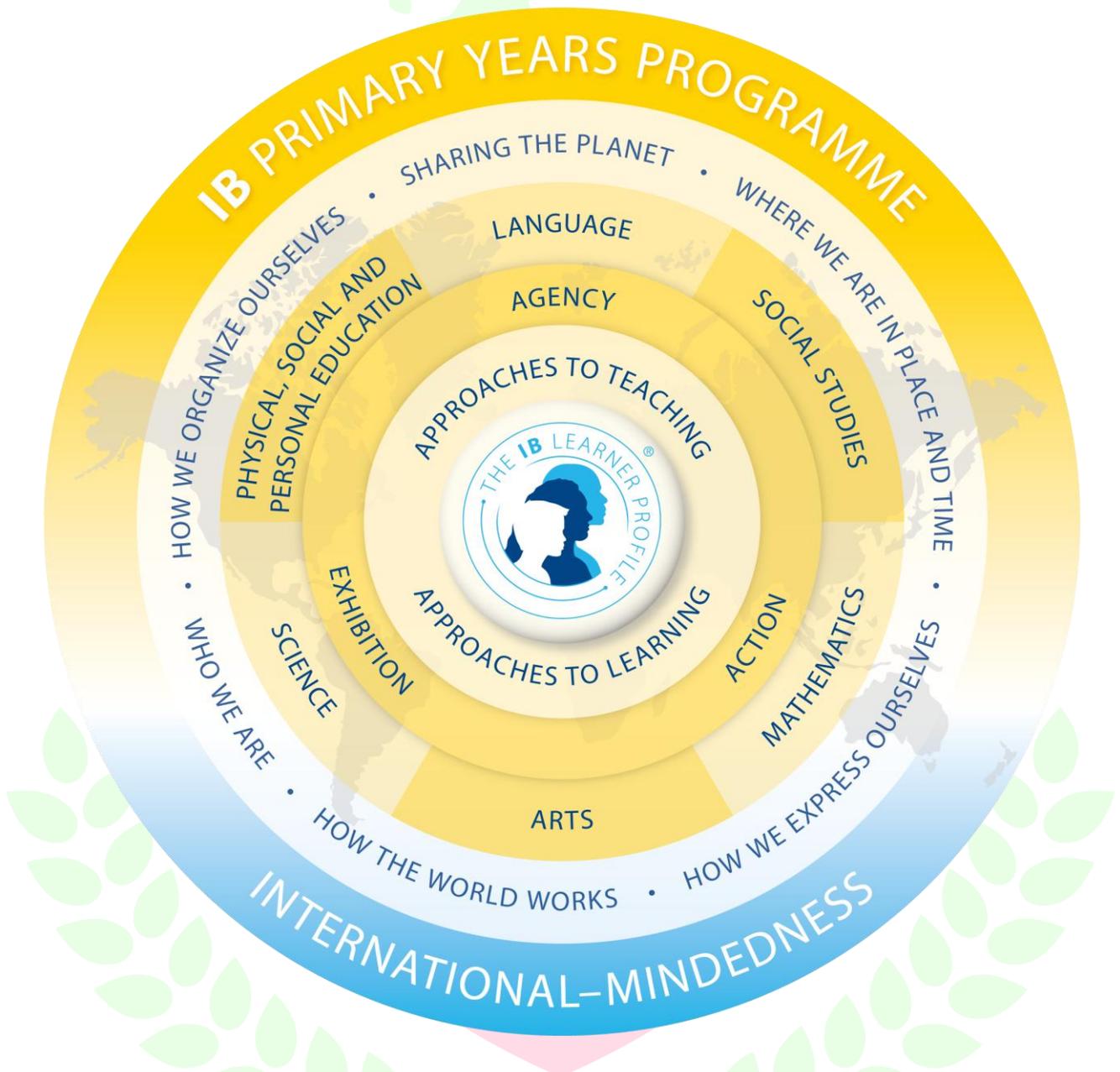


Approaches to teaching

The teachers at FirstSteps understand that learning is activated when students can connect knowledge to concepts and personal experiences in meaningful ways. Teachers encourage students to ask questions, investigate topics of interest, and explore ideas through inquiry-based learning. This approach shifts the focus from delivering content to facilitating discovery and understanding. By posing open-ended questions and guiding students through the process of inquiry, teachers stimulate curiosity and encourage students to actively seek knowledge. Beyond passive learning, teachers promote active engagement through hands-on activities, projects, and experiential learning opportunities. This involves conducting experiments, participating in simulations, and engaging in community-based projects. Action-oriented learning not only reinforces understanding but also motivates students to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, fueling their curiosity to explore further.

Reflection is crucial in the learning process at FirstSteps as it allows students to make sense of their experiences, consolidate their learning, and identify areas for further inquiry. Teachers facilitate reflection by encouraging students to consider what they have learned, how they approached challenges, and what insights they gained. Reflective practices help students connect new information to existing knowledge, promoting a deeper understanding and fostering ongoing curiosity.

Curiosity-driven learning can be integrated into various subjects and topics. Teachers across disciplines can collaborate to create interdisciplinary projects or units that inspire curiosity and connect learning across different areas of study.



Role of the Learning Community

The PYP has a widespread influence within the school and explicitly impacts all facets of the school community's functioning. The school community acknowledges that the PYP will have a systemic and all-encompassing impact in order for change to occur inside the school for the benefit of all children. Our goal is to guarantee that children have a consistent learning experience, inside and outside school, guided or independent.

When students have agency, the teacher-student interaction becomes collaboration. Students with a high sense of self-efficacy contribute more effectively to the learning community. The learning community promotes agency and self-efficacy. Transdisciplinarity serves as an organizational paradigm for learning and teaching curriculum designed, taught, and assessed. The human subject, especially students, instructors, and members of the larger learning community and their relationships are central to transdisciplinary learning.

Many of the transdisciplinary themes, such as "Sharing the Planet," "Where We Are in Place and Time," and "How We Express Ourselves," signify a shared duty and encourage communities to act on values and norms that are shared by all. The PYP links with the heritage of the people through the learning community of the host nations, as well as the human development ideals upon which it is founded. This feeling of community and its role in learning and teaching is a global advantage, especially when it comes to producing internationally minded people. All transdisciplinary themes have relevance culturally, ecologically, politically, economically and technologically. The learning community is able to contribute in either of the above relevant avenues.

The learning community plays an imperative role at FirstSteps.

- Parents are invited to the classroom at the beginning and during a unit to share how learning can be made more meaningful for their children. They even contribute to the delivery of concepts by coming in as guest speakers/specialists of their fields.
- The diverse learning community helps to arrange guest speakers and field trips for students.

Cambridge International Education

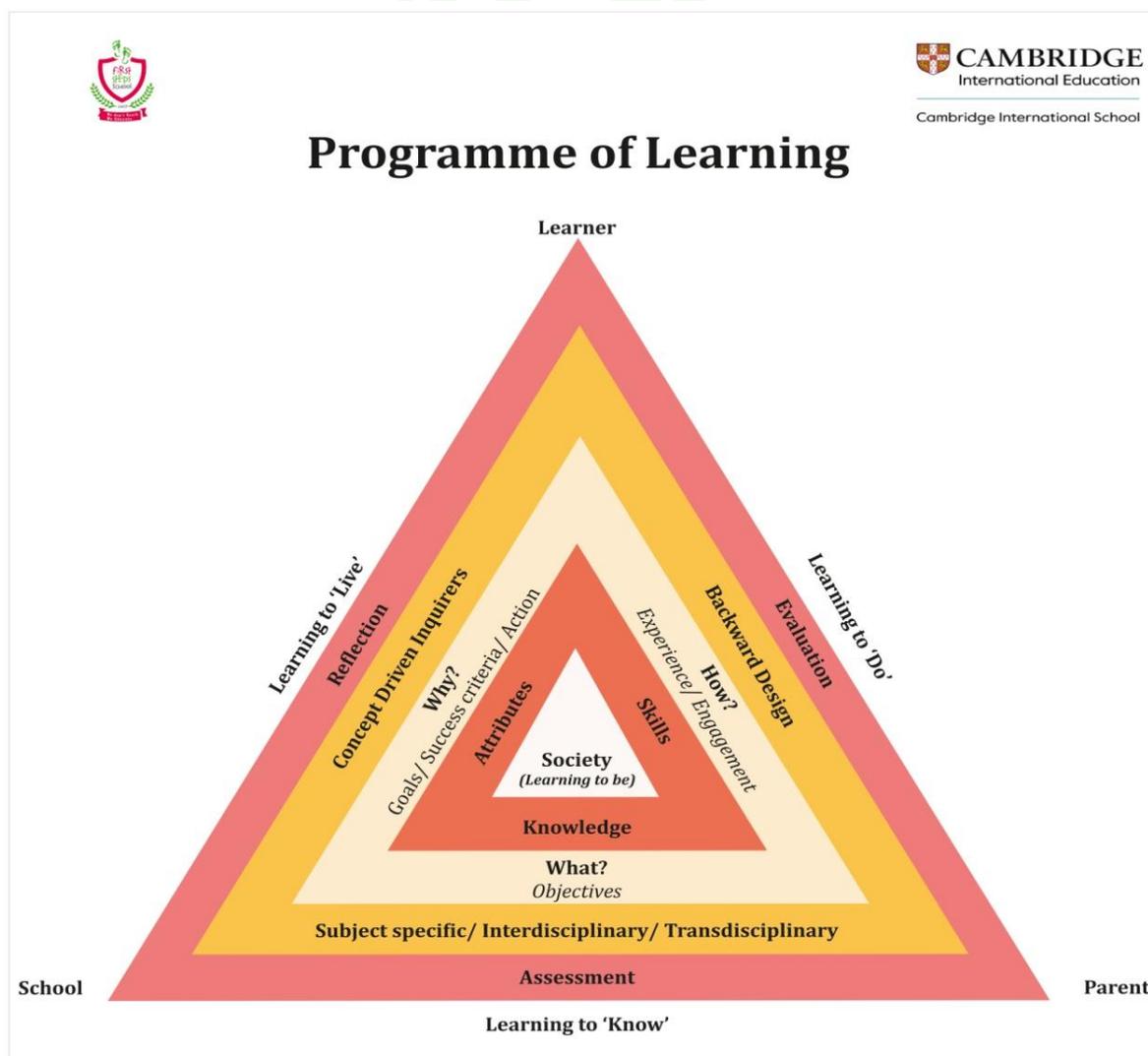
The Cambridge International Education at FirstSteps School

Cambridge International Education (CIE) sets the global standard for international education. At FirstSteps School, we offer Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint (*Grades 6 to 8*) and a 2 year IGCSE curriculum (*Grades 9 and 10*).

The CIE provides a broad, balanced and flexible approach to combine the subjects available, suiting the context, culture and ethos. This supports the FirstSteps School in drafting, implementing, refining and reviewing its curriculum at regular intervals.

At FirstSteps, the secondary section extensively uses the documents and course books endorsed by the CIE to draft its annual curriculum. This is a continuous process and includes the subject-specific syllabus guides, schemes of work,

learner guides (*where applicable*), past papers available on School Support Hub and the coursebooks used. In 2022, the secondary section team revised its existing approaches to curriculum using the Backward Design on Toddle to derive its **Programme of Learning**. The Programme of Learning is depicted in the form of a triangular model (*attached below*).



The Programme of Learning is based on the Backward Design which is an instructional and curricular design model first proposed by Jay Wiggins and Grant McTighe in 1998. The idea behind the Backward Design model is to "begin with the end in mind," and make sure facilitators know what they want their learners to be able to know and do before selecting content. In essence, this is "backwards" from traditional curricular planning processes, thus the model's name. It ensures alignment between objectives, assessments, and, ultimately, content.

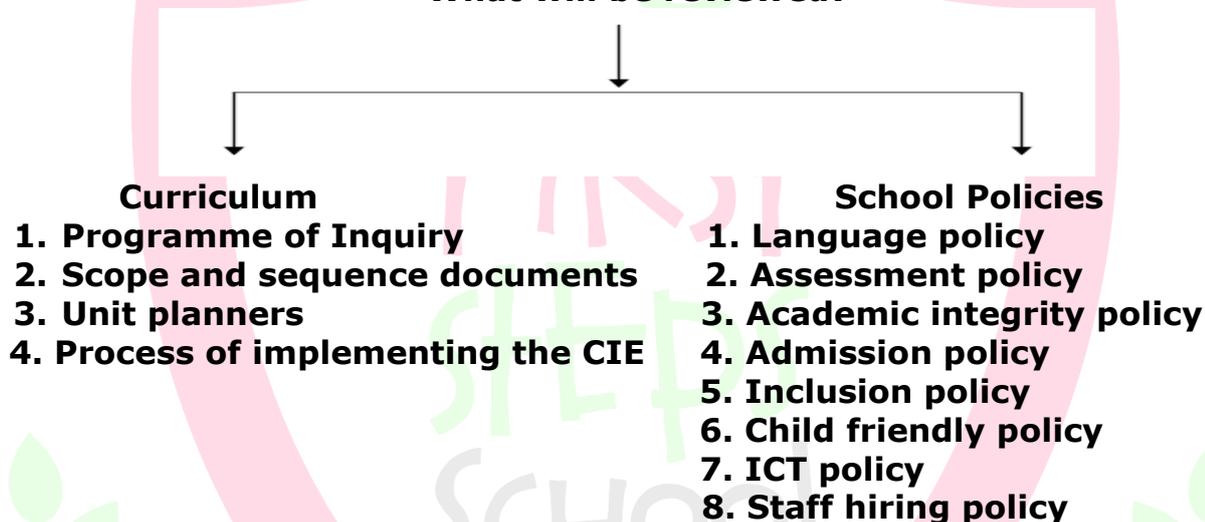
The Programme of Learning is an outcome of collaborative professional development sessions of the secondary section team at FirstSteps School. The model was drafted and adopted in March 2022. The model encompasses the essential elements of the CIE Curriculum and signifies a balanced structure to

implement them. The triangular approach to learning outlines its ability to have an impact on its individual elements. It highlights the interconnected and magnified outlook in manifesting the core of the curriculum - **SOCIETY** viz. essentially training the community at the FirstSteps School in terms of '**learning to BE**'. The facilitators plan the Programme of Learning for their individual subjects in alignment with the CIE Curriculum.

The Programme of Learning is reviewed by the facilitators and pedagogical leaders before the beginning of every academic year.

(IV) Scope

What will be reviewed?



(V) Responsibilities

The programme reviewing team will comprise of the following stakeholders:

- a. Head of School
- b. Chairperson
- c. CEO
- d. Head of Junior wing
- e. Head of Cambridge and Exam Officer
- f. PYP Coordinator
- g. Homeroom facilitators
- h. Single subject facilitators
- i. Parents
- j. Students



(VI) Review schedule

Name of the Policy / Document	Review date
1. School Action Plan	June 2024 (Thereafter every academic year)
2. School POI	March 2024 (Thereafter every academic year)
3. School scope and sequence documents	Ongoing
4. Language policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every two years)
5. Assessment Policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every two years)
6. Inclusive education policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every two years)
7. Academic Integrity policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every two years)
8. Staff hiring policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every three years)
9. Staff well-being policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every three years)
10. School admission policy	June 2024 (Thereafter every three years)
11. ICT Policy	June 2024(Thereafter every two years)
12. School Safety and Security policy	June 2024(Thereafter every two years)
13. Cambridge Programme of Learning	June 2024 (Thereafter every academic year)

(VII) Reviewing a School Policy

The school community should review their policies regularly to ensure that the school policies remain relevant and valid. As part of this review process, the school may decide to develop a new policy, update a policy, combine several policies into a single policy or withdraw a policy that is no longer relevant.

To ensure it (the school) reviews its policies regularly, schools should maintain a record of its existing policies noting the date each policy was approved and the scheduled date to review it.

- a. Other than the regular cycle of review, a policy may need to be reviewed where the circumstances which led to the original policy being established have changed.

Reasons for policy review may include:

- The policy is no longer followed as a matter of course during school operations
- The policy is no longer effective or having the desired impact
- individuals or groups within the school community view elements of the policy as contentious
- New issues have arisen that the policy needs to address.

The school policies shall be reviewed and edited every two/three years. The Chairpersons, CEO, Head of school, Head of Cambridge and Exam Officer, Head of Junior Wing, PYP Coordinator and Facilitators shall all be involved in the collaborative planning considering feedback they have received about the various policies and updates on the relevance of the present policies. Once the policies are reviewed, they would be shared with the school community through the Toddle application.

(VIII) Characteristics of a Good School Policy

A good school policy should be accessible to the entire school community and should possess the following characteristics:

- Be consistent with all the standards of the curricula followed at the school.
- The learning community should be involved in developing the policy.
- Be based on a clear statement of purpose that either arises from the goals in the school.
- Be a strategic plan or clearly support those goals of the institute and its underlying values
- Indicate what actions are required by relevant groups within the school community.
- Contain guidelines for how the stated purpose will be achieved.
- Indicate what the school expects of those subject to the policy.
- Be written in a style that the general public can readily understand.
- Outline how it will be monitored and feature a period for review.

(IX) Process and implementation of the Programme Review

- a. Data collection for the program review at FirstSteps is a systematic process aimed at gathering relevant information to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of the PYP and CIE programmes. The process involves identifying key performance indicators, using and designing data collection instruments such as surveys, feedback and observation protocols, and implementing data collection methods to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Further, the data analysis helps derive meaningful insights and informs decision-making processes aimed at improving the program's performance and outcomes. This process enables the stakeholders to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make informed strategic decisions.

The following processes facilitate the data collection and analysis for the purpose of the review:

a. Collaborative meetings/Teachers' reflections –

While conducting the inquiry, the teachers record their reflections on their respective planners on the school's learning management system, Toddle. The planner is a living document to which all the teachers of the grade have access. Collaborations are conducted at various levels, i.e., whole staff, grade level, and single subjects. The minutes of the meetings are maintained for all future reference. Regular surveys are conducted amongst the teaching fraternity to gauge the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Further, the teachers use IB mandated policies as guiding frameworks to ensure consistency, fairness, and alignment with the IB educational philosophy.

b. Regular feedback from the parents

The school follows an open-door policy, where parents are welcome to share their suggestions, reflections, and concerns with the senior leadership team. Parents are also encouraged to give regular feedback during orientation sessions, parent collaborations, student-led conferences and parent-facilitator meetings.

c. Interactions with the students/Students reflection

The school's open door policy is not just restricted to the parents, the student's are also encouraged to share their reflections and suggestions at the beginning, during or after every unit of inquiry. The student's reflections are invaluable and help in the self assessment and review of the teaching learning strategies and the curriculum of the school programme. All other

students' concerns and issues are addressed as per the regulations of the school's child-friendly policy.

d. Programme development plan

The program development plan is indispensable for the comprehensive program review at FirstSteps. As the foundational framework for program creation and evolution, it establishes the initial goals, objectives, and strategies guiding educational initiatives. This plan acts as a compass during a program review, providing a reference point against which current performance can be evaluated. It ensures alignment between the program's objectives and the broader mission and vision of the school, fostering coherence in educational efforts. Outlining strategies for continuous evaluation and improvement promotes a culture of ongoing refinement in educational practices. Additionally, the plan aids in resource allocation by specifying needs and strategies for optimal utilisation, ensuring efficient resource deployment to support program goals. Ultimately, the program development plan serves as a cornerstone for accountability, delineating roles and responsibilities and holding stakeholders accountable for program success. The school works together on one programme development plan during an academic session, which strives to align the PYP program with the Programme standards and practices, 2020.

e. Observations

Observations play a pivotal role in facilitating the program review process at FirstSteps. The pedagogical team, including the Head of School, the Head of Cambridge, and the PYP Coordinator, directly witnesses program activities, interactions, and outcomes to gain valuable insights into various facets of program implementation and effectiveness. Through systematic observation protocols, the pedagogical team assesses the fidelity of program delivery, ensuring that it aligns with intended goals and objectives. Further, the observations provide an opportunity to evaluate students' and staff's engagement and participation levels, shedding light on the program's impact on learning and teaching practices. It enables the leadership team to identify strengths and areas for improvement, offering concrete evidence to inform decision-making processes.

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f. The policy is framed, reviewed and implemented in compliance with the following IB standards and practices

- *The school has systems and processes in place to document, share and store curriculum, policies and procedures that safeguard programme implementation. (0201-04-0100)*
- *The school captures and uses data that informs the operation and sustainability of the programmes(s). (0201-04-0200)*
- *The school captures and uses data that informs the quality of the implementation of the programme(s). (0201-04-0300)*
- *The school implements and reviews systems and processes to identify the needs of students. (0202-02-0100).*
- *The school documents its IB-mandated policies and communicates them to the school community. (0301-06-0200)*
- *The pedagogical leadership team uses the school's IB-mandated policies in decision-making and curriculum development. (0301-06-0700)*
- *The school plans and implements a coherent curriculum that organizes learning and teaching within and across the years of its IB programme(s).(0401-01)*
- *Teachers collaborate to design, plan and deliver the school's IB programme(s). (0401-02)*
- *The school develops, regularly reviews and shares its curriculum in ways that explicitly engage the school community. (0401-03)*
- *The school implements and reviews processes that actively engage students in their own learning. (0402-01-0200).*
- *Teachers use IB-mandated policies to support students. (0403-05-0300).*

The above practices have a direct relevance in developing and reviewing the policy, however focus will be laid on all other programmes standards and practices requirements through the programme implementation at the various stages

(X) Important links to other school policies

The Program Review and Refinement Policy typically intersects with all the other school policies to ensure comprehensive institutional management and improvement. The policy clearly states the review schedules and the procedures to be implemented for creating a synchronized approach through continuous efforts of the teachers, administrators, staff, parents and students, to establish a positive school culture. The school policies are interconnected to ensure that program reviews are conducted comprehensively, transparently, and with consideration for various aspects of school operation and improvement. Integrating the Program Review and Refinement Policy with these other policies helps maintain consistency,

effectiveness, and alignment with the overall goals of the educational institution. Compliance with the Standard – Culture: The school implements processes with consideration of the relationship between its IB-mandated policies. (0301-06-0100)

Appendix-1
Student Feedback and Feedforward Post Inquiry

Reflect on your learning and growth during this unit. Some questions to consider:

What did you like the most about this unit? What could have been done differently?

What new skills/knowledge did you acquire in the unit?

Where did you encounter challenges and what did you do to overcome them?

What does that tell you about yourself and how you learn?

What might you want more help with?

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Reflection Sheet

Name of the Inquirer: _____

Grade: _____

Unit of Inquiry: _____

Central Idea:

Something I will never forget:

2 new facts I learned:

One big question that I still have:



Appendix-2
Parent Input Form Pre-Inquiry
Parent – Facilitator collaboration

Grade: ____

Name of the student: _____

Theme:

Central idea:

Parents' suggestion:

I feel the learners could inquire into:

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I as a parent or any of my acquaintances can support the inquiry by:

Parent Signature

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Appendix-3

Teacher Reflection Post Inquiry

How did the strategies we used throughout the unit help to develop and evidence students' understanding of the central idea?

What learning experiences best supported students' development and demonstration of the attributes of the learner profile and approaches to learning?

What evidence do we have that students are developing knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills to support the transfer of learning across, between and beyond subjects?

To what extent have we strengthened transdisciplinary connections through collaboration among members of the teaching team? What did we discover about the process of learning that will inform future learning and teaching?

How effective was our monitoring, documenting and measuring of learning informing our understanding of student learning?

What evidence did we gather about students' knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills?
How will we share this learning with the learning community?

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- "Guidelines for Effective School-Based Program Evaluation" by the American Evaluation Association - Offers practical guidelines and considerations for conducting effective program evaluations in educational settings. (n.d.).
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