

Maplewood Canadian International School Cultural Consideration Policy

Introduction

Maplewood Canadian International School is committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment that acknowledges and celebrates the cultural diversity of its students, staff, and the broader community. This policy outlines the principles and practices that guide our approach to cultural considerations, ensuring sensitivity and respect for local customs, traditions, and religious practices while maintaining a Canadian curriculum's core values and educational standards.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote mutual respect and understanding among all members of the school community.
- Ensure the school environment is inclusive and welcoming to students and staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Provide detailed guidelines for incorporating cultural considerations into school practices, curriculum, and events.

2. Principles

- Respect for Diversity: Recognize and value the school community's cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.
- Cultural Sensitivity: Be aware of and sensitive to the cultural norms and practices of the UAE and the diverse backgrounds of students and staff.
- Inclusivity: Ensure that all students and staff feel included and respected regardless of cultural background.

3. Guidelines

3.1 Curriculum and Instruction

- Culturally Responsive Teaching:
 - Develop lesson plans that include diverse cultural perspectives and content.
 - Incorporate literature, case studies, and examples from various cultures.
 - Use teaching strategies that are responsive to different learning styles and cultural backgrounds.
- Language Support:
 - Provide bilingual resources and translation services for students and parents as needed.
 - Encourage using students' first languages in certain classroom activities to foster a multicultural learning environment.

3.2 Religious and Cultural Observances

- Accommodation of Religious Practices:

- Designate prayer rooms for Muslim students and staff.
- Recognise and provide leave for staff to observe religious holidays.
- Observance of Ramadan:
 - If feasible, adjust school schedules to accommodate prayer times during Ramadan, including shorter school days.
 - Support fasting students by creating quiet spaces for rest during lunch and break times.
 - Educate non-Muslim students and staff about Ramadan to promote understanding and respect for those observing the fast.
 - Organize a school-wide iftar event to break the fast together and celebrate the spirit of community and sharing.
- Cultural Celebrations:
 - Organize school-wide events celebrating cultural diversity, such as International Day, where students can share their cultural heritage through food, music, dance, and traditional dress.
 - Encourage classrooms to have cultural exchange activities, such as “Cultural Show-and-Tell” or “Heritage Projects,” where students present aspects of their cultures.

3.3 Dress Code

- Respect for Cultural Attire:
 - Offer flexibility within the uniform policy to accommodate cultural and religious clothing. For example, provide options for long sleeves, long skirts, or pants instead of shorts or skirts.

3.4 Communication and Engagement

- Cultural Awareness Training:
 - Provide annual training for all staff on cultural sensitivity and the specific cultural norms of the UAE. This includes workshops, seminars, and guest speakers from different cultural backgrounds.
 - Include cultural competence as a critical component in the professional development programs for teachers and administrative staff.
- Parental Engagement:
 - Conduct parent-teacher meetings in multiple languages where necessary and provide translation services during these meetings.
 - Create a culturally inclusive parent advisory committee to provide input on school policies and activities.
 - Organise workshops for parents on navigating the school system, understanding the curriculum, and supporting their children’s education in a multicultural environment.

3.5 Food Services

- Dietary Accommodations:
 - Ensure the school cafeteria provides halal food options and clearly labels them.
 - Offer vegetarian, vegan, and allergy-friendly options to cater to various dietary needs.
 - Review and update the cafeteria menu regularly based on feedback from students and parents to ensure it meets the diverse dietary requirements of the school community.
 - During Ramadan, ensure that the cafeteria is sensitive to fasting students by providing alternative spaces for non-fasting students to eat.

4. Implementation and Monitoring

- Policy Dissemination:
 - Distribute the cultural consideration policy to all staff, students, and parents at the beginning of each academic year.
 - Include the policy in the staff handbook and student-parent handbook.
- Regular Review:
 - Establish a committee of staff, parents, and students to review the policy annually and suggest improvements.
 - Conduct surveys and feedback sessions with the school community to assess the effectiveness of the policy and identify areas for enhancement.
- Feedback Mechanism:
 - Create an anonymous feedback system where students, parents, and staff can report any concerns or suggestions related to cultural considerations.
 - Ensure that concerns are addressed promptly and that there is a clear process for resolving issues related to cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

Maplewood Canadian International School is dedicated to creating an educational environment that respects and values cultural diversity. By adhering to this policy, the school aims to promote mutual respect, understanding, and inclusivity, enriching the educational experience for all members of the school community.

<https://fischools.ae/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Abu-Dhabi-Private-Schools-Policies-Cultural-Consideration-Policy-EN-9-January-2024.pdf>