



ATHENS COLLEGE

Hellenic-American Educational Foundation

Kindergarten • Elementary • Junior High • High

ATHENS COLLEGE • PSYCHICO COLLEGE • KINDERGARTEN J. M. CARRAS

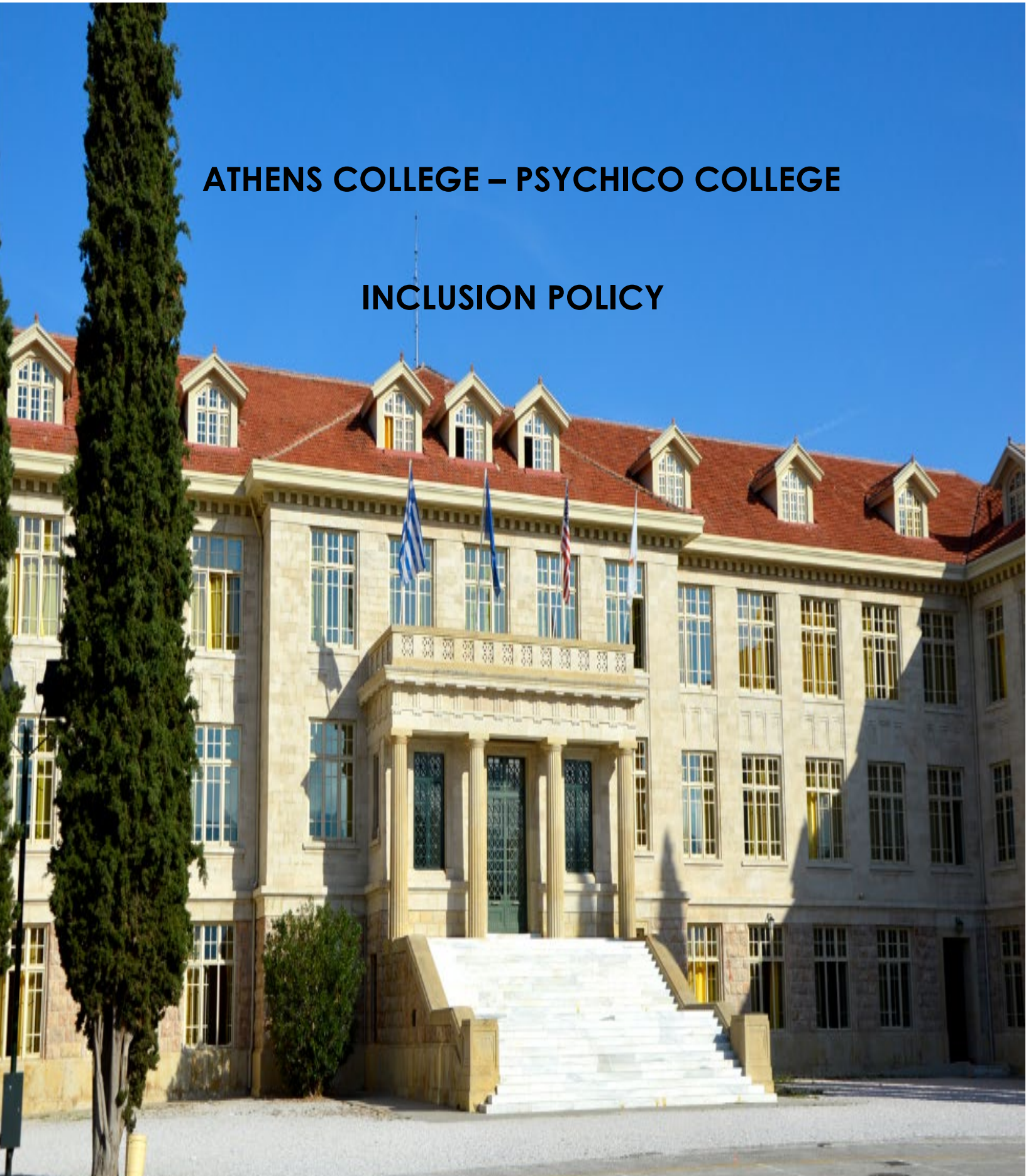
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Middle Years
Programme

ATHENS COLLEGE – PSYCHICO COLLEGE

INCLUSION POLICY



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Revised

February 2023

The 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.

HAEF – Athens College*¹ Mission Statement

The mission of the Hellenic-American Educational Foundation is to contribute to society as a beacon for Greek education, developing responsible global citizens and future leaders, inspired by Hellenic heritage and both American and European liberal values. Its aim is to provide the essence of education by helping each individual to achieve their highest potential and unique aspirations, instilling in them respect for themselves and others, cultivating a sense of civic duty, and exemplifying the highest ethical standards.

Our aim, through academic excellence and critical thinking, is to inspire and transform students into graduates distinguished by creativity, teamwork and a spirit of discovery.

¹* Reference to Athens College denotes HAEF - ATHENS COLLEGE (051958) and HAEF - PSYCHICO COLLEGE (000901)

The IB Learner Profile

As IB learners we strive to be:

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 analyze 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 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 commit to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and 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 ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses to support our learning and personal development.

Inclusion Philosophy

Athens College believes in an inclusive approach to learning with the ultimate goal of enabling all students to develop their abilities and flourish within a fair context of equal opportunities. Our School seeks to establish a culture of inclusion in teaching, learning, and assessment and to create an optimal learning environment for everyone. In alignment with the International Baccalaureate (IB), we promote principles of best practices to ensure equal access for all our students, such as the acceptance of each student's identity, evaluating previous knowledge, and the acquisition and expansion of new knowledge.

The Principles of Inclusive Education

According to the IB, inclusion is an ongoing process that aims to increase access and engagement in learning for all students by identifying and removing barriers. Inclusion is an organisational paradigm that involves change. It is a continual process of increasing learning and participation for all students. It addresses learning support requirements and questions the broader objectives of education, the nature of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment. It is an educational approach to which all schools should aspire. Inclusion is facilitated in a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, support and problem-solving involving the whole school community (from Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes, 2016).

As seen in its mission statement, the IB promotes diversity. There are four basic principles of inclusive practice in the learning cycle: affirming identity and building self-esteem, scaffolding, valuing prior knowledge and extending learning. More specifically:

- education for all is a human right
- education is enhanced by creating a positive environment that promotes a sense of belonging, security, self-confidence and the multi-faceted development of all students
- every teacher is a teacher to all students
- learning requires the empowerment of all students
- diversity in learning is valued as a rich resource for creating inclusive communities
- all students enjoy equal opportunities for quality learning
- the development of each student is built on prior knowledge
- the assessment provides all students with equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievements and receive praise
- multilingualism is recognized as a given and as a right
- all students are motivated to exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities as citizens
- all students' voices within the student community are equally heard, and their views are respected
- all students within the student community develop the IB Learner Profile attributes and evolve as reflective individuals with knowledge and empathy who help create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect
- all students experience success as a cornerstone of learning

Inclusion in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The School's team actively seeks to recognize each student's differences, potential, and special educational needs, ensuring all inclusion in the teaching and learning process. For this purpose, given that the school cannot provide diagnoses through health professionals, the family is requested to provide the recommended medical or specialized care when necessary. The request for a diagnosis or medical certificate containing the diagnosis aims at informing the planning of pedagogical actions and the fulfilment of legal duties related to the fair offer of specialized educational care and regarding the full inclusion of all students.

The IB promotes optimal support by providing inclusive access arrangements, ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students regardless of their learning differences. When the School identifies obstacles to learning in a student, it must proceed to make special arrangements and ensure the maximum possible support for the student.

When the evaluation process is completed, and the relevant interventions have been identified, the production of the respective Individualized Educational Plan (IEP / Accommodation Plan) will start, following the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and possibly further provisions by the School. The document includes identifying students' specific skills and educational needs; the definition and organization of pedagogical and accessibility strategies, services, and differentiated resources; the type of service according to the particular educational needs of the students.

The IEP is a document that can be changed over time according to the student's development. It may incur requesting new medical or specialized care to re-evaluate learning needs and even reduce special educational care due to overcoming barriers in the educational process.

Athens College also follows the guidelines of the Ministry of Education concerning the maximum number of students with learning differences per class section. We include a maximum of 4 (four) students with special educational needs per class section.

Per the IB principles, inclusive assessment is promoted when assessment:

- is intended to provide each student with the opportunity to succeed
- is continuous, diverse, and relevant to each student
- focuses on the progress of each student
- allows for differentiated instructional methodologies
- is flexible and provides students with multiple opportunities to express themselves and demonstrate their skills using various means
- sets goals and determines learning outcomes in a way that is clear to everybody
- evaluates both the result and the process

As stated in the Athens College Assessment Policy, our students take part in formative assessment, which, in combination with feedback and appropriate Administration, helps them develop conceptual understanding and skills, perform to their best capacity in summative assessment tasks, and meet personal goals.

When creating learning engagements, our main priority is to consider all learning profiles and, through formative assessment, gather information about our students' strengths and the areas

that need strengthening to promote learning. To this end, we seek various teaching and learning tools, practices, and strategies, embracing the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principle that "diversity among students is the norm." Inclusion is achieved in an environment of cooperation, mutual respect and support. It is noted that for the objectives and strands that put barriers to learning due to a specific diagnosis, the achievement levels are not factored in awarding a grade on the scale from 0-8. These are examined on a case-by-case basis. For example, if a student has been diagnosed with dyslexia, then the objective strands related to conventions, such as spelling, punctuation etc., are not considered.

Examples of accommodations in everyday teaching practice include but are not limited to:

- small group instruction
- academic programme support
- accommodated/individualised resources
- prompting and cueing
- extended time
- assistive technology

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department at Athens College has been operating since 1985 and has been a pioneer in Greece, both in the public and the private educational sector.

The Department comprises twenty-two (22) individuals, including seventeen psychologists, two special educators, two speech therapists, and one occupational therapist. Two psychologists are in each Junior High School and High School, respectively.

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department aims to provide support services to all students and support and inform teachers and parents. Operating within the framework of the School, the Department also includes Counseling services open to the entire School community.

The main objectives of the Psychoeducational Counseling Departments of the School Units are:

- to contribute to the early detection, prevention and support of students' educational and emotional difficulties
- to integrate children with special educational needs into the school environment
- to provide support to all members of the school community
- to intervene in cases of emergency or crises
- to organize and implement primary prevention programs aimed at supporting students and their psychosocial integration into the school environment

Student Counseling

The Department's psychologists provide counseling support to the students. Individual counseling is provided on the initiative of the student, parents, teachers, or the Administration. Psychologists provide their services to all students as long as their parents have provided the School with written consent. A child is referred to psychoeducational services outside the School in cases deemed necessary.

- Request from a student: A student can contact the Department on his own and ask to speak with a psychologist:
 - if the request is related to learning: The psychologist arranges an initial meeting with the student and then gathers information from teachers and parents. The Administration is informed
 - if the request is related to an emotional matter: The psychologist arranges a meeting with the student to listen to the matter. The psychologist asks the student whether his parents are aware of this issue and informs them that communication with the parents will follow. In cases where the student is open to parent communication, the psychologist communicates with the parents
 - if the student is unwilling to have the psychologist communicate with his parents, the Administration is informed, and the psychologist works with the student to support him and convince and prepare him to speak with his parents about the issue
 - in cases of emergency (student in crisis): if a student contacts a psychologist in an emergency, the psychologist sees the student and then informs the student's parents. If the Administration refers a student in crisis to the psychologist, the parents are informed after consultation between the Administration and the psychologist
- Request from a parent: Parents can request that the Psychoeducational Counseling Department see their child. The psychologist then arranges to see the student and informs the Administration.
- Request from a teacher: Teachers can contact the Psychoeducational Counseling Department and ask for advice regarding a student or can refer a student. Parents are then notified before the student meets with the psychologist. Parents can be notified by the Administration, teacher, or psychologist, depending on each specific case.
- Request from the Administration: The Administration can ask the Psychoeducational Counseling Department to see a student. The Administration then informs the parent before the psychologist meets with the student, either via telephone or in person, with the psychologist present.
- Referral from the previous school unit: The Department of the last unit school provides the files of all students it has worked with to the next school unit with specific recommendations. If a student is recommended to be monitored, the psychologist communicates with the parents and calls the student to an initial meeting per their agreement.
- Collaboration from the previous school year: If a psychologist has been working with a particular student during the prior school year, they may directly call to see the student as they have already received parental consent.

If the psychologist deems it necessary, a student is referred to psychoeducational services outside the School. The psychologist makes referrals for specialists from a list of various specialities. The psychologist who made the referral then seeks to maintain regular communication, either by phone or in person, with the specialist who supports the student outside of school.

Parental counseling

Psychologists are at the disposal of all parents of the School. Cooperation can begin with the parent's initiative, the psychologist's, the teachers' or the Administration's. The frequency of these meetings is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of each child/parent. If deemed necessary by the psychologist, a referral is made to psychoeducational services outside the School. The psychologist informs the Administration.

Assessment of students with learning differences

When a learning challenge is observed in a student, who does not have a formal diagnosis from the public sector, the student's teacher or parent contacts the school unit psychologist. If other teachers also observe difficulties, a referral is made to apply to KEDASY (First Center for Interdisciplinary Assessment and Counseling Support) for further examination. Once the parent has made the application, the school, upon request from KEDASY, sends a descriptive pedagogical report for the student. Once the evaluation by KEDASY is completed, the parent must submit an original copy of the formal diagnosis to the secretariat of the respective school unit. The psychologist of the Department then informs the student's teachers about the recommendations of KEDASY. Students diagnosed with Special Learning Difficulties have the right, under the Law, to be orally examined. Parents of students who have received a diagnosis from KEDASY while in primary school must submit the original copy to the secretariat of Junior High School upon their transfer to secondary education. Finally, in High School, psychologists oversee the applications for Special Arrangements for the SAT, ACT, TOEFL, and GCE exams and inclusive access arrangements for the IB Diploma students to be authorized by the IB.

Collaboration with the Administration

Psychologists collaborate with the Administration to deal with any incidents that may occur. Regular meetings are held per school unit between the psychologists and the Administration members to exchange information. This exchange of information concerns students monitored by psychologists as well as diagnoses, disciplinary issues, and health and family issues which the Administration and psychologists should be aware of. Psychologists are also informed of any disciplinary incidents handled by the Administration. In cases where information is shared about a family in crisis (e.g., death, illness), psychologists contact the family.

Collaboration with teachers

Psychologists are at the disposal of all teachers at the School. At the beginning of the year, Psychologists inform teachers or advisors (depending on the school unit) about the students they see regularly and participate in faculty meetings. Both psychologists and teachers can request individual sessions to exchange views and discuss the challenges of specific students. Communication between psychologists and teachers can also be done via e-mail. Additionally, psychologists brief and guide teachers in case of an emergency (panic attack, death, accident, natural phenomena, etc.).

Collaboration with the School's Infirmary

Psychologists collaborate with the School's infirmary for specific student issues throughout the academic year.

Updating and Collaborating with Psychologists of other School Units

At the beginning of the school year, psychologists meet with the psychologists of the previous school unit regarding the students they worked with the past year, and their personal files are handed over. They discuss and analyze all incidents which took place the previous year so as to take any action needed to ensure a smooth transition to the next school unit. Throughout the academic year, regular meetings are held with the psychologists of all school units to exchange information, plan everyday events, and ensure the unified operation of the Departments.

Welcoming New Students

At the end and the beginning of each school year, events are held for the smooth transition of students from Elementary School to Junior High School. For students entering High School, an informational meeting is held with new students for their smooth integration into their new school environment. Psychologists of each school unit also communicate with new students throughout the year about their needs.

Career Counseling and Guidance

In all sections of grade 10 of High School (MYP Year 5), a Vocational Guidance test (ARISTON test) is administered on school grounds under the supervision of the psychologists. Psychologists then conduct individual sessions with all students who took the career guidance test. Additionally, the Summer Vocational Orientation Program is organized and held to familiarize students with the field they are considering studying.

Social Emotional Literacy Programs

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department also runs various programs in classrooms or within the school unit in cooperation with the Administration, teachers, MYP Approaches to Learning (ATL) and Service as Action (SA) Coordinators, and the student community, depending on the needs of each school unit (e.g., school bullying, conflict resolution, peer relationships, anxiety, addiction, study skills, sexual ethics, health education, etc.)

Presentations to Parents

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department arranges various presentations for parents on adolescent issues of interest to them. Presentations are conducted either by the School's psychologists or by external agents.

Informational Material

The Psychoeducational Counseling Department creates and shares useful informational material for students, parents, and teachers through the School's LMS platforms.

The Academic Support Program – Academic Advisors

The Academic Support Program of Athens College aims to help all students overcome academic challenges and provide support throughout their learning journeys. The program's underlying philosophy is that all students begin at the same starting point and are encouraged to progress systematically in achieving the best possible learning outcomes.

The Academic Advisor is responsible for following each student's progress and is regularly updated by the Administration, teachers, the students, the Psychoeducational Counseling Department, and parents.

The procedure followed throughout the academic year is as follows:

- an informational meeting to get to know all the students at the beginning of the academic year
- regular individual meetings with all students during the first semester to discuss and set goals

- regular individual meetings with all students during the second semester to evaluate whether goals set at the beginning of the year have been achieved
- individual meetings throughout the academic year with students who encounter academic challenges, initiated either by the student or by the Academic Advisor

The Social Welfare and Diversity Office

The Athens College Social Welfare and Diversity Office, in collaboration with the Administration and the Psychoeducational Counseling Department, is focused on raising awareness and sensitizing students, teachers and parents to equality and social justice issues. These broad themes are divided into six more specific pillars:

- coexistence – me and others
- migration - refugees
- solidarity – social Welfare
- religious – racial diversity
- student social justice
- individual and social diversity

In cooperation with the Administration and the Psychoeducational Counseling Department, the Social Welfare and Diversity Office:

- organizes conferences, workshops or seminars on topics related to the above pillars
- invites distinguished speakers (for students, teachers, and parents) and collaborates with external providers
- recommends activities and events of a social and charitable nature
- meets with students and parents in cooperation with class advisors

Review Process

The Inclusion Policy is reviewed regularly by the senior pedagogical leadership team, the Psychoeducational Counseling Department, and the faculty as part of the IB curriculum review cycle and the whole school improvement plan. The current Inclusion Policy is subject to review at the end of the school year or the beginning of the following school year to include any modifications required by the Greek State or anticipated due to the revision of the MYP framework and School procedures. All updates are communicated to the broader school community in due course.

References

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