

KODAIKANAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

KIS Academic Philosophy & Policy
Information handbook for parents and students



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KIS Philosophy

Statement

Kodaikanal International School is an autonomous residential school with a broad college-oriented curriculum, serving young people from diverse cultures. The school's academic program is intentionally set within a community life based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and devoted to service in India and the whole human community.

Definitions

- **College-oriented education:** KIS is an educational institution, first and foremost. Education is what we do and we seek to do it as well as we can. At KIS, education is valued in and of itself, but also valued for its ability to help students find their way into appropriate higher education and vocations.
- **Christian self-definition:** KIS is a Christian school. By 'Christian' we mean an identification of the school with beliefs and principles derived from the life, person and teachings of Jesus Christ. These beliefs and principles are revealed in scripture and are the foundation stone upon which we make decisions regarding every aspect of institutional life and our role in society.

As an international community we seek to avoid culturally-bound interpretations of Christian identity. We aim to be sensitive to our South Asian context and relevant to our ideals of global education. Our understanding of the role of Christianity in KIS life together is broad and inclusive, spiritual as well as moral, seeking to define the center, rather than the periphery of Christian faith and practice.

- **Multicultural:** At KIS, we welcome students and staff from all nations and stand against all forms of chauvinism as a community — religious, racial, cultural, national or gender related. KIS attempts to draw on the richness of all its constituent cultures and our community members are supported in developing an understanding of their own cultures as well as those of others. We believe that a diverse community is a rich community and that living in KIS will prepare our graduates for a global community.
- **Residential:** KIS is a boarding school. Our residential program is built on the presumption that students learn from their whole experience in community - in the classroom, on the playing field, in activities, on field trips and in the dorms and that teachers teach not just in the classroom, but provide learning models and opportunities for students in all these arenas.

KIS is a naturally enriched boarding environment requiring special commitments from its staff and students. Staff is required to devote time to activities and to individual students far beyond day school commitments. Students are expected to take every aspect of their communal lives seriously as part of a total learning experience leading to a greater sense of individual independence.

KIS recognizes that living away from their family can be emotionally and psychologically challenging for students and provides counseling access, peer and adult mentors for every student as well as academic advisors and chaplains.

- **Community Life:** KIS is an intentional, created community, self-regulating and dedicated to living out particular values in daily life. Our school has a particular ethos given by our surroundings and the diverse backgrounds, but it is also intentionally created by our value commitments and the way we structure our community life.
- **In India:** KIS is not just an international school that happens to be placed in India. India is a part of what we are and we are committed to being a constructive part of the life of this nation. Our commitment to Indian society underpins our desire to educate and educate well in this setting.

We are committed to education that takes the richness of Indian history and culture and a progressive stance on positive social change in this context.

General objectives

KIS strives to be a healthy microcosm of the global societies in our community. It recognizes and encourages the distinctive differences between people, nations and cultures, at the same time affirming the unity of humankind. Our school lifestyle reflects this healthy tension as staff and students learn together in theory and practice how to bridge differences between themselves and others.

KIS acknowledges Jesus Christ and his teachings to be the foundation stone for achieving all its objectives.

Specific objectives

- Give students the opportunity and freedom for the fullest possible development as a whole person: academically, spiritually, emotionally, morally, socially and physically
- Provide a creative, high quality, academic program with a curriculum which values learning as an end in itself and is also acceptable to colleges and universities worldwide
- Explore and adopt independent curriculum designs that facilitate learning in this setting. Where possible, the school would be a center for sharing appropriate educational models and designs with other schools in India
- Provide a cultural and social environment within which students and staff are helped to:
 - develop respect for the dignity and worth of others
 - develop greater appreciation for all cultural traditions and learn to discern strengths and weaknesses in each
 - contribute actively and responsibly to community life
- Develop staff and student concern for global issues such as human effects on the environment, distribution of natural resources, the dynamics of poverty, issues of development and colonialism and identification of social and political forces that contribute to justice and peace
- Promote particular awareness and understanding of the cultures, societies and peoples of Tamil Nadu, India and South Asia
- Encourage the spiritual development of each member of the community, to promote spiritual understanding among the religions of our world and to present Jesus Christ and his teachings as the foundation stone for achieving all KIS objectives
- Provide this education within the income derived from fees paid by the students, according to the fee schedule set by the Council of Directors from time to time










Curriculum objectives

- KIS curriculum design will provide maximum educational benefit to each individual student
- KIS curriculum will emphasize affective as well as cognitive education so that values and skills for living in a community are emphasized both in course content and in instructional methods
- KIS curriculum will be flexible and allow exploration of new curricular designs which will be encouraged if consistent with the school's mission, values and context
- Where possible, KIS curriculum will allow students to be able to relate without major disadvantage to educational systems anywhere in the world, while recognizing that some systems are inconsistent with the basic principles of our curriculum
- Given staff and student mobility, special attention will be given to maintaining continuity and high standards of instruction
- Methods and teaching style shall seek to incorporate the best pedagogical methods, striving to excite and enthuse students with the love of learning as a lifetime challenge

Accreditation

- KIS accreditation reflects its 105 years in global education as an academically selective school preparing students for entry into colleges and universities around the world
- KIS curriculum supports diplomas accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (USA) and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) which are accepted by other schools and by institutions of higher education internationally
- KIS High School Diploma is recognized by the Association of Indian Universities and a large number of individual Indian institutions as equivalent to a pass in the +2 stage of the 10 +2 pattern of education for admission to professional and degree courses of India.

KIS is accredited, recognized and / or affiliated to:

	IBO - International Baccalaureate Organization (1976)
	CIS - Council of International Schools
	MSA - Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Philadelphia, USA (1968)
	NHS - National Honor Society, USA
	NASC - National Association of Student Councils, USA
	ASCD - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, USA
	NACAC - National Association for College Admissions Counseling
	NESA - Near East South Asia Council of Overseas Schools
	Association of Indian Universities, Delhi (1981)

Educational organization

KIS curriculum will be organized into a cohesive and integrated plan that will:

- Be specific in its basic educational goals for each grade level and in the horizontal and vertical coordination of its program instruction
- Encompass Pre-School through Grade 12

Distinctive curriculum elements

- Broad and balanced selection of liberal arts courses in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, math, arts, practical skills and physical education
- Individualized advisory programs assisting students in creating appropriate individual programs
- Courses and content relevant to the South Asian context
- Broad spectrum of religious education courses at all levels
- Coordination with a diverse program of co-curricular activities designed to support the educational goals and values of the school
- Emphasis on the responsibility of all people for the societies in which they live.*

**This emphasis is embodied in a strong Social Experience curriculum with courses targeted at social and environmental concerns. Relevant course content across the curriculum is designed to make students aware of their role in and responsibilities to both their native societies and the global society and integration of field work and service opportunities into all appropriate areas of the curriculum.*

Evaluation

Provision of a structure, adequate personnel and resources will be made for constant evaluation and revision of the curriculum.

KIS Values

Kodaikanal International School values the following guiding principles for KIS community life:

- **Accountability:** All the community members should be able to justify their actions according to the effective pursuit of KIS mission, goals and the particular requirements of their roles
- **Appreciation:** Individuals of all groups at KIS will appreciate all other members of the community for their individuality, gender and specific cultural identity
- **Concern for Others:** All members of KIS will care for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all other members of the school community to the best of their ability
- **Consistency:** Policies will be justly applied to all school community members in the context of KIS mission and goals
- **Context:** Without losing its global and Christian character, KIS will be engaged with its local, India and South Asian contexts in all aspects of its programs
- **Cooperation:** All KIS community members will work together to resolve conflicts effectively
- **Integrity:** Truthfulness and the open sharing of information are accepted standards at KIS
- **Openness:** KIS consistently draws on the best resources, models and ideas available in the world in pursuit of its mission
- **Performance:** KIS expects the highest possible level of achievement to be pursued by each person
- **Reverence:** All members of KIS will seek to develop their own inner, spiritual life and respect the spiritual efforts of others

KIS Graduation goals

Kodaikanal International School believes that graduating students should demonstrate:

- Thinking, knowledge and understanding by:
 - Acquiring core knowledge in the areas of mathematics, physical and life sciences literature, social studies and religious studies
 - Acquiring core knowledge in the areas of mathematics, physical and life sciences literature, social studies and religious studies
 - Justifying one's views and actions with reasonable, intelligible arguments
- Skills and work habits necessary for learning by:
 - Using techniques, tools and technology in a wide variety of situations

- Organizing time and resources to accomplish goals, both individually and as part of a team
- Valuing the process as much as the product of one's work
- Communication skills by:
 - Reading, writing, listening and speaking effectively in at least two languages
- Skill in developing and maintaining well being by:
 - Being able to care for oneself physically and emotionally
 - Accepting the challenge to grow spiritually
- Demonstrate aesthetic sensitivity and expression by:
 - Developing and expressing oneself creatively and imaginatively
 - Being sensitive to aesthetic quality in the arts and in one's own work
- Attitudes and social interactions conducive to peaceful, purposeful and joyful living by:
 - Thinking and acting independently
 - Living with and for others
 - Demonstrating empathy and respect for others
 - Taking responsibility for one's own actions
 - Demonstrating an understanding of and concern for the environment
 - Understanding structures that perpetuate injustice, violence and oppression in society, between societies, between nations, religions and cultures; perceive one's own place within these structures

IB Programs at KIS

KIS is currently offering the MYP and the IB diploma program as well as the KIS diploma accredited by the MSA.

IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate Organization 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 IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs 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 profile (K - 12)

The aim of all IB programs is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

The IB Middle Years Program (MYP) is designed for students between 11 and 16 years. This period encompasses early puberty and mid-adolescence and is a particularly critical phase of personal and intellectual development. This time of uncertainty, sensitivity, susceptibility, resistance and questioning requires an educational program that will help students develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. Learning how to learn and evaluate information critically is as important as subject content.

MYP aims to enable students to:

- Build upon their spirit of discovery to develop an understanding and enjoyment of the process of learning independently and in cooperation with others
- Acquire knowledge and understanding in preparation for further learning
- Recognize the extent to which knowledge is interrelated
- Learn to communicate effectively in a variety of way
- Develop a sense of personal and cultural identity as well as respect for themselves and other
- Acquire insights into local and global concerns affecting health, the community and the environment
- Develop a sense of individual and collective responsibility and citizenship

IB Diploma Program philosophy

From its inception, the development of the Diploma Program was based on three fundamental principles:

- the need for a broad general education, establishing the basic knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for further study
- the importance of developing international understanding and citizenship for a more peaceful, productive future
- the need for flexibility of choice among the subjects to be studied, within a balanced framework, so that the students' options could correspond as far as possible to their particular interests and capacities.

Attempting to encapsulate the aims of the program in a single sentence, Peterson suggested that they were "to develop to their fullest potential the powers of each individual to understand, to modify and to enjoy his or her environment, both inner and outer, in its physical, social, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual aspects" (1987). He emphasized the importance of the concept of general education as *process* rather than *content*. Peterson further stated that "the aim of general education was not the acquisition of general knowledge, but the development of the general powers of the mind to operate in a variety of ways of thinking". This principle continues to have a profound effect on the planning of curriculum and methods of assessment for the Diploma Program.

Since its introduction, one of the great advantages of the Diploma Program has been the willingness of IB teachers to experiment with their ideas and practices. Innovative and committed teachers and examiners from many different cultures and systems of education have played a significant role in the development of the program and today their participation is as pivotal as ever. Continuing to find new ways to support teachers in classrooms around the world, and examiners from many different countries, is of the highest priority.

MYP fundamental concepts

Three fundamental concepts underpin MYP program development:

- **Holistic learning**

The MYP accentuates the interrelatedness of traditional school subjects and so advances a holistic (whole person) view of learning. This perspective asks the student to consider issues and problems in their widest scope and to realize that good solutions often draw upon insights acquired from many sources. Students are helped to recognize relationships between school subjects and the world outside, and learn to combine relevant knowledge, experience and critical thinking to solve authentic problems.

- **Intercultural awareness**

This concept aims to develop student attitudes, knowledge and skills as they learn about their own and other cultures, encouraging them to consider multiple perspectives, fostering tolerance, respect, empathy, understanding and acceptance of others' rights to be different.

- **Communication**

Communication is fundamental to learning, supporting inquiry and understanding, and allowing student reflection and expression. Good command of one's own language enables clear expression of ideas, attitudes and feelings. Learning other languages extends that competence and teaches appreciation of different cultures and ways of thinking. Good communication is more than simply generating appropriate language. It is also about listening to what others have to say and being attuned to intentions, variations and nuance. The MYP encourages students to explore multiple forms of expression.

Shared features of the IB programs

The features that form the basis of the three programs are common and can be readily identified. They include:

- the broad nature of study, including more than one language
- the flexibility of each program's curriculum model, enabling teachers to respond to local requirements and interests
- the diversity and flexibility of pedagogical approaches

Each program promotes the education of the whole person, emphasizing intellectual, personal, emotional, and social growth, through all domains of knowledge, involving the major traditions of learning in languages, humanities, sciences, mathematics, and the arts. While the Diploma Program and Middle Years Program grew from a western humanist tradition, the increasing influence of non-western cultures on all three programs is not only being acknowledged, but is becoming increasingly significant.

KIS and the IB programs' philosophy

The KIS curriculum goals and objectives and the graduation goals are aligned with the IB mission statement and the IB learner profile. As a part of the curriculum review cycle the graduation goals are also periodically reviewed and one of the criteria being, reflecting on how well it is aligned with the IB mission statement and learner profile. The KIS school philosophy as stated in Design '94 is also periodically reviewed.

KIS Elementary School

ES mission statement

“ KIS Elementary School strives to provide a holistic program and nurturing environment, where each child can develop intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. It is our goal that each KIS student will walk on the world stage, or in its quiet corners, caring, sharing and seeking justice. .” This ES mission statement was developed using the KIS mission statement and defines / clarifies the pillars for teachers of elementary aged students. This “holistic” approach is spelled out under the KIS specific objective in Design '94.

Academic philosophy



Intellectual development

The academic program of KIS Elementary School seeks to develop all aspects of a child's intellect. Theorists believe / agree there are many types of intelligence. Elementary curriculum follows / is constructed around Gardner's established theory of multiple intelligences which defines eight different aspects to intelligence and stresses children's need for stimulation in each of these multiple intelligences to achieve their full potential.

Multiple intelligences at KIS

1. Verbal / linguistic

Language Arts classes emphasize writing, reading, speaking, library skills and second language learning beginning in Kindergarten

2. Logical / mathematical

Mathematics, computer classes and higher level thinking activities

3. Visual / spatial

Art classes using a variety of mediums multimedia teaching and learning experiences, model design and creation

4. Bodily / kinesthetic

- Physical Education classes develop coordination and athletic skills
- Dance and drama activities
- Hands on learning
- Fieldtrips

5. Musical / rhythmic

- Students create, perform and learn through music
- Classroom music at all grade levels
- Beginning piano instruction in grade 3-4
- Choice of instruments in grade 5

6. Interpersonal – team building and cooperative learning activities

Social Studies classes teach about other people and cultures. Students learn to cooperate with others in collaborative learning experiences and group activities Peer mediation program designed to develop students' ability to resolve conflicts

7. Intrapersonal – reflection

Health classes teach children how to care for themselves. Assignments include personal reflection at each child's developmental level

8. Naturalistic

- Hands on approach to teaching Science in a classroom lab and outdoors
- Grade 5 field trip to a wildlife reserve
- Grade 3 - 5 Hiking & Camping program
- PS - Grade 2 Field Trips around Kodaikanal

Special needs

Individualized instruction is provided for those with special learning needs through English as a Second Language (ESL) and KIS Learning Support department.

Physical development

After-school sports opportunities and a weekend hiking program are spread over first and second semesters and supplement scheduled Physical Education (PE) classes. KIS Elementary School has a personalized sick room to provide first aid or care for children with minor ailments which is supervised by the school doctor and staff from the Dispensary, known affectionately as the 'Dish'.

Emotional development

KIS Counselor is available for elementary students as needed and visits the school on a regular basis. All elementary staff are sensitive to each students' emotional needs and work to create safe and secure classrooms. Elementary School teaching staff and dorm parents work together to understand and individually support each child.

Social development

In addition to the important social interaction in the classroom and on the playground, KIS Elementary School provides clubs as well as after-school and / or evening activities. These vary with the interests and talents of available staff and have included such things as cricket, dance, cooking, crafts, biking, soccer, knitting, choir and drama. Currently art, cooking, sewing, basketball, gymnastics and Suzuki violin are offered. Activities include movies, sports, interactive games, plays, concerts and festive events.

Spiritual development

Religious Education is part of KIS elementary curriculum, emphasizing and supporting the Christian framework and values of the school. It is reinforced in other activities and programs such as:

- Weekly Spirit Splashes religious assembly (grades K-5)
- Christ-centered Character Education Program (grades PS-5)
- Service learning and social action
- Special assemblies for Christmas and Easter
- Sunday school

Boarding students are required to attend Sunday morning worship services and participate in the Sunday school program at Kodaikanal International School Church. They also have a weekly devotional time in the dormitory. Students are encouraged to respect those of all faith and cultural backgrounds through a multicultural, thematic curriculum.

KIS has now acquired PYP candidate school status with the IBO in 2009.

KIS Primary Years Program

What is the Primary Years Program (PYP)?

It is a trans-disciplinary program of international education designed to foster the development of the whole child.

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP) is designed for students aged 3 to 12. It focuses on the total growth of the developing child, touching hearts as well as minds and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic development.

The PYP draws on research and best practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools to create a relevant, engaging, challenging and significant educational framework for all children.

Curriculum documents are published in English, French and Spanish but schools may offer the program in other languages under certain conditions.

The PYP is one of three programs offered by the International Baccalaureate (IB).

What is the curriculum framework?

The curriculum framework consists of five essential elements: concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, action. The knowledge component is developed through inquiries into six trans-disciplinary themes of global significance, supported and balanced by six subject areas.

This is illustrated by the hexagon below.



The curriculum framework is further structured around three interrelated questions.

- What do we want to learn? *The written curriculum.*
- How best will we learn? *The taught curriculum.*
- How will we know what we have learned? *The assessed curriculum.*

How are students assessed?

Teachers assess students by selecting or designing methods of assessment appropriate to the learning outcomes they intend to capture.

Teachers also take into account the diverse, complicated and sophisticated ways that individual students use to develop and demonstrate their understanding.

The prime objective of assessing students' learning and performance is to give feedback to:

- students—to encourage the start of lifelong learning
- teachers—to support their reflection on what to teach and how to teach it
- Parents—to highlight their child's learning and development.

Cover photograph by Penny Ohana



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KIS... over 100 years in global education

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