



Teaching and Learning Policy

Latest Review: June 2023

Review cycle: 3 years

Next Review: June 2026



Wellspring Learning Community

Teaching and Learning Policy

Contributors to the 2023 review:

Director of Learning and Teaching - Rita Zgheib
IB DP Coordinator and Secondary School Principal – Kathleen Saleh
IB MYP Coordinator – Nizar Shamseddine
IB PYP Coordinator – Nadine Daya
Senior Executive Assistant – Sereen Ajami

Related Policies:

Wellspring Guiding Statements
Teacher Performance Review Policy
Assessment Policy
Promotion Policy
Learning Diversity Policy
Homework Policy

Approvals - names and signatures:

Chairperson of the Board

Head of School

Wellspring Learning Community

Teaching and Learning Policy

Wellspring Learning Community's Mission Statement

Wellspring Learning Community aims to establish an inquiry-based learning environment in which students from diverse backgrounds are given every opportunity to optimize their social, emotional and academic capacities and talents. Our students will become confident, resourceful, creative, caring, responsible global and local citizens prepared to use their education to contribute in meaningful ways towards improving society, both locally and internationally.

Rationale

The Wellspring Teaching and Learning policy aims to:

- Ensure that Wellspring students are provided with high quality learning that leads to consistent academic, personal and behavioral student success
- Provide the Wellspring Community with a visible reference to a common language and shared understanding of teaching and learning practices at Wellspring that align with the school's guiding statements
- Set a framework of standards, practices and expectations for teachers across all school levels
- Articulate the guidelines that ensure adapting the curriculum to the learning needs and styles of Wellspring students.

Guiding Principles

High Quality Learning

High Quality Learning at Wellspring is defined by the community's commitment to delivering student centered inquiry and concept-based approaches to teaching which are rooted in global and local contexts. Learning at Wellspring is collaborative and differentiated to meet the varying needs of students. It is informed by authentic and reliable assessment practices.

Wellspring Learning Community pledges to deliver high quality learning to every student by enabling them to:

- Be mindful of their wellbeing
- Take pride in their unique heritage
- Construct their knowledge and cultural capital
- Acquire thinking, communication, self-management, research, and social skills
- Develop the Learner Profile attributes
- Grow in independence and agency as global citizens and lifelong learners
- Share their talents with others.

Differentiation

Wellspring strives to respond to the learning needs and styles of every student by differentiating the content, the form, and assessment of the learning. Differentiation is an integral part of the planning of instruction units and the offering of leveled courses such as extended and standard math courses in the MYP or high and standard level courses in the DP.

The Learning Diversity department at Wellspring is committed to identifying and removing academic or physical barriers to learning by providing students with individualized support and educational plans.

Some students may require a more specialized approach than the one Wellspring can offer. Thus, as the student's best interest is primordial, discernment and transparent communication are vital components of the school-home partnership.

Internationalism, Interculturalism and Global Citizenship

Wellspring Learning Community defines **internationalism** as a belief in a global society that is built on compassion, mutual respect and empathy. Wellspring believes that **interculturalism** is built on acceptance, communication, dialogue and interaction within and between cultures. Wellspring recognizes the commonality of humanity while recognizing the individual and promotes an environment in which cultural diversity is honored. The school values internationalism and interculturalism in its endeavors, both formally and informally and strives to educate its students to become global citizens.

Teaching and Learning at Wellspring

Wellspring teachers

Wellspring teachers are:

- Leaders of learning. They demonstrate this through their own example as lifelong learners. This learning supports the continual improvement of teaching and learning.
- Proficient in the Approaches to Teaching (ATT) mainly inquiry and concept-based learning
- Language teachers
- Promoters of cultural diversity and global contexts
- Team players and reflective practitioners
- Committed to removing learning barriers
- Firm believers in the essential role assessment along with structured feedback and reflection play in supporting students, measuring the learning, and informing the teaching.

Teaching and Learning with Students

Wellspring's teachers and staff believe that students learn best when they:

- Are happy, interested, motivated and engaged
- Are confident, feel secure and are aware of boundaries
- Clearly understand the task and know expectations
- Are given tasks which match and challenge their abilities
- Receive appropriate and timely feedback
- Progress successfully throughout the learning process
- Connect their learning to real life contexts and transfer it meaningfully to unfamiliar situations.

The Learning Experience

Learning experiences at Wellspring ensure that students can:

- Inquire, take initiative and investigate
- Work as a class, in groups cooperatively and/or individually
- Develop self-management, social, communication, thinking and research skills
- Take agency in making individual or collaborative decisions that may impact their own and others' learning
- Discuss ideas and share feedback with others
- Express their creativity in multiple forms
- Develop autonomy
- Receive emotional or academic support as needed
- Achieve the personal and academic goals they have set with their teacher.

The Learning Environment

Learning takes place best when:

- The learning environment is safe, inviting, stimulating and organized
- Displays of student work are prominent and demonstrate ongoing student learning and inquiry
- Resources are abundant, available and accessible
- Technology is used efficiently
- Learner profile attributes are visible
- Unit questions are displayed
- Essential agreements are honored.

Effective Teaching

Wellspring's expectations for effective teaching include:

- Securing a thorough understanding of the IB frameworks and other curricula applied at Wellspring
- Collaboratively planning and coordinating student learning experiences with all stakeholders such as administration, subject leaders, colleagues, students and parents
- Ensuring that all students are granted access to the curriculum through the implementation of high quality, well-paced and differentiated engagements that cater to different student learning styles and needs
- Cultivating lively and inquiring minds through the inclusion of intercultural values within a diverse learning environment
- Activating student prior knowledge and assisting students to reflect and make connections;
- Constructing classroom learning environments in which all students feel safe, valued, respected, challenged and supported and where positive classroom management techniques are practiced
- Knowing all students and treating them fairly and consistently while promoting attitudes that foster learning
- Valuing students' ideas and opinions and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to student questions
- Setting high expectations of quality work and academic integrity
- Employing a variety of appropriate resources which support student inquiry and facilitate student agency
- Integrating technology effectively to enhance learning
- Promoting international mindedness and cultural diversity
- Maintaining effective assessment and meaningful records to monitor the progress of students over time and allow for intervention when necessary
- Constructing timely assessments that are fair, meaningful and that inform planning and teaching

practice

- Sharing the understanding of the assessment criteria with students to facilitate progress
- Participating in regular reviews of curricular documents to evaluate their effectiveness.

Effective Learning

Effective learning is:

- Inquiring, engaging, applying critical thinking and continuously reflecting on learning
- Exploring different perspectives and being open to new ways of thinking
- Sharing ideas and formulating questions
- Acquiring and transferring knowledge and skills and developing conceptual understanding, across multiple disciplines and unfamiliar contexts
- Exhibiting attitudes that foster respect and acceptance of others
- Identifying, locating and utilizing resources effectively and appropriately for quality learning
- Putting their learning at the service of their engagement as global citizens
- Seeking to continuously learn how to learn and learn about learning.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and reporting are integral parts of the teaching and learning process used to improve student learning.

The assessment philosophy of Wellspring Learning Community is consistent with the principles and practices expected by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). An assessment provides students with feedback on their performance and enables them to reach expected learning outcomes for each subject area. Through distinct types of assessment, school stakeholders gain data on how students are developing as inquirers and global citizens in addition to their competency in different content areas. The analysis of the data helps to support the needs of the students and inform decisions for differentiation and content.

Assessment at Wellspring is an ongoing activity that varies in methods and purpose. It is used as a tool to evaluate the depth of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching. Wellspring aims for assessment to be authentic, clear, specific and varied to portray a well-rounded representation of student learning. Assessment serves to provide meaningful feedback to teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is carried out during the year to enhance student learning and promote professional growth.

The aim is to:

- Recognize and share good practice
- Encourage teachers to reflect on their practices and their implementation of the PYP, MYP, DP and the Lebanese curriculum
- Track progress of teaching and learning issues identified in the school's strategic plan
- Provide information to administration about professional development needs
- Identify key aspects of teaching for development by departments and for the whole school
- Support new, inexperienced or struggling teachers