

ADMISSIONS POLICY



STILL I RISE

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Nairobi



*We raise passionate, caring and brave leaders
to shape a peaceful tomorrow
through the best quality education.*

*At Still I Rise International School Nairobi
we change the world
one child at a time.*

... Still I Rise International School Nairobi, Mission Statement



“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

A SCHOOL IN A SPECIFIC CONTEXT

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 organisation works with schools, governments and international organisations 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 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.

STILL I RISE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

We raise passionate, caring and brave leaders to shape a peaceful tomorrow through the best quality education.

At Still I Rise International Schools, we change the world one child at a time.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF ADMISSIONS

Philosophy

At *Still I Rise International School*, we believe that every child is unique and capable of thriving in a learning environment that recognizes and nurtures individual strengths, needs, and identities. We are committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and supportive community where diversity is celebrated, and every learner feels valued, empowered, and engaged.

Our international school admits students from economically disadvantaged

backgrounds across East Africa. We recognize that the diversity of personalities, experiences, nationalities and cultures of our school's composition is an enriching factor. It strengthens our international outlook, and it brings with it too a multiplicity of strengths, capacities and scholastic interests. We are preparing our students to graduate into caring leaders in a diverse world; it is an asset, therefore, that during their formative education they experience companionship and collaboration with such a rich tapestry of young people.

Inspired by the IB Learner Profile, staff and students alike are determined to be balanced, caring and principled. This means going beyond being merely accepting, it means being actively inclusive. We employ multiple strategies so that there is no obstacle to a joyful, rewarding experience for all at our diverse school. Children with special educational needs are not only welcome here, but are given the opportunity to flourish alongside their peers. By applying differentiation techniques to our pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, as well as considering our learning spaces, we seek to make our school as accessible as possible to the broadest range of students. This, in itself, is an extension of our philosophy which led to the founding of our school in the first place: that high quality education should be a right for all. It is also an extension of our commitment to provide individualised attention and care to all our students, no matter whether their educational needs include diagnosable learning difficulties or not.

Purpose

At Still I Rise, our admissions policy reflects our unwavering commitment to the International Baccalaureate (IB) philosophy of equitable, high-quality, and holistic education. We believe that every student has the right to learn and thrive in an inclusive environment where diversity is valued and supported. This policy ensures that learning differences, linguistic backgrounds, personal circumstances, or previous educational experiences do not limit access to our programmes.

We actively work to identify and remove systemic, environmental, and attitudinal barriers so that all students can participate fully in school life and achieve their potential. In line with the IB's definition of inclusion as "an ongoing process to increase access and engagement for all," our admissions process considers the whole child and supports a pathway for success,

regardless of their starting point. Our approach is centered on fairness, transparency, and the provision of appropriate support from the point of entry and throughout the learner's journey at Still I Rise.

KENYA AND SENs

Whilst a little behind the international curve on establishing a structured response to learning differences, Kenya has made strides forward in the 21st century.

The Revised Edition of the National Education Act (1980) had already enshrined into law a certain degree of inclusivity by stating that “no pupil shall be refused admission to, or excluded from, the school on any grounds of sex, race or colour or on any other unreasonable grounds”. But it was not until the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 when the country first explicitly laid out a policy direction on special needs and disabilities. It underscored “the government’s commitment to ensuring that learners with special needs and disabilities have equal access to quality and relevant education.” In the years that followed, efforts have been made to improve the Kenyan education sector’s policy and legal framework. There has also been a focus on collecting adequate data on children with SENs, providing appropriate facilities, and advocating the importance of mainstreaming special needs education in the nation, though on all counts this is work in progress rather than mission complete.

OUR SCHOOL

The Still I Rise International School of Nairobi is located in Mathare North, an area neighbouring the Mathare slum in Nairobi, capital city of Kenya. We welcome students both from the surrounding areas and from other Nairobi’s neighbourhoods (Kawangware, Kayole, Eastleigh).

Many different nationalities are represented in our school: around 50% our students are refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan, 50% are Kenyan, representing

all the major ethnic groups residing in the area.

Our admission of students, detailed in our admissions policy, is primarily based upon the vulnerable status of children. We actively prioritise those students who lack a support network such as family and a stable home life, and resources like a hygienic home and an income which would pay for schooling. This poverty takes its toll on the mental health of our students who arrive requiring support and intervention. Through regular 1-1 sessions with our Child Protection Officer, group sessions with boys and girls discussing adolescent issues, psychodrama and playful workshops working through trauma, group projects about topics from loneliness to bullying, yoga and meditation sessions outdoors, we attempt to slowly calm the students and take them from what we refer to as the 'survivor brain' toward a 'learner brain' where cognitive development can occur in a child with a relaxed state of mind.

OUR SCHOOL

Our selection process has two stages.

The first is to identify which children in the geographic locality are suitable beneficiaries of our charitable organisation. In practice, this means prioritising children with extremely low-income families, out of school children and those displaced from their original homes. We ultimately seek to admit a student body of which 51% are refugees and Internally Displaced Persons and at least 50% are female. Neither medical background nor academic capability are factored at this stage.

The next stages of our admission process are trial periods at the school where the candidate students partake in engaging activities in the classroom and around the school, both individually and in groups. The assessment criteria of this stage are based upon the Approaches to Learning (ATLs) which is a core tenet of IB schooling. The design of the activities and assessment instruments mean we seek the *potential* to develop a broad range of ATL skills, rather than just current achievement. In order that they may get the very best out of their school experience, we select students who demonstrate some potential to interact, to communicate, to collaborate, to create, to think critically, to

organise, to transfer skills, to reflect and to be resilient and positive.

This means that many students who struggle in certain skill clusters, for example critical thinking or affective skills can – and do – join the school. The stage is only likely to preclude those students who, whether for reasons related to SENs or not, struggle to a considerable degree across a broad range of ATL clusters. Bold in our ambition to bring world class education (and ultimately the rigour of IB assessment) to a particularly disadvantaged community of children, we recognise that there is a limitation to our capacity to mitigate the difficulties faced by those children with the most severe learning challenges. One asset of the trial stages of our selection process is that it enables us to honestly confirm that those students who begin their first year at our school are students who we are confident we can support as they strive for success. The following sections outline what this support does, and could, entail.

ADMISSION TO THE IB Diploma Programme

Still I Rise International School Nairobi aims to offer a rigorous and supportive IB Diploma Programme (DP) to students who demonstrate academic readiness, motivation, and alignment with our values.

1. General Academic Requirements

To ensure success in the IB DP, students applying from MYP Year 5 must meet the following academic expectations:

Overall MYP Performance: A minimum of 4 or above (on the 1–7 IB scale) in all subjects.

Subject-Specific Thresholds:

5 or higher in subjects the student wishes to pursue at Higher Level (HL)

4 or higher in subjects the student wishes to pursue at Standard Level (SL)

Applicants will participate in academic interviews with the MYP Coordinator, DP Coordinator, DP Deputy Coordinator, and Head of IB to assess readiness and discuss programme fit.

2. Language Proficiency

Language competency is essential for a student to succeed at C.I.A. and gain entrance to the curriculum. To be accepted into the Diploma Programme, students must pass an English proficiency exam. They have to show that they are proficient in the language, which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- using a broad vocabulary in addition to proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
- communicating intelligibly, accurately, and effectively while speaking and writing;
- display a unique style while keeping the target audience in mind.

All MYP students currently take an English Language and Literature course.

All IB Diploma students take a first language course (Language A) in English. To be eligible for admission to Language A, a student needs to have completed an English Language and Literature course at the MYP level..

For Language Acquisition (French or Kiswahili):

Students scoring a 4 or higher may be eligible for Higher Level (HL) courses.

For Language and Literature (Language A): Proficiency in academic English is required, as this is the primary language of instruction.

3. Mathematics and Science Readiness

Students intending to take Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches HL should have a 6 or 7 in MYP Mathematics. Students selecting HL sciences are expected to have at least a 5 in both MYP Science and Mathematics.

4. Subject Choice and Guidance

To ensure students are placed in subjects aligned with their interests, academic strengths, and future goals:

Course selection meetings will be held with students and families. These meetings will be supported by internal advisors and, where possible, a guidance counselor.

Students will complete internal assessments and placement tests during MYP Year 5 to further evaluate DP readiness and inform final subject selections.

5. Still I Rise Learner Traits

In addition to academic criteria, we value personal development and character.

Students should demonstrate:

Positive teacher recommendations, especially in relation to self-management, responsibility, and collaboration.

An average of at least 2 in the school's Traits Rubrics, reflecting growth in alignment with the Still I Rise core values.

CONFIDENTIALITY, DISTRIBUTION & REVIEW OF POLICY

We obtain prior consent from all parents for carrying out all activity relating to admissions and storing data regarding their child. Any physical material is kept in locked filing cabinets in the school office, managed by the school administrator. Only the relevant members of the team can access confidential information regarding individual students on the school software. If a student changes school, these files are directly passed on to the appropriate member of staff in the new institution.

We share the Admissions policy with all teachers, and lead training and workshops for the wider school community (other school staff, parents, students) to disseminate information on the topic and refer to the policy.

This Admissions policy will be annually reviewed by our committee so that it continues to reflect the needs and profiles of our students. This committee comprises the School Principal who acts as Coordinator, our Child Protection Officer, a teacher representative, a parent representative, student captains, members of Still I Rise's education management team and the on-site logistics officer.

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[Education in Emergencies: Including Everyone](#)

 LEARNING AND BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT training manual Edukans 2021_1....

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