

CAIS

National Standards & Effective Practices

2019



Canadian Accredited Independent Schools
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Mission, Vision & Strategy

The school has clear mission, vision, values and strategy. These statements are understood and accepted by all constituencies: Board, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and students. The statements give direction to the Strategic Plan (including curricular, co-curricular, financial, organizational) to ensure that all facets of school life are in alignment.

- 1.1 The school has clear statements of mission, vision and values. They are short, memorable, aspirational and achievable.
- 1.2 The school has a current integrated strategic plan (including HR, program, finance, facilities, enrolment, advancement) that demonstrates adherence to its mission, vision, and values and articulates the school's unique value proposition.
- 1.3 The school demonstrates adherence to its vision, mission, values, and strategy in the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- 1.4 The school's Strategic Plan includes an Implementation Plan that is updated annually based on research and/or changes to the current landscape.
- 1.5 The school effectively communicates the school's mission, vision, values and strategy to all members of the school community.

- 2.6 The school encourages all students to engage in fitness through opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities.
- 2.7 The school encourages the involvement of all students in its program of co-curricular activities.
- 2.8 The school offers all students opportunities for and instruction in leadership development.
- 2.9 The school is an ethical community that promotes integrity, honesty and self-discipline.
- 2.10 The school has appropriate and effective procedures for counseling of all students; the school uses effective referral practice when issues surpass the skills or capacity of school personnel.
- 2.11 The school includes in its reports to parents, information on the student's academic, emotional, social, and physical development.
- 2.12 The school has effective procedures for timely reporting to parents on all aspects of students' progress and offers suggestions for assisting them.
- 2.13 The school models and promotes wellness.
- 2.14 The faculty and staff consistently model the vision, mission, and values of the school.
- 2.15 The school encourages students to take responsible risks and learn through both their failure and success.
- 2.16 Policies and practices are in place to ensure that teachers, parents and students work collaboratively and actively to pursue positive, respectful, and appropriate relationships.



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Co-Curriculum & the Learning Environment

The school promotes and acts upon the academic, emotional, physical and social potentials of all its members within an ethical community.

- 2.1 The school promotes inquiry and independent thinking.
- 2.2 The school promotes understanding and respect for the differences and diversities among people.
- 2.3 The school demonstrates its commitment to service and citizenship in the broader local, national and global communities by encouraging all students to meaningfully participate and teaching the skills of citizenship.
- 2.4 The school advocates and demonstrates positive practices with respect to environmental issues.
- 2.5 The school encourages the involvement of all students in cultural development, through musical, dramatic and artistic expression, appreciation, and/or study.



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Academic Program

The school's program is congruent with its mission and strategy; it is based upon an articulated philosophy and research about the ways in which students learn and effective ways to teach them.

- 3.1 Through an ongoing consultative process, the school has published a definition of excellence in teaching and learning that encompasses current research.
- 3.2 The school's program is dynamic and innovative to address the rapidly changing globalized world.
- 3.3 The school's academic program is strategic.
- 3.4 The school has a documented scope and sequence of the program that aligns with the strategy.
- 3.5 The school helps all students understand how they learn about, develop and apply a wide variety of strategies in which to learn.
- 3.6 The school's Information Technology plan is congruent with the school's strategy.
- 3.7 The resource centre (library) is a centre for learning and appropriately supports the program and strategy.
- 3.8 The school guides students to choose a current and post-secondary program that best suits their needs.
- 3.9 The school program provides opportunities for students to practice a repertoire of thinking skills.

- 3.10** Teachers recognize differences in learning styles and abilities and use an appropriate variety of instructional strategies to engage and challenge all learners.
- 3.11** The school has instructional materials and equipment available in sufficient quality, quantity, and variety to give effective support to the program.
- 3.12** The school provides program support to help students who struggle with learning.
- 3.13** The school's assessment policies and procedures are thoughtful and reflect attention to authentic performance tasks, multiple sources of evidence, educational goals and individual student learning.
- 3.14** The school ensures that all students receive feedback that is personal, timely and supports growth and development.
- 3.15** The school maintains appropriate academic records, which are protected against loss and available only to authorized persons, for both current and former students.
- 3.16** The program is designed to support students in the attainment of all essential learning outcomes identified by at least the provincial Ministry of Education.
- 3.17** The program is designed to engage all students in high quality online learning experiences by graduation.
- 3.18** There are established structures for teachers to meet to review and discuss the personalized learning of individual students.
- 3.19** There are established structures for teachers to meet to review and discuss the program and how it is challenging and engaging learners.
- 3.20** The school encourages students to be innovative, take responsible risks, and learn through both their failures and successes.
- 3.21** The preschool program (if applicable) operates in a way that assures a mission consistent experience for children.



School Leadership

The school has an overall administrative organization, which communicates, carries out and supports the school's mission and strategic plan.

- 4.1** The school's leadership team implements the strategic and operational needs of the school.
- 4.2** The leadership team supports the Board in the development of strategy and communicates progress through the Head of School.
- 4.3** The leadership team communicates effectively, insuring the internal audience (staff, students, Board) is informed about the school's policies, procedures and decisions.
- 4.4** The leadership team develops this strategy for the retention of students and engages employees in that process.



Human Resources

The school's Human Resources strategy is in place to ensure that the people practices and policies support the educational purpose of the school and are aligned with the vision, mission, values and strategies.

- 5.1** Organizational Effectiveness - Policies and procedures are in place to ensure succession planning and people development.
- 5.2** Recruitment and Retention - Policies and procedures are in place to ensure effective recruitment and retention of employees.
- 5.3** Selection - The school executes rigorous selection procedures that ensure all employees are suitable people to work with children and young adults, including verbal reference checks to the most recent employer.
- 5.4** Total Compensation Program - Policies and practices are in place to ensure fair and ethical treatment with regard to compensation and working conditions for all positions within the school.
- 5.5** Professional Growth Program - The school has a professional growth program that is aligned with the Strategic Plan and is aligned with its definition of excellence in teaching and learning. Faculty PD is resourced by a minimum of 2% of the budget for faculty salaries (excluding benefits).
- 5.6** Evaluation and Termination of Employment - Policies and practices are in place to ensure faculty evaluation and termination procedures are aligned with the school's definition of excellence in teaching and learning.
- 5.7** School Culture - Policies and practices are in place to ensure that teachers and staff work collaboratively and actively to pursue positive, respectful, and appropriate relationships with their students and with other adults in the school community.



School & Community

The constituent relations, communications, and fundraising programs of the school are well planned and effective, both serving the community and engaging them in achieving the school's mission. As well, the school has established systems and procedures to maintain harmonious relationships with the community in which it exists.

- 6.1** The school has a vision and strategy for the effective involvement of stakeholders (parents, alumni/ae, donors, friends, etc.).
- 6.2** The school has an established program to engage its constituents in a mutually beneficial manner to create meaningful involvement, as well as volunteer and financial support for the school.

- 6.3** The school has a communication plan in place, which clearly relates the mission, values and needs of the school and inspires loyalty and involvement. The plan fosters and stimulates relationships and is personalized to the different constituents within the school community.
- 6.4** The school communicates effectively, insuring the external audiences (parents, alumni and prospective families) are informed about the school's policies, procedures and decisions.
- 6.5** The school has a culture of philanthropy and optimizes donor engagement.
- 6.6** The school has appropriate infrastructure to support overall advancement and fundraising support services.
- 6.7** The school has mission-appropriate fundraising programs that engage all constituents.
- 6.8** The school interacts constructively with the communities in which it exists; uses community resources appropriately, and participates in and contributes back to these communities.
- 6.9** The school is able to raise significant amounts of money for capital and endowment projects.
- 6.10** The school has a marketing plan that articulates the unique value proposition of the school to prospective families and the broader community.



Enrolment Management

The school has defined those qualities that constitute a “mission appropriate” student and has established policies and procedures for enrolment management that ensure that the school is enrolling mission appropriate students.

- 7.1** The school has defined what constitutes a diverse student body in accordance with the school's mission and its geographic community.
- 7.2** The school has a strategic and proactive enrolment management program.
- 7.3** The school has effective policies and procedures to support the enrolment management program.
- 7.4** The school ensures an appropriate match between a prospective student and family and the mission of the school.
- 7.5** The school operates under a clear set of practices for gathering, reviewing and maintaining prospective student information; while respecting the confidentiality of students, families, and documents in the admission process.
- 7.6** The school's promotional materials accurately describe the school.
- 7.7** Financial responsibilities of the parent/guardian, as well as the financial aid process, are clearly stated in writing and communicated prior to enrolment and re-enrolment.

- 7.8** While families are responsible for the payment of fees, the school, within the constraints of its budget and stage of development, has provisions for offering financial assistance to deserving students.
- 7.9** The school respects and affirms the dignity and worth of each candidate and his/her family.
- 7.10** The school applies the same high standards of integrity whether talking about its own school or other institutions.



Governance

The Board's membership, structure and processes advance the school's mission, vision and long-term viability; and the Board operates in fiduciary, strategic and generative modes.

- 8.1** The Board adopts a clear statement of the school's mission, vision and values, and reviews them periodically.
- 8.2** The Board oversees the development and implementation of the school's strategy and Strategic Plan that is data-driven and consultative. The Board annually reviews the major strategic priorities for the school.
- 8.3** Every Board meeting includes a discussion of strategy and risk.
- 8.4** The Board's size, composition and nominating process ensure the expertise and diversity needed to achieve the mission and strategy of the school, including nonparents on the Board.
- 8.5** The Board reviews and maintains appropriate bylaws that conform to legal requirements, including duty of loyalty, obedience and care.
- 8.6** The Board has a written mandate to identify and endorse all roles and responsibilities of its Board members, committees and task forces.
- 8.7** The Board has processes to train, assess, improve and sustain its effectiveness.
- 8.8** The Board keeps records of its meetings, committees and policies, and communicates its decisions appropriately, while keeping deliberations confidential.
- 8.9** The Board has developed a cooperative and effective working partnership with the Head of School. The performance of the Head of the school is evaluated on an annual basis by the Board through a practised and understood procedure. The results and the basis of the Head's compensation are documented.
- 8.10** The Board ensures the leadership capacity of the school's leadership and Board.
- 8.11** The Board exercises fiduciary responsibility in attempting to assure the long-term viability of the school.
- 8.12** The Board ensures the school has a risk management policy in place with respect to strategic, reputational, operational, financial or legal risks.
- 8.13** The Board devotes time and energy to generative thinking in addition to meeting its strategic and fiduciary responsibilities.

- 8.14 The Board engages in fundraising and has endowment plans and/or funds in place.
- 8.15 If the School has a Foundation, the membership is so constituted as to provide the expertise and commitment required to be effective stewards of its assets.



Finance

The school's financial resources and financial planning are adequate to support the school's mission and to sustain the school's long-term permanence and strength.

- 9.1 The school is incorporated as a non-profit organization or share capital organization, and is audited annually by an independent professional.
- 9.2 The budget, financial resources, and management are capable of sustaining educational and other programs consistent with the school's stated mission and strategy.
- 9.3 The school has a policy and practice of building financial reserves for long-term facilities needs and unforeseen financial obligations.
- 9.4 The school has operating and capital budgeting processes that are approved and monitored by the governing body.
- 9.5 The school has policies and follows practices sufficient for the governing body to meet its fiduciary responsibility with regard to finance and financial risk management including but not limited to quarterly reporting on key performance indicators.
- 9.6 The school combines a solid financial base with effective financial management to ensure its long-term permanence and strength.
- 9.7 The school has a long-range strategic financial plan that is informed by school data and supports the school's future strategy.
- 9.8 The school communicates a high-level annual report to its community and makes Financial Statements available on request.
- 9.9 Financial records, whether digital or paper, are secured against fire or other potential loss.
- 9.10 The school focuses on revenue, including actively researching sources of revenue.



Physical Plant, Health & Safety

The physical plant, grounds and operations of the school support the vision, mission and programs of the school. The school has established and effectively implemented guidelines and procedures that promote a safe and healthy school environment.

- 10.1 The school's overall facilities are suitable to the operations and strategic priorities of the school.
- 10.2 The school's instructional facilities are suitable to support the vision and mission of the school.
- 10.3 The facilities are operated and maintained in compliance with local health and safety regulations, building codes and in a manner designed to safeguard the health, safety, comfort and dignity of students, visitors, contractors, faculty and staff.
- 10.4 The school demonstrates long-range facilities planning that is incorporated into the school's strategic and longrange financial plans. Long-range plans address plant maintenance, improvement or expansion as correlated with projected enrolment, program growth, and/or institutional development and change.
- 10.5 The school's risk management and insurance program is comprehensive and reviewed periodically with respect to risks, liabilities, and obligations.
- 10.6 The school has written emergency response procedures, which have been implemented, practiced, communicated and updated on a regular basis.
- 10.7 The school has written procedures regarding notification, treatment and reporting of injury, illness and suspected child abuse. The procedures are clearly understood by faculty, staff, parents, and students as appropriate.
- 10.8 The school has a business interruption plan.
- 10.9 All written security, health, safety and emergency procedures dealing with health, safety and child protection are reviewed, communicated and updated annually.
- 10.10 The administration is aware of, and ensures that the school is in compliance with, all relevant legal and statutory requirements as it relates to health, safety and child protection.
- 10.11 The school manages its traffic and parking in ways that are controlled, safe and respectful of the surrounding community.
- 10.12 There is appropriate signage on campus so that staff, students and visitors feel welcome and are able to navigate the campus safely and easily.
- 10.13 The school researches and employs practical strategies for addressing educational and risk management issues (including legal and insurance issues) before allowing off-site excursions.
- 10.14 The school ensures that transportation of staff and students is managed in compliance with all legislated requirements.
- 10.15 Facilities and staff for food service are appropriate and the quality of the food served is reasonable, balanced, and appealing to the diverse needs and interests of the Community.
- 10.16 The school has an environmental responsibility plan that is congruent with the school's mission and vision.
- 10.17 Employees understand that the supervision of students to ensure their safety is a priority in all school activities.
- 10.18 The school has a clear definition of child protection with supporting policies and procedures in place to respond promptly and effectively to incidents of child abuse and suspected child abuse within the school or elsewhere.



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Commitment to School Improvement

The school demonstrates a commitment to continuous whole school improvement.

- 11.1** The school has conducted an Internal Evaluation Report that provides for broad participation of the school community and full disclosure in the examination of strengths and weaknesses.
- 11.2** The school has addressed all recommendations from its previous accreditation visit (only for schools going through re-accreditation).
- 11.3** The school regularly collects and analyses research and school data and uses it to make improvements.
- 11.4** The school engages in ongoing development, review and evaluation of its program, including tracking the level of success of its graduates.
- 11.5** The school is aware of, and continues to search out, new approaches to education, and implements those aligned to the mission of the school.
- 11.6** The school has a structured, ongoing process through which it solicits and analyses the perspectives of staff, students, alumni and parents about their experience with the school, and it uses the information from this process to strengthen the school and improve learning.



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Boarding

The Boarding program operates in a way that assures an enriched and extended learning experience for all students.

- 12.1** The boarding program has an articulated philosophy and curriculum that meets the needs of boarding students.
- 12.2** The boarding program is integrated into the total life of the school, by shaping culture and extending the academic and co-curricular learning for all students.
- 12.3** The boarding program provides for the individual needs of a diverse population.
- 12.4** The boarding program is carried out in a safe and healthy environment.
- 12.5** Rules and policies governing boarding life, leave, privileges, travel and discipline are published so that both boarding students and their parents are properly informed.
- 12.6** The boarding community thrives in a climate of trust, care, honesty and collaboration that is evident.

- 12.7** The boarding staff are responsive to parents and actively promote the concept of co-parenting (so residential staff get some authority in the partnership).
- 12.8** The boarding staff has the knowledge, skills and qualities to effectively support boarding students.



12b

Homestay

The Homestay program operates in a way that assures an enriched and extended learning experience for all students.

For schools starting the Internal Review Process during the 2019-2020 school year.

- 12.9** The school has an articulated philosophy and program for the homestay students that is aligned with the school's mission and vision.
- 12.10** There is a clearly defined admissions process that addresses whether a student will thrive in the homestay program.
- 12.11** The homestay program and its students are integrated into the life of the school and there is positive and meaningful connection between students, fostered by their shared experiences of school life.
- 12.12** The homestay program provides resources to meet the diverse needs and to support the health and wellness of homestay students.
- 12.13** The homestay program operates in safe and healthy home environments.
- 12.14** There are comprehensive, well-developed homestay policies and processes that are consistently applied and regularly reviewed by the school. These policies are published to ensure students, parents, host families, and other stakeholders are well-informed.
- 12.15** The school ensures positive relationships are established between students, parents, host families, and other stakeholders. These relationships are trusting, caring, honest and collaborative.
- 12.16** The staff are proactive and responsive in their communication to students, parents, host families, and other stakeholders to address the needs of homestay students.
- 12.17** The homestay programs are directed by staff that is knowledgeable and able to support the students.
- 12.18** The program follows provincial guidelines and/or regulations that relate to homestay.