



How Inclusive is Your School?

This self-assessment tool is designed to provide an instrument for schools to review their current practices regarding inclusive education. As Singapore moves towards building more inclusive societies, inclusive education naturally becomes a big part of Singapore's focus. Building an inclusive school is a journey and an on-going process of reflecting on current practices, modifying the environment and school processes, and collaborating up with the community.

In this self-assessment tool, we will look at four different components that will serve as a foundation of an inclusive school. We will be looking at:

1. Student participation
2. Families and communities
3. School policies
4. Teachers and development

Let's find out how inclusive your school is and see what next steps you can take to foster inclusivity in your school!

A. Student Participation

Participation in class allows students to learn from each other and improve student-student relationships as well as teacher-student relationship. Given the right environment and support, students with additional needs will have the opportunity to achieve their rights in fulfilling their potential and improving their confidence, self-image and relationships.

Does your school provide the right environment and support for students of different abilities? Tick against the checklist below to find out:

- Efforts are made to ensure everyone at the school has friends (e.g., buddying new children with experienced children for first day of school)
- Students are given responsibilities to care for their classrooms and common areas (e.g., they have to clean up after themselves)
- The curriculum, lessons and/or school activities are flexible in terms of it being adaptable based on the needs and abilities of all students, to allow all of them to participate fully and actively
- All students, regardless of abilities, are able to play within the same area and participate in school-wide activities
- There is teamwork among teachers and students to learn from each other and to have equal opportunities to participate in all school activities (e.g., teachers and students working together for school-wide events' decorations, asking for choices)
- Students do not discriminate/leave out any individual who looks/speaks/acts differently from the majority
- Children are able to find the strengths of their classmates and value them for it
- Children are aware of "inclusive education" through the role modelling of the adults around them
- School events and class activities are planned with all students in mind (e.g., celebrations, performance, sports day)

Instructions:

Step 1: Based on the above checklist, prioritise three areas that you would like to improve on.

Step 2: Rank them in terms of **importance** for the school. [**Importance:** 1= highest importance, 3= least importance]

1. _____

(Importance: ____)

2. _____

(Importance: ____)

3. _____

(Importance: ____)

Based on your selected three points/areas, how would you rate your school's current performance of this area (from 1-10, with 10 being the highest indicator of performance):

1. (Rating: ____)

2. (Rating: ____)

3. (Rating: ____)

Actions to be taken:

B. Families and Communities

Caregivers' involvement and partnership with the school helps build positive relationships, encourages new positive behaviours, and increases self-satisfaction and optimism among themselves, their children, and educators.

Does your school provide opportunities for caregiver-school collaboration? Tick against the checklist below to find out:

- The school leaders meet with all parents/caregivers / external stakeholders on a regular basis to review the success of the partnerships and identify issues or concerns to be addressed
- Parents/caregivers are welcomed and valued partners in the decision-making process involving their child's education
- Parents/caregivers are seen as valued resources to promote "inclusive education" and to provide relevant recommendations in improving school activities during school wide planning sessions.
- The school uses data from regular surveys of parents/caregivers regarding their satisfaction with the quality of services provided and the extent to which they feel welcomed into the school
- Parents/caregivers are aware which professional organisations, advocacy groups, and community organisations offer resources for inclusive education

Instructions:

Step 1: Based on the above checklist, prioritise three areas that you would like to improve on.

Step 2: Rank them in terms of **importance** for the school. [**Importance:** 1= highest importance, 3= least importance]

1. _____

(Importance: ____)

2. _____

(Importance: ____)

3. _____

(Importance: ____)

Based on your selected three points/areas, how would you rate your school's current performance of this area (from 1-10, with 10 being the highest indicator of performance):

1. (Rating: ___)
2. (Rating: ___)
3. (Rating: ___)

Actions to be taken:

C. School policies

School policies are important frameworks that will ensure consistency in applying values and principles. Policies that remove barriers to learning and participation of all students ensure that all students have the opportunity to make progress and achieve their potential.

Does your school's policies remove barriers to learning and participation of all students? Tick against the checklist below to find out:

- Inclusion is understood by everyone (i.e., teaching members, non-teaching members) as a continuous process of increasing participation for all
- There is a shared idea on what inclusion is by everyone in the school community (i.e., through the school mottos, missions, values, plans)
- Everyone is valued equally, and the school is committed in including everyone
- Important school information or announcements are made accessible to all (e.g., translated to different languages, simplified languages for students, use of visuals, subtitles for recordings, large prints)
- Has processes and procedures in place that help all teaching staff, caregivers and students to work together to identify and contribute to students' learning needs (e.g., discussion on goals for students, IEP discussions)
- Inclusive education goals and values of the school are shared by all in the school community and can be observed during school events (e.g., during contact time, staff meeting, assembly, sports day)
- The physical structures of the school are made accessible for the use of individuals of all abilities in the school community (i.e., entrances and exits, classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, child-friendly maps, strategic location of common areas, alarms, and safety evacuation procedures)
- Has effective support, supervision and monitoring structure or framework where everyone is able to participate in learning including teaching and non-teaching staff

- Inclusive education is a shared goal for all where practices and activities towards inclusive education are documented by members of the school community and used in making future decisions
- Staff members (e.g., counselors, allied educators, special education teachers, therapists) are trained to identify and help students with additional needs

Instructions:

Step 1: Based on the above checklist, prioritise three areas that you would like to improve on.

Step 2: Rank them in terms of **importance** for the school. [**Importance**: 1= highest importance, 3= least importance]

1. _____

(Importance: ____)

2. _____

(Importance: ____)

3. _____

(Importance: ____)

Based on your selected three points/areas, how would you rate your school's current performance of this area (from 1-10, with 10 being the highest indicator of performance):

1. (Rating: ____)
2. (Rating: ____)
3. (Rating: ____)

Actions to be taken:

D. Teachers and Development

Professional development programmes ensure that educators develop well-honed classroom management skills for inclusive classes that will ensure greater teacher confidence and student success.

Does your school offer professional development programmes that educators can tap on to develop management skills for inclusive classes? Tick against the checklist below to find out:

- Staff are aware of new staff and welcome them and what they can offer to the school
- Professional development provides opportunities for staff to work with diverse groups within and outside the school (e.g., teachers across both special education and mainstream schools are invited to exchange and share expertise with staff about teaching and learning with different groups of students, taking into consideration knowledge of physical education teachers or art teachers as well)
- Staff are encouraged to share their knowledge, interests and expertise through various platforms (e.g., contact time, professional development training, internal sharing)
- Teachers' professional development also involves attending workshops/courses in relation to enhancing knowledge on inclusive practices
- Teachers and Allied Educators/Allied Professionals/Counsellors have allocated time to regularly plan and discuss teaching or classroom strategies, **not limited to** only students with learning needs or students under the care of the Allied educators/Allied professionals/counsellors
- Teachers are aware of all the resources that are available within the school in order to assist children with more individualised learning needs
- Do staff consider replacing the idea of a child as "having special needs" with a child who "experiences barriers to learning and participation", regardless of school setting?
- Teachers are skilled in effective classroom management and are able to respond proactively to inappropriate student behaviour (e.g., running around the class, talking loudly in class, mouthing items)
- In-class support options for students with additional learning needs are a predominant option (i.e., limiting the number of pull-out sessions by allied educators/therapists etc.)

Instructions:

Step 1: Based on the above checklist, prioritise three areas that you would like to improve on.

Step 2: Rank them in terms of **importance** for the school. [**Importance:** 1= highest importance, 3= least importance]

1. _____

(Importance: ____)

2. _____

(Importance: ____)

3. _____

(Importance: ____)

Based on your selected three points/areas, how would you rate your school's current performance of this area (from 1-10, with 10 being the highest indicator of performance):

1. (Rating: ____)
2. (Rating: ____)
3. (Rating: ____)

Actions to be taken:

Are you ready to take action?

Inclusion is an ongoing journey. Use the indicators above to continuously review where you are at, and to implement adjustments where needed. To help you along, take note of these three 'R's':

1. Reflect on the process continuously
2. Review the indicators as you go along
3. Respond accordingly to the needs as you take actions

Items are adapted from:

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (2016). The index for inclusion. A guide to school development led by inclusive values (4th ed.). Cambridge Index for Inclusion Network.

Stetson & associates, Inc. (2017). Quality Standards for Inclusive Schools Self-assessment Instrument.