



Cambridge International School



# Programme Review Policy





#### **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 organization works with schools, governments and international organizations 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'S 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 difference 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.



#### **Cambridge Assessment International Education**

Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

#### **Cambridge Learner Attributes**

**Confident**: in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others.

**Responsible**: for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others.

**Reflective**: as learners, developing their ability to learn.

**Innovative**: and equipped for new and future challenges.

**Engaged**: intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.





#### MISSION STATEMENT OF FIRSTSTEPS SCHOOL

FirstSteps School believes in providing a stimulating value-based learning environment based on mutual understanding and respect to develop caring, responsible and lifelong learners. We promote international-mindedness in our school community to nurture global citizens fulfilling our mission **INDIA FOR WORLD**.

- **I I**nculcate universal brotherhood and values,
- **N N**urture innocence, uniqueness and creativity,
- **D** Develop concern for environment in particular and the Planet Earth in general
- I Imbibe entrepreneurial skills & international mindedness.
- **A** Acquire habit of inquiry.
- **F** Foster international education system,
- Open mind for the development of intellect, self-esteem, self-confidence and critical learning,
- **R** Respect one-self and others,
- **W** elcome the change and develop it with a positive attitude and vision.
- O Organise self-discipline
- **R** Right environment to develop inquisitiveness for learning and to dissipate learning beyond the classroom.
- L Learners for life time and leaders of tomorrow.
- **D** evelop the virtue of understanding others' perspective.

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#### Aim of the Programme Review and Refinement Policy

The process of developing and reviewing the programmes offered by the school provides the opportunity for the entire school community to contribute positively towards creating relevant and meaningful learning environments and processes.

The aim of **Programme Review and Refinement Policy at** FirstSteps is summarized below:

- Developing a well-balanced curriculum that is challenging, appropriate, engaging and significant for all age levels.
- Ensuring a smooth transition between curricula and grades through horizontal and vertical alignment of the PYP and using UbD in the CAIE curriculum.
- Laying down a concrete plan for reviewing and refining the programmes and policies at the First Steps IB World School.
- Uniformity of understanding and application of school policies among all members of the school community.

#### Reviewing a School Policy

The school community should review their policies regularly to ensure that the school policies remain relevant and valid. As part of this review process, the school may decide to develop a new policy, update a policy, combine several policies into a single policy or withdraw a policy that is no longer relevant.

To ensure it (the school) reviews its policies regularly, schools should maintain a record of its existing policies noting the date each policy was approved and the scheduled date to review it.

Other than the regular cycle of review, a policy may need to be reviewed where the circumstances which led to the original policy being established have changed.

Reasons for policy review may include:

- the policy is no longer followed as a matter of course during school operations
- the policy is no longer effective or having the desired impact
- individuals or groups within the school community view elements of the policy as contentious
- new issues have arisen that the policy needs to address.



The school policies shall be reviewed and edited every two years. The Chairpersons, CEO, Head of school, Principal, School coordinators and Facilitators shall all be involved in the collaborative planning considering feedback they have received about the various policies and updates on the relevance of the present policies.

#### **Characteristics of a Good School Policy**

A good school policy should be accessible to the entire school community and be:

- consistent with all the standards of the curricula followed at the school.
- the learning community should be involved in developing the policy.
- be based on a clear statement of purpose that either arises from the goals in the school.
- be a strategic plan or clearly support those goals of the institute and its underlying values
- indicate what actions are required by relevant groups within the school community.
- contain guidelines for how the stated purpose will be achieved.
- indicate what the school expects of those subject to the policy.
- be written in a style that the general public can readily understand.
- outline how it will be monitored and feature a period for review.

#### What will be reviewed

- Programme of Inquiry
- Scope and Sequence
- Process of implementing the CAIE.
- All school policies:
- Assessment Policy
- Language Policy
- Staff Hiring Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Staff Well-Being Policy



- Child Friendly Policy
- ICT Policy
- School Admission Policy
- Review of action plan and self-study questionnaire for evaluation.
- The School programme development plan.

#### **Reviewing Team**

- Head of school
- Chairperson
- CEO
- Principal
- PYP Coordinators
- Exam Officer
- Facilitators
- Homeroom facilitators
- Single subject facilitator
- Students
- Parents

#### Collaborative meetings/Teachers reflections -

The teachers record their reflections on their respective planners on the school's learning management system i.e. Toddle while conducting the inquiry. The planner is a living document which all the teachers of the grade have access to. Collaborations are conducted at various levels i.e. whole staff, grade level and single subjects, the minutes of the meetings are maintained for all future references.

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#### Regular feedback from the parents

The school follows an open door policy, where the parents are welcome to share their suggestions, reflections and concerns with the senior leadership team. Parents are also encouraged to give regular feedback during the Orientation sessions, parent collaborations or the PFM (Parent Facilitator Meetings).

#### Interactions with the students/Students reflection

The school's open door policy is not just restricted to the parents, the student's are also encouraged to share their reflections and suggestions at the beginning, during or after every unit of inquiry. The student's reflections are invaluable and help in the self assessment and review of the teaching learning strategies and the curriculum of the school programme.

All other student's concerns, issues are addressed as per the regulations of the school child friendly policy.

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### **Policy Review Schedule**

Name of the Policy / Document	Review date
1. School Action Plan	June 2022 (Thereafter every academic year)
2. School POI	June 2022 (Thereafter every academic year)
School scope and sequence documents	June 2022 ( Thereafter every academic year)
4. Language policy	June 2022 (Thereafter every two years)
5. Assessment Policy	June 2022 (Thereafter every two years)
6. Inclu <mark>sion po</mark> licy	June 2022 ( Thereafter every two years)
7. Academic Integrity policy	June 2022 (Thereafter every two years)
8. Staff hiring policy	June 2022 (Thereafter every two years)
9. Staff well-being policy	June 2022 (Thereafter every two years)
10. ICT Policy	June 2022( Thereafter every two years)
11. Child-friendly policy	June 2022( Thereafter every two years)
12. Cambridge Programme of Learning	June 2022 ( Thereafter every academic year)

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#### The PYP at First Steps IB World School

The Primary Years Programme aims to develop a transdisciplinary curriculum that is interesting, relevant, challenging, and meaningful for students aged 3 to 12. The PYP definition of curriculum is broad and inclusive when designing an international education curriculum for primary school children.

We at Firststeps believe that:

- all students should be encouraged to engage fully in the programme
- the school's curriculum should incorporate all academic and non-academic student activities.

The PYP has a widespread influence within the school and explicitly impacts all facets of the school community's functioning. The school community acknowledges that the PYP will have a systemic and all-encompassing impact in order for change to occur inside the school for the benefit of all children. Our goal is to guarantee that children have a consistent learning experience, inside and outside school, guided or independent.

When students have agency, the teacher-student interaction becomes a collaboration. Students with a high sense of self-efficacy contribute more effectively to the learning community. The learning community promotes agency and self-efficacy. Transdisciplinarity serves as an organizational paradigm for learning and teaching curriculum designed, taught, and assessed. The PYP framework and curriculum model aim to produce an educational experience that is consistent in all aspects.

#### Role of the Learner

The transdisciplinary themes allow students to share their voices and collectively explore their common ground from the diverse viewpoints of their distinct experiences and backgrounds together developing **international mindedness**.. The PYP transdisciplinary paradigm promotes the concept that kids are best served when we assist them by emphasizing the value of the student's voice.

At Firststeps, the students have a voice, choice and ownership; therefore they are at the forefront of our planning. Collaborations with students are done in the classroom and throughout the school community. This can be seen in our school through

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- Unpacking of central ideas and transdisciplinary themes at the beginning of the inquiry.
- Learning continuums during the inquiry as well as the academic year.
- Feedback and feedforward after a unit.
- The school's child-friendly policy.

#### **Role of Teaching and Learning**

PYP inquiry and concept-based learning is designed to align with and contribute to the transdisciplinary approach. The transdisciplinary themes, which are supported by the subject scope and sequence guidelines and essential programme aspects, allow students and members of the learning community to engage in authentic conversations. These conversations, which emerge from the inquiry process, combine subject knowledge and individual and social experiences to express new ideas and solutions for a more peaceful society. At First Steps students and teachers are specifically engaged with:

- the programme of inquiry—the structure that articulates what, when, and how to explore transdisciplinary themes from 3–12 years.
- concepts that have relevance across, between, and beyond the subjects and that connect a broad range of knowledge to arrive at conceptual understandings.
- the approaches to learning and teaching are critical for investigating ideas and knowledge in relation to transdisciplinary themes.
- meaningful physical and virtual learning spaces that stimulate critical thinking and set the mood for the inquiry.
- chances to think and act to improve individual and communal understanding and learning, or to solve local and/or global concerns.

#### **Role of the Learning Community**

The value of transdisciplinary learning is in the integration of information and experiences from a lot of stakeholders, fields, and views, rather than just one's own. Transdisciplinarity necessitates a collaborative, community-based approach to problem-solving and possibilities centered on shared themes. The human subject, especially students, instructors, and members of the larger learning community and their relationships are central to transdisciplinary learning.

Many of the transdisciplinary themes, such as "Sharing the Planet," "Where We Are in Place and Time," and "How We Express Ourselves," signify a shared duty and



encourage communities to act on values and norms that are shared by all. The PYP links with the heritage of the people through the learning community of the host nations, as well as the human development ideals upon which it is founded. This feeling of community and its role in learning and teaching is a global advantage, especially when it comes to producing internationally minded people. All transdisciplinary themes have relevance culturally, ecologically, politically, economically and technologically. The learning community is able to contribute in either of the above relevant avenues.

The learning community plays an imperative role at Firststeps.

- Parents are invited to the classroom at the beginning of a unit to share how learning can be made more meaningful for their children.
- The diverse learning community helps to arrange guest speakers and field trips for students.

#### Process of Programme of Inquiry Design at Firststeps IB World School

**Knowledge:** The transdisciplinary themes provide a platform for student inquiries. The inquiry programme shows how the six transdisciplinary themes will be explored across age and grade levels. It allows children to engage in a well-balanced and cohesive curriculum. These themes create an opportunity for collaboration and continued cooperation among the students and facilitators, empowering them to gain a better knowledge and exercise agency for themselves and their larger communities.

**Designing:** At the beginning of the academic year the PYP team collaborates to decide what descriptor they will be undertaking from the transdisciplinary themes, grade-wise. It is ensured that the descriptors are allocated thoughtfully and spread across the various years of instruction. These descriptors shall form the basis of the POI design for review.

#### **Related Concepts:**

The teaching and learning community uses related concepts to illustrate what students should learn about a particular area. The related concepts not only help understand the disciplines better, but they also help us gain a conceptual understanding across, between and beyond subjects, reflecting and reviewing that the units are transdisciplinary.

**Designing:** After identifying the descriptor from the transdisciplinary theme, the teaching and learning community refers to scope and sequence documents,



previous inquiries and other curriculum documents, where related concepts are mapped out. These related concepts are then linked together to create central ideas.

**Key Concepts:** Concept-based inquiry is a strong learning tool that enhances meaning and comprehension while also challenging students to interact with important concepts. Concepts provide the lens through which inquiries are explored. The learning community uses concepts to empower learners to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as opposed to rote learning or remembering a huge spectrum of content knowledge.

Key Concept	Conceptual Lens/How concepts help to view different inquiries.
Form	What is it like?
Function	How does it work?
Connection	How is it linked to other things?
Change	How is it transforming?
Causation	Why is it as it is?
Responsibility	What are our obligations?
Perspective	What are points of view?

**Designing**: After deciding on the related concepts under the descriptors, the learning community relates them to the key concepts through a conceptual lens, i.e. questioning in contexts from how we would be able to comprehend and refine the central idea further.





Reflect on the balance of knowledge, key concepts, ATL and attributes of the learner profile across the units of inquiry at each year level-horizontal alignment

		Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme
♠	3–4						
	4–5						
	5–6						
	6-7						
	7–8						
	8-9						
	9–10						
	10-11						
$\bigvee$	11–12						

Check that all aspects of the descriptors of the transdisciplinary themes are explored—vertical alignment

**Approaches to Learning:** Approaches to learning are based on the belief that learning how to learn is a crucial component of a student's education. They are interrelated and flexible to a range of situations. These skills promote concentrated inquiry and pave the way for lifelong learning. Students' sense of agency is reinforced by these skills that empower them to view learning as an active and engaging process. The development of these abilities is usually mentioned as critical in assisting learners to thrive both inside and outside of the classroom.

**Designing:** While discussing the central ideas, the team would discuss the ways in which the learners could possibly learn and gather relevant knowledge. Approaches to learning and learner profile attributes can support each other and be used to fortify learning experiences.

**Approaches to Teaching:** Approaches to teaching are inquiry-based, focused on conceptual understanding, developed in local and global contexts, focused on effective teamwork and collaboration, differentiated learning to meet the needs of the learners and informed by formative and summative assessments planned as per **Assessment policy**.



#### Designing:

Approaches to Teaching	Approaches to Teach at Firststeps	
Conceptual Understanding	Through teaching and learning, the teachers collaborate with the learning community to create conceptual understanding. The related concepts and key concepts are interwoven within the classroom and curriculum for the wholesome development of the learner profile attributes.	
Development in global and local contexts	Through teaching and learning, the learning community interacts and collaborates to incorporate local and global contexts into the unit of inquiries. The learning community plays an imperative role in arranging real-life experiences for the learners that create responsible global citizens.	



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**Collaboration Among Teachers (Weekly):** A unit of inquiry begins, grooves, and concludes with formal and informal collaboration among all teachers. Year-level and single-subject facilitators discuss how their subject focus may assist a unit of inquiry. Our planning materials are shared through our planners on Toddle.

## Teamwork and collaboration

**Collaboration with PYP Coordinator and HOS (Fortnightly):** The PYP coordinator and the teachers of a particular grade meet fortnightly to discuss the inquiry flow. The PYP Coordinator also offers support for field trips and guest speaker visits. The HOS collaborates with the grade teachers to understand the scope and flow of the inquiry.

**Collaboration with Learners (Daily):** Teachers regularly collaborate with learners in the teaching and learning process. The learners unpack the central idea and give suggestions to refine the Programme of inquiry.

Collaboration with Parents (At the beginning of the inquiry): Parents are invited to the classroom at the beginning of the inquiry to gauge how they think the inquiry would unfold in the classroom. They also get the opportunity to create collaborative learning experiences with the teachers and the learning community.

#### Differentiated Learning

The school has a special educator to cater to the needs of children who need assistance in learning. The scope and sequence documents assist the facilitators to identify the different needs of the learners in the classroom. The learners take on different roles in the classroom, assisting the teacher in the learning process. Action taken by learners inspires other learners to take action on many occasions. The facilitators address differentiated learning through creating group tasks and differentiated learning engagements.

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# Informed by Formative and Summative Assessments

**Assessment as learning:** Learners are assessed as they learn through learning continuums and informal activities.

**Assessment for learning:** The progress of the learners' understanding in a unit of inquiry is assessed through an assessment for learning. Teaching and learning can be modified by taking the feedback from these assessments.

**Assessment of learning**: The conceptual understanding is assessed at the end of the unit as a culmination of learning. This helps the learning community to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that has happened throughout the unit.

Action: Student agency forms the core of the programme. It is essential to PYP learning and the program's fundamental outcome of international mindedness. Learners exercise agency by making responsible decisions. They learn about the responsibilities that come with being internationally oriented and the benefits of collaborating with others for a common goal by taking individual and group action. Learners perceive themselves as competent, capable, and active change-makers when they see practical measures they may choose to do to make a difference. Learners can demonstrate that they have connected their learning to real-world concerns and opportunities by taking action. Short-term or long-term action, reviewed or ongoing, are all possibilities. It can happen at home, at school, or in local or larger groups, and it can be individual or communal.

In the PYP, all learning and instruction are mapped vertically and horizontally in the programme of inquiry, and it is approached through concept-based inquiry, which engages learners with significant ideas to promote meaningful learning opportunities.

#### Integrating IB Curriculum Documents into the Programme.

**Scope and Sequence Documents:** The entire school staff [including teachers from both CAIE and PYP] is involved in the mapping of the subject scope and sequence documents according to the age and grade levels. These are then mapped further as per units, single subjects and yearly focus. These form the basis of teaching and learning in the classroom and the learners are assessed on these learning outcomes through the class progress summary and assessments throughout the year. The scope and sequence documents are revisited every year to identify the learning gaps and take remedial action.



**Guide to Programme Evaluation:** The school consults the guide to programme evaluation before beginning the self-study process. the guide provides information about planning and completing the programme evaluation process, including both parts of the self-study questionnaire. The self-assessment is a detailed and thorough reflection by the community members on each of the practices. It provides the opportunity to reflect and identify where the school excels or lacks. It shows what needs additional attention and amendments in policy, planning, and implementation.

At Firststeps, the action plan is reviewed annually, the standards are divided among facilitators who work in small groups to review and collect evidences of the practices being implemented at the school. The whole school staff then collaborates to identify the level at which the standards and practices are implemented. The self-assessment process is a collaborative exercise at all levels of the school. Actions taken in the annual review of the action plan are colour coded by the year. Reviewing the action plan annually enables the school team to complete the self-study questionnaire effectively. The self study questionnaire is completed once every four years. Following are the guidelines and processes at FirstSteps IB World School which facilitate self-assessment.

- Checking requirements: The recommendations from the previous evaluation are shared by the management with the school team. The entire school team then reviews the action plan and the standards from the action plan are divided amongst groups of facilitators.
- Assessing the development of practices: Review of the standards and practices is done by these smaller teams. They check for the requirements of the programme and assess the practices already in place at the school. Recommendations and changes in school practices are suggested to the whole school team. Descriptors 'developing, developed and highly developed' are used by the team to assess the degree of implementation of the programme.
- Assessing and reporting on the development of the standards: Review of the development of the standards is done yearly and the action plan is reviewed yearly. The inputs of each year are reviewed and recorded through colour coding. Evidence is collected on Toddle by tagging them under different standards. When the time for evaluation approaches, the team takes the action plans of the various years between evaluations and the team then collaboratively fills up the self-study questionnaire. Descriptors, 'shows notable development, shows development beyond requirements, offers



opportunity for further development and requires development' are used by the school community to assess themselves.

**IB Principles to Practice PYP:** This document is the basis of the running of the teaching and learning at Firststeps IB World School. The curriculum is designed in alignment with the elements of the document as illustrated above in the process of programme refinement and review.



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# <u>Appendix-1</u> <u>Student Feedback and Feedforward Post Inquiry</u>

Reflect on your learning and growth during this unit. Some questions to consider:



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#### **Reflection Sheet**

Name of the Inquirer:	
Grade:	
Unit of Inquiry:	
Central Idea:	

Something I will never forget:

2 new facts I learned:

One big question that I still have:

End of Inquiry:Student reflections Firststeps school, Chandigarh Session 2019-20

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# <u>Appendix-2</u> <u>Parent Input Form Pre-Inquiry</u> <u>Parent - Facilitator collaboration</u>

Grade:	Name of the student:
Theme:	
Central idea:	
Parents' suggestion:	
I feel the learners could inquire into:	
I as a parent or any of my acquaintar	nces can support the inquiry by:
Parent Signature	
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# Appendix-3 Teacher Planning and Working Document Pre-Inquiry

Grade level:				
Name:				
Transdisciplinary Theme:				
TD theme descriptors				
Descriptor you have chosen:				
Related concepts and Key concepts matching:	ikst			
Related concepts	Key concepts			
Subject integration (Which subjects would fit in	n well with this inquiry?)			
Subject Focus:				
Lines of inquiry				
Possible Central Idea (A statement linking two or more concepts through a verb):				
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# Appendix-4 Teacher Reflection Post Inquiry

How did the strategies we used throughout the unit help to develop and evidence students' understanding of the central idea?
What learning experiences best supported students' development and demonstration of the attributes of the learner profile and approaches to learning?
What evidence do we have that students are developing knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills to support the transfer of learning across, between and beyond subjects?
To what extent have we strengthened transdisciplinary connections through collaboration among members of the teaching team? What did we discover about the process of learning that will inform future learning and teaching?
How effective was our monitoring, documenting and measuring of learning informing our understanding of student learning?
What evidence did we gather about students' knowledge, conceptual understandings and skills? How will we share this learning with the learning community?

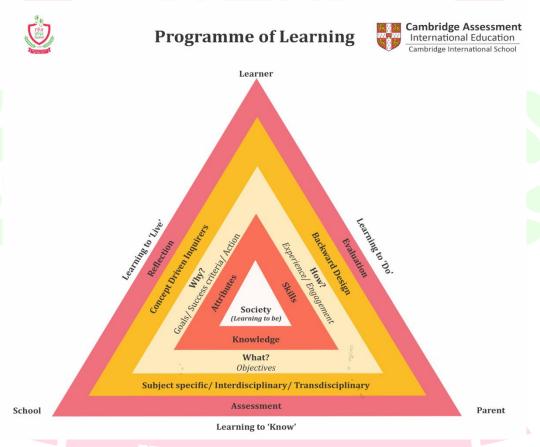


#### The Cambridge Assessment International Education at FirstSteps School

Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) sets the global standard for international education. At FirstSteps School, we offer Cambridge Lower Secondary, IGCSE and A-Level programs in the secondary section (*Grades 6 to 12*).

The CAIE provides a broad, balanced and flexible approach to combine the subjects available, suiting the context, culture and ethos. This supports the FirstSteps School in drafting, implementing, refining and reviewing its curriculum at regular intervals.

At FirstSteps, the secondary section extensively uses the documents and coursebooks endorsed by the CAIE to draft its annual curriculum. This is a continuous process and includes the subject-specific syllabus guides, schemes of work, learner guides (where applicable), past papers available on School Support Hub and the coursebooks used. In 2022, the secondary section team revised its existing approaches to curriculum using the Backward Design on Toddle to derive its **Programme of Learning**. The Programme of Learning is depicted in the form of a triangular model (attached below).





The Programme of Learning is based on the Backward Design which is an instructional and curricular design model first proposed by Jay Wiggins and Grant McTighe in 1998. The idea behind the Backward Design model is to "begin with the end in mind," and make sure facilitators know what they want their learners to be able to know and do before selecting content. In essence, this is "backwards" from traditional curricular planning processes, thus the model's name. It ensures alignment between objectives, assessments, and, ultimately, content.

The Programme of Learning is an outcome of collaborative professional development sessions of the secondary section team at FirstSteps School. The model was drafted and adopted in March 2022. The model encompasses the essential elements of the CAIE Curriculum and signifies a balanced structure to implement them. The triangular approach to learning outlines its ability to have an impact on its individual elements. It highlights the interconnected and magnified outlook in manifesting the core of the curriculum - **SOCIETY** viz. essentially training the community at the FirstSteps School in terms of 'learning to BE'. The facilitators plan the Programme of Learning for their individual subjects in alignment with the CAIE Curriculum.

The Programme of Learning will be reviewed by the facilitators and pedagogical leaders before the beginning of next academic year i.e. March 2023.

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