

EQUITY PLAN 2025–2028

Oulu International School

Oulu International School forms a caring community that emphasizes intercultural awareness, responsibility, and respect as our core values. We strive to put our mission statement, ***Joy of Learning in a Diverse and Caring Community***, into action in everything we do. We care for each other and strive for an active yet safe and peaceful school day for all students and staff members. This requires not only accessible facilities but also careful planning and an open-minded atmosphere that promotes equity across the entire community. Identity is viewed as an ongoing process, and OIS staff are committed to supporting the growth of every student.

Under the **Human Rights Act and Finnish law**, equity means that all people are equal, regardless of their age, gender, ethnic or national origin, citizenship, language, religion or belief, opinions, disability, health, sexual orientation, or any other personal trait – basic rights belong to everyone. OIS emphasizes this as a community in everything we do.

Our students are chosen through **language proficiency tests**, which are held by a well-trained testing team. The process is clear and unambiguous, and the decisions are made based on the performance in these tests only. Whenever there's a need, we modify our language tests so that, for example, someone with a disability is able to take part. All our test procedures have been approved by the Oulu City.

Additionally, **staff recruitment** is based solely on the interviews, training, and skills of candidates, not on other factors such as health, gender, age, or nationality. In the recruitment process we follow the Oulu City guidelines, and are flexible depending on the need and, for example, interviews by a video call can be arranged to ensure equal opportunities for everyone to apply to our school.

In OIS we do not just work against discrimination of any kind, but we also take special measures to improve the status and circumstances of a certain group or individual that is exposed to unequal treatment. For example, we plan and implement **special education measures** carefully and offer various ways for students to demonstrate their learning. **Assessment** at OIS is versatile, and reflection takes place frequently. We also make sure that our **CLIL approach** is effective and that it supports both the English and Finnish skills of the students as well as their different mother tongues.

Our **teaching materials** are carefully chosen and made – they show and respect differences. We promote equity among everyone, but we do it in an age-appropriate way, for instance, in Biology and Health Education lessons, or whenever there is the need. We respect the values and beliefs of versatile families, but we are also aware that the Finnish law is our first guideline.

The concept of community is important at OIS and therefore we work actively together with families. We ensure with Oulu City that **the interpretation services** are available whenever there is a need for them. We meet regularly with **OIS parent association** (OISPA) to collect ideas from parents and families to improve and make OIS a better place for everyone. We respect each other and communicate, for instance, the content of our celebrations when necessary, and make sure

that the alternative programs offered are as festive. However, we also show respect towards important **celebrations in versatile cultures** and arrange a variety of celebrations to avoid presenting one religion or belief over the other.

As an international school, our approach to learning and teaching is **intercultural**. We appreciate the local connections we have, but we also see for example Erasmus trips as an opportunity to widen our **global world-view**. However, we take into consideration that **basic education in Finland is free-of-charge**, and we do not put students into an unequal position when planning class or field trips.

Discrimination of any kind is strictly prohibited at OIS. We take students' opinions and worries carefully into consideration and, for instance, emphasize the importance of the active role of the **Student Council and Tukioppilaat**. We work actively against bullying and racism, and we bear in mind that as a whole community we are responsible for a discrimination-free school.

In spring 2025, we conducted an Equity survey for students, staff members, and guardians. Based on the answers, all in all OIS is functioning well. We take each other rather well into consideration, and our focus is on offering versatile support measures. We do our best that different cultures, religions and beliefs, nationalities and ethnicities are respected – we are an interculturally aware community where everyone is unique and special regardless of for example their heritage, background or sexual orientation.

However, according to the newest survey results, there are certain things we need to take a closer look and emphasize more. We should celebrate the **variety of cultures, religions, and languages** of our community more, and make sure that the **state of health and disabilities** are taken into consideration more carefully.

In addition, students mentioned **racism and making fun of other people's differences** as issues in our community in their responses. Hence, there is of course **zero tolerance for bullying** at OIS, we must keep our eyes and ears open and act accordingly when we face this kind of behavior. The other measure is to keep educating our students about equity topics. We believe that knowledge is the key to prevent prejudices. Therefore, we will continue the **anti-racist approach** which we focused on during our Anti-Racism week in spring 2025.

Also based on students' answers, it was clear that there's a need to form new channels for making sure that **everyone's opinions** are taken into consideration. As an action, this will be taken to both OIS Student Council and Staff teams in order to strengthen everyone's voice to share their thoughts without any fear.

Staff members also mentioned a specific wish in their survey. The second biggest worry in terms of equity according to the OIS adults had a link to **gender identities** and **sexual orientation**. This will be one of the topics in upcoming trainings.

In conclusion, for the next **three-year period 2025–2028**, OIS will focus on celebrating the **variety of different cultures, religions, and languages** of our community. We will continue to work actively **against racism and discrimination** based, for example on **state of health** in any form. We also do our very best to create **more channels** for students **to get their voices heard**, and the staff will be given more information on **gender identities and sexual orientation**.