



## Aga Khan Academy Mombasa Admissions Policy

***“Committed to excellence, the Academies will only admit students on the basis of their merit, that is, their intellectual promise, evidence of character, and capability and desire to learn. The schools must – and will - therefore have the capacity to select students without regard to the ability of their families to pay the school fees.”<sup>1</sup>***

***“At the very heart of our conclusions is one, central conviction: the key to future progress in the developing world will be its ability to identify, to develop, and to retain expert and effective home-grown leadership.”<sup>2</sup>***

***“Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for a privileged elite – but rather to open the doors of opportunity to students from a broader array of backgrounds. Our goal is to provide a truly exceptional education for truly exceptional students.”<sup>3</sup>***

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of the policy is to align the principles on which students are admitted to the Academies to the vision of His Highness for the Academies, their students and their graduates:

The above quotations from His Highness lay out the key principles underpinning this policy:

- that admission to the Academies is merit-based, i.e. the Academy is selective;
- that, in the medium-term, admission must be made without recourse to the family’s ability to pay. Ultimately, it should be means-blind and, in the interim, means-assessed if there are requests for financial support;
- that students should be assessed for admission in an age-appropriate manner, on their potential, their likelihood to adapt and succeed in the Academy, on their ability to think critically and on their leadership experience and attributes, all of which should be further nurtured through the Academy’s programme and ethos; and
- that the student body should be diverse, and from that we should seek to develop attributes of pluralism in the students.

The Aga Khan Academies are an integrated network of co-educational schools with an outlook and educational perspective based on the vision of His Highness the Aga Khan. The Academies aim to develop future leaders with the skills and knowledge to enact positive change and support development in their societies. Many challenges in the developing world result from an inability to fully mobilise human resources: access to education is often blocked by economic and social barriers, which prevent the best talents emerging to take on leadership roles. The Academies seek out the brightest and most proactive minds and give them an education that will prepare them to achieve progress in their communities, regardless of their ability to pay.

Admission to an Academy is based on merit, regardless of a family’s economic status or background. The underlying premise is that what students know is no longer the most important measure of an education; the true test is the ability of students and graduates to engage with what they do not know, think critically and

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<sup>1</sup> His Highness the Aga Khan, Foundation Ceremony of the AKA Maputo, June 25, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> His Highness the Aga Khan, Foundation Stone-Laying Ceremony of the AKA Hyderabad, September 22, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> His Highness the Aga Khan, Foundation Stone-Laying Ceremony of the Residential Campus, AKA Mombasa, August 14, 2007.



find solutions<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the Academy selects a diverse student body as part of its mission to educate future leaders with a pluralistic sensibility. A programme of financial aid is available to students who qualify for entry but do not possess the financial means to enrol.

Whilst education is a right, the type of education students receive at an Aga Khan Academy is a privilege that is available to only a minority of students around the world. Academies students and graduates therefore have the responsibility to use their talents and education to improve the quality of life for people in their respective communities, through whichever field they choose to enter.

The Academies seek students from pre-primary through higher secondary levels representing a diverse range of economic, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Students should have the ability and motivation to excel academically and should have exhibited leadership qualities through their involvement in extracurricular or community activities, where possible.

## 2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- Admission to the Academy is, ideally, at the beginning of the academic year or term but can be at any time of year, unless the timing is potentially disadvantageous to the student/the Academy or the grade is at capacity.
- The Academies admit students from Grade 1.
- Usually, a student is admitted with the expectation that s/he will graduate before turning 19 years of age. Exceptions may be made if a student's prior education has been delayed or interrupted for any reason.
- The Academies reserve the right not to admit a student after the beginning of the Diploma Programme and during Grade/Year 10 because of the course requirements of the IB Diploma and the Middle Years Programme (MYP).
- Admission, if given, is granted for a programme (i.e. PYP, MYP or Diploma) but not for automatic progression from PYP to Grade 6 or from MYP to Diploma. Such progression depends on each student's academic performance, attitude and behaviour which is subject to continuous review to ensure the student is suitable to progress in the Academy.
- Admission may be withdrawn at any time if a student's behaviour or attitude is not aligned to the Academy's values and code of behaviour or if academic progress is insufficient to make suitable progress on the programme offered.
- Admission is merit-based and based on the student's potential ability to succeed academically and fit into the Academy.
- Financial Aid is available to those without the means to afford the fees, based on the income and assets of a family. The family of every senior school (Grades 6-12) student of the country in which the Academy is located is eligible to apply for financial aid on behalf of the student. Awards of Financial Aid are made through an evidence-based process overseen by the Financial Aid Committee. There are no other fee concessions available, excepting sibling concessions and staff concessions (see below). A financial Aid form is available from the Admissions office and should be completed by March 10<sup>th</sup> the year prior to joining in August.
- All applicants have a common admissions procedure, which is age-related.
- The responsibility for admissions lies within the Admissions Committee<sup>5</sup>, overseen by the Admissions Manager including the relevant Programme Coordinator, Principal (or their alternates) and, in relation to residential places, the Head of residential Life or a nominated member of staff.
- Each student admitted should have the benefit of a campus tour, face-to-face or, depending on travel restrictions, a virtual tour.

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<sup>4</sup> His Highness the Aga Khan, Opening Ceremony of the AK School, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic, October 30, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> For admissions arrangements for the International Talent Identification (Rebalancing) Programme, see relevant policy.



Link to AK Strand – Pluralism, Culture, Ethics, Economics for Development  
IB Learner Profile – Principled, Courageous, Open-minded

### 3.0 JUNIOR SCHOOL

1. Students entering Grade 1 should, ideally, have completed at least three years of pre-school/kindergarten, and, in most cases, will be six years of age before the beginning of the year of entry<sup>6</sup>.
2. All prospective students must demonstrate a potential for high academic achievement and demonstrate age-appropriate competency in literacy and numeracy.
3. Financial Aid is not awarded to Junior School students. In exceptional circumstances, and if there is a compelling reason for the student to enrol or continue their education at the Academy, Financial Aid applications for students below Grade 6 may be considered by the Financial Aid Committee (including the Head of Academy as a member of that Committee). If the level of Financial Aid is 20% or below and the student shows exceptionally high academic potential or if there is a need to keep siblings together in the Academy, then such a case may be considered by the Committee.
4. Students entering Grades 2-5 will be age-appropriate at the beginning of the academic year according to the outlines given below:
  - Grade 2 - 7 years old
  - Grade 3 - 8 years old
  - Grade 4 - 9 years old
  - Grade 5 - 10 years old

Admissions is at the discretion of the Admissions Department for students not satisfying this age criteria.

5. Each applicant is assessed against a range of competences, in her/his dominant language. These are supplemented by class visits and personal interviews with members of the Junior School staff.

### 4.0 SENIOR SCHOOL

The Academy aims to identify able students who are likely to flourish in the Academies programme, including gifted students and those with specific talents, who:

- are academically capable and highly self-motivated;
- have exhibited leadership qualities through their involvement in extracurricular or community activities; and
- through this involvement, have well developed social skills and a desire to contribute to society.

Applicants take a standardised non-verbal reasoning assessment, a Maths assessment and an English assessment as well as an interview with a relevant member of the Senior School Faculty. Applications are welcome from high-achieving students who have studied in other curriculums other than the PYP or MYP.

30/50% Scholarships are awarded to a small number of students each year who exemplify the above characteristics to enable them to access the Academy's education and transfer from Kenyan schools with a lower fee structure.

### 5.0 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

The Academy allows applications for the Residential Programme from day students who have excellent

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<sup>6</sup> Six years of age by August 31 in the Aga Khan Academy Maputo and Mombasa, July 31 in the Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad.



records of achievement, behaviour and attitude from their previous schools and who will be able to benefit, potentially, from an Academy education.

## **6.0 TALENT IDENTIFICATION PROGRAMME**

The Academy offers an in-country Talent Identification Programme to students in marginalised urban and rural socio-economic contexts (Grade 6) and an International Talent Identification (Grade 7) as part of the rebalancing programme to designated countries identified by the Academies Unit further to the guidance conveyed by His Highness. All students admitted as part of the Talent Identification programmes are residential students, because of the adverse conditions for study that are likely to exist in their homes. The assessment tools aim to assess each student's creativity, non-verbal reasoning, verbal expression, and the way the student thinks when presented with problem-solving scenarios as well as a mathematics assessment. Assessments are both written and oral. If possible, we assess students in their strongest language. (See TID and ITID Policies)

## **7.0 DIPLOMA PROGRAMME**

1. The Academy offers the IB Diploma Programme to Grades 11 and 12 and all applicants need to be assessed for their abilities and the likelihood of success on the programme.
2. Applicants must have demonstrated outstanding academic achievements as well as a proven record of civic mindedness, creativity, and participation in community projects.
3. Admission onto the IB Diploma programme is not automatic for Grade 10 students studying at the Academy but is dependent on performance in the MYP, attitude and behaviour
4. In addition to providing their formal qualifications, external applicants take a standardised non-verbal reasoning assessment, a Maths assessment, and an English assessment as well as an interview with a relevant member of the Senior School Faculty. Applications are welcome from high-achieving students who have taken qualifications other than the MYP.

## **8.0 OUTCOMES OF THE ADMISSION ASSESSMENT**

The Admissions Manager or alternate will communicate the decision of the Admissions Panel to parents within 2 weeks of the assessment and review. The process takes longer for the Talent Identification Programmes (local and international) where final decisions are taken by an appointed panel, chaired by the Academies Unit Academic Director.

The actual results of admissions tests will not be shared with parents however: the Admissions Panel's notes are kept in confidence.

Parents/Guardians are asked to supply a copy of:

- the last two consecutive school reports;
- the birth certificate and passport (or a valid identity card);
- two recent passport photographs;
- the student's medical record and vaccination card; and
- the student's school leaving certificate (if available).

## **9.0 FEES**

1. Every applicant will be charged an Assessment fee, which is not refundable. This is payable to the Academy prior to an assessment being scheduled.
2. To hold one's place at the Academy, a student's parent/guardian will be required to pay both an Admissions Fee and caution deposit before a student will be permitted to enrol. The Admissions fee and caution deposit is payable by all new students, at the time they accept an offer in writing. The



above fees do not apply to the students on the Talent Identification or the International Talent Identification (Rebalancing) Programme.

3. The caution deposit is refundable when the student graduates or otherwise leaves the Academy, provided that: notification has been given to the Admissions Department (see below), all outstanding fees have been settled, and school property that has been on loan to the student (e.g. text books, library books) has been returned in good condition and signed off.
4. Tuition fees are payable in advance at the beginning of the school year or alternatively in instalments, as agreed with the Head of Academy. A request to pay by instalments must be received in writing from the parent/guardian. This request must be approved by the Head of Academy and the Head of Finance. Tuition fees are not refundable.
5. Any student with outstanding fees from the previous academic year will not be readmitted to class until all fees have been settled in full or a payment plan has been agreed with the respective parents/guardians, unless approved otherwise by the Head of Academy or the Head of Finance.
6. If a student/a student's family wishes to withdraw from the Academy, a full term's notice of withdrawal must be given or in lieu of notice pay one term's fees to the Academy.
7. Families who require financial assistance to support or continue their child's attendance at the Academy can apply for Financial Aid in advance of joining. The level of financial support offered will be determined by the Financial Aid Committee at the Academy, following a thorough review of a family's financial circumstances.
8. An offer of acceptance to the Academy is valid for one term i.e. if a student was assessed and accepted into the Academy in July, the offer would only be valid up until the start date for the next full academic term, i.e. January of the following year (this is however at the discretion of the Admissions Department). The offer of Admission applies whether the Academy is open for face-to-face education or, if the situation arises, virtual education.
9. The Academy may receive applications or requests for enrolment from families deemed to be of strategic importance to the Academy by the Head of Academy. In such cases, follow the process outlined in Appendix 17. Admission should only be granted to students who will benefit from an Academy education and who will contribute to it and enhance it. 'Discounts' are not given to such applicants: it is important that Financial Aid goes to those students /families in need and that the need is evidenced through the Financial Aid Committee.
10. The children of faculty and Senior Leadership Team members are welcome to apply for admission. If successful, tuition fees are waived for the first child and are charged at 10 per cent of the full fee for the second child. Subsequent children enrolled pay full tuition fees unless assessed for Financial Aid. Any income tax obligation on this concessional education will be borne by the employee.
11. Other fees, once a student is enrolled, beyond tuition fees, such as examination fees, field trips, are covered by the employees and not by the Academy. These students may apply for Financial Aid to take part in the Student Exchange programme.

## **10.0 KEY DOCUMENTS**

- Financial Aid Policy
- International Talent Identification (Rebalancing) Policy
- Inclusion Policy

## **APPENDIX: Transition from one programme to the next**

### **Progression into the Middle Years Program:**

Progression from the PYP into the MYP is dependent on the student's demonstration of their ability to cope with the subsequent programs. The student's academic progress, self-management skills and contribution to the life of the school are all factors that are taken into consideration. In Year 5, all

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students take a transition assessment in Maths, Language and non-verbal reasoning to determine their entry-level to the program when compared to external students who are similarly tested.

Parents of students who the PYP team feel are struggling to meet the expectations of entry to the MYP are consulted at the beginning of Year 5. A structured and collaborative plan is put in place to support the student to aim towards transition into our or a different school program and a final decision about suitability is taken in May of year 5 at another meeting with the parents. The SS Principal sends a letter to Year students to offer them a place.

### **Transition process for students on the SSU register into Year 6**

- Early May - Students in Year 4 of severe concern (> 2 years delay on CEM scores for both Language and Maths) · Meet with parents to discuss concern about their child's transition · Inform parents of the expectations of Year 5 against their child's current progress / scores (Year 4 Home Room teacher HRT, SSU Team, Principal)
- September - All students that may find transition challenging and require a personalised transition plan · Meet with parents to create the plan (Year 4 HRT, Year 5 HRT, SSU Team)
- January - All students with a personalised transition plan · Meet with parents to review the plan (Year 5 HRT, SSU Team)
- Early March - All Year 5 students · Letter to parents about the transition process (JS Principal)
- April - All students with a personalised transition plan · Meet with parents to review the plan · Inform parents of the assessment procedure and expectations of MYP against their child's performance (Year 5 HRT, Head of SSU, Principal)
- Beginning May - All year 5 students · Administer transition assessments (Maths, Language, Non-Verbal) All students, HRTs, SSU
- Mid May - Parents of students of concern · Meet with parents to discuss assessment results (Principal JS, Head of SSU, HRT)
- End May - All students who should not transition to MYP · Inform Senior School of unsuitability (Principal JS)
- End May - All students who are suitable for transition · SS Principal sends out letter of offer to students.

### **Progression through Middle Years Programme and into Diploma Programme**

Progression from one MYP year to the next and into DP is not automatic. The Academy will only allow students to progress from one year to the next when they are making academic progress and contributing to the life of the school on a wider basis. Admittance to the DP, will only be made to students who have a good chance of success at the programme. Decisions will be made on an individual basis after reviewing evidence from MYP assessments and student's academic and behavioural records.

To be promoted to the next class in Years 7, 8 and 9, a student's final year report should demonstrate:

1. A mean grade of above 4.1 (in Year 6 and 7), 4.5 (in Year 8), 4.8 (in Year 9) in all subjects taken.
2. That the student has met the Academy's expectations for Service learning
3. Attendance of at least 90% in each subject of study for the whole year.

Students who fail to meet these criteria will have their promotion reviewed by the school. Parents and students concerned will be involved in this consultation process both at the end of the semester and academic year.

### **Progression into the Diploma Programme.**

For students who fail to make satisfactory progress during the Diploma programme parents and



students concerned will be invited to a meeting with the SS Principal to discuss concerns at the end of a given semester or/and at the end of the academic year.

Each student's progress and attainment is reviewed in March of Year 10 by a committee consisting of the HoA, SS Principal, Head of Year 10 and the VP Student Support and Wellbeing. The SS Principal sends an offer letter to Year 10 students who have been selected to progress and the parents of students who have not been offered a place are invited to meet with the Principal.

Such students must demonstrate:

1. Ability to attain at least an overall mean grade of 5.1 in all MYP subjects taken
2. Achievement of grade 3 and above in the Personal Project
3. That the student has met the Academy's expectations for Community and Service
4. A minimum of 90% attendance in each subject of study
  - a. Personal circumstances that may have affected attainment adversely are considered and a positive attitude to learning may be considered if a student is just below the grade the entry requirement.
  - b. CEM forecast grades may influence whether a student is offered a place if they appear to be underachieving but have the potential to improve.

In addition to meeting the entry requirements for chosen subjects of study in DPI, a student should have:

A Year 10 final grade of 5 or above for each higher level subject chosen. For those planning to take **Mathematics and Physics HL, grade 6 is required in Extended Mathematics and Physics.**

A Year 10 final grade of 4 or above for each Standard Level subject chosen.