



NPO 141 - 155

Position Statement: Umalusi

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SAMA is a member of the National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations www.naisa.org

THE RIGHT TO OFFER A MONTESSORI CURRICULUM:

In terms of the South African Constitution, the South African Schools Act and the Rights and Responsibilities of Independent Schools Agreement between National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations (NAISA) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE), independent schools are allowed to implement curricula other than the NCS/CAPS. This means that Montessori schools are entitled to offer the Montessori Curriculum.

LEGISLATION:

The South African School Act (SASA act 84 of 1996) as amended requires that all schools offering Grade R to Grade 12 be registered with their Provincial Education Departments (PED). Umalusi's mandate to accredit schools is based on a complex system of regulations and policies including the National Qualifications Framework Act (67 of 2008) as amended (NQF Act) and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (58 of 2001) as amended (GENFETQA).

Provincial Education Departments (PED) registration requires that schools are registered with Umalusi. Umalusi has, however, in its own policies defined its mandate as the registration of schools that offer the NCS/CAPS. Umalusi thus does not accredit schools that offer a curriculum other than the NCS/CAPS, such as Montessori.

ACCREDITATION BY UMALUSI:

Put succinctly all schools must be accredited by Umalusi. Independent Schools are legally allowed to offer alternative curricula. Umalusi will not register schools offering alternative curricula. SAMA, with other independent schools which have their own curricula, through National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations (NAISA), has been engaging with both the Department of Basic Education (BDE) and Umalusi regarding this issue for many years and the matter is still under discussion.

SAMA advises all our member schools to apply for Umalusi Accreditation as is required by law. When asked what curriculum you follow, please enter "Montessori". If for any reason Umalusi refuses to proceed with accrediting your school, please advise the SAMA office immediately, and keep a full record of all communications with Umalusi.

Should you decide to enter NCS/CAPS on the application you could be required to follow the NCS/CAPS *in its entirety* which would make it extremely difficult to offer an integrated Montessori programme based on Montessori principles. If a school agrees to follow NCS/CAPS rather than the Montessori Curriculum SAMA will not be able to advocate for your right to offer a non-NCS/CAPS Curriculum.

ENSURING THAT YOUR SCHOOL IS REGISTERED:

SAMA is clear on the matter of registrations. SAMA advises all schools offering formal schooling (Grade R upwards), to register with the Provincial Education Department (PED) in their region. It is a legal requirement to register your school, if you do not register you are operating your school illegally.

We are also not advising that you do not undergo Umalusi accreditation. SAMA advise that if you apply for Umalusi accreditation via online 'Expression of Intent', you stand firm on your legal right to offer the Montessori curriculum.

Any school that is unclear on this issue is advised to contact the SAMA office.