



The Village High School

Inclusion Policy

Last reviewed April 2016

Next review April 2017

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As an IB World School, The Village School is committed to supporting the wellbeing of all its students by promoting positive attitudes, appropriate choices and respectful behavior. We seek to develop young people who actively demonstrate the characteristics of the IB Learner Profile in their learning and in their attitude to life and the Inclusion Policy supports our efforts to achieve this goal.

1. IB Learner Profile¹

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The Village School IB students, like their counterparts around the world, strive to be:

- **Inquirers** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
- **Knowledgeable** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
- **Thinkers** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
- **Communicators** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
- **Principled** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
- **Open-minded** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
- **Caring** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
- **Risk-takers** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
- **Balanced** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
- **Reflective** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

2. The Village School Mission Statement

The Village School is committed to offering our students a stimulating and relevant curriculum within a caring and supportive environment:

¹ © International Baccalaureate Organization 2006

“The Village School, an international community, is committed to developing inquisitive lifelong learners prepared to think critically, to collaborate genuinely, and to give of themselves generously, as they prepare to lead the next generation into an ever-changing world.”

Definitions

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), private schools are required to provide auxiliary aids and services to ensure that students with disabilities are not excluded, denied services, segregated, or treated differently than other students. Private schools are also required to provide “reasonable accommodations,” meaning those that would not change the fundamental nature of the program or result in undue administrative hardships or costs.

Under ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who:

- 1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; OR
- 2) has a record of such an impairment; OR
- 3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The Village School may consider a student to have Inclusion needs if they meet one or more of the following categories:

- Communication difficulties (speech and language disorders);
- Physical or sensory difficulties;
- Specific Learning Difficulties/SLD (including but not limited to: Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia, ADHD, Asperger’s);
- Medical conditions;
- Mental health issues;
- Social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Principles

The Village School embraces the following principles in the education of students with inclusion needs:

- Students with inclusion needs have an important role within our school and bring with them their many abilities and talents;
- Students with inclusion needs have the right to have their learning needs met;
- The inclusion needs of students will *normally* be met in their regular classroom through high quality learning and teaching with appropriate differentiation as necessary;
- The inclusion of students with specific learning needs should not adversely impact upon the education and progress of their peers;
- Clear communication and collaboration with parents is vital in ensuring that students make progress;
- Students are not discriminated against according to their individual needs, including during the application process as long as the school can meet the needs of that student;
- Failure to disclose a known inclusion need to the school in advance during the application process will be considered grounds for the cancellation of the educational contract because all applications must be open and indicate the willingness of the family to work with the school for the benefit of the student;
- Enrollment and continued re-enrollment are based upon the school’s belief that we can adequately meet the needs of the student and ensure that good academic progress is made. The final decision in such instances is that of the Division Head.

The Identification of an Inclusion Need

There are many different academic and non-academic indicators of an inclusion need, therefore identification is a process that relies on open, honest communication between the school and parents. Where students already have identified learning needs, it is the moral responsibility of the parents to make the school aware of this during the admissions process and disclose relevant documents relating to this.

At The Village School, identification of inclusion needs may be through some or all of the following:

- Summative assessment data (psychological evaluation reports, other test/exam results, SAT/ACT score reports, IB exam data);
- Formative assessment and observations (in class daily observations by class or subject teachers);
- In-school screening with the Learning Specialist following a teacher or parent referral;
- Parental observations/concerns;
- Professional judgements of class and subject teachers.

5. The Referral Process

- **Step 1:** The class or subject teacher considers reasons for making a referral for one or more of the following reasons: progress may be poor, there may be concerns over quality of work or the student's ability to access the curriculum appropriately, behavior may be a concern, and the student has not responded to intervention by the teacher. These concerns are discussed with the students' parents, and they are fully aware of the referral to the Learning Specialist.
- **Step 2:** A referral is made to the Learning Specialist along with samples of work and relevant data.
- **Step 3:** The Learning Specialist will begin gathering information and contact parents.
- **Step 4:** Recommendations will then be made as to the nature/level of support required by the student; it may also be a recommendation that the student have a 'formal' learning evaluation carried out by a suitably qualified professional. No financial support is available within school for this external testing.
- **Step 5:** Intervention takes place. Where specialist support is recommended, there is no additional cost to parents for services offered within the mainstream curriculum. If additional services are recommended by outside vendors, the school assumes that parents maintain financial responsibility. No financial support is available within school for supplemental services.
- **Step 6:** Accommodations plans and/or treatment plans are produced by the Learning Specialist and shared with the student's teachers. Individual Accommodation plans should be used when a student requires support that is in addition to high quality classroom teaching with appropriate differentiation and is different to that required and received by their peers for progress to take place. Where students are working one-to-one with specialists such as speech or occupational therapists or a reading specialist, it is the expectation that this specialist will have a suitable treatment plan and will share this openly with the school.
- **Step 7:** Monitoring and reviewing the accommodations/treatment plan- The school has in place a reporting system, which provides two reports a year from the Learning Specialist on each student's progress and two student conferences with the Learning Specialist. Parents are also encouraged to meet with the learning specialists on parent/teacher conference days. The reporting and communication structure forms an important part of the monitoring and reviewing process for students with inclusion needs to ensure that targets are relevant and that progress is being made.

The Inclusion Needs Roster

Students with identified Inclusion Needs will have their names and details added to the school's Inclusion Needs Roster.

Confidential accommodations plans are updated at least yearly and disseminated to the student's teachers by the Learning Specialist.

Each student's accommodations plan outlines the following: Accommodations, recommended teaching strategies, behavior plan details, strengths, difficulties, other pertinent information that may affect learning.

Special Accommodations for Assessment/Access Arrangements

Across the High School, students with identified Inclusion Needs are entitled to accommodations during assessment situations that help alleviate some of the barriers they face due to their learning difference and/or difficulties. A roster of all students eligible for additional accommodations is kept in school, updated at least yearly by the Learning Specialist, and disseminated to pertinent teaching staff.

Accommodations vary according to the needs of each student and may include (but are not limited to):

- 10% to 50% extra time
- preferential seating
- oral responses
- use of a word processor
- testing in a separate room
- permitted rest breaks.

Registering Inclusion Needs with IB

The IB Coordinator will work with the Learning Specialist at the beginning of the examination year to apply for accommodations for the IB exams. The Learning Specialist is responsible for making families aware of the need for current testing (within 3 years) on file. There are typically two sets of documents required by IB: formal testing and diagnosis, specific to the inclusion need; and school support plan for the student. Other information may be required by IB before they are able to approve the accommodation.

The Village School understands that there are circumstances beyond a student's control that may also adversely impact upon their performance during crucial examinations. It is therefore imperative that parents keep school informed, should emergency measures need to be taken. It is possible to apply to the IBO for special consideration for a temporary medical or other condition that impact on a student's ability to perform according to their potential during final examinations. These applications are strictly controlled and must be made through the appropriate channel. The first point of contact would be the Learning Specialist and the IB Coordinator.

Private Tutors/Specialists

The Village School recognizes the important role that one-to-one tuition with a qualified teacher or specialist has to play. Private tutors are welcomed onto the school campus following completion of the required criminal background checks and fingerprint screening in line with Texas Licensing protocols. Tutors will be asked to provide evidence that they are suitably qualified and state registered (if applicable). While they are welcome to work with our students, they are not employees of the The Village School and are not covered under any school insurance

policy. Parents are advised to also make independent inquiries on a prospective tutor and should be independently satisfied that an individual is qualified and trustworthy to work alone with their child.

Policy Review

The current policy was reviewed by Susan Cook (Learning Specialist), Gillian Richardson (IB Coordinator), Rich Mayer (Senior Director of Academic & Professional Development) and Jonathan Keen (High School Director) in January and followed up in April 2016.

The Senior Leadership Team will review this policy annually. Any suggested amendments should be presented to the Senior Leadership Team for discussion.

Next Review: May 2017