



INCLUSION POLICY

MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME

General Introduction

The goal of HISD's special education department is to support students with disabilities in gaining college and career readiness skills through active engagement in grade level curriculum. The Admissions, Reviews, and Dismissal (ARD)/Individual Education Plan (IEP) Services division of the Houston Independent School District's (HISD) Office of Special Education Services provides a variety of supports and services for parents, students, community, and district personnel. The ARD/IEP Services staff provides related services, instructional services, and individualized educational program (IEP) supports and services in the schools, district, community, and homes. These supports and services include preparing ARD/IEP committee members to actively participate in the admission, review, dismissal/individualized education program (ARD/IEP) process. Technology development and application, parent and personnel training, product demonstrations, and connecting schools and families to community resources are just a few of the many supports and services provided by the ARD/IEP Services team.

Special Education Models Utilized

Students with special needs are provided access to the curriculum in the least restrictive environment. For some, that means a self-contained classroom or mainstreaming for part of the day. However, in many cases, this is a general education classroom where classroom teachers and co-teachers collaborate following an inclusive approach. Our school provides the following instructional services in order to meet the needs of our Special Education students:

- General Education
- English as a Second Language (EB)
- Special Education Co-Teacher Services
- Preparing Students for Independence (PSI – Self-Contained)
- Skills for Learning and Living (SLL – Self-Contained)
- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Speech and Language Therapy (S/L)
- Social Work (SW)
- School Psychologist
- Health Plans
- Homebound academic support



Principles of Practice with Special Education Needs (SEN) students

We have incorporated within our SEN practices the four principles of good practice identified by the International Baccalaureate that promote equal access for all learners across the curriculum. We recognize that these principles are based on elements of good practice that are essential to the development of the whole person.

1. Affirming Identity and Building Self Esteem

First and foremost, we have chosen to utilize the development of the Learner Profile attributes in our regular advocacy class meetings. These classes are inclusive of our entire student population which helps develop a sense of camaraderie among the whole student body. During class time, students are encouraged to explore the various attributes and strive to identify with one or more of them. Students who exhibit particular strengths in a Learner Profile attribute are recognized by the campus as a whole.

2. Valuing Prior Knowledge

We recognize that it cannot be assumed that those learners who have diverse learning needs will necessarily all share the same previous learning and background knowledge. If new information is to be understood, it must be linked to prior knowledge. All teachers on our campus activate prior knowledge through the use of either formal pre-assessment or questioning strategies. In addition, our teachers engage in a process of regular collaborative planning in order to consider and develop the strategies necessary for activating and building up background knowledge when planning units of study.

3. Scaffolding

Scaffolding provides a concrete context for understanding. Our teachers use the following strategies to foster learners' increasing independence:

- Visual aids
- Demonstrations
- Collaborative groups

4. Extended Learning

Students receive multisensory instruction that is explicit, direct, cumulative, intensive, and focused on the structure of language. Multisensory learning involves the simultaneous use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways to enhance memory and learning of written language. Ultimately, it is our goal to foster learners increasing independence in taking responsibility for developing strategies for their own learning.



Follow Up

During the first two weeks of school, the Special Education Department provides folders of special education students currently enrolled in classes. The folder contains modifications, test information and specifics of the child's I.E.P. The case manager of each grade level meets with teachers individually to answer questions regarding specific students.

If a teacher suspects a student is failing due to a learning disability and the teachers were not notified that the child receives special education support, teachers must refer the student to the Intervention and Assistance Team (IAT). The first step teachers take in the referral process is to discuss the child with the grade level team members. Next, teachers discuss the issue with the grade level administrator. Finally, teachers are asked to attend an IAT meeting.

Co-teachers and general education teachers plan collaboratively to meet the needs of our students. The co-teachers are NOT teacher aides for the general education classroom. Co-teachers also service as case manager for students. The case manager will track students' success and be proactive for any possible failures.

The Case Manager arranges and presides at ARD/IEP meetings for the students assigned to their case load. Prior to the ARD, the Case Manager, an Administrator, and at least one general education teacher must be present. ARD/IEP meeting Case Manager duties:

- Gather pertinent information from the student's teachers
- Be familiar with information and able to present as relevant
- Attend the ARD as representative of the team

Principles into Practice Standards Addressed

Standard A9: The school supports access for students to the IB programme(s) and philosophy.

Standard A9a: The school strongly encourages participation for all students.

Standard B1.5b: The school has developed and implements an inclusion/special educational needs policy that is consistent with IB expectations and with the school's admissions policy.

Standard B2.8: The school provides support for its students with learning and/or special educational needs and support for their teachers.

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