

# Inclusion Policy

VERSION 2.1

SHARPSTOWN  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL



## Philosophy

At Sharpstown International School, we believe that all students deserve access to a rigorous education. It is our mission to prepare all students, regardless of their special educational needs, for college and career success so that they may be productive and responsible global citizens. We provide an inclusive education system in which students with special educational needs are fully participating members of our community of learners. Inclusion is defined by the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning and achievement in all aspects of their educational programs.

We provide support and intervention with the goal of allowing all students to maximize their abilities and achieve academic success. Students supported by Special Education, Section 504, and English Language Learner programs have access to all programs at our school and are given placement in courses that are the most academically appropriate based on the student's individual learning needs. Teachers receive ongoing professional development in differentiation and other instructional strategies that enhance the teaching and learning occurring in their classrooms and help to ensure that all students have access to rigorous learning experiences.

## Categories of Services

### Special Education

We work to provide every student with a free appropriate public education that meets each student's unique educational needs in the least restrictive and most inclusive environment possible. Students within the special education program are provided with accommodations and supports that enable them to access the most academically rigorous learning opportunities possible.

We provide the following instructional services to meet the needs of our special education students:

**In-class Support** – Students receive additional academic support in the general education setting. Support may be provided by a certified special education teacher or by a qualified teaching assistant under the supervision of a certified special education teacher. In-class support providers support students with content reinforcement, organization, behavior support, accommodation implementation, and task completion.

**Support Facilitation** – Special education teachers consult with general education teachers on a predetermined schedule or an as needed basis. The special education teacher consults with the general education teacher on the implementation of instructional accommodations and the delivery of instructional strategies for students with disabilities.

Self-contained Class – The student is assigned to special education classes for part or most of the school day and attends general education classes that the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee has determined to be most appropriate for addressing the student’s individual learning needs.

## Section 504

Students with disabilities who are not served by the special education department and meet the eligibility requirements for Section 504 are provided with accommodations and services through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Revised in 2008, all schools that receive federal funds are required to provide a “free appropriate public education” to each student with a disability regardless of the nature of the disability. These students are allowed accommodations and services that support them in their pursuit of academic achievement. Students that suffer a temporary medical condition that limits their ability to perform at the previous level of study will be given accommodations as needed on a temporary basis.

Section 504 students have access to all academic and extra-curricular programs and are placed in the most rigorous classes possible based on their individual learning needs in accordance with the determination of the 504 committee.

## English Language Learners

Language development services are available for those students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). We offer academic support to LEP students as needed on an individual basis. Educators with specialized training and certification provide instruction and accommodations to our English Language Learners (ELL).

As is the case with other programs, the goal is to ensure students are placed in the most rigorous and inclusive environment as their level of proficiency with the English language will allow. Assessment of English language proficiency occurs through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), classroom performance, and teacher evaluation. Ongoing professional development opportunities are available to teachers who work with ELL students. ELL students are allowed the use of designated supports based on individual needs and as determined by their LPAC.

## Placement

Sharpstown International School uses the Houston Independent School District’s procedure to place students with special needs into the appropriate educational program. The procedure is as follows:

“The child’s parents or guardian should contact the home school’s referral chairperson to initiate a special education referral for an evaluation of the child’s needs. The referral

chairperson meets with the parents or guardian to complete the referral packet. The referral chairperson forwards the referral information to the referral committee for review. After reviewing the information, the referral committee submits the documentation to the evaluation specialist. The evaluation specialist reviews the information and determines if it should be forwarded to Child Study Intake staff for evaluation. A child without significant data to verify eligibility or for whom temporary placement is not appropriate should have an evaluation completed within 60 days and an ARD/IEP meeting review within the next 30 days.”

## Planning and Instruction

Per federal, state, and district regulations, each student that is assigned an IEP must be provided with the documented accommodations by all classroom teachers. Below is the district’s policy that all must follow:

“The ARD/IEP committee develops an IEP for the child. The IEP includes goals and objectives for the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and social development. The goals and objectives are based on information provided by the family in conjunction with goals and objectives listed in an alternative evaluation measure.”

## Documentation and Monitoring

During the first two weeks of school, the Special Education Department, Section 504, and ELL coordinators provide specific accommodations, modifications, behavior support plans, individual health plans, goals, objectives, and testing information for students currently enrolled in classes. This information is kept on file and easily accessible by teachers. Case managers and/or coordinators update these documents as needed. Teachers are required to provide the support required as specified in the IEP, 504 plan, or LPAC plan. Teachers are expected to document the supports and accommodations provided and submit those to the appropriate department coordinator for review. All accommodations are to be documented for assignments in the district grade reporting system. A printed report of accommodations must be submitted to the appropriate coordinator each semester.

Meeting the needs of learning support requirements necessitates a collaborative team approach. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents share the responsibility to monitor the delivery of support. Students who receive supports through Special Education, Section 504, and ELL programs have annual meetings to review progress and the effectiveness of their individual supports and accommodations.

Sharpstown International School also employs a Response to Intervention (RTI) committee that includes an administrator, the Special Education department chair, and the 504

coordinator. Their responsibilities include monitoring student progress and teacher implementation of accommodations and modifications as required by law.

## Principles of Practice

We have incorporated within our inclusive 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 student.

### 1. Affirming Identity and Building Self Esteem

Sharpstown International School promotes the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in all instructional settings, inclusive of our entire student population. Students are encouraged to explore the various attributes, strive to identify with one or more of them, as well as make plans to develop others further. All students are also scheduled into a Guidance class. This class serves to promote social and emotional skills as well as the development of the attributes of the IB Learner Profile. All students, regardless of their special educational needs, are included in this model. It is during this time that scheduled grade level meetings occur to celebrate, share, and remind students of their successes.

### 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 formal pre-assessment, diagnostic activities, and/or questioning strategies. In addition, our teachers engage in a process of regular collaborative planning to consider and develop the strategies necessary for activating and building 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
- Supplemental aids
- Demonstrations and modeling
- Cooperative learning groups
- Hands-on activities
- Graphic organizers
- Chunking
- Think aloud

- Questioning
- Leveled reading
- Vocabulary building

#### 4. Extended Learning

Students receive multisensory instruction that is explicitly 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 approaches to learning.

### Inclusive Access Arrangements for IB Examinations

For students who have assessment access requirements, the IB Diploma Programme (DP) Coordinator formally requests inclusive access arrangements from the IB and provides the necessary documentation of the learning support requirements. Consent of the parent is required before the documentation can be submitted. The DP Coordinator informs the student, parent, and teacher(s) of the result once the request has been processed by the IB.

### Commonly Used Acronyms

ARD – Admissions, Review, and Dismissal

BSIP – Behavior Support and Intervention Plan

EL – English Learner

ELL – English Language Learner

ESL – English as a Second Language

ESOL – English to Speakers of Other Languages

IAT – Intervention Assistance Team

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IHP – Individual Health Plan

LPAC – Language Proficiency Assessment Committee

TELPAS – Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System

SLC ALT – Structured Learning Class with an Alternate Curriculum

SLC Standard (formerly TREK) – Structured Learning Class with Standard Curriculum

SLL – Skills for Living and Learning

STAAR – State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness

STAAR ALT – State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness - Alternate

## Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually and communicated to the school community through the school website. Teachers and other staff members participate in annual refresher training on our policies and practices as well as ongoing professional development as needed. Amendments to this policy are considered as needed based on changes to IB policy, federal and state policies, district policy, and community needs.