

SMMHS Inclusion Policy

Policy Purpose/IB Standard: The school implements, communicates and regularly reviews an inclusion policy that creates cultures that support all students to reach their full potential. (0301-02)

Culture 2.1: The school implements and reviews an inclusion policy that meets IB guidelines. (0301-02-0100)

At Signal Mountain Middle/High School, we recognize and appreciate that no two students are the same. Every student is, in fact, an individual with unique personal and educational needs. While we encourage all students to embody the IB Learner Profile and strive for academic success, we understand that this is no simple task for many students who are simultaneously trying to overcome other obstacles in their lives and/or in the classroom. The purpose of this document, then, is to outline the best practices for addressing our students in an effort to allow all students access to the MYP curriculum. As our students and schools continually evolve, so will this document. To stay current, our intention is to reevaluate our special needs population, available services, philosophy, and procedures on an annual basis.

This document echoes the policy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) for middle years, diploma and certificate candidates with special assessment needs. "Inclusion succeeds when a school-wide culture of collaboration encourages and supports inquiry and problem-solving" ("Understanding IB philosophy" 1). We recognize that all educators are responsible for discovering how to ensure that every child can participate in the classroom community. This begins by welcoming every child into the space and providing materials so they can access the learning. Our mindset should be that all children are valued members of our learning community; every adult in the building is responsible for creating an inclusive environment. In that vein, we should always aspire to meet children where they are and then take them farther.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Communicate to all stakeholders in our IB community – administrators, teachers, students, and parents – the programmatic expectations for creating and maintaining an inclusive educational environment for all learners as required by IBO. "Inclusive education involves responding positively to each student's unique learning profile, including students with diverse learning needs. There is a shift from specialist teachers being solely responsible for students with learning differences to collaborative planning by all teachers who are a part of a student's education along the learning continuum." (Understanding IB Philosophy, p. 1)
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practice in the context of the Middle Years and Diploma Programs within Signal Mountain Middle/High School.
- Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders on how to "remove barriers to learning" (Developing inclusion in your context, p. 13).

Culture 2.2: The school identifies in its inclusion policy all of its legal requirements and outlines the school's structures and processes for compliance. (0301-02-0200)

Our special needs student population includes students who have certain challenges—whether permanent or temporary—that limit their ability to perform academically. These challenges could be (but not limited to) the following:

- Specific learning disabilities
- Behavioral and/or emotional issues

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- Communication and/or language disorders
- Physical and/or sensory conditions
- Medical conditions
- Mental health issues

Students with any of the above listed challenges qualify for one (or more) of the following services: Exceptional Education, counseling support, Section 504 Plan, or other ancillary support programs. Each support department has their own methods for identifying and assessing students in need of services.

Process of Qualification at SMMHS

If there are student concerns impacting academic performance, contact the grade-level counselor, who then convenes the Student Support Team (counselor, school psychologist, SPED teacher, Admin). The team decides on steps that can be taken in the regular ed classroom (RTI, etc.) for 6-9 weeks. After that period, the data is evaluated. If the student is found to need additional support, they are then tested by an exceptional education (ExEd) professional, and depending on the outcome, a formal IEP process will begin. The support team is convened again to determine what services are required to meet that child's individual learning needs.

Culture 2.3: The school describes in its inclusion policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and clearly states the school's vision for implementing inclusive programmes. (0301-02-0300)

Vision

We are ambitious in our goals for this policy and define them as follows:

- to offer free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students in our school.
- to provide all children access to curriculum through creative and differentiated teaching methods.
- to foster compassion and caring in all of our staff and students to create a safe learning environment.
- to guide all students to reach their unique intellectual capacities.
- to support our students as risk-takers.
- to encourage all students to be global-minded thinkers.
- to communicate with all stakeholders about our students, their progress, and their changing needs.
- to collaboratively monitor success of the policy by analyzing data collected.

The only way to ensure success for our students with special needs is to hold all parties responsible for their particular role in this joint endeavor. These parties—or “stakeholders”—include parents, students, families, exceptional education teachers, teachers, staff, IEP Team, and the MYP team, itself. We have the following expectations:

Teachers/Staff will

- familiarize him/herself with the nature and needs of his/her students' special needs by utilizing school resources and the students 504 Plan or IEP.
- be proactive in familiarizing themselves with their students and their individual special need(s) according to the students 504 Plan or IEP.
- seek out and utilize appropriate tools and resources to best serve their special needs students.
- provide differentiation and/or accommodation as required and/or needed for the student's success as outlined in the students' 504 Plan or IEP.

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- respect student privacy and maintain discretion in providing special need services.
- make an effort to differentiate for all students according to their individual strengths and areas for growth.
- make a concentrated effort to communicate with parents and students as often as necessary and appropriate.
- collaborate with all stakeholders to inform and guide students with special needs in making decisions concerning the school's IB Programmes.

Parents/Students/Families will

- communicate the special needs of their students to the best of their abilities.
- provide accurate and current special needs documentation (when possible).
- be actively engaged in and supportive of their students' learning at home.
- take the steps necessary to contact appropriate staff members to voice concerns, clarify programming, and ensure best practices.

Responsibilities of Other Related Educational Staff

Exceptional Education Teachers/Case Workers	<p>The case manager for students who qualify for Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for specific learning disabilities is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeping the files current and making sure that confidentiality is maintained while allowing access to those individuals (teachers, related service providers, support staff, and others) who work directly with the student. Not every person who works with a student will need to have access to the complete file. • working collaboratively with classroom teachers to ensure compliance across the curriculum • working with students to teach self-advocacy and identify and develop study skills that support their own learning needs • keeping parents informed of their students needs and rights as learners
School Counselors	<p>Students who do not qualify for an IEP but have other health impairments that impact their learning may qualify for a 504 Plan. Counselors are responsible for keeping records on file and providing those documents to the student's teachers for accommodations</p>
Administrators and IB Coordinator (for DP accommodations)	<p>Administrators serve as part of the IEP team in making educational decisions. Administrators and the IB Coordinator for DP students are responsible for making sure teachers and other responsible parties are upholding the student's educational needs. The IB Coordinator works with teachers and case managers to ensure that DP students are practicing their accommodations on a regular basis. The IB Coordinator is also responsible for gathering all documentation to submit to IB by the registration deadline so all accommodations are provided during the May exam session.</p>
Support Staff providing related services includes but is not limited to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Psychologist • Contracted and county related service providers such as occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists • Consultative services from contracted or county level audiologist, board certified behavior analyst, assistive technology lead staff • Masters prepared special education teachers

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD) Coach• ExEd Teacher Assistants• School Social Worker• English as a New Language Instructor• School Counselors |
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Additional Authority All policies written for Signal Mountain Middle/High School will comply with policies established by the local Hamilton County Schools district and the Tennessee State Department of Education including all federal, state, and local laws.