

Special Education Needs Policy

Tri-County International Academy

International Baccalaureate Programme



2016-17

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Tri-County International Academy

International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

Rationale/Purpose

The IB Program at the Tri-County International Academy endeavors to ensure that all students are provided the support necessary to allow them to achieve academic success and reach their full potential as members of the Tri-County International Academy.

This document is designed to communicate to all of our stakeholders – parents, students, teachers, and administrators – the expectations for creating and maintaining an educational environment for all IB students as required by IBO (International Baccalaureate Organization) and supported by the Tri-County International Academy. It provides clear guidelines by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practices within the IB program at the Tri-County International Academy. This document also establishes clear responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Philosophy

It is the philosophy of IB and the Tri-County International Academy that every student can learn. Every student should also be supported in learning the creative, thinking, and learning skills that are necessary for success as adults. Goals include making them self-sufficient, caring and reflective members of society, and productive citizens in the global market place. It is our vision, therefore, to provide learner-centered IB instruction wherein all students receive the necessary resources, guidance, accommodations, and differentiated instruction need for personal success. Our policy draws its authority from the IBO Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Program (2009), Programme Standards and Practices (2005), and Candidates with Special Assessment Needs (2007).

The IB Program at the Tri-County International Academy supports the policy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) students with special assessment needs. “The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standards assessment conditions could put a candidate with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized. This policy applies to candidates affected by a temporary, long-term or permanent disability or illness, including candidates with a learning difficulty.”

This document is designed to provide stakeholders “with information about the arrangements available for candidates with special needs during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations. There is no intention to provide guidance on teaching methodology or resources. Procedures for requesting special arrangements are explained in the *Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme*, the procedures manual for coordinators and teachers.”

The IB Program at the Tri-County International Academy meets all state and federal requirements:

- IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
- Assistive Technology Act

Special Education Needs Policy Goals

The goals of the Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy are:

- Adhere to national, state, and local laws regarding Exceptional Student Education;
- Ensure that the special needs of our students are identified early, assessed, and provided for;
- Clarify the expectations of all stakeholders;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of stakeholders;
- Assist all students in accessing all elements of the school curriculum and assessment policy.

The administration, faculty, and staff of the Tri-County International Academy acknowledge that:

- Our students have different educational and learning needs, abilities, and goals;
- Students gain knowledge and skills at different rates and through different means;
- All students are capable of learning and they are unique;
- Our school welcomes all students.

International Baccalaureate Principles

These principles are taken directly from *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs* (IBO, 2009).

- 1.1 The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have special needs.
- 1.2 Special arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's special needs when demonstrating his or her level of attainment. The special arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.
- 1.3 The special arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the intellectual capacity to meet all assessment requirements leading to the award of the diploma or certificates.
- 1.4 The school, not the IB, is responsible for establishing whether the Diploma Programme can be taught and assessed. Advice may be sought from IB Cardiff (sen@ibo.org) before a school accepts a student with special needs; however, this advice is restricted to the implications for internal and external assessment and does not extend to teaching methods and resources.
- 1.5 If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) (English, French, or Spanish) arises from a diagnosed need, special arrangements may be authorized. (For subjects in groups 3 to 6, all candidates are allowed to use a translating dictionary in the written examinations.)
- 1.6 The IB aims to authorize special arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school. Coordinators are required to provide information on both the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom and under assessment conditions.
- 1.7 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international mindedness. Therefore, the special assessment needs policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with special assessment needs, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practice in different countries.
- 1.8 The IB will ensure that, wherever possible, arrangements for candidates with a similar type of need are the same. Given that cultural differences occur in the recognition of learning issues and the accommodations allowed, some compromise may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.

International Baccalaureate Principles cont.

- 1.9 If special assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate, consultation with the IB is mandatory. Similarly, if a Diploma Programme candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, activity, service (CAS), the appropriate IB regional office must be consulted. Any exceptions are stated in this document. However, a school may provide any kind of special arrangement for a candidate during his or her Diploma Programme or trial (practice) examinations.
- 1.10 A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's condition or adverse circumstance. Similarly, in the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work. If appropriate, the IB will ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered.
- 1.11 The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee, who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential.
- 1.12 If special arrangements are authorized for internal assessment, the IB may require the candidate's work to be submitted to IB Cardiff for scrutiny.
- 1.13 The list of special arrangements available is revised regularly. The IB will consider alternative arrangements proposed by a coordinator, provided those arrangements could be made available to all other similarly affected candidates.

SEN Terminology

Accommodation – a generic term comprising all forms of arrangement, compensation, or conditions that may be allowed for a candidate.

Adverse circumstances – Circumstances beyond the control of the candidate(s) that might be detrimental to the performance of the candidate(s) in one or more assessment component (for example, bereavement, natural disasters, civil unrest). “Adverse circumstances” do not include medical conditions or disability.

Assessment component – Each subject and level for the IB Diploma Program are divided into assessment components, for example, paper 1, paper 2, and internal assessment. Some components comprise discrete tasks that are undertaken separately. These separate tasks within a component, such as the map work section for a geography examination paper, are referred to in this document as a “part” of an assessment component.

Exceptional circumstances – Circumstances that are not commonly within the experience of other candidates with special assessment needs. The IB reserves the right to determine which circumstances qualify as “exceptional” and therefore justify a particular special arrangement.

Invigilator – A person, or persons, responsible for supervising an examination; also referred to as a “proctor” or a “supervisor”. The invigilator of an IB examination may or may not be the coordinator.

Special arrangements – Changed or additional conditions during the assessment process for a candidate with special education needs. These enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment more fairly and are not intended to compensate for any of ability.

Special assessment needs – A candidate with special assessment needs is one who requires special arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment.

Special education needs – This refers to candidates with individual learning needs, who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, and who require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement. Candidates who require special assessment arrangements may display the characteristics of one or more of the following special educational needs.

Specific learning issues, language and communication disorders – Significant issues in reading, writing, spelling, or manipulating numbers associated with issues in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notations, dyslexia, dyscalculia). Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems):

Physical and sensory conditions

- Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious, but affect mobility.

- Sensory issues: hearing – embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties; visual – includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.

Medical conditions

- The most common being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia; sickle cell anemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia, and other cancers.

Mental health issues

- A wide range of conditions that can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions, such as schizophrenia and manic depression, to eating disorders, anxieties and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a candidate's life.

Technical language

This refers to terminology specific to the subject being tested. It may be the target of the assessment and must be known by the candidate to understand fully the subject.

Roles & Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the School

- The school will work with the Tri-County Educational Service Center to make sure the program is in compliance with federal and local laws regarding students with special educational needs.
- The school will provide guidance to students with special education needs to help them make informed decisions concerning application to our program.
- The school, along with the Tri-County Educational Service Center, will raise staff awareness of the needs of our exceptional students.
- The school will provide resources for the implementation and continuation of the Special Education Needs Policy.
- School counselors in conjunction with the Tri-County Educational Service Center will provide the teachers with all IEPs and 504 plan documentation.
- Exceptional Student Services personnel, school guidance counselors, and support facilitators will provide updates and host meetings for IEP and 504 reviews.
- The school will facilitate the provision of appropriate accommodations as outlined by the Tri-County Educational Service Center.

Responsibilities of the IB Coordinator

- The IB Coordinator will apply to the IB for students' accommodations in assessment type and circumstances.
- The IB Coordinator will work collaboratively with faculty to support students with special education needs.
- The IB Coordinator will provide examination accommodations as needed and approved by the IB.
- The IB Coordinator will maintain discretion and confidence in providing special education needs services.

Responsibilities of the Faculty

- The classroom teacher will comply with all federal and local laws regarding special education needs.
- The classroom teacher will participate in all required training when available.
- The classroom teacher will identify struggling learners and refer the student to the counselor or IB coordinator as needed.
- The classroom teacher will implement the appropriate interventions as outlined in the Multi-Tier Support System.

Responsibilities of the Faculty cont.

- The classroom teacher will maintain accurate records of students' progress.
- The classroom teacher with the assistance of the exceptional student services facilitator and counselor will become familiar with the special needs of the exception student.
- The classroom teacher will provide differentiate instructions as outlined by the students' IEP or 504 Plan.
- The teacher will maintain discretion and confidentiality in providing special education needs services.

Responsibilities of the Parent

- Parents will play an active role in their child's education.
- Parents will have knowledge of their child's entitlement within the school district policy.
- Parents will communicate to the school all information and documentation regarding their child's special education needs.
- Parents will communicate with the school regarding any changes in their child's special education needs.
- Parents will make request for needed child studies and services from the school or school district in a proactive manner.
- Parents will provide documentation needed for IBO accommodation requests.

Responsibilities of the Student

- Students will be proactive in asking for assistance from the school administrators, faculty, and staff.
- Students will be an active participant in classes and meetings.
- Students will follow all Tri-County International Academy IB policies and procedures.

References and Resources

Candidates with special assessment needs, IBO, 2011.

Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom, IBO, 2013.

Learning diversity in the International baccalaureate programmes, IBO, 2010.

Language Policy, Tri-County International Academy, 2013

Assessment Policy, Tri-County International Academy, 2013

Special Needs Policy of South Fork High School in Martin County, Florida

Special Education Needs Policy of Dallas International School, Dallas, Texas.

Special Education Needs Policy Marion County Public Schools, Ocala, Florida.2430