
Dundee Ridge Middle Academy
International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme
Candidate School



Special Education/Inclusion Needs Policy

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I. PURPOSE, MISSION, AND BELIEFS

A. PURPOSE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/ INCLUSION POLICY

The Special Educational Needs/ Inclusion Policy is a working document developed by a committee of teachers and administrators from Dundee Ridge Middle Academy. Consistent with the standards and practices of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP), this document provides an overview of DRMA's beliefs and practices as they relate to the special educational needs of our students. This policy outlines the processes implemented at DRMA to ensure that all students have access to the MYP curriculum, so that they can fulfill the mission of both IB and Dundee Ridge Middle Academy.

B. MISSION AND BELIEFS

“Dundee Ridge Middle Academy, in cooperation with families and community, prepare students to be lifelong learners by creating opportunities to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to manage the complexity of an ever-changing 21st century. Through challenging curriculum delivered in a respectful, diverse learning environment students will reach their full potential, master academic standards and be prepared to take responsible action for the future.”

Leadership in rigorous education

We acknowledge that in order for students to reach their greatest personal potential, both as leaders and learners, they need to be provided with the least restrictive environment possible. This means ensuring that students receive meaningful and equitable access to the curriculum, while safeguarding their interests and removing barriers, so they can find success.

Inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring citizens

To help our students develop their true potential as citizens of our world, we recognize the need to enhance their motivation to learn. By providing curriculum that is accessible and appropriately challenging to all students, we can foster inquiry and offer students opportunities to build upon their knowledge, so they can become caring and active members of our communities.

Intercultural understanding and respect

Nurturing intercultural understanding and respect among students happens when educators understand and respect the needs of all learners. Being cognizant of the unique personal and educational needs of each student, we recognize and appreciate that not every individual can have the same educational

experience. We see the diversity of our learning community as a positive resource that can enrich learning, providing opportunities for students and staff to heighten their awareness and expand their thinking.

II. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Our Special Educational Needs (SEN) population includes students who need accommodations or adaptations to curriculum in order to meet their learning needs and facilitate continued academic growth.

These students may include, but are not limited to:

- Special Education students who have an active Individualized Education Plan in place
- English Language Learners who have a barrier in the language of instruction
- Students who are in need of counseling support
- Students with medical or health issues which require a 504
- High achieving or gifted students who are driven to pursue further inquiry
- Students of poverty

III. PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of Dundee Ridge Middle Academy's' Special Educational Needs programs are:

- To provide a positive and friendly environment to all learners with varying needs, recognizing and capitalizing on differences and diversity
- To provide all children access to curriculum through inclusion and differentiated teaching methods
- To monitor student success as shown through data, and communicate with all stakeholders about students, their progress, and their changing needs
- To guide all students to reach their unique intellectual capabilities

IV. INCLUSION

At DRMA, every effort is made to provide the least restrictive learning environment that appropriately matches the needs of each student. Therefore, inclusion can be implemented differently for each student, depending on many factors such as, but not limited to:

- the student's skill level

- the student’s previous learning experiences
- the unit of study

At DRMA, inclusion can take many forms including:

- Students present in the General Education classroom
- Access to common curriculum for all students
- Support in the General Education classroom from Educational Assistants, Special Education teachers, collaborative co-teachers, and modifications from the General Education teacher
- Additional time to work in another setting

V. DIFFERENTIATION

“Differentiation can help learners access the content at an appropriate level through a variety of resources” (*Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes 5*).

Differentiation is a system of strategies that appropriately structure the curriculum so that each learner can reach his/her true potential. Differentiation “puts students at the center of the planning” helping teachers “respond specifically to their needs” (*Making Differentiation a Habit: How to Ensure Success in Academically Diverse Classrooms 57*). Teachers differentiate through various means including, but not limited to:

- Content – Modifying resources and learning goals or providing opportunities for students to select what they want to learn.
- Process – Providing variety or choice in how students will learn.
- Product – Capitalizing on students’ learning preferences and strengths by permitting them choice when demonstrating their learning.

These forms can be suggested by the teacher for each learner based on readiness or the learner’s profile. Methods of differentiation can also be determined by student interest and choice. Differentiation can take many forms and is closely tied with the Four Principles of Good Practice outlined by IB. (*How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms 32*)

VI. THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

A. AFFIRMING IDENTITY AND BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Valuing the diverse needs of all members of our learning community supports identity and encourages self-esteem. By creating an environment in which all students feel accepted, they are more receptive to

developing the Learner Profile traits. Students who feel confidently supported in their academic endeavors are more likely to be risk-takers who participate actively in class, as well as inquirers who pursue further opportunities for learning. When we acknowledge students' differences in positive ways, they are more apt to be open-minded themselves.

At DRMA, students create networks and support systems through each subject area class. Each subject area class, for MYP years 0-3, follows the procedures of Developmental Design, starting class with a greeting to acknowledge all members of our learning community. This is followed by sharing, to help students build relationships, create connections, and see multiple perspectives (Crawford 60). Subject area classes also include activities to support community building. This sense of belonging increases self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, homerooms have the opportunity to participate in activities and reflections tied to the Learner Profile trait of the month and World Wide Languages to help students grow in their understanding and display of these traits. This curriculum lays the foundation for a productive and proud school year.

In addition, all subject area teachers have received training on strategies to increase student communication in the classroom. By providing each student with opportunities to communicate, using a variety of forms to facilitate that communication, we can ensure that each student's voice is heard. When students feel acknowledged, they feel valued and can open themselves up to continued learning experiences.

B. VALUING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

In order for students to learn and retain new knowledge, it must be tied to their existing knowledge, which is distinct to each student. "When planning the range of new learning that can take place in any individual, previous learning experiences or prior knowledge must be taken into consideration" (*IB Special educational needs 6*). Valuing prior knowledge is a critical piece of teaching and learning at Dundee Ridge Middle Academy.

While it is paramount to make connections between prior knowledge and present learning, in some cases, students may not have past experiences that can be used to tie these pieces together. In these situations, building background knowledge related to concepts and vocabulary is of utmost importance. At DRMA, teachers help students construct background knowledge related to vocabulary and concepts by focusing on the four principles devised by Blachowicz & Fisher:

- Students are active in developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them

- Students personalize word learning
- Students are immersed in words through language-rich environments
- Students build on multiple sources of information to learn words through repeated exposure

In addition, teachers at Dundee Ridge help students develop the necessary background knowledge by providing comprehensible input. We understand that acquiring new information is easier when it is appropriate to the students' language proficiency levels. Keeping this in mind, teachers use aids, such as photographs, pictures, gestures, modeling, manipulatives, and graphic organizers when teaching vocabulary and concepts to students. Learning subject-specific language is also facilitated by the use of slower, enunciated, and repetitive speech. All of these techniques help students to attain the information necessary for them to make connections and further develop their learning.

C. SCAFFOLDING

DRMA and IB strive to develop lifelong learners. However, in order for students to gain autonomy in learning there must be a gradual release of responsibility, often known as scaffolding. Teachers can demonstrate scaffolding instruction when they provide substantial support and assistance in the beginning stages of learning a new concept or strategy, and then gradually decrease the amount of support as the learners gain experience through multiple practice opportunities. Through scaffolding, we are able to increase students' level of independent learning.

During guided and independent practice at DRMA, students are provided with self-regulating strategies, known as learning strategies. These learning strategies are categorized into three groups: Metacognitive, Social, and Cognitive. Metacognitive Strategies help students monitor their own thinking and learning through awareness, reflection and interaction. Social Strategies improve learning through the use of group discussions and cooperative learning. Cognitive Strategies allow students to apply a specific technique to a learning task. Such techniques utilized at DRMA include:

- before, during, and after reading strategies
- setting a purpose for reading
- text to self, text to text, text to world connections
- Cornell notes
- graphic organizers
- concept maps or webs
- interaction strategies (Think Pair Share, Inside-Outside Circle, etc.)
- visual cues

- mental hooks

Scaffolding Techniques are another important element of teaching and learning. DRMA lessons incorporate instruction, modeling, practice, and application to increase student confidence, and thus achievement. In addition, teachers use easily understandable input to assist students in the acquisition of new information. Teachers may also provide particular students with sentence stems to facilitate their communication during various tasks. Finally, larger assignments or assessments may be broken into smaller, more manageable tasks, ensuring that particular students can accomplish each step that is a prerequisite for the next. By purposefully scaffolding learning experiences, teachers are able to create a ladder of success for all students.

D. EXTENDING LEARNING

To take learning to the next level, teachers provide students with experiences that will extend their thinking. This is done by “combining high expectations with numerous opportunities for learner-centered practice and interaction with cognitively rich material...” (*IB Special educational needs 7*). At DRMA, one of our main instructional goals is to provide student-centered classrooms driven by inquiry. To facilitate the achievement of this goal, teachers rely on subject-specific strategies, as well as whole-school strategies. Reciprocal Teaching is used throughout the subject areas to increase communication and thinking among students. Through the use of Reciprocal Teaching strategies, students at DRMA are given opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers while interacting with a deeper understanding and variety of contexts and concepts.

VII. ROLES IN SUPPORTING SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

A. TEACHER ROLES

1. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

- Special Education teachers are instructors of academic, social, and emotional/ behavioral knowledge, skills, and support.
- Special Education teachers develop Individual Education Plans (IEP) for Special Education students and hold annual IEP meetings.
- Special Education teachers are the case managers for Special Education students. They create goals for each student, track the student’s progress toward those goals, collect data, and inform all stakeholders of each student’s progress and needs, through the use of progress reports.

- Special Education teachers work with students in the most conducive environment for each student. This could be through inclusion, co-teaching, small group settings, or individual settings.
- Special Education teachers modify tasks for students guided by assessment results.
- Special Education teachers are learning strategists who collaborate with General Education teachers to provide accommodations.

2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER

- English Language (ELL/ESOL) teachers are instructors of academic and language acquisition concepts and skills.
- ELL teachers conduct the W-APT test with each student identified as an English learner to establish their level of language proficiency.
- ELL teachers monitor students' progress of language proficiency goals by creating data walls, which can be accessed by all General Education teachers.
- ELL teachers make modifications for English learners guided by the data walls and ACCESS test results.
- ELL teachers are language strategists who collaborate with General Education teachers to provide instructional methods that promote comprehension and language development.
- ELL teachers work with students in the most conducive environment for each student. This could be through inclusion, in small group settings, or in individual settings.
- ELL teachers co-teach with the General Education teachers.
- ELL teachers provide informational sessions for families during the school year.
- ELL teachers communicate students' progress through ACCESS test results, report cards/ grades, observations, and monitoring twice a year.

3. GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER

- The General Education teacher is a content specialist. He/ She develops the curriculum sequence and instructional objectives in accordance with IB objectives and concepts and Florida State Standards.
- The General Education teacher collaborates with the ELL teachers and the Special Education teachers to plan and develop lessons, as well as modify and adapt curriculum to meet the needs of all students.

- The General Education teacher communicates with the ELL teachers and Special Education teachers about students' progress on an informal basis throughout the school year. This can occur when information is requested or if questions/ concerns arise.
- The General Education teacher formally communicates with the ELL teachers about the progress of monitored and observed English Learners through the use of reflection sheets.
- The General Education teacher formally communicates with the Special Education teachers about the progress of Special Education students for their quarterly progress reports and annual IEP meeting.

B. SUPPORT STAFF ROLES

1. PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSISTANT

- Paraprofessional Assistants (PARAs) collaborate with General Education teachers, as well as ELL teachers and Special Education teachers as appropriate, on lesson plans and modification of student tasks.
- PARAs work with students in the classroom or small group settings to support the achievement of their goals and academic growth.

2. GUIDANCE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

- The guidance counseling department works with students individually and/or in small groups to reach their academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral goals.
- DRMA guidance counselors are also members of our Professional Learning Communities, communicating with teachers about the varied needs of our students and modifications to meet those needs.

3. LICENSED SCHOOL NURSE

- The Licensed School Nurse (LSN) works with students who have medical or health issues that could impair their educational achievement.
- The LSN provides information, resources, and modifications for teachers to use when working with students with medical or health-related issues.
- The LSN communicates with families regarding their student's medical or health issue, providing education and any available resources to aid them in supporting their student's needs.
- As part of the Special Education Team, the LSN screens each student in the evaluation or reevaluation process and meets with the parent/ guardian to learn the student's health history. This information is part of the IEP report.

- The LSN works closely with the school's staff and administration to support medical and health related referrals.

4. SPEECH PATHOLOGY

- The Speech Pathologist services students with speech and language needs as addressed in an IEP.
- The Speech Pathologist may service students individually or in a small group setting.
- The Speech Pathologist works with students' goals as identified on their annual IEPs and collaborates with General Education teachers and Special Education teachers.
- The Speech Pathologist at DRMA is a district consultant who works with students 2-3 days per week or as prescribed.

5. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- The Occupational Therapist services students with sensory needs as addressed in an IEP as a secondary disability.
- The Occupational Therapist may service students individually or in a small group setting.
- The Occupational Therapist at DRMA is a district consultant who works 4-6 hours per week at our school or as needed, based on students' IEPs.

6. DEAF/ HARD OF HEARING ITINERANT

- The Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Itinerant services students who have hearing needs as addressed in an IEP.
- The Itinerant monitors students' progress, checks on students' hearing devices, and ensures that the hearing needs of students are met.
- The Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Itinerant is a consultant who works as needed, based on students' IEPs.

7. SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

- The School Psychologist provides evaluations of students either entering the Special Education Program or as part of a student's three year evaluation process.

VIII. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS PRACTICES

A. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

1. IDENTIFICATION

If a General Education teacher determines that traditional classroom interventions are not helping increase student progress, the information is sent to the Guidance Counselor. A multi-tiered support system (MTSS) is put in to place for the student. MTSS can be but is not limited to;

- Tier 1 – interventions in the classroom setting
- Tier 2 – 504 plan or intensive class or assistance from para in classroom

If a student is still struggling, the counselor then schedules a meeting with the student's parents/ guardians to discuss their student's progress during the interventions and the possibility of a Special Education initial evaluation.

The evaluation may or may not include:

- an interview with the parents/guardians about their concerns, the student's strengths and weaknesses, and the student's medical or health background
- intellectual testing
- academic testing
- communication/speech testing
- motor testing
- sensory testing
- social/ emotional/ behavioral rating scales
- observations in the classroom
- transition testing

The Guidance Counselor then sends a Consent for Evaluation form (CE) home, describing the specific assessments that will be conducted and who will conduct them. Parents/ Guardians must return the CE, with their signature, before the evaluation can begin. Once permission is returned to the school, Special Education staff have 60 school days to complete the evaluation.

Once the evaluation is completed, parents/guardians are contacted to set up a meeting. During this meeting, the Special Education staff share the results of the evaluation and the eligibility determination for Special Education services. Parents/Guardians must sign the eligibility determination signature page to confirm receipt of the evaluation results.

- Tier 3 – IEP/ESE Services

- If a student qualifies for Special Education services, his/her needs are discussed at the meeting. Based on those needs, goals are developed in the form of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

2. RE-EVALUATION

After the initial evaluation, students' continuing needs are determined by conducting a comprehensive re-evaluation at least every three years. A Special Education staff member schedules a physical or verbal meeting with the student's IEP team and parent to discuss the student's progress and determine the areas to assess.

The reevaluation may or may not include:

- an interview with the parents/guardians about their concerns, the student's strengths and weaknesses, and the students' medical or health background
- intellectual testing
- academic testing
- communication/speech testing
- motor testing
- sensory testing
- social/ emotional/ behavioral rating scales
- observations in the classroom
- transition testing

The Special Education staff member then reviews the Reevaluation testing. Testing cannot begin without parent consent. Once permission is granted Special Education staff have 60 school days to complete the reevaluation.

Once the reevaluation is completed, parents are contacted to set up a reevaluation meeting. During this meeting, the Special Education staff share the results of the reevaluation, as well as eligibility for continuation of Special Education services. Parents/ guardians should sign the eligibility determination signature page to either agree or disagree with the reevaluation results.

If the student continues to qualify for Special Education services, his/her needs are discussed at the meeting. Based on those needs, goals and services are updated on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) in a meeting with parents. Along with the IEP, a Prior Written Notice (PWN) notification of changes in services is also sent home. The PWN should be signed by the parents/guardians and sent back to the Special Education staff.

3. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

a). COLLABORATION

Special Education teachers, General Education teachers, and Special Education PARAs collaborate by working together to improve access to the General Education curriculum for all students. This provides subject area teachers with strategies they can use to better meet the needs of Special Education students in all of their classes throughout the day.

b). SUPPORT WITHIN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

Support for Special Education students within the General Education classroom can take many forms.

General Education teachers use the strategies learned from collaboration, provide accommodations listed in students' IEPs, to differentiate the curriculum and reach each Special Education student.

In addition, students who have been identified (within their IEPs) as needing extra assistance in the General Education classroom receive support from Special Education staff throughout the day. These staff members help make the content accessible to the students through the use of various strategies to increase student comprehension, as well as the use of accommodations listed in their IEPs. While in the General Education classroom, Special Education staff members also utilize co-teaching models to support Special Education students. These models may include:

- One teach, one drift
 - The Special Education staff member checks in with individual Special Education students and provides redirection on academic processes, as needed, while the General Education teacher instructs the class as a whole.
- Alternative teaching
 - The Special Education staff member works with a small group of Special Education students and non-ESE students, while the General Education teacher works with the larger group.
 - The Special Education staff member works one-on-one with a Special Education student, while the General Education teacher works with the larger group.
 - The Special Education staff member re-teaches parts of the lesson to one or more Special Education students, while the General Education teacher works with the larger group.

c). SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION

Students with secondary disabilities, such as speech/ language, sensory, or deaf/hard of hearing, receive services from the Speech Pathologist, the Occupational Therapist, and the Deaf/ Hard of Hearing Itinerant

respectively. These services occur in small groups or individual settings or in the classroom, with a frequency determined by their IEPs.

B. ELL STUDENTS

1. IDENTIFICATION

At enrollment, students (and their families) complete a language survey. If they have identified a language other than English as their mother tongue, they are tested using the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). The W-APT is an English language proficiency test given to students who may be designated as English language learners (ELLs). It assists educators with programming decisions, such as identification and placement of ELLs. W-APT test items are written using the five English Language Proficiency Standards from the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium: Social & Instructional Language, Language of Language Arts, Language of Mathematics, Language of Science, and Language of Social Studies. Each form of the test assesses the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The W-APT is designed to be individually administered and adaptive, so that parts of the test may be discontinued as soon as the student reaches the upper limit of his or her performance (Wisconsin Center for Education Research). Based on the results of the W-APT, students either receive direct service, indirect service, or no service through the English Learning programs.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

a). ENGLISH LEARNING (ELL) CLASSES

Students who have been designated as English language learners and have an English proficiency level, according to the WIDA Standards, of 1 (entering), 2 (beginning), 3 (developing), and low 4 (expanding) receive direct English Language Learning services through Language and Literature courses at DRMA.

b). CO-TEACHING AND COLLABORATION

Students who have been designated as English language learners and have an English proficiency level of high 4 (expanding), 5 (bridging), or 6 (reaching) receive indirect English Learning services. In an effort to support these ELLs throughout the day, our ELL Department works with teachers of various subject areas. EL teachers co-teach with Language and Literature teachers during different periods of the day. While they cannot be present to co-teach every period, they work together closely to plan lessons and activities to reach students at a range of English proficiency levels.

This provides the subject area teachers with strategies they can use in all of their classes throughout the day. Through collaboration and co-teaching, DRMA is able to provide support for students who need

indirect EL services, and extended support for students who need direct services.

C. STUDENTS WHO NEED COUNSELING SUPPORT

1. IDENTIFICATION

Students who need counseling support are identified in a number of ways, including:

- Teacher recommendation
- Parent recommendation
- ESE recommendation
- Student self-advocacy
- Recommendation from a mental health professional who has worked, or is currently working, with the student

The reason for counseling support may be academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral. In any case, parent permission is needed for continuous counseling services.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The Guidance Department works with students individually and/or in small group settings to reach their academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral goals. The frequency with which school counselors meet to work with individual students varies. Counselors may meet with students weekly, monthly, as needed, or as indicated on an IEP. In severe cases, outside counseling services may be brought in to support students.

When determining topics for group sessions, the Guidance Department creates surveys so students can give input as to the areas in which they need support. Group sessions are based on these requests and any needs that arise throughout the year. In the past, group sessions have included:

- Grief groups to support students who have experienced loss
- Anger groups to help students process their feelings and express them appropriately
- Girls' groups to help young ladies avoid cliques by creating a network of friends

D. STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL OR HEALTH ISSUES

1. IDENTIFICATION

Annually, the Licensed School Nurse reviews the DRMA student health forms to identify students who have a health concern or medical diagnosis. Students with a medical/health issue must receive a diagnosis from a licensed medical practitioner. When necessary, students who have a diagnosed and documented health issue will be provided with a 504 Health plan, which will be written by a 504 team. This team may include the school nurse.

Students may also be identified through the IEP process, staff observations and concerns, as well as DRMA's annual vision and hearing screening. The school nurse will then look into the situation and communicate the concern with the student and his/her family, possibly recommending a visit to a medical practitioner for diagnosis of the issue and treatment options.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

The school nurse checks in periodically with each student who has a medical/ health issue to discuss his/her medical treatment and progress, as well as any related questions he/she may have. In addition, the nurse talks with the student to determine the impact his/her medical/ health issues may be having on his/her academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral goals.

The licensed school nurse communicates with families regarding their students' medical /health issues and provides resources, when available, to aid families in supporting their students' needs. Examples of aid include, but are not limited to:

- Pamphlets and brochures about illnesses
- Vaccination information
- Access to no-cost vision exams and eyeglasses

The LSN provides information and resources for teachers to use when working with students who have medical or health related issues. Teachers adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessments to meet students' medical and health needs

E. HIGH ACHIEVING OR GIFTED STUDENTS

1. IDENTIFICATION

High achieving or gifted students are identified through a combination of standardized test scores subject-specific formative and summative assessments results, and teacher recommendation.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support for high achieving or gifted students may be provided through recommendations from the individual classroom teachers. Support for these students can take several forms:

- Differentiated tasks, such as individualized projects, to provide students with appropriately challenging and rigorous tasks
- High school credit classes offered such as; Earth Science, Spanish, Agriculture, Algebra and Geometry

F. STUDENTS OF POVERTY

1. IDENTIFICATION

Students of poverty were previously identified through the completion of a free and reduced lunch form at the beginning of each school year. Now all students at DRMA receive free breakfast and lunch regardless of socioeconomic status. Students of poverty can be identified through application for uniform assistance or parent notifications through guidance or the school registrar.

2. SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support for students of poverty may be provided through recommendations from the Guidance Department or individual classroom teachers. Support for these students may include:

- Supplies from DRMA community events such as clothing and food drives
- Differentiation of instruction to meet student needs
- Teacher assistance, as needed, before or after school
- Meetings with the counselor as needed

IX. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

In order to form a cohesive support team for students, it is necessary to keep families well-informed.

A. SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The families of Special Education students receive communication about the following:

- IEP meetings (translation services are provided during the meeting as needed)
- IEP progress reports
- Special Education Documentation such as: Evaluation Plan Prior Written Notice, Reevaluation Plan Prior Written Notice, IEPs, updated IEPs, Record of a Team Meeting, Announcement of a Meeting

B. ENGLISH LEARNING SERVICES

The families of students who receive English Learning services stay informed through:

- Family informational nights
- progress reports and report cards to inform families of their students' performance within English
- Learning classes
- Annual identification of service for EL students
- ACCESS scores sent home annually

C. COUNSELING SERVICES

The families of students who need counseling support receive communication on an as-needed basis from the Guidance Department. Communication may be regarding confidential information about their student, or seeking parent permission for counseling services.

D. HEALTH SERVICES

The families of students who have medical/ health issues are informed on an as-needed basis from the Licensed School Nurse. Communication from the LSN includes information about contagious diseases and immunization records.

E. HIGH ACHIEVING OR GIFTED STUDENTS

The families of high achieving or gifted students receive periodic contact from subject area teachers about their students' progress and performance on differentiated tasks and individualized projects.

F. STUDENTS OF POVERTY

The families of poverty receive periodic contact from subject area teachers about their students' progress and performance in class. If the student has been meeting with the counselor, he/she may also contact the family to give them updates as needed.

X. CONTINUED EDUCATION FOR STAFF ON SEN PRACTICES AT DRMA

A. DIFFERENTIATION

During the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, DRMA teachers attended differentiation trainings led by district ESE staff regarding How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms and Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom. Through this training, teachers acquired strategies to determine students' levels of prior knowledge before beginning a unit. We learned how to construct flexible groups based on assessment data. We also became more cognizant of the need to identify learning style and to differentiate by creating activities that appeal to various learning styles, thereby affirming a student's identity. We learned to construct formative practice opportunities that allow students to reach all levels of Bloom's taxonomy and scaffold their learning.

B. CO-TEACHING

Co-teaching allows our ESE teachers, ELL teacher, and Academic Subject Coaches to work with a variety of teachers throughout the day, providing students with the necessary support to increase their

academic performance. In addition to offering direct support in the classroom, co-teaching has prompted consistent collaboration among our staff, allowing best practices to extend beyond the co-teaching schedule into every lesson.

C. COLLABORATION

Collaboration is a designated time to promote effective working relationships with colleagues and has been built into our weekly schedule. To facilitate our use of collaboration time, which began in the fall of 2013, we received training from Heidi Hayes Jacobs (Curriculum 21) during the 2013-2014 school year. Her workshops provided our staff with tools related to the following areas:

- collaborative curriculum planning, inquiry, collaborative instructional delivery, collaborative communication related to data and day-to-day interactions, and digital tools for authentic professional collaboration and communication.

Utilizing the techniques taught in this seminar, teachers and support staff are able to more effectively work together during collaboration time. This allows us to discuss strategies, share ideas, plan curriculum, differentiate instruction, design authentic assessment tasks, and standardize grading practices. Through this collaborative time we are able to make instruction accessible to all students while implementing the IB MYP.

D. STUDENT INTERACTION STRATEGIES

During the 2015-2016 school year teachers received training from Karen Bailey on assessment design and student centered learning. With this training, we expanded our methods for determining a student's level of comprehension to ensure accurate understanding of the directions. We also gained a repertoire of techniques for increasing student communication in the classroom. The use of these strategies promotes language learning and language use.

XI. POLICY CREATION

The Special Education Needs/ Inclusion Policy was created by a committee which consisted of the ESE Coordinator, a Special Education Teacher, ELL teacher, Title I Coordinator, Language Acquisition teacher and the IB MYP Coordinator. In addition, input was gathered from the Guidance Department, the Licensed School Nurse and General Education teachers. The work of the committee was informed by publications from the IBO, example SEN/ Inclusion Policies from IB World Schools, and the trainings

received at the IB workshops. The committee met six times, following an agenda aligned with the MYP Standards and Practices tied to Special Educational Needs. Staff members were made aware of the policymaking process through regular updates of the meeting agenda items.

XII. COMMUNICATION OF THE SEN/ INCLUSION POLICY TO THE DRMA COMMUNITY

The SEN/ Inclusion Policy is shared with staff, families, and students in a variety of modes of communication. The policy is available upon request in our front office. Staff members learn about the SEN/ Inclusion Policy during specific collaboration times set aside for policy study. We have an informational table set up during conferences, in the fall and spring, to inform families and students of the details of the policy. In addition, the SEN/ Inclusion Policy is highlighted during the IB MYP Informational Night. Within the next few years, we will translate the policy into Spanish (the most predominant mother tongues of our student body) and have it available upon request in the schools front office. This will allow our SEN/ Inclusion Policy to be accessed by all families, including those who are not proficient in English.

XIII. REVIEW PROCESS

Every three years a committee will be formed to examine the inclusion practices for SEN students, at which time this policy will undergo a complete review. The committee will include, but is not limited to, a representative from the English Language Learner Department, a representative from the Special Education Department, a representative from the General Education Department, Guidance Counselor and the IB MYP Coordinator. The purpose of the committee will be to review the current document to ensure its accuracy and to provide continued support to meet the needs of all of our learners. Our first full review will take place during the 2019-2020 school year. If needs arise in the years between formal reviews, a committee can be formed to make amendments to the policy.

The implementation of the SEN/ Inclusion Policy, in all MYP classrooms at DRMA will be reviewed by the MYP Pedagogical Leadership Team (which consists of the Principal and Assistant Principal) as part of the teacher observation process.

XIV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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XV. APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Glossary of terms

Abbreviation or Term	Brief explanation
Collaboration	Two or more teachers working together to plan instructional lessons and units.
Co-teaching	Two teachers implementing a lesson within a classroom
Differentiation	Adjusting instruction based on students' needs

ELL	English Language Learner
General Education teacher	Subject area teachers
IB	International Baccalaureate
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
Inclusion	Least restriction environment that appropriately matches the needs of the learner
LSN	Licensed school nurse
MYP	Middle Years Program
DRMA	Dundee Ridge Middle Academy
SEN	Special Education Needs
ESE	Exceptional Student Education
Scaffolding	Providing support during instruction, with a gradual release of responsibilities so students can become more independent learners.
PWN	Prior Written Notice
W-APT	WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test
WIDA	World-class Instructional Design and Assessment

APPENDIX B: Standards and Practices

IB MYP STANDARD	Section in which standard is addressed in DRMA's Special Education Needs Policy
A.9 The school supports access for students to the IB programme and philosophy	Purpose, Mission and Beliefs Program Goals
A.9a The school strongly encourages participation for all students	Purpose, Mission and Beliefs Program Goals

B1.5b The school has developed and implements a special education needs policy that is consistent with IB expectations and with the schools' admission policy.	Whole document
B1.8 The school provides support for its students with learning and or special educational needs and support for their teachers.	Program Goals Inclusion Continued Education for staff
C1.6 Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles.	Practices: SEN Support Practices: ELL Support Continued Education for Staff
C2.3 The written curriculum builds on students' previous learning experiences	Inclusion The Four Principles of Good Practice: Valuing Prior Knowledge
C2.10 The written curriculum integrates the policies developed by the school to support the programmes	SEN Practices: Special Education Support Practices: ELL Support SEN Practices: Students who need counseling support SEN Practices: Students with Medical/Health Issues Support SEN Practices: High Achieving or Gifted Student Support
C3.3 Teaching and learning builds on what students know and can do	Differentiation The Four Principles of Good Practice Scaffolding
C3.7 Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning in a language(s) other than mother tongue	Mission and Beliefs Inclusion Differentiation The Four Principles of Good Practice: Valuing Prior Knowledge, Scaffolding SEN Practices: ELL Support
IB MYP STANDARD	Section in which standard is addressed in DRMA's Special Education Needs Policy
C3.9 Teaching and learning uses a range and variety of strategies	Inclusion Differentiation The Four Principles of Good Practice: Valuing Prior Knowledge, Scaffolding, Extending Learning
C3.10 Teaching and learning differentiates instruction to meet students' learning needs	Mission and Beliefs Program Goals

and styles.	Inclusion Differentiation The Four Principles of Good Practice: Valuing Prior Knowledge, Scaffolding
C3.14 Teaching and learning fosters a stimulating learning environment based on understanding and respect.	Mission and Beliefs Program Goals The Four Principles of Good Practice
C3.15 Teaching and learning encourages students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.	Differentiation The Four Principles of Good Practice: Extending Learning Continued Education for Staff: Differentiation
C4.7 The school analyses assessment data to inform teaching and learning.	Program Goals Roles in Supporting SEN Students: Special Education teachers, EL teacher

Dundee Ridge Middle Academy is a candidate school* for the Middle Years Program. This school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy—a commitment to high-quality, challenging, international education—that we believe is important for our students.

* Only schools authorized by the IB Organization can offer any of its three academic programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) or the Diploma Programme (DP). Candidate status gives no guarantee that authorization will be granted.

For further information about the IB and its programmes visit <http://www.ibo.org>