



Special Needs and Inclusion Policy

I. PHILOSOPHY

- A. Providence Hall Charter School (PHCS) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School with a focus on high quality, inquiry based international education for all students. It is the philosophy of both PHCS and IB that every child can learn and that every child should be provided with those creative, thinking and learning skills that will carry them to success as adults, making them self-sufficient citizens, caring and reflective members of society, and productive contributors in the global marketplace. Therefore, it is the vision of PHCS, in the context of the inclusive nature and the learner-centered nature of IB instructions of the elementary school level Primary Years Program (PYP), the junior high school level Middle Years Program (MYP), and the high school level Diploma Program (DP), that all students receive the necessary resources, guidance, accommodations, and differentiation needed to attain their highest level of personal success.
- B. This document echoes the policy of the IB for PYP, MYP & DP candidates 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 standard 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," (Candidates with Special Needs 1).
- C. PHCS designed the Special Education Program to ensure that all the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of students are met. A student is scheduled in classes according to the least restrictive environment for that student. Options include being scheduled among same aged peers, in a small group setting with students of same cognitive or behavioral level, and where necessary with two teachers, one being the general education subject teacher and the other a specialist at providing individualized accommodations, who will provide learning strategies and modified lesson plans.

II. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN THE PYP

The PYP philosophy acknowledges and accommodates the diverse learning styles of all children. To this end, PHCS seeks to offer a differentiated teaching and learning environment. When educationally appropriate, PHCS provides an inclusive experience for students with special needs. PHCS also acknowledges that in order to fulfill the requirements of an IEP, a student may require individualized instruction to reach academic goals. Designated special education teachers are IB trained and participate in the collaborative planning process at each grade level. The six transdisciplinary themes provide learning opportunities for each student at their level of understanding.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN THE MYP

The Global Contexts, which are unique to the MYP, provide meaningful connections for students. The Approaches to Learning component assists teachers in identifying student learning styles in order to implement modifications. Teachers respond to diverse learning needs by differentiating their instruction. During the MYP, it is important that procedures and processes are put in place to support students as they pass through the MYP.



IV. SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN THE DP

All students, regardless of their special education needs, are welcome to participate in the full DP. All are advised upon program entry of the rigorous program requirements to ensure appropriate placement and academic success. In addition to employing teaching strategies that include differentiation for students with special needs, students are also supported through special arrangements if necessary. The IB publication, *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs*, will be referenced to provide support for program completion. The Diploma Program Coordinator will submit to IB the appropriate accommodations form, along with necessary documentation, requesting assessment modification when needed.

V. DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

- A. In determining a student's eligibility for the Special Education Program, a team comprised of educational professionals and parent(s)/guardian(s) takes into account each student's unique talents, needs, and capabilities to develop and implement an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan that is in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004).
- B. Diagnostic testing and teacher teaming are used to help determine student placement within the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) system. Three tiers exist within the MTSS system and students may move flexibly through each of the tiers depending on their needs and abilities. Students may be re-taught or pre-taught a concept they are missing or simply be provided the opportunity to catch up on missing work if that is what is hindering their progress in the classroom. Progressive movement throughout the tiers is determined by the MTSS team members and students may be referred for the Special Education Program by the MTSS team.
- C. PHCS has the following educational support to assist students with special education needs:
 1. Trained Educational Assistants
 2. Resource Teachers
 3. Counselors
 4. Support Specialists (Speech & Language Pathologist, Behavior Support Team, Braille & Sign Language Specialists, Occupational Therapists, School Nurse, Social Worker, State Advocates, Peer Tutors)

VI. ADAPTATION AND MODIFICATION

- A. Adaptations and modifications are changes, which allow all students to participate in regular classrooms as independently as possible to the best of their abilities. Things to consider when modifying or adapting a student's program include skill level and activity, equipment and materials, instructional practices and curriculum. Student and parent/guardian goals are considered. Students at PHCS are all provided with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) to support their educational challenges.
- B. To further optimize the learning environment, the Special Education Department works together with the general education teachers, counselors, school psychologists, administration, and parents/guardians. By doing so, PHCS is able to reinforce positive behaviors, create and implement behavior or academic intervention plans, and maintain appropriate classroom standards. Collaborating together as a professional team of educators, we regularly consult and annually revisit each student's Individualized



Education Program to affirm that his/her needs are met. PHCS sets new goals for the student to make sure the IB Curriculum is delivered within the range of the student's ability.

- C. Adaptations and Modifications used may include:
1. Small group settings
 2. Study skills sessions
 3. Assistive technology
 4. Peer tutors
 5. Extended time on classroom assignments and tests
 6. Extended time on standardized examinations
 7. Internally and externally modified and shortened units or lesson plans
 8. Oral testing
 9. Tracking sheets
 10. After school tutoring sessions
 11. Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) classes

VII. POLICY USE AND REVIEW

This policy is a working document that guides teacher practice and furthers student development as balanced, whole learners. It will be reviewed and revised yearly, or as necessary, by the school's pedagogical leadership team (administrators, IB Coordinators, department heads and interested teachers).