



Inclusion/Special Needs Policy

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme

Washington-Liberty High School

Last Revised February 2023

Introduction and Purpose

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 IB.
- Provide clear guidelines to all stakeholders by defining appropriate vision, goals, and practice in the context of the Diploma Programme at Washington-Liberty High School.
- Establish clear responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- Outline the various accommodations and support opportunities that are available to students and teachers.

This document draws its authority from the IB *Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Program* (2012), *Programme Standards and Practices* (2005), *Candidates with Special Assessment Needs* (2009), *The Diploma Program: A Basis for Practice* (2009), *The Diploma Program: From Principles to Practice* (2009), *Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate* (2010), *What is an IB Education?* (2013), *Diploma Programme: From Principles to Practice* (2015), *The IB guide to inclusive education: A resource for whole-school development* (2015), and the IB Program Resource Center online publications and resources. It was created in collaboration by teachers, administrators and central office staff.

Inclusion/Special Needs Policy Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the IB Coordinator, Director of Counseling, Special Education Department Chair, Assistant Principal, and Instructional Lead Teacher. It is the responsibility of the IB Coordinator to ensure the success of the special education needs policy review.

Date of last review: February 2023

The inclusion policy:

- ☐ identifies all legal requirements
- ☐ outlines the structure and process it uses to comply with legal requirements
- ☐ describes the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community
- ☐ clearly states the school's vision for implementing inclusive IB programmes
- ☐ includes evidence of a review process such as the date of the most recent review.

IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

Program Philosophy

Washington-Liberty High School (WLHS) serves the citizens of Arlington, Virginia's geographically smallest county, located across the Potomac River from the District of Columbia. We educate one of the nation's most diverse and sophisticated student populations – students come from 71 countries and speak 45 different languages. We serve students with a range of programs designed to meet individual needs. Our mission is to prepare and support all students to strive for the best, to become life-long learners, and to become successful, active members of the global community.

WLHS supports the IB philosophy that values “diversity and difference is a key aspect of becoming more internationally minded.” Learning differences represent one form of diversity. We seek to support and celebrate students experiencing learning challenges and to help them to develop the confidence to own their differences with pride and to develop the tools and approaches needed to succeed and thrive. Additionally, we seek to ensure that “all candidates should be allowed to take their examinations under conditions that are as fair as possible.” WLHS offers an array of accommodations for students found eligible to receive special education services. Any faculty member or parent can identify a student for evaluation and assessment. The identification of students who are eligible for special education is a carefully managed process, guided by state and federal regulations. Evaluations required to make this determination are completed at the expense of the school system and only with parent permission. Teachers and parents are part of the team that evaluates students in need of services. An individual education plan (IEP) is developed for each student found eligible for services. This plan is reviewed at least annually.

Identification

All students experiencing academic and/or behavior difficulties may not have a disability or require special education to meet their individual educational needs. In many cases, accommodations within the regular education program will address a student's particular needs without resorting to evaluations or special education services. At WLHS, the Intervention Assistance Team (IAT) is an informal collaborative process that is designed to help promote students' success in the regular education classroom. Intervention strategies such as alternative or modified instruction and/or behavior management techniques may be developed to:

- Improve the student's academic performance
- Improve the student's behavior, or
- Improve and refine teaching skills so that the classroom teacher is able to teach students with diverse educational needs.

If the approaches offered through the IAT are effective, the student will experience educational success within the general education program. This will eliminate special education as an alternative.

IAT Functions

The written intervention plan developed for the student will be implemented by the classroom teacher, the parent in collaboration with the teacher, the classroom teacher in collaboration with and consultation by persons with a particular expertise, or consultative staff alone. The IAT carries out the following activities:

- Review problem areas
- Documents strengths and difficulties
- Utilize informal methods to document areas of strength and need
- Recommend specific in-school accommodations (differentiation)
- Recommend school based resources (i.e. Counseling, Reading Specialist, etc.)
- Monitor student's progress and effectiveness of interventions
- Develop monitoring system
- Involve parents as participants
- Provide parents with clear information and feedback
- Provide feedback to administrators regarding school resource needs
- Develop intervention plans
- Refer to student study if necessary

Benefits of IAT

Some benefits of the IAT process:

- Collaborative problem-solving approach
- Promotes strength-based approach
- Develops student self-advocacy
- Provides students with strategies to develop, ultimately leading to academic success
- Reduces labeling
- Addresses a need without evaluations
- Provides academic/behavioral supports in least restrictive environment
- Provides support to teachers
- Improves and refines teaching skills to teach students with diverse needs
- Prevents over-referral to special education

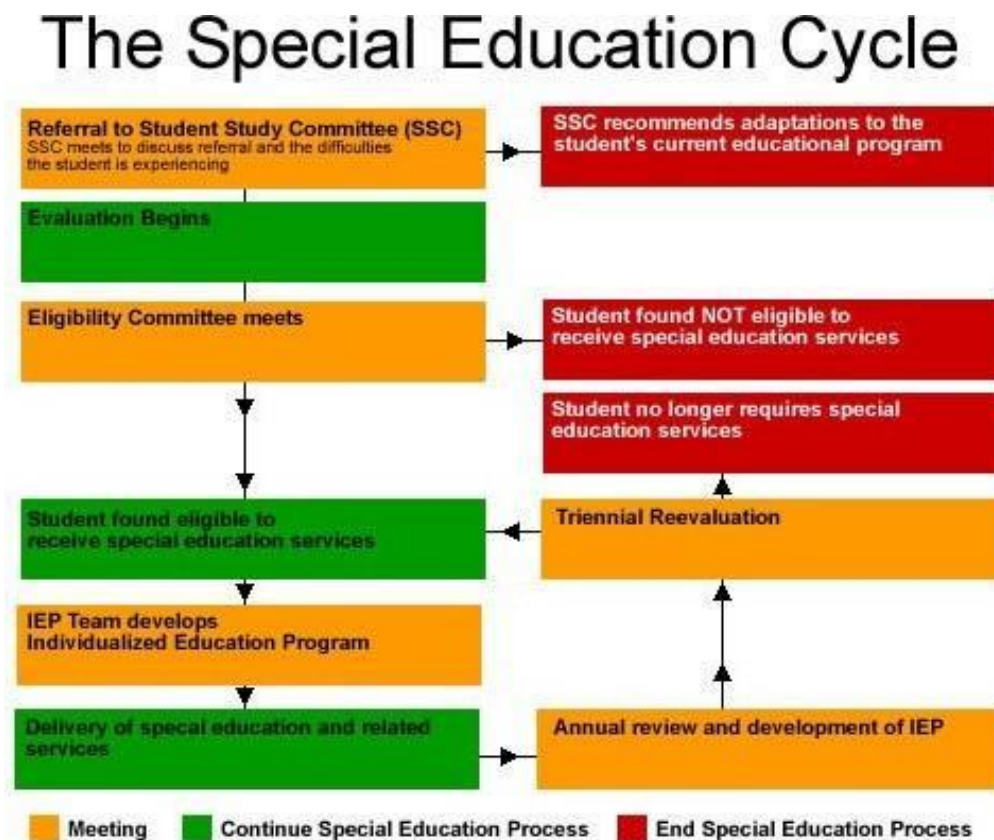
Who should be referred?

School staff should consider an IAT referral for any student who is:

- Experiencing academic and/or behavioral problems
- At-risk of not being promoted
- At-risk of being referred to Student Study Committee
- Absent frequently
- Planning to drop-out
- Demonstrating negative changes in behavior after illness or accident
- Demonstrating marked change in academic performance or behavior

Special Education Cycle

Before your child can become eligible to receive special education services, the school is required by law to determine your child's specific needs. The school determines these needs through a process consisting of many steps, often termed the "Special Education Cycle." When viewed as an ongoing cycle with several steps along the way, the special education process is easier to understand. An explanation of each step in the cycle can be found on the Arlington Public Schools Office of Special Education website.



Special Arrangements

Any student that has either an IEP or a 504 plan is automatically eligible to apply for special arrangements with IB to assist the candidate during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations. In November of each year, after the IB exam registration period has ended, the IB Coordinator requests a list of all special needs and 504 students from the Special Education Department and the Counseling Department. The IB Coordinator then files a request with IB for any student with special needs that is enrolled in an IB course. Special arrangements may include:

- Additional time
- Word processor
- Scribe
- Readers
- Prompters
- Modifications to examination papers or assignments
- Transcriptions
- Extensions to deadlines
- Assistance with practical work
- Other arrangement as included in the IEP and approved by IB

WLHS encourages all students to come forward if they experience any adverse circumstances. The IB Coordinator will file a D2 form with IB as necessary.

Professional Development for Instructional Staff

WLHS firmly believes that inspiring and informed teaching is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. The instructional team will determine how best to differentiate instruction, “a process of identifying with each learner the most effective strategies”. To that end, WLHS is committed to financially supporting ongoing professional development for all instructional staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to attend a wide range of workshops including Learner Profile, Special Needs, and Developing Strategies that Promote and Support Diverse Learners in the DP.

Resources for Parents, Students, and Instructional Staff

The Washington-Liberty Special Education Department has a special education coordinator who can provide technical assistance to staff and parents. Additionally, there is a full-time educational administrative assistant to assist with the paperwork and an Assistant Principal with extensive classroom and administrative expertise in the area of special needs. The Counseling Department has ten counselors with reasonable caseloads, three Hispanic liaison counselors, and an abundance of support personnel to help students with special needs.

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