



**I.E. Weldon Secondary School
IB World School 1438**

Special Education Needs Policy *2015-2016*

Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone.

■ *George Dei, 2006*

Guiding Philosophy

At I.E. Weldon we believe that all students are entitled to an inclusive education that promotes the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational experiences that facilitate the membership, participation and learning of all students in any school programme and activity. To this end we have made it a priority to identify and remove any barriers to student participation in the IB programme while preserving the integrity of IB curricular and assessment expectations. For our students we see it as our duty to provide differentiated instructional experiences, assessment and classroom accommodations, assistive technology and support resources to ensure that all students thrive and reach their highest potential.

Policy Design and Revision

This Special Education Needs policy is a working document that has been developed by our Special Education Advisory Committee representing all subject groupings, including ToK and CAS, and school administration¹. This policy has been designed to incorporate the principles outlined in the Ministry of Education documents entitled *Special Education: A Guide for Educators (2001)* and *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009)*, as well as IBO publication *Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements (2014)*. This policy is reviewed annually by our Special Education Advisory Committee. All revisions are published to our school web page to inform all stakeholders about the arrangements available for candidates with special needs during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations.

Governing Principles

At Weldon we believe that all students should have the opportunity to choose an IB education for themselves. To this end, we have endeavoured to ensure that access to the IB programme at our school is as inclusive as possible, while maintaining the academic rigor and integrity demanded by the IBO and that our stakeholders have come to expect. We evaluate the success of our

¹ For a complete list of Special Education Advisory Committee members, please refer to Appendix A.

programme with equal consideration given to how many students felt confident enough to take on the challenge of the IB programme and the results of each examination session. For students who require learning accommodations, we adhere to the following principles to ensure inclusivity and access for all.

The following has been taken directly from the IBO document entitled *Candidates with Assessment Access Requirements (2014)*.

- 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.

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, action, 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.

Accommodations and the Application Process

At Weldon, inclusivity begins with information. Geographically, we are a large board with a far flung student population base. Recognizing this, our guidance staff have made it a priority to go out to our feeder school community and to elementary schools outside our school board to present information about our Power Pack (Grades 9 and 10) and IB Programmes to potential students, their parents, teachers and administrators. These presentations give all stakeholders an opportunity to discuss concerns and ask questions about the programmes to determine whether or not an IB education is an appropriate fit for their child. As well, we host a series of community information sessions to deliver information about the programme to families and hold a Grade 8 Student Information Night to give students and their families an opportunity to explore our school, gather information about our academic programmes and ask essential questions. At these meetings we discuss the IB application process and assist families with registration paperwork. It is also a priority to discuss with families that special learning needs are not disqualifying factors in determining student suitability for the IB programme. Also it is important to note that our board has committed to providing transportation for any student who wishes to participate in the IB programme who may live outside our catchment area and we also cover all student fees for families who require special financial consideration. All students are welcome at Weldon.

The first part of the student application to the IB programme is submitted electronically. To ensure assistance with that process, our guidance team goes to each Grade 8 community school

to help kids select their courses and answer programme questions. An additional written application is completed at school with the Grade 8 teacher to ensure that students have access to word processing programmes and other forms of assistive technology.

Accommodations in the Classroom

Special needs students enrolled in the IB Programme at Weldon are legally entitled to all assistive provisions outlined in the Ontario Education Act. This act stipulates:

The Education Act² and the regulations made under it constitute the core of the legislation governing the operation of schools and school boards in Ontario. Subsection 8(3) of the Act requires the Minister of Education to ensure that appropriate special education programs and special education services are provided in accordance with the Act and regulations.

It states that:

The Minister shall ensure that all exceptional children in Ontario have available to them, in accordance with this Act and the regulations, appropriate special education programs and special education services without payment of fees by parents or guardians resident in Ontario, and shall provide for the parents or guardians to appeal the appropriateness of the special education placement.... The current legal framework for the education of exceptional pupils originated with the Education Amendment Act, 1980 (frequently referred to as Bill 82), which made it mandatory for all school boards to provide, or purchase from another school board, special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils.

This requirement is now found in paragraph 170(1)7 of the Education Act, which states that: Every board shall . . . provide or enter into an agreement with another board to provide in accordance with the regulations special education programs and special education services for its exceptional pupils.

Subsection 1(1) of the Education Act includes the following definitions of exceptional pupil, special education program, and special education services.

An exceptional pupil is defined as: a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee, established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11 (1), of the board, (a) of which the pupil is a resident pupil, (b) that admits or enrolls the pupil other than pursuant to an agreement with another board for the provision of education, or (c) to which the cost of education in respect of the pupil is payable by the Minister.

A special education program is defined as: in respect of an exceptional pupil, an educational program that is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of educational services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil.

² The Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, C.E.2, as amended, referred to hereafter as the Education Act, or the Act.

Special education services are defined as: facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program.

Further to this, the Education Act also defines specific roles for all teachers in regards to the delivery of Special Education programming for exceptional students. These responsibilities include:

The teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil;
- provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP;
- communicates the student's progress to parents;
- works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.

Students will also benefit from coordinated efforts managed by a Special Education teacher. The special education teacher will fulfill the following responsibilities:

The Special Education teacher:

- holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education;
- monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

Special Needs Education for Students with Mental Health Concerns

Currently, special education legislation does not specifically provide special education funding for students with mental health concerns. That being said, any student who can provide documentation from a certified medical practitioner identifying a mental health condition will be accommodated based on their learning need. A formal, Individual Education Plan will be created by the Head of Special Education, stipulating all necessary classroom accommodations and modifications under the category of "Unidentified Condition". All IEPs developed by local special education teams based on a medical diagnosis bear the full weight of law and entitle students to all provisions outlined above.

Special Needs Education and Language Acquisition

Our special education teaching team also plays a key role in supporting English language learning for English as a Second Language Learners and English Language Deficiency students. For students with English language deficiencies, the Head of Special Education develops an

Individual Education Plan which serves as a legally binding document listing appropriate accommodations and modifications to be made to a student's learning plan. This plan considers the level of language proficiency for each student, the student's programme of study and long term academic goals. If deemed appropriate, the IEP provides students access to school procured assistive technology devices, including lap tops, translation programmes and Speak to Text software. The IEP may also provide for modified testing environments, access to technology during tests and examinations and time extensions in testing situations.

Special Needs Education and Administrative Support

In addition to classroom support from Special Education and subject teaching staff, the IB coordinator will ensure that all IB policies regarding candidates with assessment access concerns are fulfilled and that all candidates are supported in fulfilling their learning goals. To this end, the IB Coordinator will:

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

The school will also fulfill a number of responsibilities, specific to the demands of an IB education for exceptional students. The school will:

- ensure that students with special learning needs will receive appropriate guidance from school counselling staff with special attention paid to IB course requirements and the IB principles governing accommodations for students with assessment needs;
- have the Head of Special Education conduct IEP review meetings to update student accommodation plans. The IB Coordinator will be invited to attend these meetings. Updated IEPs will be posted on the school's secure administrative site to ensure that all classroom teachers are informed of any changes;
- ensure that student programming complies with all accommodations outlined in the IEP and those permitted upon application to the IBO for modified assessment and examination provisions at the school's expense;
- provide professional development for all staff in order to implement all elements of a student's IEP or IBO assessment accommodation. This includes training for examination invigilators.

Special Needs Education and Family Support

At Weldon we believe that parents/legal guardians should be regarded as leading experts on their children. As such, it is essential that families play a key role in developing and managing the learning needs of exceptional children. To this end, we ask that families:

- advocate for their children. Please work closely with the school, teachers and the IB Coordinator to ensure that appropriate accommodations are implemented in order to serve the best interests of your child;

- provide all relevant documentation in order to access all essential special education services and apply for all necessary accommodations;
- attend IEP review meetings as necessary;
- encourage your child to take advantage of all accommodations and assistive technology available to them according to the terms of the IEP;
- encourage your child to advocate for themselves if they feel their learning needs are not being met.



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Special Education Needs Policy: Appendix A
2015-2016

Special Education Advisory Committee Members

Angela Jones	Head of Special Education, Committee Chair
Angela Piggott	Vice Principal, Special Education Portfolio
Erin Matthew	IB Coordinator
Jacqueline Schryer-Zak	School Improvement Head
Kaila Kouzemenko	Teacher of English as a Second Language
Stephanie Campbell	Department Head of International Languages
Danielle Lazzarin	Department Head of English
Sheri Van Kessel	Department Head of Mathematics
Russell Briere	Department Head of Science
Mairi Bew	Department Head of Canadian and World Studies
Kyle Timms	ToK Coordinator
Julie Hendren	CAS Coordinator
James Simmons	EE Coordinator
Kenlynn Duke	Head of Student Services