

Special Educational Needs Policy

A. Policy Statement:

The Maplewood International School is committed to creating and maintaining safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments where each student is supported to grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially as per his/her learning strengths and needs. We are committed to the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for our students with special learning needs. It is understood that special educational programming is inclusive of students with physical, mental, sensory, cognitive or behavioral disabilities as well as students with gifted and talented abilities. This policy is in keeping with our school's commitments as per Federal Law No, 29, *Regarding the Rights of Persons with Special Needs* and as per ADEC regulations for private schools.

Maplewood International School recognizes that integrated learning environments provide opportunities for all students, those with and without disabilities, to share in the joint responsibility for one another's learning needs, and to learn about disabilities as they impact their social, emotional, physical and intellectual learning environments.

B. Vision:

Our vision is to provide strengths-based special educational programs that reflect the best UAE and Canadian standards and practices to prepare our students to be productive members of society.

C. Mission:

In partnership with parents as per standard private schooling operations and principles, use all available resources to plan, implement, and monitor the provision of highly effective special educational programs through Individual Educational Programs (IEP), Behavioral Learning Plans (BLP), and/or Advanced Learning Plans (ALP) that are based on students' assessed strengths and needs, and that will enhance their social competence and enable them to maximize their contributions to their communities.

D. Definitions:

Inclusive Education: Students with special needs have opportunities to participate in programs and services in the least restrictive environment that is commensurate with each student's individual strengths, capabilities, and needs. All students have the right to be educated to the extent possible with their age-appropriate peers in general educational settings with support provided as required. SEN students will be educated in the least restrictive environment that enables optimal learning for every child.

Least Restrictive Environment refers to the placement of special educational students in their regular classroom learning environment whenever and however practicable and when effective in meeting the learning needs of the child. The provision of a range of supports within the classroom such as accommodations or modifications, shadow teacher support, or special education supports in the regular classroom will be the first level of considerations. Only students with severe disability who will not benefit from education in the regular education classroom will be placed in a special education program within their school. Under certain very necessary conditions and after confirming assessments are completed, a student may be recommended for placement in a specialized center-based school.

Specific Learning Disabilities: A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. This disability may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations or reasoning. Such disabilities include perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

Learning Problems that arise from environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage may impede learning and require regular classroom differentiation and accommodation in order to enable optimal results for students; however, these learning conditions are not considered learning disabilities as such and should not be referred for SEN support.

Physical and Health Disabilities: Chronic or severe health and physical problems that lead to poor and limited functionality and that adversely affect the educational performance of students. These include but are not limited to asthma, attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity, diabetes, heart disease, epilepsy, leukemia, cerebral palsy, renal failure, and head injuries to name a few.

Visual Impairment: Any visual impairment that with correction adversely affects a child's educational performances. These include both partially sighted and blindness.

Speech and Language Disorders: Having a communications disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, impaired use of language, or a voice impairment that adversely affects the child's educational performance.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD): Pervasive developmental disorders that cause severe or pervasive impairment in thinking, feeling, language, and the ability to relate to others. These disorders are on a spectrum that ranges from Asperger's Disorder to Autism and they require a range of differentiated and individualized interventions and supports.

Gifted and Talented refers to students with an exceptionally high level of capability in one or more subjects, or in areas of personal interest. These students require supplemental enrichment programming.

Enrichment Programming may include but is not limited to advanced study in a particular subject or topic, independent studies, a comprehensive school enrichment program, and/or vocational guidance. These programs will be identified through the *Advanced Learning Plan* process.

Advanced Learning Plans (ALP) are developed by a specialized team to meet the needs, interests, and creativity of Gifted and Talented students.

Special Education Support Services include but are not limited to speech and language services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and vocational training.

Accommodations are changes that include alterations of the environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to achieve success, but do not alter what is being taught. Accommodations include but are not limited to sign language interpreters, text-to-speech computer-based programs, extended time, and large print books.

Modifications refer to changes in the curricular learning outcomes to better suit a student's learning capacity due to an inability to access the general education curriculum.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a plan that is developed by the Learning Support Team in collaboration with the parents. This plan includes the goals and objectives, accommodations, and modifications that are required to meet the educational needs of identified special education children.

Behavioral Learning Plan (BLP) will identify the student's behavioral issues, level of interference with the student's learning and with classroom proceedings, as well as interventions, structures, and additional supports required to minimize the impact of behavior on learning and success. The goals and objectives for the student may be behavioral or a combination of behavior and academic.

E. Key Role and Responsibility:

Classroom Teachers are responsible to provide educational programming for all students placed in their care. They are to utilize the instructional and assessment practices that represent current knowledge in the field, and to use these tools to maximize learning for every child. If after completing observations and assessments of their students' learning strengths and needs, and after utilizing accommodations, scaffolding, and differentiated learning strategies the classroom teacher determines that a particular child's learning needs are not being met, then a referral to the special educational needs coordinator is to be made for additional assessment and programming.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SEN Coordinator) is responsible to follow up on all referrals, conduct specialized observations of students within their regular classroom setting, and conduct any additional specialized in-school assessments. The SEN Coordinator will then refer the case to the Learning Support Team (LST). During this process, the SEN Coordinator is responsible to convene and facilitate all meetings of the LST in accordance with the timelines identified by ADEC.

The Learning Support Team (LST) consists of the division coordinator, the SEN coordinator/special education teachers, classroom teachers involved with the student, shadow teachers, and the school social worker and/or nurse as appropriate to the needs of the student. The LST will meet when convened by the SEN coordinator to review each referred student's academic and performance histories, medical histories, classroom observation reports and any and all assessments completed by classroom teachers, the SEN coordinator, or outside agencies as provided by the parent.

The School Support Team (SST) consists of the learning support team (LST) and the vice-principal, and will be convened as determined necessary by the SEN coordinator or school social worker, or when external supports or placements are being considered.

The Shadow Teacher is responsible to assist the classroom teacher as instructed to support the inclusion of special needs students in the regular classroom. The shadow teacher may assist in the preparation of materials, take part in LST meetings, provide direct learning support for students as assigned, monitor and assist students with their work, supervise special needs students outside of the classroom during breaks as assigned, and assist in the collection of information regarding student strengths, performance, and needs.

F. Policy Context:

Maplewood International School is committed to the provision of programs for students with special educational needs through effective allocation of staff and resources, and through functional partnerships with parents of these students. The resourcing of special needs programs will be through additional tuition for program costs as needed, and by the effective allocation of general staffing and material resources.

The consideration and flow of special educational programming will move from:

Total integration in the regular classroom with accommodations

Integration in the regular classroom with regular classroom support
and/or modifications to the program as determined by the IEP

A combination of regular classroom programming with additional support
and school-based special education programming in either the classroom
or in the learning resource room

Learning resource room setting full time

Recommended alternate center-based school placements or homebound programming

G. Procedures:

The following processes will be used to identify, assess, and program for students with special educational needs who require modifications to their learning programs and additional supports as well as for other learners who require accommodations and differentiated learning within the regular classroom.

1. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will provide well-planned, grade-level curricular learning experiences to all students. During this initial stage teachers will assess student learning to identify students who are demonstrating less than optimal learning. Teacher assessments will lead to decisions to scaffold learning, differentiate instruction, and to accommodate learning challenges. Various methods of delivery and assessment will be utilized during this phase.
2. Students in Grade 3-11 will also take the standardized MAP assessment three times a year to assess their abilities. Teachers will evaluate the results and anyone that has scored significantly below grade level will be referred to the SENCO for further evaluation. Additionally, students that score extremely high will also be referred to the SENCO for further evaluation to ensure they are being adequately challenged.
3. As soon as a teacher recognizes that a student requires additional support or modifications to the curriculum in order to maximize learning, or that a student requires additional behavioral supports, the teachers will compile a report of his/her observations and assessments and any recommendations that will improve the student's learning outcomes. The teacher will then refer the student to either the SEN coordinator for SEN observations and assessments or to the school social worker for behavioral programming.
4. The SEN coordinator or school social worker will as soon as practicable following a referral schedule visitations to the classroom to complete the required observations and assessments. The SEN coordinator/school social worker may at this time explore with the teacher additional suggestions for scaffolding and differentiating the learning, accommodating the student's learning within the regular classroom, adjusting the methods of delivery, restructuring the classroom, or adjusting routines and transitions, etc.
5. Upon completing the first round of observations and assessments the SEN coordinator/social worker will convene a meeting of the LST.
6. The LST will review the student's learning or behavioral profile, teacher and SEN coordinator assessments and recommendations, and programming interventions that have been implemented. The LST will decide to either continue to monitor the student's progress within the regular classroom or meet with the parent to review the team's findings and to discuss possible supports and modifications that may be

- required or as determined by the SST, recommendations for additional external assessments.
7. Following this initial meeting with parents, the SEN coordinator or school social worker will compile a draft IEP, ALP, or BLP that will be shared with other members of the LST team and the parents. A final IEP, ALP or BLP document will be compiled and reviewed during a follow up meeting with the parents. This document will identify additional supports and/or modifications to the curriculum or placement in the learning support room for part of the student's program.
 8. Placement in the learning resource room for the student's entire program or referral of the student for further assessments or placements with other support agencies and service providers will be referred to the SST for approval, program planning, and monitoring.
 9. The LST team members and the parents will finalize the student's IEP/ALP or BLP, and sign off on the document.
 10. The LST will meet regularly (Monthly) in order to monitor the student's progress and make any adjustments to the IEP,/ALP or BLP as deemed necessary in order to maximize learning for the student. Changes to the IEP, ALP, or BLP will require parental involvement in these decisions.
 11. Students who are pre-identified with SEN codes will upon intake be provided with the necessary additional supports and programming arrangements as can be determined by the student's profile and assessments from previous years or placements. Additional tuition and support for these students will be discussed with the parents upon intake. Appropriate SEN programming as determined by the SEN coordinator and/or school social worker in consultation with the vice-principal will be put in place prior to the student beginning or as soon as practicable thereafter. Such programming includes any learning support programming, modifications, or shadow teaching support that is deemed necessary.
 12. The LST will meet at the beginning of the school year to review the preliminary program arrangements as determined in nine (9) above, and in consultation with the parents will make any adjustments to these decisions based upon a review of the

student's learning profile and current ongoing assessments completed by the SEN coordinator/school social worker, and the classroom teachers.

13. The LST will meet regularly (monthly) to review and monitor student progress. Additional support or program modifications or external assessments will be provided as determined necessary by the SST and agreed upon by the student's parents.
14. Any parents with SEN students will work in partnership with the school to support their child's learning needs. Such support will be in the form of involvement with the LST during regular meetings (at least quarterly) as convened by the SEN coordinator.
15. Parents may be required to provide additional tuition in order to meet any extra-ordinary learning support needs for their children.
16. The school will work within its available resources to support parents and students with special learning needs and will allocate resources accordingly.