

Special Education Policy

(Based on the BC Ministry of Education Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines September 2013)

Rationale

Special education programs and services enable students with special needs to have equitable access to learning and opportunities to pursue and achieve the goals of their educational programs in each of the following areas: Emotional / social, intellectual, artistic / aesthetic and physical. These are offered within the context of a limited scope that a small school can offer, which includes limited physical space and access to specialized education assistants.

Summary

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 who have obstacles in learning and special needs that cannot be met within the classroom within the context of the regular program and curriculum may receive support through:

- Small Group Academic Support
- Developmental Waldorf Remedial assessment and support

Where ongoing support is necessary in a one-on-one setting for academic reasons, such as tutoring or other one-on-one support, or where a consultation with an anthroposophical doctor or similar is recommended, it is to be provided at the parent's expense. Due to lack of physical space, student enrolment for students who need 1:1 support outside of the classroom, will need to be reassessed each year. If this support is to happen on campus during regular school hours, services can only be offered through employees of the school.

Definitions

“Student with Special Needs:” A student who has a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioral nature, has a learning disability or has special gifts or talents, as defined by the Ministry in the Manual of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, Section E.

“Individual Education Plan (IEP):” An Individual Education Plan is designed for a student that includes one or more of the following:

- learning outcomes that are different from, or in addition to, expected learning outcomes set out in the applicable educational program,
- a list of support services,
- a list of adapted materials, instruction or assessment methods

“Individual Learning Plan (ILP):” An Individual Learning Plan is designed for a student that includes one or more of the following:

- basic services that support a student in the short term academically and emotionally
- alternate delivery of programs due to approved external events (grade school only)
- low level learning support to improve learning and study skills.

Please note: These measures should only be used when the teachers have made all reasonable efforts to integrate the student, and it is clear that a combination of education in such classes and supplementary teacher support cannot meet their educational or social needs, or when there is clear evidence that partial or full placement in another setting is the only option after considering their educational needs or the educational needs of others.

“Behaviour Guidance Plan (BGP):” “Behaviour Guidance Plan” will be put in place for students in the following situations:

- when behavioural issues are ongoing and the Three Streams Process (see also Three Streams Handbook on the website) has determined that a Behaviour Guidance Plan is required
- when ongoing non-compliance occurs.
- when behaviours threaten the safety of the student, other students or the staff

“Alternate Education Plan (AEP):” In the High School, when alternate delivery of programs due to approved external events occur, this will be addressed through the Alternate Education Plan Policy.

“adaptations:” teaching and assessment strategies made to accommodate a student’s special needs. Those may include alternate formats (e.g. oral vs written), instructional strategies (e.g. visuals) and assessment procedures (e.g. additional time).

“modifications:” learning outcomes that are substantially different from the regular curriculum, and specifically selected to meet the student’s special needs.

Placement

The school will provide a student who has special needs with an educational program. This will occur in a classroom where the student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

The emphasis on educating students with special needs in classrooms with their age and grade peers, however, does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, community-based programs, or specialized settings, if available.

These measures should only be used when the school has made all reasonable efforts to integrate the student, and it is clear that a combination of education in such classes and supplementary support cannot meet their educational or social needs, or when there is clear evidence that partial or full placement in another setting is the only option after considering their educational needs or the educational needs of others.

Planning

The school will ensure that an IEP is designed for each student where a specialized program is developed

for high incidence categories (K, P, Q, R see Ministry of Education website) and always for low incidence categories (A-H). An IEP is not required when:

- The student with special needs requires little or no adaptations to materials, instruction or assessment methods; or
- The curriculum has not been modified

The IEP will be reviewed at least twice each school year, and where necessary, revised or cancelled.

The school will offer the parent of the student and, where appropriate, the student the opportunity to be consulted about the preparation of the IEP.

Evaluating and Reporting

Standards for all students, including students with special needs, are developed with appropriate expectations for student achievement. Students with special needs are expected to achieve some, most, or all provincial curriculum standards with special support.

Where a student with special needs is expected to achieve the learning standards, regular reporting procedures will be used to indicate progress.

Where it is determined that a student with special needs is not capable of achieving the curriculum, and substantial course or program modification is necessary, specific individual goals and objectives will be established for the student in his or her IEP.

Where a professional support person other than the classroom teacher is responsible for providing some portion of the student's educational program, that person should provide written reports on the student's progress as per the student's IEP.

Process of Referral for Support

At the initial intake interview, specifically for the purpose of program planning, parents are required to share information pertaining to any special programs or therapy their child has received or continues to receive. This may include prior medical specialist referrals, speech and language support or occupational therapy support. Parents are required to submit all assessments in full to the school based team.

Once admitted, the Student Support Manager, in ongoing dialogue with classroom teachers and in collaboration with the parents, determines if a student would benefit from extra assistance. This is determined by a variety of means, not limited to but including:

- referrals from the schools Three Streams Process (yellow form)¹
- formal assessments from outside agencies
- special education support documents from prior schools

Parents are encouraged to inform the school when they access community support services.

¹Please note: If the three streams process or the Director of Education determines that a Behaviour Guidance Plan is needed, enrolment probation (90 days) restarts after any new diagnosis or at the initiation of a behaviour plan. Probation means the school student support team is taking an active and intentional role in trying to support the student and manage the situation.

SUPPORT TYPES

Small Group Support

Based on results and needs identified, some students may require small group support either in the classroom or in a separate space. This level of support is provided by the classroom teacher and/or support staff and is typical for high incidence categories

One-on-One in class Support

Based on results and needs identified, some students may require one-on-one support, either in the classroom or in a separate space. This level of support is provided by student support staff. An IEP is written, based on information collected, and is done in collaboration with parents, teachers, special education assistants, and/or other specialists. For high incidence category students, the cost of one-on-one support will be carried by the family. If these services are needed on campus during school hours, they can only be offered through employees of the school.

Based on our school media policy, and current Waldorf philosophy on media use at school, students who are recommended to use laptops or computers in their educational assessments will be provided opportunities for alternate modes of conveying their learning, such as oral, pictorial, etc. In some instances, a scribe may be provided in lieu of technology, as determined by the Student Support Chair and the Principal.

Developmental Waldorf Remedial Support

Students, in grades one to four, may receive Waldorf Remedial Support that supports their physical development, such as midline integration, balance etc., as a basis for academic learning. Students are referred by the teachers to the SSEG and Care Group.

A Waldorf Remedial Assessment (soft assessment) will be conducted, a report written up which includes recommendations for further support. If the recommendations entail further remedial support, the remedial teacher will schedule times with the students' teachers for a series of one-on-one support. The support can vary from daily 20 minutes to twice a week for 40 minutes, depending on the needs of the student.

One Remedial Series includes 10-12 lessons; the costs are covered by the Whistler Waldorf School. After one series, a progress report is written for the parents' and teachers' perusal.

Should the report recommend further, or ongoing remedial support during the same school year, the costs of the support will be shared by the Whistler Waldorf School (50%) and the parents (50%). Should the school receive supplemental funding for the category of the student, the remedial support costs will be covered by this.

Government Funding for Special Needs Support

Certain special education categories qualify the school for supplemental funding from the Government of

British Columbia. This funding is to be utilized to increase student programming at the school. “These funds are not targeted to specific students; however, are provided to school districts to support the needs of students within their district.”

(http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf#page=138)

Safety and Students with Special Needs

Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct, School Act, Section 85(1.1) 168(2) (5.1)

Some students with special needs present particular challenges because of the nature of their disabilities. Students with severe needs may be unable to comply with the code of conduct due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioral nature. Careful planning for the safety of the staff and students, both those with and without special needs, is part of the development of a student’s IEP Safety Plan, and/or Behaviour Support Plan.