



Cullen Middle School

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Cullen Middle School Inclusion/Special Education Needs Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure that all students are provided equal access to the IB curriculum and opportunities for academic rigor
- to emphasize that all students and staff are encouraged to embody the IB Learner Profile including supporting them as risk-takers, fostering compassion and communicating effectively
- to foster a curriculum that is creative and differentiated to support all our students in reaching their unique potential
- to communicate the responsibilities of all stakeholders in the success of students with special needs.

Cullen Middle School is a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program. Our school is pursuing authorization as an IB World School. IB World Schools share a common philosophy and a commitment to a high quality, challenging, international education that we believe is important for all students. IB World Schools have a responsibility to provide equal access to the curriculum, instructional programs, and academic rigor for all students, regardless of individual abilities and needs.

Cullen Middle School is committed to offering a level of support and services to students with diverse academic, behavioral and health related needs. Students with disabilities may be served through a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), or through a differentiated approach utilizing strategies and supports geared for the individual student.

Types of Services and Supports

Special Education Needs (SEN): A student has special educational needs (SEN) if he or she has learning difficulties or disabilities that require additional supports and services than most other children of about the same age. Extra support and assistance will be provided based on the need of the student. Examples of additional support and assistance include:

- Extended time to complete assignments
- Rechecking for understanding
- Scaffolding of information
- Use of technology to support learning

For other students, that may be a Section 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan.

Section 504 Eligibility and Accommodation Plan

A student may be eligible for a Section 504 Accommodation Plan if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities and requires a Section 504 Accommodation Plan in order for the child's educational needs to be met as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students. Major life activities include, but are not limited to: self-care, manual tasks, walking, seeing, speaking, sitting, thinking, learning, breathing, concentrating, interacting with others, working, reading, concentrating, standing, lifting, bending, etc. This may include individuals with attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, cancer, diabetes, severe allergies, chronic asthma, Tourette's syndrome, digestive disorders, cardiovascular disorders, depression, behavior disorders and temporary disabilities (e.g., broken writing arm, broken leg, etc.). Conditions that are episodic or in remission are also covered if they create a substantial limitation in one or more major life activity while they are active.

Eligibility under Section 504 is considered by completing an evaluation by a comprehensive team at the school. If a student is found eligible, a Section 504 Accommodation Plan may be developed if required. Determination of what is appropriate for each child is based on the nature of the disabling condition and what that child needs in order to have an equal opportunity to learn when compared to the non-disabled. Types of accommodations may include:

- Enlarged print
- Positive reinforcements
- Rearranging class schedules
- Visual aids
- Peer assistance with note taking
- Not all students that are eligible for Section 504 will require an accommodation plan.

Special Education

A student may be eligible for special education and require an individualized education plan (IEP) if he/she has a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and requires specially designed instruction. Unlike Section 504, there are 13 specific categories of eligibility. Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech Language Impairment, and Other Health Impairment are examples of categories.

A team of qualified individuals will review current data, collect additional information if needed, and determine if a child has a disability under one of the categories identified by IDEA. The team will also consider if the child requires specially designed instruction known as special education services and supports. All services and supports will be provided at no cost to the parent and designed to meet the individual needs of the student.

If an IEP is required, that document will be developed by the parent and required members of a school team. The IEP will cover the current performance of the student, goals, services and supports, testing accommodations and where those services will be provided. The IEP is reviewed at least annually.